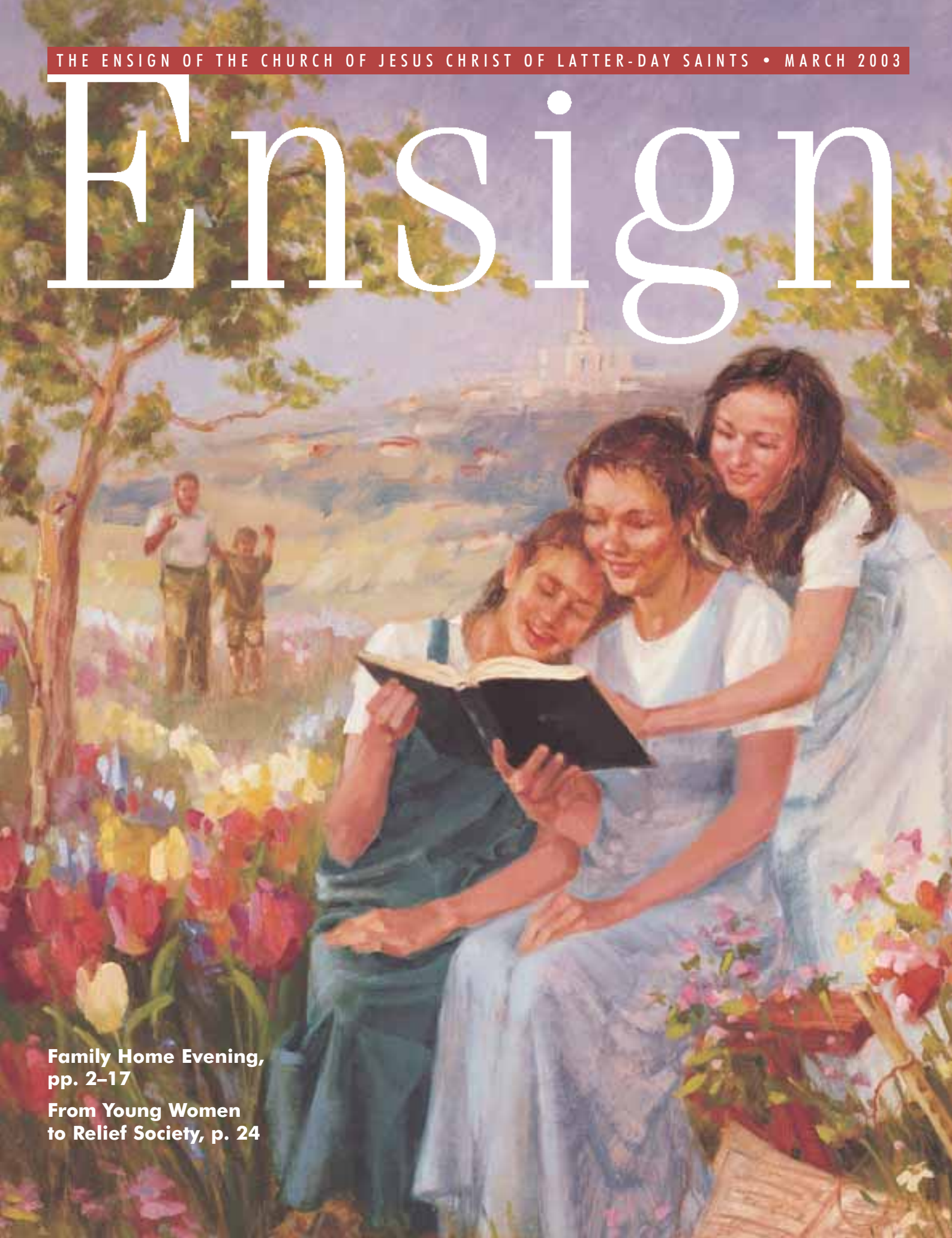


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**From Young Women
to Relief Society, p. 24**



A Father's Baptism, by Liz Lemon Swindle

Describing the baptism of her husband, Joseph Smith Sr., by her son the Prophet Joseph Smith on 6 April 1830, Lucy Mack Smith wrote, "When [my husband] came out of the water, Joseph stood upon the shore, and taking his father by the hand, he exclaimed, with tears of joy, 'Praise to my God! that I lived to see my own father baptized into the true Church of Jesus Christ!'"
(History of Joseph Smith, ed. Preston Nibley [1958], 168).

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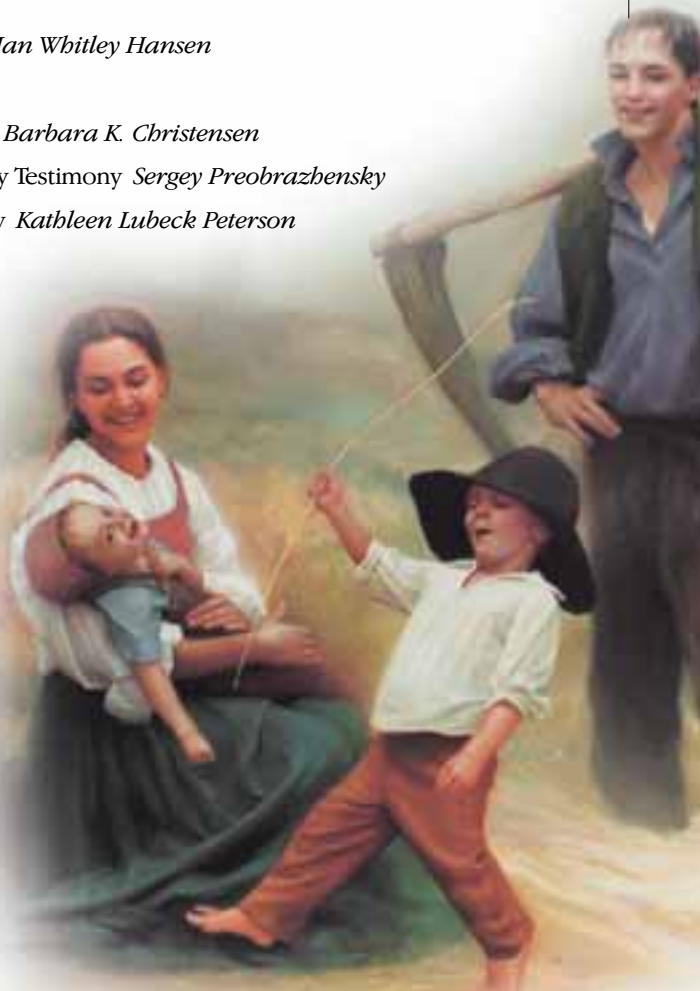


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AN OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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Family Home Evening

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

One Evening a Week—Monday Night

“We have a family home evening program once a week [Monday night] across the Church in which parents sit down with their children. They study the scriptures. They talk about family problems. They plan family activities and things of that kind. I don’t hesitate to say if every family in the world practiced that one thing, you’d see a very great difference in the solidarity of the families of the world” (interview, *Boston Globe*, 14 Aug. 2000).

“[The Lord] expects us to have family home evening—one night a week to gather our children together and teach them the gospel. Isaiah said, ‘And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.’ That is the commandment: ‘All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.’ And the blessing: ‘And great,’ he said, ‘shall be the peace of thy children’ [Isaiah 54:13]” (meeting, Nouméa, New Caledonia, 17 June 2000).

Childhood Recollections

“In 1915 President Joseph F. Smith asked the people of the Church to have family home evening. My father said we would

do so, that we would warm up the parlor where Mother’s grand piano stood and do what the President of the Church had asked.

“We were miserable performers as children. We could do all kinds of things together while playing, but for one of us to try to sing a solo before the others was like asking ice cream to stay hard on the kitchen stove. In the beginning, we would laugh and make cute remarks about one another’s performance. But our parents persisted. We sang together. We prayed together. We listened quietly while Mother read Bible and Book of Mormon stories. Father told us stories out of his memory. . . .

“Out of those simple little meetings, held in the parlor of our old home, came something indescribable and wonderful. Our love for our parents was strengthened. Our love for brothers and sisters was enhanced. Our love for the Lord was increased. An appreciation for simple goodness grew in our hearts. These wonderful things came about because our parents followed the counsel of the President of the Church” (“Some Lessons I Learned as a Boy,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 54).



What is the great strength of [this] Church? . . . It is the emphasis which we place on families. . . . Keep your families close together and love and honor your children” (meeting, Reykjavík, Iceland, 11 Sept. 2002).



LETTER FROM THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

October 4, 1999

To: Members of the Church throughout the World

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Monday nights are reserved throughout the Church for family home evenings. We encourage members to set aside this time to strengthen family ties and teach the gospel in their homes.

Earlier this year we called on parents to devote their best efforts to the teaching and rearing of their children in gospel principles which will keep them close to the Church. We also counseled parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities.

We urge members, where possible, to avoid holding receptions or other similar activities on Monday evenings. Where practical, members may also want to encourage community and school leaders to avoid scheduling activities on Monday evenings that require children or parents to be away from their homes.

Church buildings and facilities should be closed on Monday evenings. No ward or stake activities should be planned, and other interruptions to family home evenings should be avoided.

*Sincerely yours,
Gordon B. Hinckley
Thomas S. Monson
James E. Faust*

Sense of Prioritizing

“You have to establish in your life some sense of prioritizing things, of giving emphasis to the important things and of laying aside the unimportant things that will lead to nothing. Establish a sense of justice, a sense of what is good and what is not good, what is important and is not important; and that can become a marvelous and wonderful blessing in your lives” (devotional, Utah Salt Lake City Mission, 15 Dec. 2001).

A Sacred Time for Family

“I wish to mention . . . family home evening. We are fearful that this very important program is fading in too many areas. Brethren, there is nothing more important than your families. You know that. This program was begun back in 1915, 87 years ago, when President Joseph F. Smith urged the Latter-day Saints to set aside one evening a week devoted specifically to the family. It was to be a time of teaching, of reading the scriptures, of cultivating talents, of discussing family matters. It was not to be a time to attend athletic events or anything of the kind. Of course, if there is family activity of such a kind occasionally, that may be all right. But in the increasingly frantic rush of our lives it is so important that fathers and mothers sit down with their children, pray together, instruct them in the ways of the Lord, consider their family problems, and let the children express their talents. I am satisfied that this program came under the revelations of the Lord in response to a need among the families of the Church.

“If there was a need 87 years ago, that need is certainly much greater today.

“The decision was made that Monday evening would be devoted to this family activity. In those areas where there are large numbers of Church members, school officials and others honored the program and did not schedule events on that evening.

“Now there appears to be a growing tendency to



President and Sister Hinckley frequently enjoy family time with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

schedule other events on Monday night. We respectfully request that our public school officials and others let us have this one evening a week to carry forward this important and traditional program. We ask that they not schedule events that will require the time of children on Monday evenings. We are confident that they will realize that it is most important that families have the opportunity, at least once a week, to be together without conflicting loyalties. We shall be grateful indeed if they will cooperate in this matter. And we urge, in the strongest terms possible, that fathers and mothers regard most seriously this opportunity and challenge to make of Monday evening a time sacred to the family.

“I have received not a few invitations to participate in community Monday gatherings of one kind or another. I have uniformly turned down these invitations with appreciation, but with the explanation that I have reserved Monday as family home evening time. I earnestly hope that each of you will do the same” (“To Men of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 58).

Wholesome Family Life

“If we live the gospel, people will come into the Church. They will see the virtue of our lives, and they will be attracted to the message we have to teach. That message places great emphasis on the family. The family

becomes a very important thing in our teaching and in our practice. We believe that the family is the basic unit of society. You can’t have a strong community without strong families. You can’t have a strong nation without strong families—the father, the mother, the children as one unit working together. Now the family is falling apart all over America, all over the world. If

we can just cultivate good, wholesome family life among our members, I don’t worry very much about the future of this Church” (interview with Ignacio Carrión, *El País* [Mexico], 7 Nov. 1997). ■

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After you prayerfully prepare, share this message using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. A few examples follow:

1. Show page 2 (without showing page 3), and ask family members what they think this message is about. Make a list of the activities that could conflict with Monday night home evenings. Read together a few of President Hinckley’s statements and the First Presidency letter. Bear your testimony of the blessings of holding weekly family home evening.
2. Read aloud “Sense of Prioritizing.” As family members take turns reading from this message, ask them to tell why they think President Hinckley is emphasizing this topic. Tell why these ideas are important to you, and invite family members to do the same.



The Calling

I Didn't Know I Had


BY JAN WHITLEY HANSEN

Family home evening was challenging when our children were young. My husband and I took seriously the latter-day prophets' counsel to hold regular family home evenings, but between our Church callings and other responsibilities, we too often found there wasn't time or energy to plan an effective, loving family home evening when Monday night came around.

While visiting Primary one Sunday I noticed how captivated the children were by the stories, visual aids, and brief but effective activities planned for sharing time and music time. I was also absorbed in learning from the well-prepared efforts the Primary counselor and music leader

put into their callings. "They obviously spent adequate time mingled with lots of love," I thought. "They do wonderful things in their callings."

Just then a thought came to mind: "Family home evening is one of your callings. In fact, it is part of your most important calling—motherhood!" I reflected on that insight. "If I can make the time to magnify my callings as newsletter editor and visiting teacher, I can surely magnify my family home evening calling."



After that, family home evenings became top priority in our family. Days ahead the lesson topic was chosen, and we prepared as thoughtfully as if we were to teach a lesson in church. Saturday errands began including things such as finding a large roll of paper to represent eternity and buying other lesson materials. Sunday was the perfect day to make visual aids, and the children loved being involved in cutting or coloring for the lessons. Our preparation built excitement for Monday nights. “What are the colored envelopes for, Mom?” my daughter asked. “It’s a secret,” I responded. “Come to family night and find out.”

Since my realization that Sunday in Primary, I haven’t been released from my family home evening calling, and I don’t plan ever to be. I love it. Its value is immeasurable.

Our family home evenings have changed as our children have grown. Now we sometimes invite the widows of the ward, and we often enjoy good doctrinal discussions. I am ever grateful that the Spirit touched me that day to accept and magnify my family home evening calling. ■

Jan Whitley Hansen is a member of the Valley View Ninth Ward, Salt Lake Holladay North Stake.

THE FAMILY HOME EVENING RESOURCE BOOK: AN ASSET FOR EVERY HOME

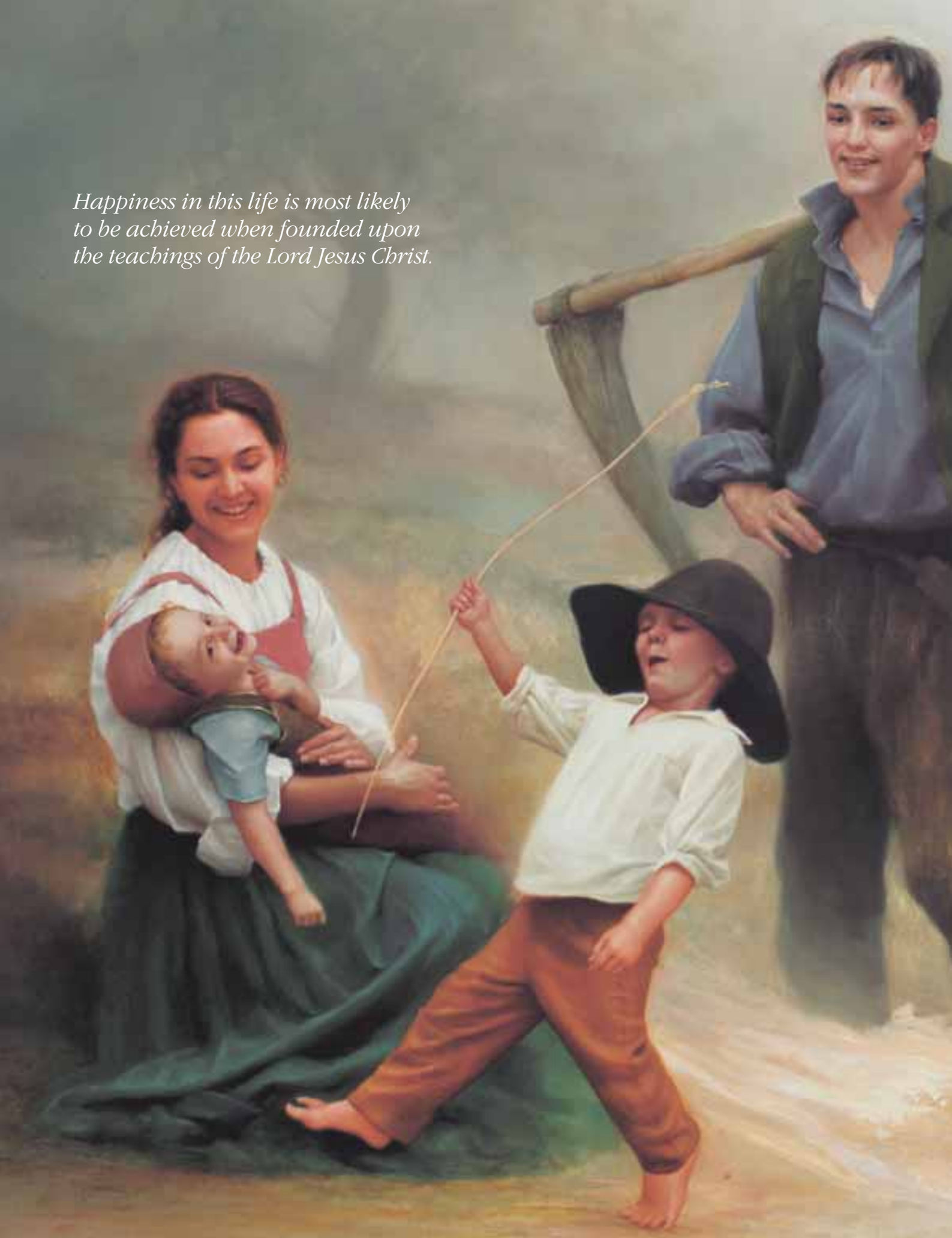
Designed to assist members in building family unity and teaching principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the home, the *Family Home Evening Resource Book* is distributed across the world in 17 languages. It contains family home evening lessons and ideas for creating your own lessons, as well as suggestions for family tips on how to improve home evenings, and helps for rearing children. This book (item no. 31106, U.S. \$5.00) is a valuable asset for every home, whether you are a single adult, an older couple without children at home, a single-parent family, or a couple with children of any age.

The Church also provides the following materials designed for use with the resource book:

- Family Home Evening Video Supplements (53276 and 53277, \$6.00 each). These two videos contain short segments that support lesson topics. Instructions for when to use each segment with the resource book are on the cover of each videocassette.
- *Children’s Songbook* (35395, \$10.00) and *Hymns* (31243, green cover, \$5.00). The references in the resource book do not correspond to these two newer music books. Look up the title of the song in the indexes of these two books to find the correct page.
- Gospel Art Picture Kit (34730, \$30.00). The kit contains a scripture index for using each picture, and each picture has a scripture reference and summary on the back.
- *Gospel Principles* (31110, \$3.00). This manual contains an overview of basic gospel teachings, and its use is frequently suggested in the resource book.

As you prayerfully consider your family home evening responsibilities, we invite you to look again at your copy of the resource book or order one through your Church distribution center.

*Happiness in this life is most likely
to be achieved when founded upon
the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.*



THE

Family

IS ORDAINED OF GOD

We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children." Thus begins the landmark declaration "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" issued in 1995 (see *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

Indeed, our Heavenly Father's plan of happiness is reflected in our homes and in our families.

As children, it is under the guidance of our parents and through interaction with our sisters and brothers that we first learn to love, to give, to grow, and to live. We experience the joys and

pains of life within the circles of our families.

The proclamation on the family goes on to declare that "happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities."

Whatever the makeup of your family, these divine doctrines remain constants for success—foundations for happy lives. The following artwork by Latter-day Saint artists depicts various families as they teach, learn, and live gospel principles. ■



Far left: Our Heavenly Father's plan of happiness is reflected in our families. The joy of parenthood is clear in this detail from a mural by Joseph Brickey titled The Purpose of Life. Above: The deep love, concern, and caring of a husband and wife for their child are shown in Keith Mallett's Tenderly.



Gospel progression, love, respect, compassion, example, teaching, and learning all happen within our families. These are some of the principles illustrated in the following works.



Page 10, top left: Teach Me to Walk in the Light, by Godofredo Orig; top right: Mother and Child, by Hagan Haltern; center left: Grandma Is a Storyteller, by Judith Mehr; center: Father and Son Embrace, by Robert T. Barrett; center right: Teach Me to Walk, by Nate Pinnock; lower left: The Little Flower, by David Lindsley; lower right: Teach Them to Understand, by Walter Rane;



bottom: Turning the Heart of a Child to Her Ancestors, by Margery Sorensen Cannon. Page 11: Detail from The Purpose of Life, by Joseph Brickey.







Left: Greg Olsen captures a moment shared by grandfather and granddaughters in his painting *Bedtime Stories*. Top right: An aged mother remembers her son in *Farewell My Son*, by Glen S. Hopkinson. Center right: A mother's enduring strength and courage are portrayed in *Zion in Her Heart*, by Clark Kelley Price. Far right: We look to Mary with the infant Christ as an example of maternal love, as shown in *Madonna*, by Kirk Richards. Bottom right: A righteous family and example of faith and endurance are represented in *Job and His Family*, by Greg Olsen.





Left: Gratitude and faith in the Lord are evident in Wilson Jay Ong's portrayal of Jairus's Daughter.
Top right: The values of work and unity are displayed in Becoming Self-Reliant, by Abu Hassan Conteh.
Lower right: A mother's many duties and her enlightened guidance are illustrated in The Responsible Woman, by James C. Christensen.





Wholesome recreational activities play an important part in a healthy and happy family life. Top left: Families enjoy a winter evening together in Olsen Park, by Eric Dowdle. Lower left: The Prophet Joseph Smith plays with his sons in Get Papa, by Liz Lemon Swindle. Right: The spirit of joyous fun is captured in Father and Son Dancing (with Banners), by Brian T. Kershnik.







Washing, Weeding, and Worshiping

My mother wove gospel teachings into everyday activities.

BY BARBARA K. CHRISTENSEN

My mother gave birth to 12 children and reared a 13th, my cousin. We grew up in the rural mountain valley of Midway, Utah, with very few modern appliances—no automatic washer, no clothes dryer, no furnace, no electric stove until later, no microwave oven, no wash-and-wear fabrics, no TV—and only one bathroom. But in what seems to me a most remarkable manner, Mother was able—through precept and example—to weave basic gospel teachings into the fabric of our everyday lives.

Wash Day

Mother taught all of us girls to sew, reminding us of the need to dress modestly and of the difficulty of finding

modest styles in the stores. All our clothes were made from percale, which had to be starched and ironed. Each fall Mother sewed six percale dresses for each of us girls and six percale shirts for each of the boys to wear to school.

I loved doing laundry in the summer. We hung it on outside pulley lines, and the clothes smelled so fresh and clean. The winter was another story. We hung everything out, only to have the clothes quickly freeze on the lines. Sometimes when I hung the clothes out, I would stay until my hands were freezing, then run in the house and warm them up again. Then I'd go back outside again. After the clothes had hung there for a few hours, we took them inside the house to finish drying. We literally had to pry them off the clotheslines. When we moaned a bit about this procedure and the winter weather, Mother reminded us that “rugged weather makes for strong people.”



ILLUSTRATED BY MICHAEL MALM

In the summer, however, to see my mother's clotheslines was to see a work of art. We sorted all of the clothes inside the wash house before taking them outside to hang. One would not see a towel, a pair of pants, and then a sheet. No, all the towels were hung together by size and color, all the sheets together, and all those percale dresses and shirts. As I said, a work of art.

Discipline

To my mother, right was right, and wrong was wrong, and there was no compromising. She was very consistent, and we could predict her reaction. For instance, we were not allowed to criticize Church authorities. Mother quoted our Danish grandmother, who said, "Remember that the first sign of apostasy is criticism of the Church leaders." That concept was strictly enforced.

In our home we knew the importance of music. When it looked as if a quarrel might begin, our mother insisted that we sing together. She often said that one can't quarrel while singing. She also insisted that it calmed our spirits and kept bad feelings away from our home. Every morning as we got ready to start the day, we would sing our favorite hymn, "Morning Thanksgiving." It is no longer in the hymnbook, but we loved it. By the time we finished that song, little troubles had disappeared, and things somehow seemed brighter.

We didn't gossip in our home. Mother told us that it was important for friends and acquaintances to know that they had real friends in us and that when they needed help, we would be there for them. She also told us that it

didn't take a lot of intelligence to sit around talking about others. My husband and I have tried to develop that attitude in our own family with a slogan hanging on our refrigerator that says, "Your name is safe in our home."

Mother questioned who "they" were when she would hear us say "they say" this or that. She reminded us that

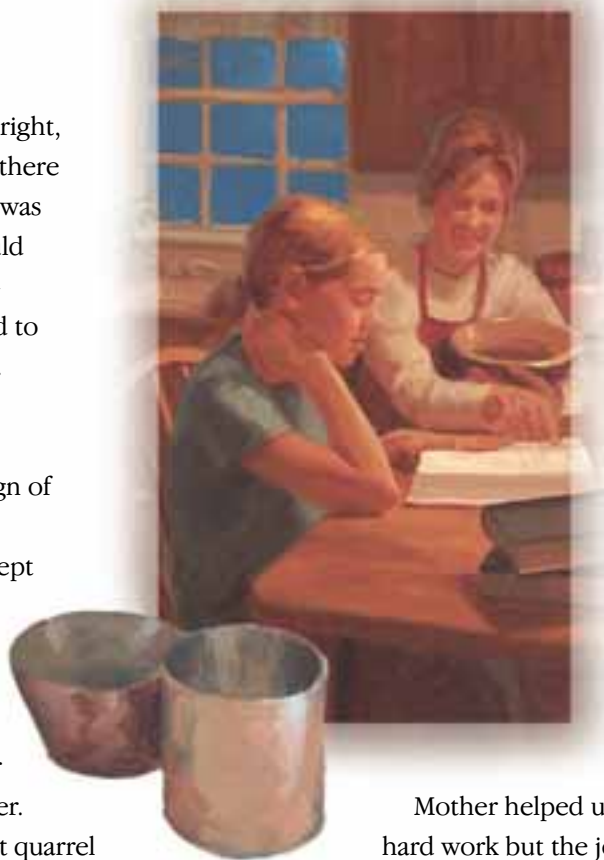
it is difficult to judge others because we do not know what motivates their behavior. She often said, "Love people into doing things."

Mother was a strict disciplinarian. My parents both taught us that obedient children are happy children. No one misbehaved long in Mother's presence—family members or friends. She loved people and let them know she did. Yet, when she spoke, we took her seriously.

Early Morning Weeding

My parents taught us that there is no such thing as a spiritually strong person who is at the same time lazy. We all worked hard in our home.

Mother helped us discover not just the importance of hard work but the joy of it as well. She taught us the magic of the early hours of the morning for accomplishment. She often told us that those who are up early "run ahead all day." She suggested that we as young mothers should arise a while before the remainder of the family. So much can be accomplished during those moments alone. She often showed us the beauty of the early morning. I can still hear her as she called us at 5:00 A.M. in the summertime. She would say, "Let's get up now, girls, and go weed while it is still cool." Once we got into the garden, she would show us the weeds and tell us that weeds were like sin. If we pulled them out while they were



small, they were much easier to remove than later when they got big. To this day I can feel a bit of excitement early in the morning when I think of that quiet time when meditating is easier, studying is more profitable, and one seems to accomplish twice as much as later on in the day.

Sabbath Day Worship

Mother taught us the great importance of the Sabbath day. Clothes, food, and cleaning were all prepared on Saturday. Mother said that one of the main reasons for the great troubles in the world today is lack of observance of the Sabbath. We truly tried to revere the Lord's day.

Our parents taught us to study and love the scriptures. Mother instilled in us a love for all good books. She could recite poetry by the hour. One of my most vivid memories is standing on the wood box while Mother and I did the dishes. She would recite poetry and would tell us wonderful stories with great morals. All 13 of us children received a book each Christmas and each birthday. They were carefully selected by Mother. She shopped at secondhand stores to find copies of her old favorites.

Mother taught us the importance of keeping a journal and writing our personal histories. She always told us that we would think we could remember details of our lives, only to find later on that many of them had escaped our memories, and we would regret that we hadn't kept our personal histories up-to-date.

Testimony

Mother and Dad worked diligently to instill a testimony in each of us. Mother often reminded us of what our grandparents' testimonies meant to them. Many times, I heard Mother relate the story of her mother's introduction to the gospel in Denmark. She was 18 years old when

a relative invited her to go to town to listen to and heckle some young Mormon missionaries. Grandmother thought that sounded like great sport. The results were quite different from what she expected, because the moment she heard the first one speak, she knew that he spoke the truth. She rushed home, thinking that her father and step-

mother would be as thrilled as she, only to be told never to mention the word *Mormon* in their home. A little later, she joined the Church and set sail for America, arriving at age 19, knowing no English and having no friends. She had also been disinherited by her family. Even though she endured many difficult experiences, her testimony remained firm throughout her life.

Mother taught us to be happy. She believed the scriptures that say to "be of good cheer" apply to both good and bad times (see John 16:33; D&C 68:6).

Finally, Mother taught us to love. She championed those who had less opportunity to accomplish. We grew up accompanying her on her visits to widows and others who were lonely. We cooked special things for them; we sewed for them; we took them vegetables from our garden. We learned that there is no joy to equal that of serving others and forgetting oneself. I later realized that those visits we made with her were probably one part for the benefit of the recipient and two parts for our growth and benefit.

I pay tribute to my mother, who taught us gospel principles as we hung clothes on the line, weeded the garden, and prepared for the Sabbath day. Her life, filled with self-discipline and compassion, was its own testimony of righteous living. My memories of her, like the lovely afterglow of a sunset, remind me of the joy that comes from striving to be like the Savior. ■

Barbara K. Christensen is a member of the Valley View Seventh Ward, Salt Lake Valley Stake.

Our parents taught us to study and love the scriptures. Mother instilled in us a love for all good books. She also helped us discover the importance and the joy of hard work. We cooked and sewed for widows and others who were lonely. As a result, we learned that there is no joy equal to that of serving others.

DANIEL, THE WORD OF



BY SERGEY PREOBRAZHENSKY

I was raised in Russia at a time when believing in God was ridiculed and most of my friends were atheists. I went to medical school in Moscow, where I learned about dietary practices that can prevent and treat heart disease. I was shocked when a friend informed me that these medical practices were almost the same as the centuries-old health code of the Russian Orthodox Church. For the first time in my life I thought that maybe there really might be something meaningful for me in religion.

I began to read the Bible. I was intrigued one day while reading the story of Daniel and his friends' refusal to eat their "daily provision of the king's meat [food, not necessarily flesh],¹ and of the wine" (see Daniel 1:3–8). Daniel proposed that they be allowed to eat "pulse" and drink water instead. He asked that this diet be put to a test to see if it was healthier than the king's diet. After 10 days Daniel and his friends were found to be "fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat" (Daniel 1:15). God also blessed Daniel and his friends with "knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" (Daniel 1:17). After three years the king discovered that in matters

of wisdom and understanding Daniel and his friends were "ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm" (Daniel 1:20).

This was stunning to me—10 times wiser! I wanted to know what that special food was. In my Russian Bible the word used for *pulse* means "vegetables." "This could not be true," I thought. No one can live for three years eating only vegetables. They do not contain all the nutrients essential for sustaining human life. I was confused. I searched Bibles in other languages and found that "pulse" had been similarly translated. I put aside the matter as a mystery.

Some years later I was converted to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and joined the Church. In the process I learned about the Word of Wisdom as revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Lord told the Prophet in 1833 that wholesome herbs and fruits are for the use of man, that meats "are to be used sparingly," and that "all grain is good for the food of man; as also the fruit of the vine" (see D&C 89:10–12, 16). The Lord then promised that all who follow these commandments would "find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:19). This impressed me as teaching the same principle of cause and effect that I had found in the story of Daniel.

With great interest I turned to chapter 1 of Daniel in the



AND MY TESTIMONY

Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible. I found the word *pulse* in verse 12 and looked at footnote 12a. I was overjoyed to learn that its meaning was not “vegetables” but “foods made of seeds, grains, etc.” I also studied the Bible Dictionary and learned that *pulse* in Hebrew refers to “seeds, and may include the grains of leguminous vegetables or any other edible seeds.”² I began to appreciate how an understanding of the Bible can be enlarged by a study of the Doctrine and Covenants and Bible Dictionary.

Then not long ago I was given a high council assignment over welfare and asked to encourage food storage in our stake. In an attempt to learn about this calling, I read that members are encouraged, depending on where they live, to store “water, wheat or other grains (such as corn and rice), legumes (dried beans, peas, lentils), salt, honey or sugar, powdered milk, and cooking oil.”³ I remembered the story of Daniel and noticed that many of the food products we should store are what Daniel ate and what the Word of Wisdom counsels us to eat. This was very meaningful to me and confirmed in my heart that the eternal truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ are the same, whether they are lived and taught in Old Testament times or in our day.

The scriptures also caution us to avoid extremes. In section 59 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord counsels that

“all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man” and are to be used “with judgment, not to excess” (see D&C 59:16–20).

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: “I thank the Lord for a testimony of the Word of Wisdom. I wish we lived it more fully. . . . The promise is before us that if we will do so, we shall receive health in the navel and marrow in the bones and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures (see D&C 89:18–21). To me it is marvelous that beyond the promises of a physical nature is the promise of hidden treasures of knowledge concerning things divine and eternal.”⁴

I thank the Lord that truths followed by Daniel, and essentially given again by the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith, encouraged in our Church handbooks, and borne testimony of by modern prophets have paved the way for me to enjoy the blessings that come from great treasures of knowledge that are “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Mormon 9:9). ■

NOTES

1. See Bible Dictionary, “Meat,” 729–30.
 2. P. 756.
 3. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* [1998], 258.
 4. “My Testimony,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 53.
- Sergey Preobrazhensky is a member of the Holladay 11th Ward, Salt Lake Holladay Stake.*

From

Young Women

BY KATHLEEN LUBECK PETERSON

When Juliana Circe da Costa, a member of the Colônia Branch, Jundiá Brazil Stake, turned 18, she was worried about attending Relief Society.

“I was afraid I would be alone and wouldn’t be comfortable with the adult women in the branch,” she says. “In the beginning it was strange, but the Lord has a purpose for everything. I’m not saying it was easy, but I’m grateful to the Lord and the sisters who were so wonderful to me.”

Juliana’s Relief Society president, Rita Ribereiro Pandolfi, played a key role in Juliana’s transition. “In our branch we receive the young women with open arms,” she says. “We know they face many changes when they leave Young Women and begin attending Relief Society.”

Like Juliana, many young women find that entering Relief Society can be an adjustment. However, not all young women are apprehensive about joining Relief Society. For some, entering Relief Society is a welcome rite of passage. “I felt ready for the change,” says Rachel Kramer of the Chapel Hill First Ward, Durham North Carolina Stake. “I was just as ready to leave Young Women at 18 as I had been to become part of it at 12. I felt that the women in Relief Society were wise, brimming with the virtue of a life in harmony with the gospel. And I was glad to go on to the ‘meatier’ gospel discussions and to be around so many women I could look up to.”

Ready to attend or not, young women entering Relief Society need the same thing—to be loved and valued, have friends, learn, feel the Spirit, and be a part of the organization. Experience shows that there are ways to make the transition easier. Proper planning between Young Women and Relief Society



to Relief Society

Sisters need to feel loved and valued when they make the transition from the Young Women program to Relief Society.





presidencies, fellowshipping, and a strong support system of caring ward or branch members can help.

Leaders Working Together

The *Church Handbook of Instructions* lays the foundation for the transition to Relief Society, encouraging Young Women and Relief Society presidencies to work together (see *Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* [1998], 206, 217).

To get better acquainted with incoming young women, one stake Relief Society presidency cooks and serves a meal at Young Women camp each year. “We would go early enough to visit each ward site,” says Relief Society president Carolyn Rasmus of the Orem Utah North Stake. “We served something that required us to place the food item on their plates so we could interact with each young woman. I remember the girls commenting—positively—that we wore jeans, weren’t afraid to get dirty, and took the time to come to camp. We hope it provided an opportunity for them to see us as sisters who are approachable.”

Evelia de Hoyos, Relief Society president of the Viveros Ward, Cuautla México Stake, says: “Every October our Relief Society presidency, accompanied by a single adult representative, visits the Laurel class. We talk about the Relief Society declaration; the history of the organization and its purpose; the focus on education; personal enrichment; the family and the home; charity; visiting teachers; and the Pursuit of Excellence program.”

Another Relief Society presidency regularly addresses the needs of the young women during stake training meetings. “Training the leaders, both in Young Women and in Relief Society, has kept the young women’s needs at the

forefront,” says Margarita Woodhouse, Relief Society president of the San Antonio Texas Stake. “By planning to include our younger sisters more fully, we are strengthening the future of Relief Society.”

She adds: “We’ve found that Young Women leaders’ attendance at Relief Society activities plays a key role in the transition. Young women look for the familiar faces of these leaders they have grown to love. Aside from mothers, Young Women leaders are the role models of Relief Society to young women.”

Many leaders on the ward or branch and the stake or district level plan events that bring young women and Relief Society sisters together. Diana Gardner of the Harrogate Ward, York England Stake, says that Laurels were invited to go to the temple to do baptisms on a night when their ward Relief Society sisters were performing endowments. “The Laurels and Relief Society sisters were eating dinner at the cafeteria together and walking around the temple grounds together. Their discussions have had a major impact on the young women,” says Sister Gardner.

One young woman found that attending home, family, and personal enrichment meeting greatly helped her with the transition to Relief Society. “When I was in Young Women, our Relief Society invited the Laurels to attend,” says Vicky Hacking of the Pleasant Hill Ward, Orlando Florida South Stake. “They regularly had a craft class that pertained to us. Sometimes we had a class for mothers and daughters. This helped me feel like I could fit in and made me want to attend Relief Society when I turned 18.”

In the Billingham Ward, Billingham England Stake, Young Women leaders invited a group of Relief Society sisters to join the young women in making Christmas presents for a service project. “It was fun to see the young women and Relief Society sisters mingling and sitting with each other, getting on so well, chatting and laughing in a less formal setting,” says Ann Helps, second counselor in the Young Women presidency. “It helped our young women break down the stereotype of Relief Society sisters and realize that older sisters were once young women too and they still have fun.”



PHOTOGRAPH © PHOTODISC

In addition to feeling loved and valued, young women entering Relief Society need to have friends, learn, feel the Spirit, and be a part of the organization.

Opportunities to Serve

Including young women new to Relief Society in planning activities, teaching lessons, and giving service helps them feel the spirit of Relief Society. Assigning them visiting teachers immediately and giving them visiting teaching assignments provide opportunities to serve as well as make friends. A new sister could also be called to a committee or given another assignment in Relief Society.

Some wards and branches invite a confident new sister to help teach a lesson. “Sharing insights from the youthful perspective of these

young sisters has often had a lasting and powerful impact in our Relief Society,” says Relief Society president Susan Burningham of the Bountiful Hills Ward, Bountiful Utah Central Stake. “I will never forget the lesson in which one young adult shared experiences recorded in her journal. In another lesson, two young women and their mother each shared the reasons they had decided to live pure and virtuous lives.”

Service opportunities bring joy to the soul and a sense of purpose. New sisters could be invited to assist other Relief Society sisters with compassionate service needs or on a humanitarian project.

“My transition from Young Women to Relief



Society was a wonderful experience because of service,” says Tagen Spencer of the Princeton Ward, Pocatello Idaho East Stake. “Even though I started my Relief Society experience in my home ward, where most of the women were elderly, they were all very welcoming to me. When I served with them on a humanitarian project, many of the widows in the ward were there. We were assigned to sort used clothing. One sister called and offered to pick me up. She even took me to lunch after the service project. Every time someone came across a used wedding dress, she would pull it out, give it to me, and start laughing. We had such a good time. It strengthened my testimony of service as well as helped me bond with the sisters.”

Fellowshipping Young Women

Welcoming the new sisters to Relief Society can be a special event. Some presidencies give each young woman a flower or a framed copy of the Relief Society declaration. Some spotlight each new member. One ward president created invitations that said, “Planting the seed of Relief Society in your heart,” and took one to each young woman at her home, along with a packet of seeds.

Welcoming young women and accepting them with love strengthen the sisterhood of Relief Society. Sitting by them, talking to them, learning about their interests and their lives can be important to the new sisters. Many of them are used to a one-on-one caring relationship with their Young Women advisers. They need to be loved by their new Relief Society sisters too.

“I had just moved to Atlanta, my first time away from home,” says Tara Towsley of the North Point Ward, Roswell Georgia Stake. “Needless to say, I was a bit intimidated. I remember sitting in sacrament meeting thinking about going home, when the most wonderful lady came up and

FEELING LOVED



“My wish for the young women joining Relief Society is that they would be received with arms wrapped around them, feel secure and safe, and feel the love of the Lord through the women they associate with. Relief Society will be the place where each young woman should find women to care about her and serve her. It’s also where she’ll learn to love her sisters. My counsel to these new sisters is to get involved and forget yourself. Then great things will happen.”

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president

introduced herself. She told me her name, said she was the Relief Society president, and told me where Relief Society was held. She said she was excited that I was there. I felt better immediately.”

One Relief Society president challenged her ward sisters to learn the names of each young woman entering Relief Society. She distributed photos and a short biography of all the incoming young adults to each of the Relief Society sisters. It helped the sisters to call each young woman by name and befriend her.

Another Relief Society president attended the Laurel class and asked each young woman to fill

out a card with her name and the name of five sisters in the ward she particularly admired. She then sent a letter to each of the sisters named, explaining how much that Laurel admired the sister. The sisters in turn took a special interest in the young woman.

Many leaders have realized that a young woman who is home for a summer needs fellowshipping just as much as those young women who are in the ward year-round. Extra attention helps these sisters feel part of Relief Society.

Fellowshipping is not a one-way street, however. Sister Margaret D. Nadauld, former Young Women general president, says, “I hope these new young adults entering Relief Society bring with them a friendliness and let the sisters feel of their strong spirits, love of the Lord, love of the scriptures, and understanding of gospel teachings.”

M. E. Clayton has attended Relief Society in several wards. Her suggestion for easing into Relief Society?

“Participate!” she says. “If young women want to have the meetings more geared toward what they’re interested in, participating and becoming part of the program will

allow the other women to meet and understand them. If they never participate, they can easily feel left out.”

Penny Rowe of the Leeds Fourth Ward, Leeds England Stake, says: “As leaders we must humbly pray for our fellow sisters and how we can best fellowship them. The greatest leader of all, our Savior, will always show us the way.”

Other Shepherds Can Help

Though Young Women and Relief Society leaders are on the forefront of helping young women make the transition, other shepherds are available to help too—parents, former Young Women leaders, priesthood leaders, home teachers, visiting teachers, friends, ward or branch families, and institute teachers. Working together, they can form a safety net for these young women, making sure they will not be ignored or drift away at this crucial time in their lives.

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president says: “A bishop can make a big difference in a young woman’s attitude toward Relief Society. When the bishop interviews each young woman and talks about the value of Relief Society in her life, it has an impact.” Continuing attention and interviews with the bishop after a young woman joins Relief Society are helpful too.

Kelly Smurthwaite of the Brigham Young University—Idaho 56th Ward, BYU—Idaho Fourth Stake, was called to be a Relief Society president in her student ward for the following school year just as she was leaving to go

home for the summer. “My bishop’s parting advice to me was to observe the Relief Society leaders in my home ward,” she says. “He also encouraged me to remain active in Relief Society in the summer by going to home, family, and personal enrichment meetings and other activities.”

With temptations so prevalent in the world and Satan trying to deceive those who are striving to follow the Savior, we need to hold fast in our efforts to strengthen young adult sisters. When faithful Latter-day Saints rally

around to love, support, and protect these young women, the Lord’s blessings can be poured out in full measure.

“I’m so grateful for the Relief Society organization. I feel it has better prepared me for the next stage of my life,” says Tara Towsley. “It has given me the opportunity

to befriend women older and wiser and has helped my testimony mature in so many ways. It took time for me to find my place, but with time Relief Society began to feel like home.”

That is how it should be.

“We love these young women so much and pray for them continually,” says Sister Nadauld. “We don’t quit loving them after they leave the Young Women organization. We know how important it is for them to stay close to the Church in all ages of their lives, so we pray that we’ll see them sitting next to us in Relief Society meetings after they turn 18.” ■

Kathleen Lubeck Peterson is a member of the Harbor Hills Ward, Newport Beach California Stake.



When faithful Latter-day Saints rally around to love, support, and protect these young women, the Lord’s blessings can be poured out in full measure.



The Road to Financial Security

The following 1933 and 1936 First Presidency statements provide principles for provident living in today's world of economic uncertainty.



A Message Concerning Preparation for Relief Measures (1933)

Reported conditions in the state and nation suggest that a considerable burden may rest upon our Church relief activities in the near future. While it seems our people may

properly look, as heretofore, for relief assistance from governmental and perhaps other sources, it cannot now be certainly foretold either what or how fully sufficient this assistance will be, and we must therefore prepare ourselves to meet the necessities that may fall upon us.

The Lord will not hold us guiltless if we shall permit any of our people to go hungry, or to be cold, unclad, or unhoused during the approaching winter. Particularly He will consider us gravely blameful if those who have heretofore paid their tithes and offerings to the Church when they had employment shall now be permitted to suffer when the general adversity has robbed them of

A period of great economic hardship called the Great Depression struck the United States and the Church during the 1930s. The United States government and the Church implemented programs to assist the millions in need. Church leaders were concerned that members would succumb to a "dole mentality," the idea of getting something from the government for nothing.

In July 1933 the First Presidency set forth fundamental principles for financial security in a letter to stake presidents. In October 1936 President Heber J. Grant read a second message in general conference, formally launching what is known today as the Church welfare program.



The Church organizations set up by the Prophet Joseph in the very early days of the Church, if properly coordinated, are qualified to carry on adequately the work of caring for Church members.



Members have long gathered to prepare food and other supplies for the poor and needy. In stake projects members today assemble school and hygiene kits that are sent to all parts of the world.



their means of livelihood. Whatever else happens, these faithful persons must not be permitted to come to want or distress now. . . .

The Church organizations set up by the Prophet Joseph in the very early days of the Church, if properly coordinated by the bishops and presidents of stakes, are qualified by purpose, jurisdiction, ability of membership, and experience to carry on adequately, during the coming winter, the work of caring for Church members. Indigent non-Church persons will obviously look to other sources. But no one must be permitted to starve or freeze in our midst.

In rendering assistance to those in need, the Church officers should have one prime consideration in mind: namely, that relief, except to sick, infirm, or disabled, should not be extended as charity. Our faithful Church members are independent, self-respecting, and self-reliant; they do not desire charity. Our able-bodied members must not, except as a last resort, be put under the embarrassment of accepting something for nothing. In recognition of this wholly praiseworthy and admirable attitude of mind, Church officials administering relief must devise ways and means by which all able-bodied Church members who are in need may make compensation for aid given them by rendering some sort of service. It is believed that private and community enterprise in our wards and stakes can be found or created in sufficient quantities for this purpose.

The experience of some of those of our stakes in which there is now the largest proportion of unemployed persuades us that this can be done. . . .

We exhort the members of the Church to prepare to take upon their shoulders this great burden which now threatens us. The cries of those in distress must be hushed by our bounty. The words of the Lord require this from us. A feeling of common humanity bids it from us. Never has the Church membership had a better opportunity than now to reap a harvest

from obedience to the law, given by the Savior, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." [Acts 20: 35]. If we shall fully observe that law, the Lord will pour out His richest blessings upon us; we shall be better and happier than ever before in our history; and peace and prosperity will come to us.

The spiritual condition and faith of the members of any ward or stake may be gauged by their response to this urgent call of the unfortunate for help.

To Israel of old, God spake through Malachi:

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

"Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" [Malachi 3:8–10].

Out of an experience, rich in God's blessings and chastisements, ancient Israel drew this bit of profound wisdom: "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses . . . burst out with new wine" [Proverbs 3:9–10].

These are the blessings promised to those who do not rob the Lord. We must not be guilty of this offense. We earnestly exhort the people to have faith in the Lord and His promises. Take Him at His word: “Prove me now here-with, . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and learn how much the Lord will bless.

We wish the presidencies of the stakes and the bishops of the wards to urge, earnestly and always upon the people, the paramount necessity of living righteously; of avoiding extravagance; of cultivating habits of thrift, economy, and industry; of living strictly within their incomes; and of laying aside something, however small the amount may be, for the times of greater stress that may come to us. By no other course will our people place themselves in that position of helpful usefulness to the world which the Lord intends we shall take.

Heber J. Grant, Anthony W. Ivins, J. Reuben Clark Jr.



The Message of the First Presidency to the Church (1936)

As promised at the last April conference, we inaugurated a Church security [welfare] plan. To facilitate the putting into effect of the plan, we organized a general committee whose functions were to represent the Presiding Bishopric in the detailed administrative work of coordinating and supervising the labors of the various regularly established organizations in their large and important security operations.

The security [welfare] plan contemplated no new Church machinery for this work but provided for the use of all the existing Church organizations—the stake and

In the 1930s clothing was packaged for distribution by bishops to members in need. This work continues today as workers load food and clothing at a Church warehouse for shipment to those who are destitute and suffering.

ward organizations, the priesthood quorums, the Relief Society, and the various auxiliary organizations—each of which was to render the maximum service it could furnish in the interest of the general welfare of the Church.

Objective to Provide Necessities

The announced objective set for the Church under this program was to provide by 1 October 1936, by a wholly voluntary system of gifts in cash or in kind, sufficient food, fuel, clothing, and bedding to supply through the coming winter every needy and worthy Church family unable to furnish these for itself, in order that no member of the Church should suffer in these times of stress and emergency.

Work to Replace Idleness

Our primary purpose was to set up, insofar as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole [getting something for nothing] abolished, and independence, industry, thrift, and self-respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be reenthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership.

Our great leader Brigham Young, under similar conditions, said: “Set the poor to work—setting out orchards, splitting rails, digging ditches, making fences, or anything useful, and so enable them to buy



meal and flour and the necessities of life.” This admonition is as timely today as when Brigham Young made it. . . .

Wards and Stakes to Help Each Other

Every ward and stake is expected to face the necessity not only of providing for its own but of helping other wards and stakes. In no other way would it be possible to do the work which the Church is aiming to do. But few stakes and wards are in a position where they may be rightfully satisfied by merely caring for their own. . . .

We must not contemplate ceasing our extraordinary efforts until want and suffering shall disappear from amongst us.

The responsibility of seeing that no one is hungry or cold or insufficiently clad rests upon the bishops, each one for the members of his own ward. He will use every Church organization of his ward to help him in his work. For help outside his ward, he will look for necessary assistance to his stake presidency, they to their regional organization, and these to the Presiding Bishopric of the Church, whose primary responsibility it is to look after the poor of the Church as a whole.

Latter-day Saints Abundantly Blessed

For this great undertaking the Lord has abundantly blessed His people already, and He will continue to pour out His blessings so long as the people do their duty by the poor.

Generations and generations ago, the Lord said to Israel of old, urging them to pay their tithes into His storehouse, “Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” [Malachi 3:10].

To this generation, the Lord has said, “Inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me” [D&C 42:31].

And the Lord added this admonition: “Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment” [D&C 104:18].

Jacob, speaking to the people of Nephi, said:

“But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

“And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted” [Jacob 2:18–19].

Appreciation for Service

We are grateful to our Heavenly Father for His goodness unto this people during this

year, for the bounteous crops which He has given to them, and for the measure of prosperity which has come to our midst.

We have proved the Lord and He has opened the windows of heaven.

We are grateful to all those who have contributed of their substance to our achievement. We thank all those who have served so long and earnestly in the working out of this program and especially to those 15,000 and odd members of the Church who have been directly concerned.

We invoke the blessings of the Lord upon each and every one of you. We pray the Lord continually to inspire His people to the end that we shall once more be able to take care of all those worthy ones amongst us to whom hard times have come in these days of stress.

Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark Jr., David O. McKay

In James R. Clark, comp., Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (1965–75), 5:331–34; 6:19–23. Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphing modernized.



Agricultural projects have been for many years an essential part of the Church welfare program.

Feasting on the Word

*Three members share insights discovered
during regular scripture study.*

The word of the Lord in the scriptures is like a lamp to guide our feet (see Ps. 119:105), and revelation is like a mighty force that increases the lamp's illumination manyfold," says Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "We encourage everyone to make careful study of

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RICHARD HULL



the scriptures and of the prophetic teachings concerning them and to prayerfully seek personal revelation to know their meaning for themselves” (“Scripture Reading and Revelation,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1995, 7). The following accounts from members offer insights gleaned from study of and prayer about the scriptures.

Serving with Sincerity

Reading again of Ammon’s brave encounter with the Lamanites at the waters of Sebus

reminded me that Ammon did not seek his own glory. Instead of marching triumphantly at the head of the other servants, he went back to the stables and readied the king’s horses for a trip to see Lamoni’s father.

Ammon’s intention upon leaving the land of Zarahemla to live with the Lamanites was to “cure them of their hatred towards the Nephites, that they might also be brought to rejoice in the Lord their God, that they might become friendly to one another, and that there should be no more contentions in all the land” (Mosiah 28:2). Ammon was offered three opportunities for power that would have given him great influence among the Lamanites. First, King Lamoni offered Ammon his daughter to be his wife (see Alma 17:24). Then, after the events at the waters of Sebus, Lamoni offered him anything he desired, including protection by the Lamanite armies (see Alma 18:21). Shortly thereafter, Lamoni’s father offered Ammon anything he asked, up to half the entire kingdom of the Lamanites (see Alma 20:23). All three of these offers could have given Ammon great influence.



Yet Ammon turned down these opportunities. I wondered why, and then I recalled the passage in Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–42 that reads: “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

“By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile.”

I realized that through Ammon’s genuine display of love and dedication, King Lamoni came to realize that Ammon truly wanted to serve him and was not in his kingdom to gain control or to destroy him. Lamoni’s father also came to accept the sincerity of Ammon’s purpose and even asked to be taught the gospel.

Ammon’s love for the Lamanites was sincere. I believe that he was a powerful missionary not because he was physically or mentally strong but because he dealt with others with genuine love.

Julie Cannon Markham, Vienna Ward, Oakton Virginia Stake

Placing Others First

For me, one of the most revealing scriptural texts about the Savior’s example is in Philippians 2. Although not frequently quoted, it is an important reference in guiding us to make correct choices. The imprisoned Apostle Paul wrote this epistle to the Saints in Philippi, the earliest congregation he founded in Europe. Although the Apostle Paul seems to have had a special affection for the Philippian Saints, he was concerned about dissension within the Church that apparently was being fueled by the pride and selfishness of some of the members. So he taught them that the key is to have “this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5)—in other

words, to think and act like the Savior.

But how did the Savior think and act? The interesting passage that follows is a poetic form that may well have been an early Christian hymn, possibly already familiar to the Philippian Saints:

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

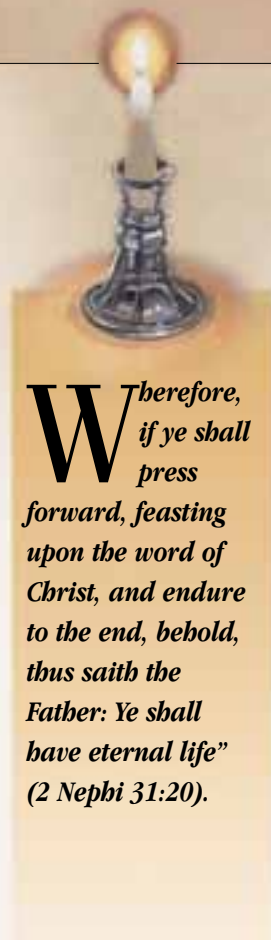
“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

“And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:6–11).

The first line in the Greek version of this passage is literally “being already in the form of God.” The text then points out the distinction between the glorious Lord of pre-earthly life and His mortal appearance as a “servant.” This contrast brings to mind the comparison of the son and servant in the Old Testament extended family unit. Historically, the firstborn son was the most important person in the family next to the father. It was he who would inherit the larger portion of the estate and probably ultimately assume leadership of the family. Servants had no such natural privileges. Therefore, the comparison of son and servant symbolizes those of highest and lowest rank, respectively. For the eldest son to voluntarily give up his rank and inheritance and assume



Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20).



Answers come to us through scripture study and prayer. “The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that are made conditional on our asking for them” (*Bible Dictionary*, “Prayer,” 753).

the role of a servant would be astonishing.

Thus, an important teaching of this text is the Savior’s infinite selflessness. In the pre-mortal realm the Lord did not seek His own aggrandizement but chose to become a servant to all in bringing about the Atonement.

The next lines in Philippians show the Savior’s willingness to put aside His own comfort. Faced with suffering and death on the cross, He could retreat and seek His own comfort and safety or follow through with His vital mission of service. The choice between fulfilling Heavenly Father’s purposes and seeking our immediate comfort often faces us, as it did the Philippian Saints. When faced with such choices, we should look to the Savior for our example, as the Apostle Paul emphasized.

Our yielding to selfishness is usually associated with a limited perspective rather than a consideration of the ultimate consequences. Thus, the text emphasizes the outcome of the Savior’s choices from an eternal perspective. Because He was willing to give up personal position in order to serve others and because He remained committed to His promises despite sufferings greater than any of us could bear, He was able to bring about the Atonement. Through this, He found infinitely greater joy in the fruits of His work than He could have realized without His sacrifice. As our perfect and personal example, He is constantly challenging us to follow Him.

Clyde D. Ford, Valley View 12th Ward, Salt Lake Valley View Stake

Drawing Near to the Lord in Our Weakness

Perhaps as some others, I’ve felt there are some parts of my personality that I wished weren’t there. Saddened by these flaws and troubled at my lack of progress in overcoming them over the

years, I sought help in the scriptures.

I received new hope after reading Ether 12:27: “And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”

This scripture is familiar, but when I read it again while pondering some of my problem areas, it struck me with new meaning. I realized I needed to find for myself how the Lord viewed me if I am to discover each weakness and, with His help, make it a strength. Also, the idea that God helps us recognize our weaknesses is a wonderful reason to talk to Him! It was then that I felt His guidance directing me toward new growth.

My first awareness of His guiding hand came shortly after my scripture experience, while attending a class on anger—because I thought someone else needed it. The instructor asked me to describe how I was doing in regard to anger. I could tell him more about how the strangers in the class felt than I could find words to tell how I was feeling. Suddenly it came to me that we often possess weaknesses we see in others.

This realization brought added meaning to the Savior’s teachings on the Sermon on the Mount when He said, “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Matthew 7:3).

The discovery that some of the characteristics I have the least tolerance for in others are sometimes my own shortcomings was

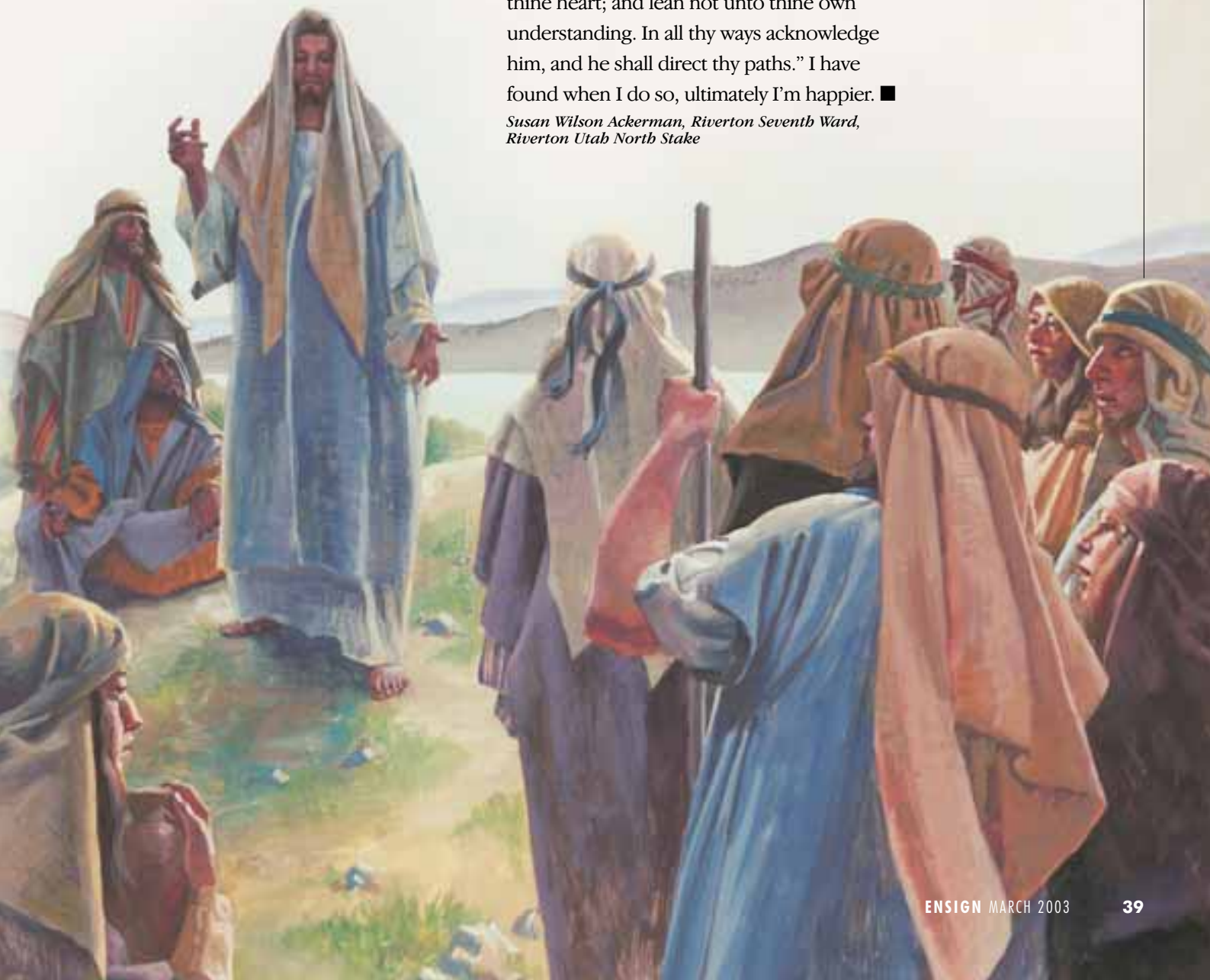
eye-opening and humbling. By focusing on my own growth and progress, I have learned I need not spend time worrying about others. I am now better able to admit my wrongs. Instead of justifying my mistakes, I now sorrow for them, try to forsake them, and repent. And surprisingly, embracing the fact that I have shortcomings has allowed me to understand some personal character strengths, like being outgoing, aware of others, and open-minded.

Moroni relates the Lord's promise to him regarding this: *"And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father"* (Ether 12:37; emphasis added).

This scripture study has made me more conscious of my personal responsibilities.

Proverbs 3:4–6 says: "So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." I have found when I do so, ultimately I'm happier. ■

*Susan Wilson Ackerman, Riverton Seventh Ward,
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When the Athenians realized the religious nature of the Apostle Paul's message, some mocked him while others remained politely uninterested. Both responses constituted looking beyond the mark.

Looking beyond the Mark

Focusing on the philosophies of men, pursuing “gospel hobbies” with excess zeal, and elevating rules over doctrine are ways we may look beyond the mark.

BY ELDER QUENTIN L. COOK

Of the Seventy

We live in a world where the latest story, the buzz, the hype, the “new thing” is much sought after and then publicized throughout the world. Movies, television, and other media often celebrate heroic gestures, dysfunctionality, conflict, and sexuality rather than the quiet, everyday acts of sacrifice, service, and love that are so much a part of the Savior’s message and example. The wild rush to find the new often tramples on what is true.

The 17th chapter of Acts gives an account of the Apostle Paul’s visit to Athens. Athens had been in a long period of decline but still was proud of its philosophical traditions. The account mentions the Stoics and the Epicureans, whose philosophies were among the more dominant of the time. The Stoics believed the highest good was virtue, and the Epicureans believed the highest good was pleasure. Many Stoics had become proud and used the philosophy as a “cloak for . . .

ambition and iniquity.” Many Epicureans had become hedonists who took as their motto “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”¹

Paul was invited to address this difficult mixture of people on Mars Hill. In Acts 17:21 we read, “For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear *some new thing*” (emphasis added).

Paul attempted to gain their attention by referring to an altar that contained the inscription “To the Unknown God.” But his real message was the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. When the crowd realized the religious nature of this message, some began to mock him, while others, equally uninterested but perhaps more polite, said, “We will hear thee again of this matter” (Acts 17:32).

This Athenian response to Paul was not unlike that of the people described by the prophet Jacob during an even earlier period: “But behold, the Jews were a stiffnecked



When we
look
beyond
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people; and they despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand.

Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by *looking beyond the mark*, they must needs fall; for God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble” (Jacob 4:14; emphasis added).

Today there is a tendency among some of us to “look beyond the mark” rather than to maintain a testimony of gospel basics. We do this when we substitute the philosophies of men for gospel truths, engage in gospel extremism, seek heroic gestures at the expense of daily consecration, or elevate rules over doctrine. Avoiding these behaviors will help us avoid the theological blindness and stumbling that Jacob described.

Substituting the Philosophies of Men for Gospel Truths

Some people seem to be embarrassed by the simplicity of the Savior’s message. They want to add complexity and even obscurity to the truth to make it more intellectually challenging or more compatible with current academic trends. The Apostasy occurred in part because of this problem. The early Christians adopted the Greek philosophical traditions, trying to reconcile their own beliefs with the existing culture. The historian Will Durant wrote: “Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it. The Greek mind, dying, came to a transmigrated life.”²

Some in their spiritual immaturity attempt to appear sophisticated and intellectual. Instead of accepting revelation, they want to dissect it and add dimensions and variations of meaning that distort its beautiful truths. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has pointed out, “The Jewish people . . . rejected the gospel, in part because it lacked adequate intellectual embroidery.”³ We look beyond the mark when we refuse to accept simple gospel truths for what they are.

Gospel Extremism

Another sign of spiritual immaturity and sometimes apostasy is when one focuses on certain gospel principles or pursues “gospel hobbies” with excess zeal. Almost any virtue taken to excess can become a vice.

Certain members have wanted to add substantially to various doctrines. An example might be when one advocates additions to the Word of Wisdom that are not authorized by the Brethren and proselytes others to adopt these interpretations. If we turn a health law or any other principle into a form of religious fanaticism, we are looking beyond the mark.

Some who are not authorized want to speak for the Brethren and imply that their message contains the “meat” the Brethren would teach if they were not constrained to teach only the “milk.” Others want to counsel the Brethren and are critical of all teachings that do not comply with their version of what should be taught.

The Lord said regarding important doctrine, “Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me” (D&C 10:68) and “That which is more or less than this cometh of evil” (D&C 124:120). We are looking beyond the mark when we elevate any one principle, no matter how worthwhile it may be, to a prominence that lessens our commitment to other equally important principles or when we take a position that is contrary to the teachings of the Brethren.

Heroic Gestures as a Substitute for Daily Consecration

In a lecture at Brigham Young University, James S. Jardine, former chairman of the board of trustees of the University of Utah, indicated that when he was a student, he thought “of consecrating [his] life in one grand, heroic gesture” but came to realize that “consecration is not a once in a lifetime event; it is a daily devotion.”⁴

When I was young, I too wanted to prove myself through some heroic gesture. My great-grandfather David Patten Kimball was one of the young men who helped carry the members of the Martin handcart company



across the Sweetwater River. That sounded like the kind of consecration for which I was looking. Later, as I visited with my grandfather Crozier Kimball, he explained that when President Brigham Young sent the men on their rescue mission, he instructed them to do everything they possibly could to save the handcart company. Their consecration was specifically to “follow the prophet.” My grandfather told me that consistent, faithful dedication to one’s duty or to a principle is to be much admired. As heroic as it was for David Patten Kimball to help rescue the pioneers, it might be equally heroic today to follow the prophet by not watching immoral movies or by refraining from using vulgar language.

My mission president put all this into perspective for me and taught that, in some cases, seeking to perform a heroic effort can be a form of looking beyond the mark. He shared a wonderful poem that reads, in part:

*O, one might reach heroic heights
By one strong burst of power.
He might endure the whitest lights
Of heaven for an hour;—
But harder is the daily drag,
To smile at trials which fret and fag,
And not to murmur—nor to lag.
The test of greatness is the way
One meets the eternal Everyday.⁵*

Some members profess that they would commit themselves with enthusiasm if given some great calling, but they do not find home teaching or visiting teaching worthy of or sufficiently heroic for their sustained effort.

God uses us “not according to our works, but according to his own purpose” (2 Timothy 1:9). We are looking beyond the mark if our consecration is conditional or does not involve daily devotion.

Elevating Rules over Doctrine

The Savior was concerned when others elevated rules over doctrine. In Matthew 23:23 we read, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint

One of the great challenges of this life is to accept Christ for who He is: the resurrected Savior of the world, our Redeemer, our Lord and Master.

and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles pointed out that Jacob’s teachings with respect to looking beyond the mark applied to the Jews of Jesus’ day:

“They took the plain and simple things of pure religion and added to them a host of their own interpretations; they embellished them with added rites and performances; and they took a happy, joyous way of worship and turned it into a restrictive, curtailing, depressive system of rituals and performances. The living spirit of the Lord’s law became in their hands the dead letter of Jewish ritualism.”⁶

Doctrine usually answers the question “why?” Principles usually answer the question “what?” Whenever we emphasize *how* to do something without reference to *why* we do it or *what* we do, we risk looking beyond the mark. At the very least, we fall into the trap Paul described to the Corinthians: “For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Corinthians 3:6).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has used the example of teaching our Aaronic Priesthood deacons the doctrines and principles of sacrament meeting so they will understand that the rules they follow (such as dressing appropriately and passing the sacrament in a nondistracting way) support what the Lord would have us accomplish in sacrament meeting (renewing our covenants and remembering the Atonement in a reverent manner).⁷ In many areas we are guided only by doctrines and principles rather than rules. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”⁸ We are responsible to the Lord for how we respond in such situations.

Those who are committed to following rules without reference to doctrine and principle are particularly susceptible to looking beyond the mark. Equally dangerous are those who get mired in rules and are thus less willing

to accept change resulting from continuous revelation.

The “Mark” Is Christ

When we look beyond the mark, we are looking beyond Christ, the only name under heaven whereby we might be saved. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the

Twelve Apostles said, “Jacob saw that the Jews would look ‘beyond the mark’ and stumble in their search for the Holy One of Israel, this literal Son of God to be known as Jesus Christ: ‘By the stumbling of the Jews they will reject the stone upon which they might build and have safe foundation.’”⁹

One of the great tragedies of our day is that many so-called Christian scholars refuse to accept the divinity of Jesus Christ. To some He is merely a great teacher. This is the ultimate example of looking beyond the mark. It happened in Jacob’s day, it happened in the meridian of time when the Savior was on the earth, and it is happening today when the gospel has been restored to the earth.

One of the great challenges of this life is to accept Christ for who He is: the resurrected Savior of the world, our Redeemer, our Lord and Master, our Advocate with the Father. When He is the foundation for all that we do and are, we avoid the theological blindness that results from looking beyond the mark, and we reap the glorious blessings He has promised us. “Come unto me, ye blessed,” He tells those who follow Him; “there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father” (Enos 1:27). ■

NOTES

1. Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul* (1898), 386–87.
2. *Caesar and Christ* (1944), 595; quoted in Neal A. Maxwell, *Lord, Increase Our Faith* (1994), 23.
3. *Lord, Increase Our Faith*, 47.
4. *On Becoming a Disciple Scholar: Lectures Presented at the Brigham Young University Honors Program Discipline and Discipleship Lecture Series*, ed. Henry B. Eyring (1995), 78.
5. Edmund Vance Cooke, “The Eternal Everyday,” *Impertinent Poems* (1907), 21.
6. *The Mortal Messiah*, 4 vols. (1979–81), 1:238.
7. See “The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 37–40.
8. As quoted by John Taylor in *Millennial Star*, 15 Nov. 1851, 339.
9. *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* (1997), 72.



The Parable of the Empty House



BY ELDER VICTOR D. CAVE
Area Authority Seventy

As Jesus traveled through the cities and villages of Galilee performing miracles, a man who was possessed with a devil was brought to Him; the man was also blind and unable to speak. Jesus healed him, causing many to be amazed and wonder if He was the promised Messiah (see Matthew 12:22–23). When certain Pharisees heard that Jesus had done this, they said, “This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils” (Matthew 12:24). Jesus dismissed their ridiculous logic and taught, “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men who receive me and repent: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven unto men” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 12:26).

A group of scribes challenged this teaching, saying, “Master, it is written that, Every sin shall be forgiven; but ye say, Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven. . . . How can these things be?” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 12:37). Jesus then gave what has become known as the parable of the empty house:

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none; but when a man speaketh against the Holy Ghost, then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth him empty, swept and garnished; for the good spirit leaveth him unto himself.

“Then goeth the evil spirit, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last end of that man is worse



True repentance is not merely eliminating the negative but replacing it with positive attitudes and actions.

than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 12:38–39).

True Repentance

A person who commits sin without repenting does not have the protective influence of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, an evil spirit enters and dwells therein, thus leaving him “unto himself.”

The spiritual danger pointed out by this parable is real. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) has explained: “When a man is baptized for the remission of sins . . . by the power of the Holy Ghost; when he becomes clean, and pure, and spotless before the Lord; . . . if he then sins against the Holy Ghost and loses the Spirit of the Lord as his companion, he is left in a fit condition to be swallowed up in every form of evil and iniquity. The house that was once swept and garnished, that was once a fit habitation for the Holy Spirit of God—that house is now vacant. The Spirit of the Lord will not dwell there longer, and the spirit of evil returns—returns to a vacant house, with a force and vigor exceeding anything of the past.”¹

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) has explained how this principle applies to the process of repentance:

“The devil knows where to tempt, where to put in his telling blows. He finds the vulnerable spot. Where one was weak before, he will be most easily tempted again.

“In abandoning sin one cannot merely wish for better conditions. He must make them. . . . He must eliminate anything which would stir the old memories.

“Does this mean that the man who has quit smoking or drinking or had sex pollutions finds life empty for a time? The things which engaged him and caught his fancy and occupied his thoughts are gone, and better substitutions have not yet filled the void. This is Satan’s opportunity.

The man makes a start but may find the loss of the yesterday’s habits so great that he is enticed to return to his evil ways, and his lot thus becomes infinitely worsened. . . .

“Many who have discontinued bad habits have found that substitution is part of the answer, and have conquered a bad habit by replacing it with a good or harmless one.”²

True repentance, then, is not merely eliminating the negative in our lives; it also must involve replacing the negative with positive attitudes and actions.

Beware of the Sharks

This reminds me of a lagoon in French Polynesia. It is

one of the largest lagoons of its kind in the world. It is of beautiful turquoise color because of its white sandy floor. The water level lowers and rises ever so slightly with the ebb and flow of the ocean tides. The lagoon is peaceful and calm, but the pass through which the tides rush is treacherous and filled with sharks that await an easy meal. One day a few tourists swam too close to the pass and began to be dragged toward danger. The peacefulness of the lagoon had led them to be careless and lazy in keeping themselves from the sharks. Gradually they had floated on the soft current toward the pass. Eventually they went too far and found themselves beyond the point where their own abilities could save them. Outside help

was necessary, so a speedboat was sent to rescue them.

As the swimmers in this lagoon should have done, we need to put forth a consistent, positive effort every day in order to remain in safe waters. We need to develop good habits that can replace old, bad ones. Satan desires that we become lazy and complacent. Daily scripture study and prayer, service, repentance, and following the promptings of the Holy Ghost can keep us safely in the spiritual waters of the Lord.

Many of us may already find ourselves in serious

Satan desires that we become lazy and complacent. Daily scripture study and prayer, service, repentance, and following the promptings of the Holy Ghost can keep us spiritually safe.

spiritual danger and in desperate need of rescue. Jesus Christ, like the operators of the speedboat, has power to save lost souls. Let us all, whether we feel we are in safe waters or not, swim to Him, our Savior and Redeemer. Then the “good spirit” will never leave but will always be with us (see D&C 20:77). ■

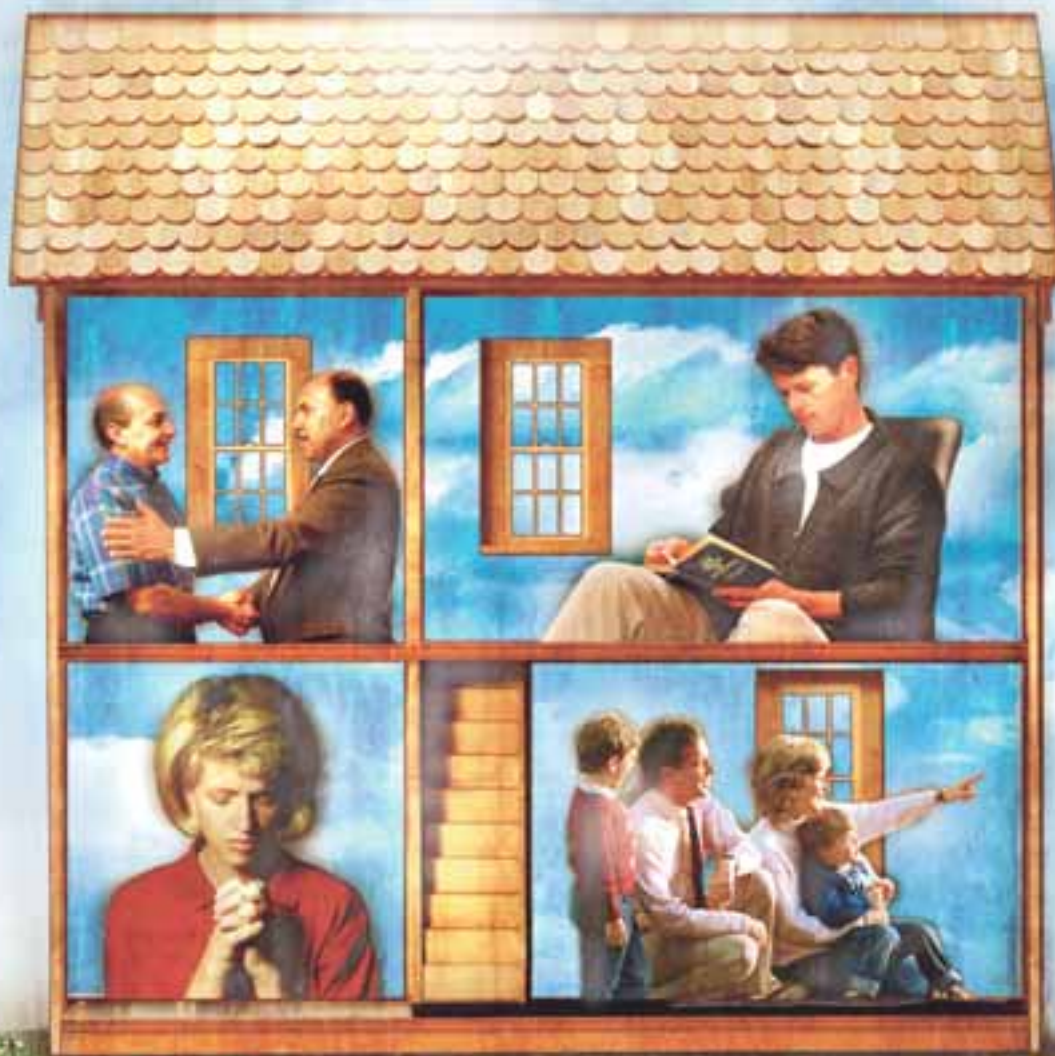
NOTES


1. *The Mortal Messiahs: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. (1979–81), 2:220.
2. *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 171–73.

Elder Victor D. Cave served as an Area Authority Seventy in the Australia/New Zealand Area from 1999 to 2002.

More on this topic:

Spencer W. Kimball, “God Will Forgive,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1982, 2–7; Delbert L. Stapley, “Good Habits Develop Good Character,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 20–22.





WORDS
OF
JESUS

Humility

“Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:29).



The Lord Jesus Christ, our perfect Master, has taught us the meaning of humility through word and example.

BY ELDER ATHOS M. AMORIM
Of the Seventy

Many times, the Savior used only a few words or a simple act to emphasize a wondrous eternal principle. For example, after feeding the 5,000, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost” (John 6:12), teaching them and us to avoid wastefulness. And when the Apostles returned from their missions, Jesus took them by ship and “departed . . . into a desert place” (Matthew 14:13) to rest for a while, reminding us that an occasional break from the demands of our work is necessary for all.

Jesus’ teachings on the subject of humility are similarly concise and powerful. The four Gospels, written with rare clarity and beauty, take us back to those days when the Son of God walked among men. His magnificent life showed a total and absolute absence of pride, arrogance, and vanity. Likewise, His words reflect a constant recognition of His dependence on the Father.

His Words on Humility

Humility is one of the dominant principles the Lord taught in the Beatitudes. To His

disciples gathered at the Sermon on the Mount and later to the Nephites on the American continent, He said:

“Blessed are they who . . . come down into the depths of humility and [are] baptized. . . .

“Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .

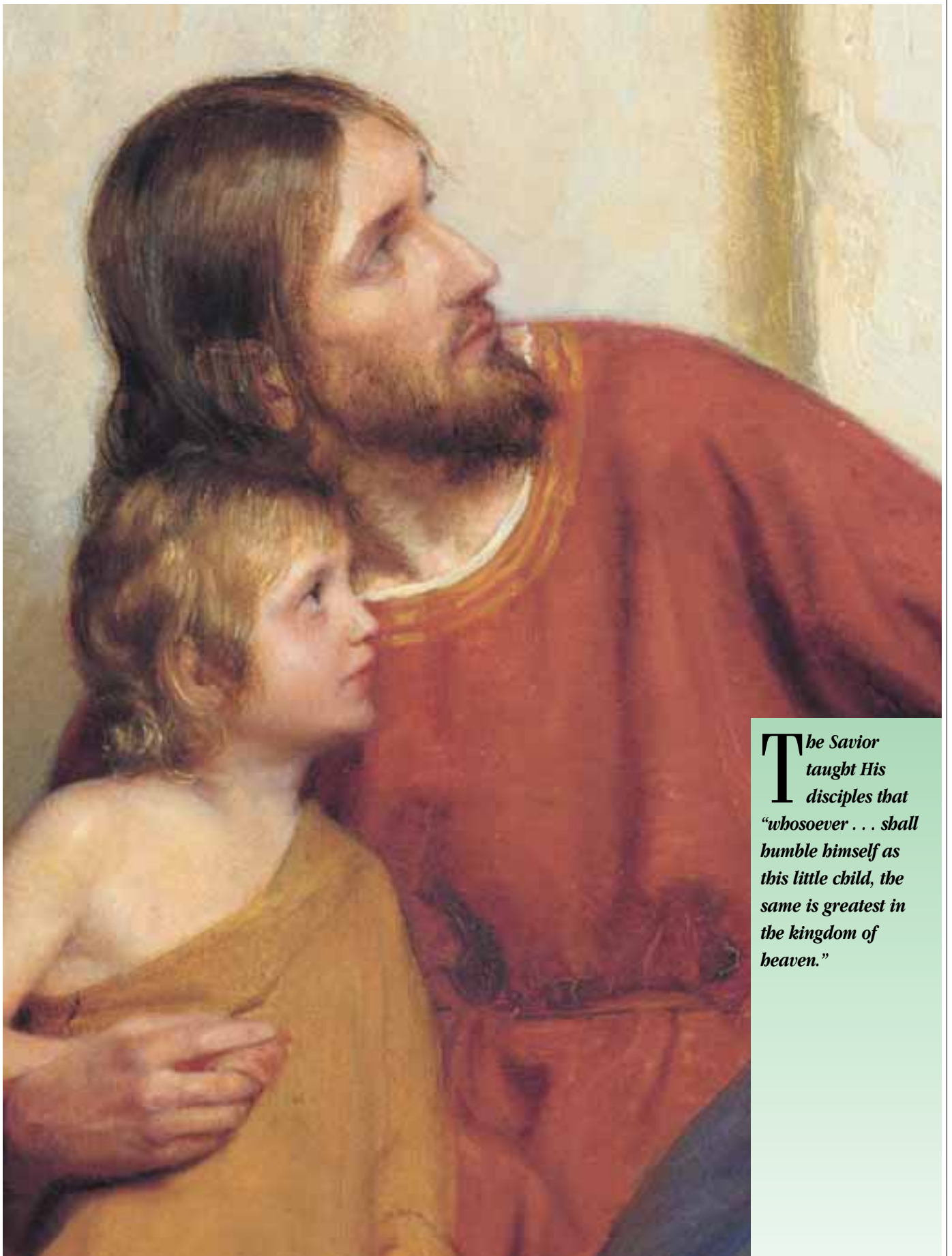
“And blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. . . .

“And blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God” (3 Nephi 12:2–3, 5, 9; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 5:4–5, 7, 11).

When His disciples asked Him, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Jesus called a little child to come to Him and chided them, saying: “Whosoever . . . shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:1, 4).

“For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great” (Luke 9:48).

Jesus always pointed out that His Father was the source of His power and knowledge. At the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus went into the temple and taught: “My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. . . . He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory:



The Savior taught His disciples that “whosoever . . . shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him” (John 7:16, 18).

Later Jesus testified: “I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things . . . for I do always those things that please him. . . . And I seek not mine own glory” (John 8:28–29, 50; see also 12:49–50).

The Master Teacher frequently warned against pride. During dinner at the home of one of the chief Pharisees, Jesus discerned how those seated at the table thought themselves better than one another (see Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 14:7). He taught them a parable and then said, “Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:11; see also 18:14).

When James and John’s mother asked Jesus to give her sons the privilege of sitting on His right and left in the day of His glory, Jesus explained that this was a privilege He was not authorized to give. And noting contention among His disciples, He said, “Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Matthew 20:27–28; see also 23:11–12; Luke 22:24–27).

Jesus taught His disciples of divine humility during their final moments together as they walked to the Mount of Olives just before His arrest and Crucifixion: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. . . . He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:1, 5).

A short while later, in His great Intercessory Prayer, He stated:

“Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: . . .

“I have glorified thee on the earth. . . .

“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them [His disciples]; that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:1, 4, 22).

His Example of Humility

From the moment of His birth, the Savior taught humility through His actions. The great Creator of all things (see

John 1:3) condescended to be born into the humblest of circumstances. He entered mortality in a shelter for animals and was laid in a manger, a crib that was also used for the feeding of animals. His first visitors were humble shepherds (see Luke 2:7–20).

As Jesus began to perform miracles in Galilee, His fame spread throughout the region. Many people flocked to Him, some desiring to be healed, while others were simply curious. To the sick and afflicted He often said, “Thy faith hath made thee whole,” emphasizing the role of the healed, rather than that of the Healer, in the miracle of healing.¹ And when a leper came, saying, “If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean” (Mark 1:40), Jesus healed him, saying, “See thou say nothing to any man” (Mark 1:44). Jesus repeated this instruction after many of His miracles, reflecting a deeply held desire that His miracles be done and received in humility and primarily in private.²

Following His miraculous feeding of the 5,000, some among the multitude wanted to make Him their king. Such popularity and power would have severely tempted or corrupted most people. But Jesus ignored the intoxicating influence of the praise of the world, departing into a mountain to be alone (see John 6:15). On another occasion of grand public acclamation, Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem. The crowds shouted words of praise, spreading before Him their cloaks and tree branches (see Matthew 21:8–9). However, Jesus chose on this occasion to ride upon a donkey, a recognized Messianic symbol of humility (see Zechariah 9:9).

Service is always an opportunity to cultivate humility. Jesus demonstrated this when He knelt and washed the feet of the Apostles. “Know ye what I have done?” He asked them. “I have given you an example, that . . . the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him” (John 13:12, 15–16).

Finally, in His hours of greatest suffering, Jesus subjected Himself to the Father. And in perhaps His greatest act of humility, He allowed Himself to be hung upon the cross. His last words in mortality typify His teachings on humility. After Jesus uttered the words “It is finished” (John 19:30), He also

declared that His Father's will had been done (see Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 27:54). He then bowed His head and gave up the ghost.

Our Words and Actions

The Lord Jesus Christ, our perfect Master, has taught us the meaning of humility through word and example. True and faithful Christians desire that their words and deeds reflect an inner sense of meekness, contriteness, and submissiveness to divine will.

On 2 November 1995, after a year of faithful preparation, Antonio and Roseli Berrocal of the Franca stake in São Paulo, Brazil, traveled with their five children to be sealed in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. On the way a tragic and fatal accident took the life of Sister Berrocal and all the children. On the 22nd of that same month, Brother Antonio entered the temple alone to be sealed to his beloved family. For me, my interview with him was a great and unforgettable lesson in humility. In moving words he expressed his gratitude to Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, for the comfort he had felt in his moments of sadness and pain. He was grateful for the sacred ordinances that would be performed. Brother Antonio is a man who is meek and lowly in heart.

Also amazing to me is the humble service of senior brothers and sisters and young missionaries throughout the world. Their number is growing each day. They sacrifice, work hard, save money to pay for their own missions, and dedicate their lives to God with pure hearts and humble spirits. I am also inspired by the humble, faithful Saints who, every month, give to their bishops tithes and fast offerings

gained by their honest and hard work.

New Testament disciples testified of the Savior's extraordinary life and of His words and example of humility. Modern prophets and apostles have testified that "His life . . . is central to all human history. . . . God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son."³

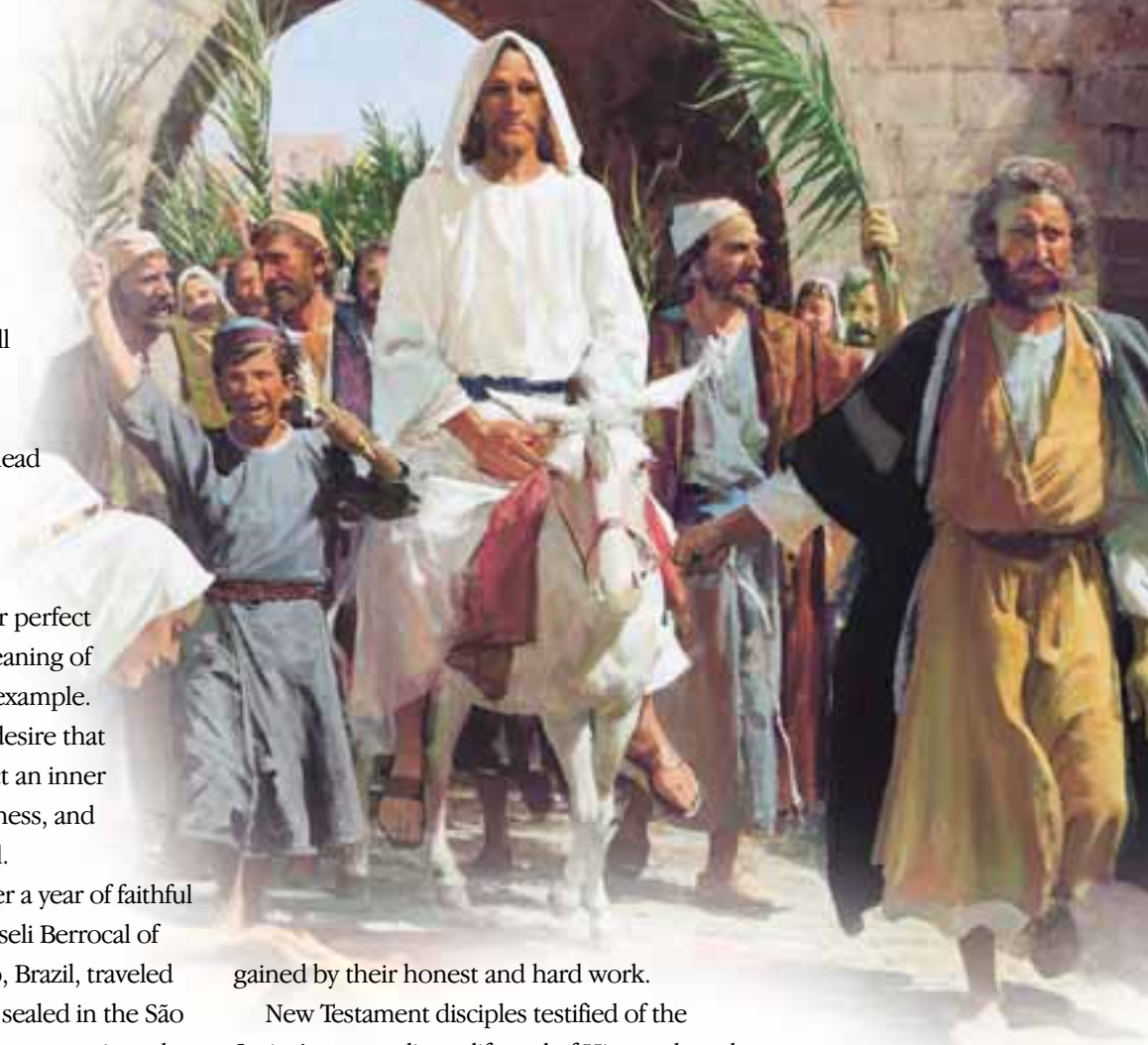
*Jesus, once of humble birth,
Now in glory comes to earth. . . .
Once he groaned in blood and tears;
Now in glory he appears.
Once rejected by his own,
Now their King he shall be known.⁴*

He lives. He has been and will always be the greatest landmark of humility along our journey to follow His footsteps. ■

Elder Athos M. Amorim served as a member of the Seventy from 1998 to 2002.

NOTES

1. See Matthew 9:22; see also 15:28; Mark 10:52; Luke 17:19.
2. See Matthew 9:30; Mark 7:36; 8:26; 9:9; Luke 8:56.
3. "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," *Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 2–3.
4. "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth," *Hymns*, no. 196, verses 1, 3.



When Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem and the crowds shouted words of praise, spreading before Him their cloaks and tree branches, He chose to ride upon a donkey—a recognized Messianic symbol of humility.

The Role of Members in CON

The members' important role in sharing the gospel has been emphasized continually for nearly a half century, but we are still far short of where we must be.



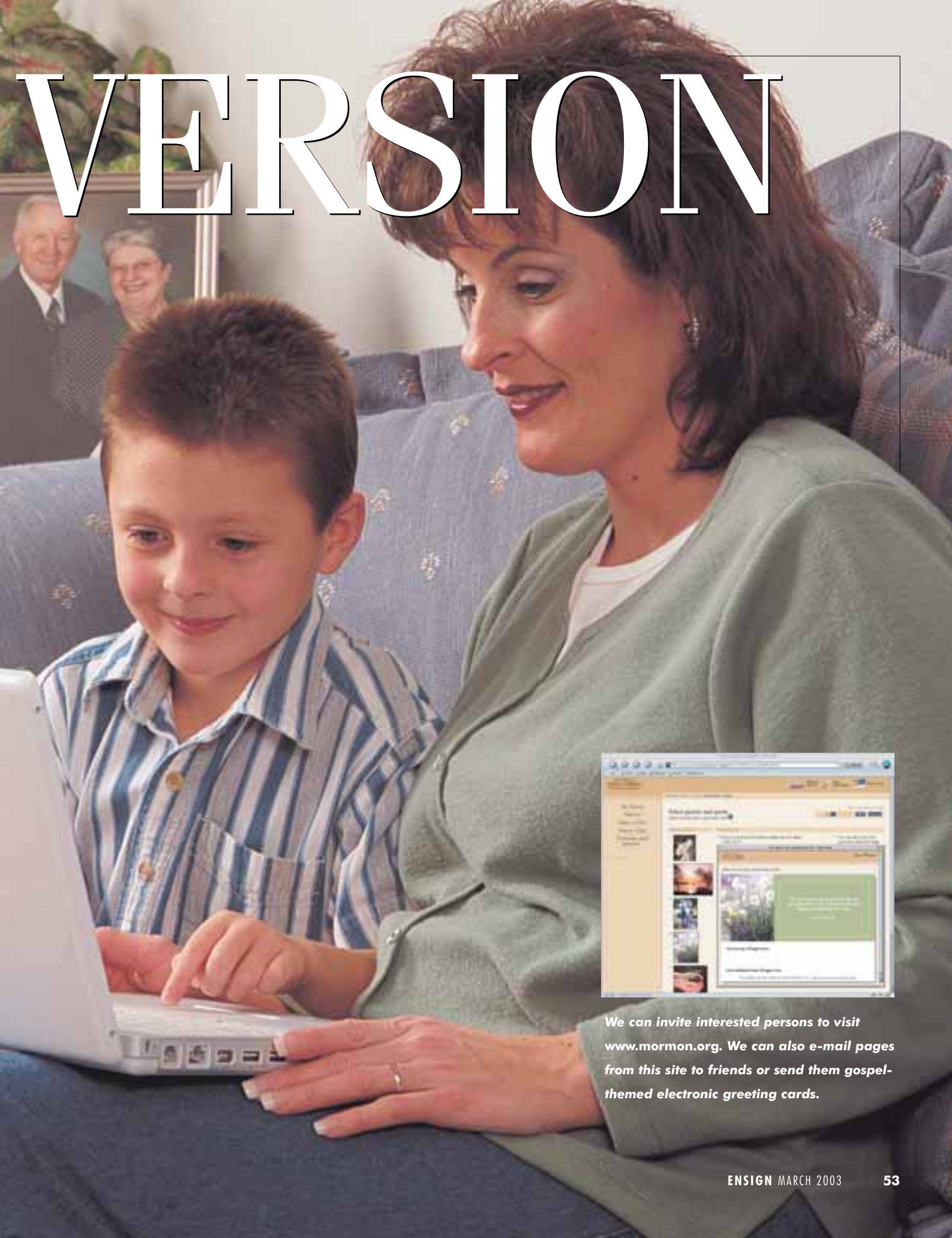
BY ELDER DALLIN H. OAKS
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Many of us remember the electrifying call of President David O. McKay (1873–1970): “Every member a missionary!” As members of the Lord’s Church, our responsibility for sharing the gospel has been emphasized continually for nearly a half century, but we are still far short of where we must be. President Gordon B. Hinckley has called each of us to increase our efforts in this vital responsibility:

“Brothers and sisters, all of you out in the wards and stakes and in the districts and branches, I invite you to become a vast army with enthusiasm for this work and a great overarching desire to assist the missionaries in the tremendous responsibility they have to carry the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. . . .

“. . . Let us, every one, resolve within ourselves to arise to a new opportunity, a new sense of responsibility, a new shouldering of obligation to assist our Father in Heaven in His

VERSION



We can invite interested persons to visit www.mormon.org. We can also e-mail pages from this site to friends or send them gospel-themed electronic greeting cards.



As members, we can invite friends to be taught the gospel in our homes.

convert baptisms come from the members' efforts.

To look at these findings from a different angle, another study showed that:

glorious work of bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of His sons and daughters throughout the earth."¹

Under the impetus of President Hinckley's words, including his challenge to double the number of people whom we help enter the covenant of baptism, we have been analyzing the sources of teaching opportunities that lead to baptisms. Bear in mind that although the research described here was obtained in the United States and Canada, we have no reason to suppose that the principles we have learned are not applicable in other areas.²

How Do We Find People Who Become Baptized?

When we investigated the sources for *investigators who participated in first discussions*, we found the following order of productivity:

1. Missionaries' personal contacting.
2. Media campaigns (which are very costly in dollar expenditures).
3. Members. Relatively few of those who participated in a first discussion—only 10 percent—came to the missionaries through members.

The profile is very different, however, when we study the sources for *investigators who are baptized*: 59 percent of investigators who were baptized started investigating the Church because a member had invited them to be taught or had given their name to the missionaries as a referral. In other words, most teaching opportunities come from the missionaries' own contacting, but most

1. Of investigators found through media campaigns, about 1 to 2 percent are baptized.
2. Of investigators found through the missionaries' efforts, about 2 to 3 percent are baptized.
3. Of investigators found through the members, 20 to 30 percent are baptized.

In other words, an investigator who is brought to the missionaries through the members is 10 times more likely to be baptized than one the missionaries have found through their own contacting efforts. Do these figures catch your attention on the importance of the members' role in finding people for the missionaries to teach?

(Lest we be too critical of our media efforts, I must add that other studies show that about 6 out of 10 adult converts said they were positively influenced by our media messages before deciding to be baptized. This fact suggests that our media efforts are very valuable in support of other approaches to finding investigators.)

It is ironic and troubling that while we have confirmed the powerful influence of members in the conversion process, evidence from other studies suggests that members are comparatively less involved than they once were in this vital role. In the overall pool of investigators, the percentage of investigators found through the efforts of members declined from 42 percent in 1987 to 20 percent in 1997, even though the average number of investigators taught by the missionaries did not change significantly during that period.

President Hinckley's Challenge

President Hinckley has called us to make a concerted effort to double the number of converts who are currently being baptized each year. "The big initial task," he said, "is first to find interested investigators." To do that, he said, we must join in what he called the "better way":

"That [better] way is through the members of the Church. Whenever there is a member who introduces an investigator, there is an immediate support system. . . .

"The full-time missionaries may do the actual teaching, but the member, wherever possible, will back up that teaching with the offering of his home to carry on this missionary service. He will bear sincere testimony of the divinity of the work. He will be there to answer questions when the missionaries are not around. He will be a friend to the convert who is making a big and often difficult change."³

That is an inspired insight and a prophetic challenge!

Members simply must take a more active role in our missionary efforts at every stage: friendshiping those who are not of our faith; sharing Church materials; sharing feelings about the gospel; inviting friends to Church activities, service projects, and meetings; giving the missionaries referrals to visit our friends; inviting those friends to be taught the gospel in our homes; and fellowshiping and strengthening new converts.

Some members do not actively participate in sharing the gospel because they don't feel comfortable starting a religious conversation or they don't know what to say. These feelings can be overcome as we learn how to introduce the gospel to our friends and



President Gordon B. Hinckley has called us to make a concerted effort to double the number of converts who are currently being baptized each year.

acquaintances in simple, nonthreatening ways, which may include the following:

Pass-along cards. These cards, which are small enough to carry in a shirt pocket or a purse, offer our friends or casual contacts a free Church item, such as a video or a copy of the Book of Mormon, and include a telephone number they may call to request the gift. The cards also invite our friends to visit the Church Web site www.mormon.org. Using the card is simple, personal, and nonthreatening. A friend or contact is under no pressure to act on the invitation. Since the recipients of pass-along cards already have a member contact, those who choose to request the gift offered on the card are much more likely to be willing to meet with the missionaries than those who do not have a Latter-day Saint acquaintance.

Pass-along cards can be obtained through local ward or full-time missionaries or at a Church distribution center.

The Church Internet site. Interested persons can be invited to visit www.mormon.org. Those who visit this site may obtain information about the gospel and the Church, request Church literature or videos, and find out where they can worship with us.

We can also e-mail pages from this site to friends or send them gospel-themed electronic greeting cards.⁴

Visitors' centers and historic sites. We have learned that as our members go through visitors' centers and historic sites—which they do in large numbers—they are touched by the Spirit, and many feel prompted to give the names of nonmember friends to the missionaries at the center, with a request that local missionaries visit those



Fellowshipping efforts must begin well before baptism and must increase in intensity in the months following baptism.

callings under the direction of the bishop.⁶

One of the effects of this change should be to reemphasize that the responsibility for sharing the gospel rests fundamentally with the members of the Church, and the leaders who have the closest relationship with the members—those in the ward—have more direct responsibility for helping the members succeed in their missionary efforts. To

friends. During 2001, members visiting these centers and sites gave the names of 150,000 of their friends. We found that these friends were unusually receptive. Almost 50 percent of them agreed to have the missionaries visit them. This is becoming a very important source of teaching opportunities.

Encouraging Members' Efforts

In discussing our responsibility for sharing the gospel, President Hinckley said: "I request each stake and district president to accept full responsibility and accountability for the finding and friendshipping of investigators within your stake or district. I request each bishop and branch president to accept the same responsibility within your ward or branch."⁵

In order to strengthen the role of these priesthood leaders, the First Presidency recently approved a major change in the way our missionary efforts are organized in the stakes and wards. In reaffirming that "the bishop is responsible for the work of sharing the gospel, retention, and reactivation within the ward," the First Presidency discontinued all stake missions and changed the callings of stake missionaries and ward mission leaders to ward

a great extent, the success of this change will depend on the ability of the bishops—and, under their direction, the other ward leaders—to embrace and magnify this responsibility.

The priesthood executive committee—presided over by the bishop, who is assisted by the ward mission leader—functions as the ward missionary committee, and the ward council plays a major role in promoting and coordinating efforts to share the gospel in the ward. In these and other meetings, such as the quorum and auxiliary meetings, the efforts of the members and the needs of investigators and new members can be discussed, plans can be made, and progress can be reported. President Hinckley's teaching on this subject is very direct: "Now, to you bishops who hold your ward council meetings, a discussion of the status of converts in that meeting may be the most important business you will conduct."⁷

Strengthening and Nurturing New Converts

For several years President Hinckley has been reminding us forcefully that "there is absolutely no point in doing missionary work unless we hold on to the fruits of that

effort.”⁸ He continues to remind us that with all of our success in baptizing new members, a distressing proportion of them still fall away into inactivity. We have not yet significantly increased our effectiveness in fellowshipping new converts so that they invariably continue to grow in the gospel, to serve in the Church, and to receive the blessings of the temple.

Among those converts who fall away, the attrition is steepest in the two months after baptism. When a convert is baptized, there is no time to lose. Fellowshipping efforts must begin well before baptism and must increase in intensity in the months following baptism.

Our experience has shown that members can have a powerful influence in this process in three critically important ways:

1. Modeling gospel living by providing practical, persuasive examples of the joy we receive from living the gospel.
2. Teaching the gospel informally by explaining Latter-day Saint doctrines and practices, answering questions, and helping investigators and new members resolve concerns.
3. Helping investigators and converts become fully integrated into the community of Saints.

When members see themselves as gospel nurturers, as the prophet has invited us all to be, we will be well along toward our goal.

The Problem of Addictions

An extremely important but widely neglected need of investigators and new members is for help in overcoming their addictions.

Most converts say they face this challenge. According to one study, 75 percent of adult converts in North America had to give up at



The ward council plays a major role in promoting and coordinating efforts to share the gospel in the ward.

least one of these substances mentioned in the Word of Wisdom—tobacco, alcohol, coffee, or tea—and 31 percent had to give up smoking, a very addictive habit.

This study also showed that almost all converts—over 90 percent—had a very high desire to avoid these substances after their baptism. However, it should not be surprising, given what we know about addiction, that many of these converts experienced some slippage back to their addictions. One-third to one-half of them reported that they had experienced “occasional,” “frequent,” or “complete” lapses in their abstinence.

Helping our new members overcome their past addictions is clearly a vital factor in helping them continue to grow in the gospel. Here we need to remember President Hinckley’s words: “I am convinced that we will lose but very, very few of those who come into the Church if we take better care of them.”⁹

Are most new members getting the special help they need in overcoming their addictions? No, they are not. The study asked these new converts, “Who has helped you live the Word of Wisdom?” As to overcoming tobacco—the most addictive substance in the study—41 percent of the converts said no one had helped them after baptism. Only 13 percent of converts—about one in seven—received any help from other members in overcoming a tobacco addiction. These distressingly low figures show how far we have to go in educating and encouraging members to help converts stay out of the clutches of their old addictions.

On the other hand, when they were asked what was most helpful to them in maintaining their abstinence, converts’ number one

response was support from members and missionaries.¹⁰ We need more of that!

Finding People to Teach

I return to President Hinckley's challenge to double the number of converts who enter the covenant of baptism. Here I have a practical suggestion.

I asked our researchers to calculate, on the basis of our present experience, what we would need to do to double convert baptisms in the United States and Canada. They concluded that we could double baptisms by doing any one of the following:

1. Increase the number of investigators found through media campaigns by 13.5 times. (That would require an extremely large increase in our media budget.)
2. Increase the number of investigators found directly by missionaries by 6 times. (That would require an enormous increase in the number or the effectiveness of our missionaries.)
3. Increase the number of investigators found through the members by 2.7 times.

Which method strikes you as the most readily achievable and the most desirable? The answer is obvious: to focus on increasing the number of investigators found through us, the members. That *is* doable!

In the United States and Canada, the average number of initial teaching opportunities currently being provided by members is about 2 per ward or branch per month. If we could increase that average to 5 per month, we would achieve our goal.

Would this increase in teaching opportunities be a burden our full-time missionaries could not bear? This increase from 2 to 5 teaching opportunities per ward would only



A calling can help converts become fully integrated into the community of Saints.

increase the average number of investigators found through the members from the current 1.2 per companionship per month to 3.2 per month. We think our missionaries in the United States, who are now spending an average of only nine hours per week teaching investigators, could easily handle that kind of increase.

Conclusion

I hope that three things stand out in the minds of those who have read this message:

1. President Hinckley has challenged us to double the number of our Father in Heaven's children whom we bring into the Church and to improve our fellowshiping and retention of new members.
2. We cannot do this without increasing our members' efforts in sharing the gospel and our effectiveness in those efforts, including friendshiping, inviting our friends to be taught, giving referrals to the missionaries, and fellowshiping investigators and new converts.
3. The extra effort necessary to double our baptisms is within our reach if we can just unite our efforts.

May the Lord bless us in this great effort. ■

NOTES

1. "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Ensign*, May 1999, 110.
2. All studies cited here were conducted by the Church's Research Information Division.
3. *Ensign*, May 1999, 105.
4. See Paul VanDenBerghe, "mormon.org," *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 50-53.
5. *Ensign*, May 1999, 107.
6. See First Presidency letter, 28 Feb. 2002.
7. *Ensign*, May 1999, 110.
8. *Ensign*, May 1999, 108.
9. *Ensign*, May 1999, 109.
10. See Janet Brigham, "Tobacco: Quitting for Good," *Ensign*, Feb. 2002, 50-57.

Adapted and updated from an address to new mission presidents, Provo Missionary Training Center, 20 June 2000.

Could I Feel Fulfilled as a Mother?

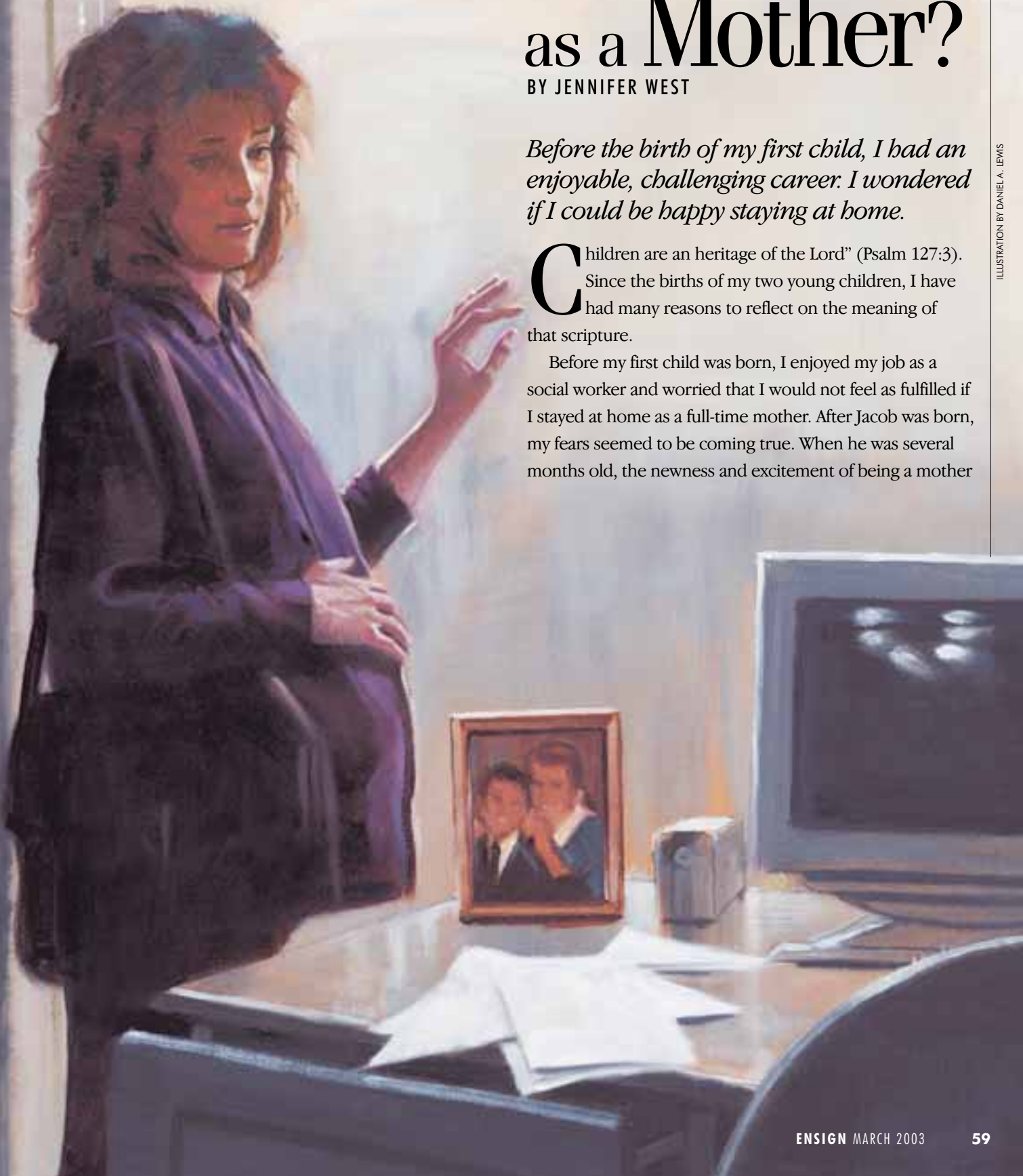
BY JENNIFER WEST

Before the birth of my first child, I had an enjoyable, challenging career. I wondered if I could be happy staying at home.

Children are an heritage of the Lord” (Psalm 127:3). Since the births of my two young children, I have had many reasons to reflect on the meaning of that scripture.

Before my first child was born, I enjoyed my job as a social worker and worried that I would not feel as fulfilled if I stayed at home as a full-time mother. After Jacob was born, my fears seemed to be coming true. When he was several months old, the newness and excitement of being a mother

ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL A. LEWIS



MOTHERHOOD'S GREAT INFLUENCE



“Motherhood is the greatest potential influence either for good or ill in human life. The mother’s image is the first that stamps itself on the . . . young child’s mind. It is her caress that first awakens a sense of security; her kiss, the first realization of affection; her sympathy and tenderness, the first assurance that there is love in the world.”

**President David O. McKay (1873–1970),
Gospel Ideals (1953), 452.**

had worn off, and I was feeling lonely and discouraged. I missed the everyday association with coworkers, the gratification of knowing I was making a difference in the world, and the recognition of a job well done. Most of all, I missed the feeling of accomplishment that came when I completed a seemingly insurmountable task. I was grateful my husband’s income allowed me to stay at home—and I knew I was making a difference in my son’s life—but making sure Jacob had a clean diaper or that his tummy was full did not leave me with the same sense of fulfillment.

One day I happened to read a copy of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” that was hanging in our hallway, and I noticed the following passage: “Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). It hit me that there is no job more challenging than the one just described and that I needed to treat it as such. I decided to begin by further researching the topic, just as I had always done when clients had issues I was less familiar with.

As I have used
my talents
and interests
to benefit my family
members, my own life
has been enriched.

As I read and pondered the words of our prophets concerning this subject, I began to realize I had been focusing mostly on the mundane activities of running a household and had forgotten the sacredness of my calling as a mother. I read the words of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who spoke of motherhood as a “grand tradition”:

“Yours is the grand tradition of Eve, the mother of all the human family. . . . Yours is the grand tradition of Sarah and Rebekah and Rachel, without whom there could not have been those magnificent patriarchal promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob which bless us all. Yours is the grand tradition of Lois and Eunice and the mothers of the 2,000 stripling warriors. Yours is the grand tradition of Mary, chosen and foreordained from before this world was, to conceive, carry, and bear the Son of God himself” (“Because She Is a Mother,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 36).

I realized that I too have the potential to raise righteous leaders, but to catch this higher vision I needed to look beyond the mundane. I tried to tackle my new responsibilities with as much enthusiasm and effort as I did my previous career. That doesn’t mean I was enthusiastic about changing my baby’s diaper or that I found fulfillment in doing laundry, but I found ways to personalize and get more satisfaction out of my new job.

I decided to make better use of my talents to bless my family’s life and at the same time make my day more enjoyable. My own mother had been a good example of this as she had shared her love for art with us. She held “art days” where we watched her create new drawings or attempted our own masterpieces. As a result, many of my siblings became talented artists. In the same way, I could use my own talents and interests to benefit my children. For example, I could influence them to love literature as I do by regularly reading aloud to them. I could help them share my love for the

outdoors by frequently taking them on walks or on expeditions to the park. And as I turned my attention to my family, I didn’t need to leave behind what I learned from my profession. I could continue to apply the principles of child development I learned as a social worker in the raising of my children.

Since then, I have realized that the rewards I have received

as a mother far outweigh any recognition or bonus I received at my previous job. For example, I recall the time I watched Jacob first discover his hands. He had stared in wonder as he rotated them before his face for what seemed like hours. I was caught by surprise at the indescribable feeling of joy that filled my heart as I wiped the tears from my eyes. Never had I been as emotional over a client’s accomplishment as I was at his simple discovery.

Then there was the evening when Jacob, still a newborn, had stared up into my eyes and it felt as if we were communicating something sacred. He had looked at me with such intensity that I wondered if I was catching a glimpse of the spiritual man harbored in his little

body. My heart filled with love, and I felt humbled to be entrusted with one of Heavenly Father’s precious spirits.

I am coming to understand the significance of President Gordon B. Hinckley’s words: “Of all the joys of life, none other equals that of happy parenthood. Of all the responsibilities with which we struggle, none other is so serious. To rear children in an atmosphere of love, security, and faith is the most rewarding of all challenges. The good result from such efforts becomes life’s most satisfying compensation” (“Save the Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 54).

I still experience times of discouragement and restlessness, but I know there are ways to meet these challenges. I find comfort in the knowledge that I am participating in a sacred work unsurpassed by any other—that of being a mother. ■

Jennifer West is a member of the Schaumburg Second Ward, Schaumburg Illinois Stake.

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

Most *Ensign* articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following questions are for that purpose or for personal reflection:

1. How can mothers use their talents and interests to improve the quality of their mothering and enrich their own lives?
2. How can mothers learn to view their responsibilities with an eternal perspective?
3. What can husbands do to help their wives feel more fulfilled when they stay at home with their children?

Everything Good

Countering the world's standards can be daunting. But several key concepts can help parents give their children a firm foundation for dressing modestly throughout their lives.

BY JAN PINBOROUGH

On a few special days, we pay particular attention to our children's clothing. We carefully dress a precious infant to receive a name and a blessing. We prepare a treasured child to be baptized in white baptismal clothing. And on one of life's crowning days, we may be privileged to watch a loved daughter or son make eternal covenants in beautiful temple robes. On each of these special days, we recognize that the way our children dress adds to the reverence and sacred significance of gospel ordinances.

But we may not realize that the way our children dress on ordinary days also has great significance. Indeed, our children's everyday dress can either bring them closer to or take them farther from the ordinances and blessings of the gospel. How can we help our children dress in ways that will lead them from the sacred moment of a blessing

or a baptism to the sacred covenants of the house of the Lord?

Knowing I Am a Child of God—and Dressing the Part

Today more than ever before, our children need clear guidance in dressing modestly. In many modern societies, standards of modesty and even decency in dress have all but vanished. Styles that once might have been seen only in a cocktail lounge or an inappropriate magazine are now being marketed to children—and at younger and younger ages. So waiting until our children approach their teens to teach them about modesty is waiting too long.

The task of countering the world's standards can be daunting—especially when children grow older and want to fit in with their peers. But by starting in their earliest years, we can give our children a firm foundation for



BELOW: PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE BUNDERSON, POSED BY MODELS

and Beautiful

dressing modestly throughout their lives. What key concepts will put this foundation in place? Consider the following gospel truths and how understanding them will affect the clothing choices we make:

- I am a child of God. He gave me the sacred gift of my body for a specific purpose—to do His work.
- God wants me to dress modestly. Dressing modestly reflects my divine origin and purpose.
- Dressing modestly helps me focus on God's purpose for me, and it helps others treat me with respect.

An Accurate Reflection

One mother reinforced these points in a family home evening lesson. She began by showing a picture of the Salt Lake Temple and one of a gambling casino. The family discussed how architects strive to harmonize form and

function as they design buildings. They noticed how the towering spires of the Salt Lake Temple lead the eye upward toward the heavens, inviting reverence and awe. "I explained that the temple's outer dignity and grandeur accurately reflect the sacred purpose of the building—to lead us toward God," the mother says.

Then the family discussed how the casino's exterior reflects the purpose of that building. "We could see how the gaudiness of that building indicates excess. It beckons people to seek worldly pleasures," this mother continues. The family talked about how building materials, colors, and design all contribute to the overall purpose of a building.

"When I held up pictures of a person in modest clothing and one in immodest clothing, our children immediately made the connection that clothing can reflect the purpose of a person," she explains. The family



could see that immodest clothing draws attention to the body of the person wearing it. They could also see that modest clothing allows the spirit of the person wearing it to radiate. “We ended by discussing how the way we

dress can either contribute to or detract from our divine purpose as children of God,” she concludes. “I challenged our family to make sure that the way we dress accurately reflects who we really are and what we are about.”

CLEAN IN BODY AND MIND



“Did you ever think that your body is holy? You are a child of God. Your body is His creation. . . . How

truly beautiful is a well-groomed young woman who is clean in body and mind. She is a daughter of God in whom her Eternal Father can take pride. How handsome is a young man who is well groomed. He is a son of God, deemed worthy of holding the holy priesthood of God.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley,
“A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” Ensign, Jan. 2001, 7, 8.

Lessons alone are not the most effective way to teach; parents must also support children in dressing modestly. If available clothing is not appropriate, consider sewing some that is.



Creating a Family Culture

Lessons alone are not the most effective way to teach modesty. Here are some ways we can create a family culture that supports our children in dressing modestly:

- Set a family standard by always dressing appropriately yourself. If you have been to the temple, wear clothing that completely covers the garment. Even if you have not yet been to the temple, wear clothing that is appropriate to wear once you have.
- Eliminate from your home any entertainment that dulls children's sense of what is appropriate and what isn't. Every visual medium—movies, computer games, television shows, music videos—carries a message about clothing. If a child's favorite pop star dresses provocatively, a young child may want to copy him or her and may begin to think these styles are not so bad.
- If you cannot find appropriate clothing, sew or have someone else sew for your children if possible.
- Write to or visit stores to let them know that you want wholesome styles for your children.
- Even when you or your children are participating in athletics, your clothing can be modest and tasteful



STAND TALL



"You have heard the phrase 'Your actions speak so loudly, I cannot hear your words.' Our actions

indeed speak volumes about us. We need to stand tall in following the counsel of the prophets to attire ourselves modestly. . . . Mothers, you can be our examples and conscience in this important matter. But remember, young people can detect hypocrisy as easily as they can smell the wonderful aroma of freshly baked bread. Parents, counsel your sons and daughters and then join with them in standing tall against immodesty."

Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop, "Standing Tall," *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 66.

as well as appropriate for the activity. If your child is required to wear an immodest uniform or costume for a school or an extracurricular activity, work with the coach, teacher, or principal to find a more appropriate style. You may even need to help your child consider giving up an activity that requires inappropriate dress.

- Don't buy clothing that looks unwholesome or "borderline" simply to help children fit in with or be popular with peers. Help them feel comfortable with looking different by explaining that this kind of "differentness" is one way they can affirm their faith and be a light to others.

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) encouraged us to create a culture of modesty different from the one that may exist outside of our homes: "We can create a style of our own. . . . *We must be different.* We need not do anything we do not wish to do. We can create our own style and standards. We can influence the patterns among our own people, and we can also help to develop proper community patterns."¹

What Is the Standard?

The Church's basic guidelines on what *not* to wear are contained in *For the Strength of Youth*:

"Immodest clothing includes short shorts and skirts, tight clothing, shirts that do not cover the stomach, and other revealing attire. Young women should wear clothing that covers the shoulder and avoid clothing that is low-cut in the front or the back or revealing in any other manner. Young men should also maintain modesty in their appearance. All should avoid extremes in clothing,

appearance, and hairstyle. . . .

“ . . . If you are not sure what is appropriate, ask your parents or leaders for help.”²

A Modest Attitude

Of course, modesty goes beyond the exact length or style of a clothing item. A crude logo can make even a sweatshirt immodest. Modesty involves both the motives and attitude of the wearer. Those who flaunt their bodies or use them to get attention do not look modest, regardless of what they wear. A wholesome look and modest attitude reflect the following understanding:

“Your body is God’s sacred creation. Respect it as a gift from God, and do not defile it in any way. Through your dress and appearance, you can show the Lord that you know how precious your body is. You can show that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ.

“ . . . When you are well groomed and modestly dressed, you invite the companionship of the Spirit and can exercise a good influence on those around you.

“Never lower your dress standards for any occasion. Doing so sends the message that you are using your body to get attention and approval and that modesty is important only when it is convenient.”³

Mirror Questions

Before children leave for school or any other activity, they typically spend at least a few moments looking in the mirror to make sure their appearance is in order. Questions such as the following can help focus a child’s thoughts beyond looking stylish toward looking attractive in a wholesome, modest way:

A CLEAR MESSAGE



“I wonder sometimes if we as mothers are the ones who make our children feel the pressure to be popular and accepted. Educating our desires so our standards are the Lord’s standards sends a clear message that in the Lord’s kingdom there are no double standards. . . . These scrutinizing young people notice. They notice how short your shorts are or if you had to tuck and pin to wear that blouse; they notice what you wear (or don’t wear) when you are working in your yard; they notice which line you are standing in at the movie theater.”

Sharon G. Larsen, former second counselor in the Young Women general presidency, “‘Fear Not: For They That Be with Us Are More,’” Ensign, Nov. 2001, 68.

“I wonder sometimes if we as mothers are the ones who make our children feel the pressure to be

- Does my clothing draw attention to my body or to my beliefs? Do I look provocative or wholesome?
- Am I dressing for success in a worldly way or dressing for the respect I deserve as a child of God?
- Does my clothing accurately reflect my identity as a follower of Jesus Christ and a member of His Church?

True Happiness

When President Brigham Young (1801–77) became concerned that his own daughters were becoming too worldly, he said, “I am weary of the manner in which our [young] women seek to outdo each other in all the foolish fashions of the world.” Then he asked them to “retrench,” to remove worldliness from their dress and behavior:

“I desire them to retrench from their extravagance in dress. . . . Retrench in everything that is bad and worthless, and improve in everything that is good and beautiful. Not to make yourselves unhappy, but to live so that you may be truly happy in this life and the life to come.”⁴

As we help our children resist the immodest fashions of our time, we will also be helping them “improve in everything that is good and beautiful.” We will be helping them enjoy the Spirit more abundantly in their lives as they stay on a path that leads them toward the blessings of the temple and of eternal life. ■

Jan Pinborough is a member of the East Mill Creek Fourth Ward, Salt Lake East Mill Creek Stake.

NOTES

1. Quoted in “On My Honor,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1979, 3.
2. (Pamphlet, 2001), 15–16.
3. *For the Strength of Youth*, 14–15.
4. Quoted in Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association* (1911), 8–10.

Prepare Family Members by Strengthening Them Spiritually

Prayerfully select and read from this message the scriptures and teachings that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Share your experiences and testimony. Invite those you teach to do the same.

The First Presidency: “The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility.

“We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform” (First Presidency letter, 11 Feb. 1999).

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “You parents, love your children. Cherish them. They are so precious. They are so very, very important. They are the future. You need more than your own wisdom in rearing them. You need the help of the Lord. Pray for that help and follow the inspiration which you receive” (“The Fabric of Faith and

Testimony,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 89).

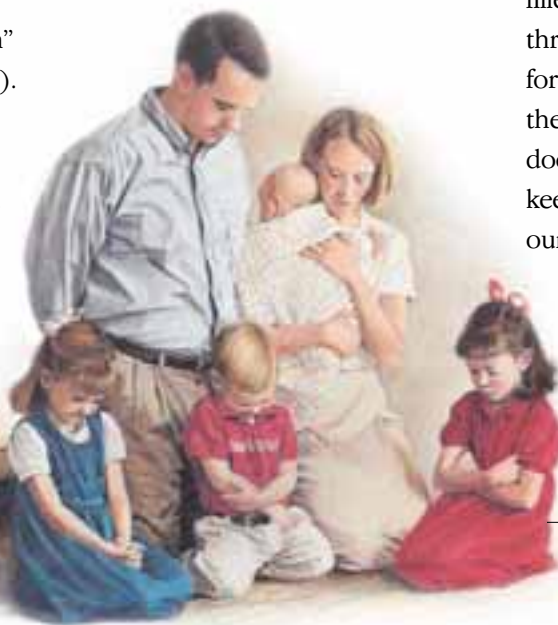
Moses 5:11–12: “Eve . . . heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient. And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters.”

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Kneel together in humble prayer as a family, each having the opportunity to be voice. There may be times when the prayer seems rote and when those not praying let their minds wander. But there will be other priceless moments when someone will petition in faith for real needs and the Holy Ghost will

touch hearts with testimony. I don’t remember as much of my mother’s teaching as I do her prayers for us. I could feel her love, and the Spirit confirmed in my heart that she loved Heavenly Father and the Savior and that her prayers would be answered. She brought blessings down on our heads then, and the memory of her prayers still does” (“A Legacy of Testimony,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 63).

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president: “Spiritually strengthening our families begins in the walls of our homes, be they grass huts or palaces; it extends to our nieces, nephews, cousins, grandchildren; it includes our ward’s Primary children and young women and young men; it encompasses our neighbors and communities. It starts with bearing our testimonies often, believing in children’s abilities and talents, sharing our struggles as well as our successes, snuggling and listening more than rushing and scolding, telling our experiences of faith fulfilled, bringing the scriptures to life through stories and teachings, asking for others’ forgiveness while forgiving their shortcomings. Of course this doesn’t happen all at once; we just keep at it! We must never give up on our children or ourselves.”

- *In what ways can we strengthen our own and our family’s spirituality?*
- *Why do we so urgently need the Lord’s help in teaching and rearing our children?* ■



OUR FAMILY HERITAGE MONTH

mind” when you’re trying to fall asleep.

4. Exercise daily. Consistent exercise can help you sleep more soundly. But avoid strenuous exercise within two hours of bedtime.

5. Avoid going to bed hungry or overeating at dinner. A light snack may help you fall asleep and may prevent hunger pains during the night, but avoid overeating, since this can make falling asleep and staying asleep more difficult. Indigestion may also wake you up during the night.

6. Never try to sleep. If you have not fallen asleep within 10 to 20 minutes, get up and do a relaxing activity, something to take your mind off of trying to fall asleep. You may need to arise and return to bed a few times before your body naturally falls asleep. But staying in bed, watching the clock, and forcing yourself to get some rest will only prolong the time it takes to doze off.

Adequate sleep helps us to be more productive in every aspect of our lives and is especially important in tasks such as driving. When we feel well rested, we have more energy to enjoy life’s pleasures and to recover from stressful situations. We are also less vulnerable to infection and other illnesses. Because our ability to make good decisions is enhanced when we are alert, it is essential that we take care of ourselves, and that begins with a good night’s rest.

*Florence Fairbanks, Forestview Ward,
Salt Lake Grant Stake*

March seemed to be the perfect month to chose as heritage month.

I pulled our artificial Christmas tree from the closet and set it up.

“This is no longer a Christmas tree,” I announced to our six children. “Now it is a family tree.” To prove the point I made a small sign and put it on top of the tree. It read, Meade Family Tree.

My husband and I had decided we would tell a story about an ancestor each night. After the story, one of the children would put a small memento on the tree in honor of that person.

On the first family night in March, we had a Scandinavian dinner in honor of our Swedish ancestors. We filled ourselves with rice cream, sweet cabbage, and Swedish meatballs. The children learned how Great-Grandpa Nelson had sailed from Sweden in a small wooden ship that was caught in a great storm.

We told the story of how Grandpa Solomon, an orphan, supported himself from the age of 10 by herding sheep. We made sheep with poster board and cotton. We imagined how it would be to hear coyotes howling at night if you were only 10 years

old. The next day when I looked at the tree, I found a homemade coyote lurking in the branches.

We followed the trail of the Mormon Battalion and pictured Great-Grandpa Harris walking from Iowa to California at the age of 17 with a case of the mumps. A picture of an old pair of shoes went on the tree for him.

By the end of March the tree was covered with trinkets and flags.

On Easter we included the heritage we had received from the Savior. We told the story of the Resurrection and then ended the day with a Jewish-style dinner.

Heritage month has become a tradition in our family. The heritage tree comes out each March



and goes back in the box after Easter. The stories, however, linger. They have become part of our lives and have helped us realize who we are. Those stories also have given us strength in difficult times and have given us the courage to laugh our way through problems we have faced.

*Joan Meade, Ephraim
Third Ward, Ephraim Utah
Stake*



Miracles Today

By Nitochka Silva Calisto

One Saturday afternoon I decided to study the Sunday School les-

son for the next day's class. It was on miracles. "If ever we needed a miracle, it is now," I thought. My mother

was a widow, and our family was going through a difficult time financially.

Ever since my sisters and I were little girls, we had devoted ourselves to the art of horsehair weaving. We would wash the horsehair, color it with dyes, and then weave it hair by hair into shapes such as butterflies,



mice, and *copibues* (the national flower of Chile). It is very fine work and unique to our country. All winter long we would weave, and in the summer we would sell our work at art fairs.

The national economy was depressed that year and greatly affected our business. In the past a major source of our income had been an art fair in Temuco, a tourist town in southern Chile. But that year we had not been invited. We had even called the fair's organizers, but they refused to give us a booth. We worried about how this loss of income would affect us.

But as I studied the Sunday School lesson that afternoon, my attitude changed completely. First I read Mormon 9:19: "[God] ceaseth not to be God, and is a God of miracles." This promise lifted my spirits. Then as I read verse 21, I felt even better: "I say unto you that whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ it shall be granted him."

I thought about the miracle my

At the office of culture, the man in charge told me there was only a remote possibility my family could have a booth at the art fair. But we needed the income, so I continued to hope for help.

family needed, and I decided to travel the four hours to Temuco to plead our case.

When I arrived at the office of culture, I was discouraged to see many other people there to make the same request and to learn that all these people had been told no. Still I felt the Lord was with me.

When my turn came to speak to the man in charge, he bluntly told me there was only a remote possibility we could have a booth but that a final decision could not be made yet. I explained that a booth would mean bread for my mother during the winter months, but I felt as if I were talking to a wall. Then without thinking, I told him I believed in miracles and left his office.

I called my husband and asked him to fast with me. My mind constantly reverted to the words of the Sunday School lesson: "[God] is a God of miracles." I needed a miracle—now.

I waited for six hours at the office of culture, feeling greater anguish with each passing minute. Finally I saw craftspeople arriving from every corner of Chile and also from other countries. The fair was starting. With a lump in my throat, I prayed, "Thy will be done." Suddenly a feeling of peace overcame me, and I decided to talk one more time to the man in charge.

When I entered his office, I could see his attitude had changed. He courteously told me I could have a booth. Once again I told him I believed in miracles.

We made the money we needed at the fair, and I learned for myself that God continues to work miracles today. My faith grows each day because of all He gives me. ■

Nitobka Silva Calisto is a member of the Carrión Ward, Santiago Chile Independencia Stake.

Intensive Family Care

By Pamela Steenhoek

Two hours after our fifth child, Angelique, was born, she began crying with every breath and started to turn purple. We realized something terrible was happening.

Medical tests indicated that Angelique had group B streptococcus, a serious illness for newborn babies. She was immediately transferred to a hospital that specialized in such problems. I was weighed down by worry as my new baby was taken away in an ambulance.

After I was released from the hospital two days later, I went directly to see Angelique. As I walked into the neonatal intensive care unit, I was gripped with fear. Two doctors and many nurses were surrounding my daughter. She was hooked up to so much machinery that I could hardly see her little body.

I pulled one doctor aside and asked, "Will she live?" He looked at me grimly and said, "We aren't sure at

this point, but we will do everything we can for her.” He asked me to go home and rest.

As my husband drove me home, we did not speak. We were both too worried. My husband went back to the hospital to give our daughter a blessing and to spend the night outside the intensive care unit.

That night as I tucked our other four children into bed, my oldest, who was seven, cried because she couldn’t hold Angelique. We had told the children that Angelique might not live, but they didn’t really understand.

I went to my room and offered the most sincere prayer of my life. I told Heavenly Father how much I loved Angelique but that He could take her if that was His will. I explained that I knew we were an eternal family and expressed gratitude for my temple marriage. In that instant a feeling of peace, love, and even happiness came over me—a feeling I’ll never forget.

I then had a distinct feeling that Angelique needed to hear our voices. My children had often “talked” to Angelique before she was born. She had been with us when we said family prayers, when we ate dinner together, and when I was singing. Now she was hearing only strangers in the hospital.

I woke the children, and they eagerly took turns

sharing messages with Angelique using a tape recorder. We sang familiar Primary songs and told her how much we loved her. We told her that we would care for her and do things with her if she would get better. The next morning I took the tape recorder to the hospital and asked the nurses to lay it at the end of Angelique’s bassinet and play the tape for her continuously.

When I returned to the hospital later in the day, an excited nurse greeted me and told me the most amazing thing had happened.

Angelique was on a respirator that recorded when she was breathing on her own and when the machine was doing the work. When our tape was playing, she started to breathe on her own half the time. When the

tape stopped, the machine would do all of her breathing for her again. It was amazing to watch her little body perk up when the tape played. The nurses played the tape around the clock. Angelique slowly recovered and was able to come home two weeks later.

I believe strongly in the power of prayer and a family’s love. I have a testimony that Heavenly Father does

The children took turns recording messages to their new, gravely ill baby sister. We sang familiar Primary songs and told her how much we loved her.



hear our prayers and that if we seek His will, He will inspire us through the Holy Ghost. ■

Pamela Steenboek is a member of the Allatoona Ward, Marietta Georgia East Stake.

Never Give Up

By Jason Lacayo

It was the 1970s, and my father, Horacio Lacayo, was a poor 13-year-old boy. One day his mother was angry with him and told him he would never amount to anything. He was upset and knew he had to do better. He decided he would make some changes.

Not long after that he met two missionaries, and they began telling him about the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Horacio had a great desire to learn more and to be baptized, but when he told his father, his father was angry. He said they already had a religion and he would never allow him to be a member of another church.

So Horacio asked his sister Maria to talk to their father for him. He often listened to her advice. After Horacio told Maria about the Church and explained that he wanted to be baptized, she agreed to help. She took the permission form to their father and told him firmly, "Signing this paper is the best thing you can do for your son."

His father eventually gave his permission, and Horacio was baptized. But soon his father began to regret

his decision and forbade Horacio to go to church. When Horacio begged him to reconsider, his father angrily told him to leave their home and never come back. So Horacio went to live with his aunt.

One night about a year later, Horacio dreamed that his father was very sick and was calling for him. The next morning before going to church, he told his aunt about his dream. She assured him it was just a dream and he should not worry about it.

When he returned home from church, his aunt was upset. She said, "I don't know how you knew, but your dad has been hurt in an accident. He is calling for you." When Horacio went to see his father, his father apologized for what he had done and said he would no longer oppose Horacio's Church activity.

Eventually many of Horacio's family members and friends joined the Church. Today Horacio, his wife, Aida, and their four sons are active Church members. Two sons are serving missions, and one just returned from a mission.

How was Horacio able to keep his faith as a boy? He never forgot that the Lord was at his side and that He would not let him down. My father never gave up.

I know the Lord will strengthen us in our spiritual battles, just as He did my father, Horacio Lacayo. ■

Jason Lacayo is a member of the Camorim Ward, Rio de Janeiro Brazil Jacarepaguá Stake, and is currently serving in the Chile Osorno Mission.

Our New Mission Life

By Robert A. Hague

After retirement my wife and I were living a comfortable life. We enjoyed working in the temple, fulfilling ward and stake assignments, and visiting our children, grandchildren, and widowed mothers. It seemed that things couldn't have been better.

But something began stirring within us. The time had come to seriously consider serving a mission, and we knew it. We soon decided to serve but felt we should make a list of things that needed doing before we turned in our missionary application forms. We dutifully made the list and began whittling it down.

Two months passed, and we discovered our to-do list had only become longer. "No problem," we thought. "We'll just put more effort into making it shrink." But it didn't. We came to realize that although the stirrings to serve a mission were still in us, our fear of the unknown was causing us to add to our list faster than we could complete the tasks on it.

One morning shortly after our most recent review of our to-do list, I was studying *Jesus the Christ* by Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933). One passage touched me profoundly: "Excuses are easy to find; they spring up as readily and plentifully as weeds

by the wayside. When the Samaritan came along and saw the wretched state of the wounded man, he had no excuse for he wanted none” (3rd ed. [1916], 431–32).

With considerable emotion I hurried into the kitchen and shared these words with my wife. They had a significant impact on her as well. There was no question about our next move.

We immediately shredded our to-do list, or what we now laughingly call our excuse list, and initiated the process necessary to be called as missionaries.

Once we did this, things fell together quickly for us, and soon we found ourselves enjoying our lives

even more as we served in the Singapore Mission. Our assignment was to train new leaders in Church branches, first in Sri Lanka and then in Malaysia. We discovered that our family back home could get along just fine without us, and we soon realized how badly we were needed as senior missionaries.

Two nights before we returned from our mission, the members of the two branches we had been working with in Malaysia invited us to what turned out to be a surprise farewell party. We will never forget stepping outside the Church meetinghouse to be encircled by the local members, each holding a homemade Chinese lantern as

they sang to us in Chinese “God Be with You Till We Meet Again” (*Hymns*, no. 152). To this day I cannot share that experience without crying. How grateful we are that we didn’t let our excuse list—our fears—keep us from a priceless experience. ■

Robert A. Hague is a member of the Yakima Second Ward, Selab Washington Stake.

At the end of our mission the local members, each holding a homemade Chinese lantern, sang to us in Chinese “God Be with You Till We Meet Again.”



PHOTOGRAPH BY KEITH JOHNSON, CHURCH NEWS



Testimonies of the Savior; music by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Orchestra at Temple Square; and evergreens, poinsettias, and lights filled the Conference Center during the First Presidency Christmas Devotional.

First Presidency Celebrates Christmas Season

By Naomi Frandsen

Jesus Christ's "has been the grandest of all gifts," emphasized President Gordon B. Hinckley at the First Presidency Christmas Devotional held in the Conference Center on 1 December 2002. "He is our King of kings. He is our Lord of lords. He is the Son of God incarnate."

The audience of more than 20,000 people joined other congregations in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South America who participated in the live broadcast through the Internet, local television stations, and the Church satellite system. Translated into 31 languages, the devotional was rebroadcast in Brazil, Europe, South Africa, Asia, and the Pacific a week later.

"Tonight, all together, we speak many tongues, but our voices are as one as we pay homage to our King, the Lord Immanuel," President Hinckley declared.

Just as the star described by Matthew symbolizes Christmas, President Hinckley said, the ever-constant North Star is "as the God of heaven Himself,



"His has been the grandest of all gifts. He is our King of kings," testified President Gordon B. Hinckley at the First Presidency Christmas Devotional.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KEITH JOHNSON, CHURCH NEWS

fixed and immovable, certain, sure, unchanging."

"I have reflected much on this," stated President Hinckley. "The heavens tell . . . the vastness of the universe over which He presides. And yet His great concern is with His children . . . of whom we are a few who worship together tonight."

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, President Hinckley declared, everything we do is "in His holy name and in tribute to Him," and we pay "homage to Him by the goodness of our lives and the outreach of our service."

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, urged listeners to "keep Christmas" by taking opportunities to serve. He learned that lesson as a boy when, after losing a drawing for a pony, he found Christmas joy by giving two nickels, which represented all he had, to a charity.

President Monson asked: "Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people and to remember what other people have done for you, . . . to look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness? . . . Then you can keep Christmas!"

"Christmas is many things," said President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. "It is a time when we have a joyful uplift. . . . It is a time to be our generous selves. It is a time when we push back for a short time our concerns and challenges and turn off unpleasantness."

President Faust closed by

urging all to “take the time . . . to do the kind deed . . . [that] can mean so much to those who may need a little lift in their lives.”

“People were anxious to come hear the prophet,” observed Sister Bonnie Allred, a Church-service

missionary who ushered guests to their seats. Sam Castor from Provo, Utah, agreed. “Sometimes it seems there’s not much new to say about Christmas, but the Spirit was so sweet when President Hinckley talked about Jesus Christ.” ■

Church and World Leaders Speak at Lighting of D.C. Temple Grounds

By Lee Davidson

It was a scene unimaginable a few years ago when Ukraine was part of the communist Soviet Union and had no freedom of religion—and no missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

But a Ukrainian diplomat told ambassadors from 45 countries at a Christmas lighting ceremony on 4 December 2002 at the Washington D.C. Temple that his country’s future hinges on restored freedom. He even openly hoped for a temple in Kiev—announced by the Church in 1998 but not yet under construction—to be built soon.

“I believe that a Mormon temple will soon be built in Kiev, and there will be even more opportunities of ensuring one of the fundamental human rights: freedom of conscience,” said Volodymyr Yatsenkivskyi, deputy chief of mission for the Ukraine embassy.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and other local and

area Church leaders welcomed Mr. Yatsenkivskyi and more than 700 invited guests at the temple’s 25th annual Festival of Lights.

Mr. Yatsenkivskyi was a last-minute replacement speaker for Ukraine ambassador Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, who planned to help switch on the 300,000 Christmas lights on the temple grounds but had to return to Ukraine.

Mr. Yatsenkivskyi was an especially appropriate replacement since in a previous job as a professor he helped teach Russian to the first LDS missionaries sent to Ukraine. “It was a tremendous opportunity to meet very nice, spiritual people,” he said.

He compared the illumination and excitement evoked by the temple’s Christmas lights to the greater light that restored freedom has brought to his country.

“Freedom opens [to] every nation the way to reach God and love,” Mr. Yatsenkivskyi said. “We are looking for light. . . . Light is life.”

Elder Maxwell also addressed the congregation. He told ambassadors that God, who created a universe of unimaginable wonders, still places His highest value on each person.

Elder Maxwell showed pictures from the Hubble space telescope to help illustrate the vastness of space and demonstrate how millions of galaxies exist, each containing billions of stars similar to the sun and millions of earthlike planets.

“It should fill us with reverence and awe, especially



The Washington D.C. Temple shines amidst Christmas lights. Church and world leaders gathered for the lighting ceremony in December.

PHOTOGRAPH BY R. COLE GOODWIN, CHURCH NEWS

those of us who may think that we—or what we do—are the center of the universe,” he said, receiving laughs from diplomats.

But “we are at the center of what He is doing,” Elder Maxwell told the crowd. “He has told us in the

scriptures it is His work and His glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. We can’t even number His creations. He can. And He desires us to be happy.”

Elder Maxwell added: “Long ago when a special

child lay in a manger, a special star appeared. It didn’t just show up that evening. It had to have been placed in its orbit centuries before in a trajectory that would make it appear at that special moment of time to announce

the birth of a special child.”

He said, “Just as there is divine design in the universe, so each of us has been placed in our own orbits in this life to love, to serve, to help light the world.” ■

From Deseret News, 5 Dec. 2002. Reprinted with permission.

Walter Cronkite Joins Tabernacle Choir for Christmas Celebration

By Lisa Ann Jackson

Walter Cronkite has fond memories of sitting with his parents around their radio listening to *Music and the Spoken Word*. It is a program he has respected throughout his life. So when the Mormon Tabernacle Choir staff called his office to invite him to join them for their Christmas concert, Mr. Cronkite was a little excited.

“They called my office and talked to my chief of staff, Marlene Adler. She excitedly called me on the phone and said, ‘Guess what!’ ” recalled Mr. Cronkite. There were some scheduling conflicts, he said, “but we got that settled pretty darn quickly by canceling everything else.”

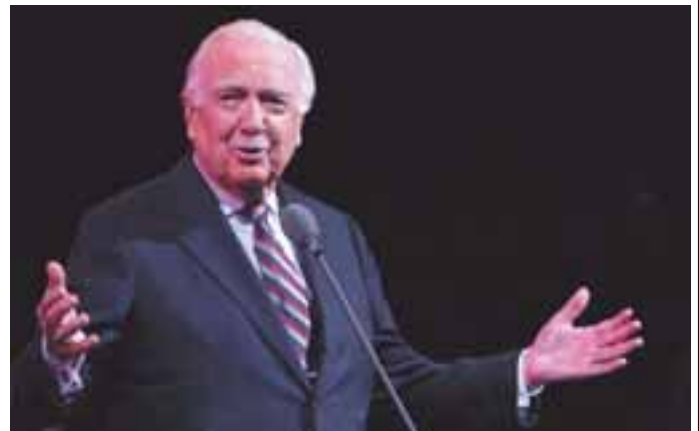
On 14–15 December 2002, Mr. Cronkite—a veteran journalist who was once voted “the most trusted man in America”—was the special guest at the annual Christmas concert of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square.

“This is a thrill in a thrill-filled life,” Mr. Cronkite told the audience, which greeted

him with a standing ovation. “I can’t tell you the goose pimples that run up my spine to stand in front of this choir.” And reflecting on his parents who introduced him to *Music and the Spoken Word*, he added, “I’d like to think tonight they are incredibly proud that Little Walter ended up in front of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.”

Set amongst flocked evergreens with twinkling lights, the choir and orchestra presented an evening of music and narration. The music included selections from traditional carols to modern favorites. Audience members held their breath for the delicate rendition of “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” and nearly leaped to their feet when a bell choir joined for “I Saw Three Ships.”

The program concluded with an emotional tale of Christmas 1914, narrated by Mr. Cronkite. Europe was embroiled in World War I, and soldiers had dug in for battle. But on Christmas that year, the spirit and music of



Walter Cronkite shares memories of listening to *Music and the Spoken Word* as a child. Mr. Cronkite was a special guest for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir’s annual Christmas concert.



The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Orchestra at Temple Square presented an evening of music and narration to celebrate the Christmas season.

Christmas brought enemies out of the trenches, and soldiers stood side by side as brothers, singing the carols

of their homelands to one another. As Christmas Day ended, the troops returned to their trenches, and the

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

sweet strains of “Silent Night” wafted across the battlefield as night fell around them.

The choir gently sang “Silent Night” as performers respectfully reenacted scenes from the story and

photographs of soldiers flashed on auditorium screens.

“It said a lot about human beings,” commented Mr. Cronkite of the text written by Steve Walkerly at Bonneville Communications. “It ought to

awaken people here at Christmastime to the horror of men [at war], who otherwise should be of goodwill.”

The program concluded with a standing ovation and an encore chorus of “Angels from

the Realms of Glory.”

While in town, Mr. Cronkite also joined the Tabernacle Choir for its weekly broadcast of *Music and the Spoken Word*, about to enter its 75th year. ■



In a Family Services public service announcement, a birth mother meets with prospective adoptive parents. The commercial was recognized with a Gabriel Award for nourishing “the human spirit.”

Adoption Commercial Receives National Award

An LDS Family Services television commercial promoting adoption was honored with a 2002 Gabriel Award on 19 October in Los Angeles, California. The public service announcement, written and produced by Bonneville Communications, depicts a conversation between a birth mother and her child’s future adoptive parents. The spot concludes with the sentiment, “I wasn’t giving my baby up; I was giving her more.”

Created in 1965, the Gabriel Award is sponsored by Unda-USA—the National Catholic Association for Communicators—and is designed to honor excellence in broadcasting that “uplifts and nourishes the human spirit.”

“This particular award and what it represents are a great honor,” says Fred Riley, commissioner of LDS Family Services. Only one public service announcement receives the award each year.

This commercial is part of an effort by LDS Family Services to promote adoption as a loving option and to recognize the birth parent who selflessly and courageously chooses adoption.

LDS Family Services has won 16 national awards for this public service campaign since the campaign began in 2000. Bonneville Communications has won seven other Gabriel Awards for the Home Front commercials and the short feature *Together Forever*. ■

Comment

Our New Look

From the Editors:

Many readers have wondered about the change in the format of Church magazines beginning with the January 2003 issue. The change reflects an effort to better serve readers throughout the world.

The changes in design allow Church magazines to bring the same spiritually uplifting material to readers in 51 different languages at the same time. In past years, the *Liahona*, *Ensign*, *New Era*, and *Friend* were published on separate editorial schedules. For instance, while the conference edition of the *Ensign* was published a month after conference, members who speak languages other than English had to wait three months to receive the general conference *Liahona*. Articles in other issues of the English magazines were also published in a different month in the *Liahona*.

Beginning in January, all articles in the *Liahona*—which serves adults, youth, and children—are published concurrently in the *Ensign*, *New Era*, and

Friend, respectively. This change allows all readers of Church magazines to receive them at the same time. In addition, this past October, translation and production processes were streamlined so readers of the *Ensign* and *Liahona* worldwide received the same conference issue in November, regardless of the language. The general conference magazines will continue to be published concurrently.

“It is a blessing for members, and for the Church in general, that readers who speak many different languages now receive the words of the latter-day prophets all in the same month,” explained Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Presidency of the Seventy, editor of Church magazines.

The change in format of the magazines was necessary to accommodate the varying length of the text as it is translated into different



languages. That text gain might be small in some languages—Spanish or Italian, for example—and quite large in others, notably Tongan and Finnish. Pages of the English-language magazines are now designed with extra white space between lines and surrounding text on the page. This makes it possible to accommodate all 51 languages while keeping the same page layouts for every language. The typeface was also standardized to help with efficiency in production.

About That New Format . . .

Please change the format/layout of the *Ensign* back to what it has been in the past. I find the wide margins at the tops of the pages, the titles of the articles in extra large fonts, and especially the double-spacing between lines to be quite distracting—as if we are now reading a children's book instead of a magazine for adults. The fonts used on the cover of the magazine are not as attractive as they were previously.

I have always found the artwork in the *Ensign* to be tasteful and beautiful. Recently, however, it seems excessive and more like a picture book. My husband and I love reading the words of our leaders and have always found the *Ensign* to be an inspiration, but please return to the tasteful format used previously.

Becky Fowkes
Knoxville, Tennessee

Thanks for the Lift

I have so enjoyed the January 2003 issue of the *Ensign*. How beautiful it is!

Family History

Changes Announced regarding Submissions to Ancestral File

In anticipation of a new system that will better handle family history data, the Family and Church History Department asks members to hold their corrections for FamilySearch™ Ancestral File

until the new system is in place.

In the interim, new family history information should be submitted to the Pedigree Resource File. Submissions will not be accepted for Ancestral File.

Information in the Pedigree Resource File, Ancestral File, and unprocessed submissions and corrections to Ancestral File will be incorporated into the new system when it is launched. ■

I love its new look.

The article "Two People Building for Eternity" touched my heart. I have a disability that prevents me from walking well. I do not have an eternal companion, but the words of the Hiatt family have given me hope that someday it will come to pass if I have faith and keep my thoughts positive and trust the Lord.

Marie W. Stealey
Paradise, California

Touching Painting

Thanks so much for showing the picture of Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus on page 2 of the December *Ensign*. That painting by Walter Rane is new to me, and it is so wonderfully natural. As I looked at that picture and pondered the significance of the scene, I was brought to tears—tears of gratitude not only for what Mary and Joseph endured but also for the tremendous gift Jesus gave. Being a mother and a grandmother myself, I tearfully reflected on the birth process and what Mary went through for us. I am really grateful for the tenderness expressed in the painting.

Barbara Ashley
Marysville, Washington

A Cloud of Witnesses

As I was sitting in the dentist's chair waiting for the shots to deaden my mouth, I started reading "A Cloud of Witnesses" in the December 2002 *Ensign*. It gave account after account of testimonies of Christ. As I read, the witness came to me strongly that these accounts were true, and tears started running down my cheeks. The Spirit can testify to us in the most unusual places—even in a dentist's chair.

Nancy Goddard
Little Rock, Arkansas

Corrections

In the February 2003 News of the Church, the *Ensign* announced a new e-mail subscription service that would provide scripture passages for daily reading. This service is not available, and Church leaders continue to counsel members to study the scriptures daily at their own pace, setting their own study goals.

In the article "Programs Commemorate September 11" (Dec. 2002, 69), the Washington, D.C., programs were

erroneously reported. David Glen Hatch performed two concerts of his work *Let Freedom Ring*. Invited guest performers included the Washington D.C. Mormon Choir and the Southern Virginia University Orchestra as well as soloists Erika Hogge, Liz Smith, and David Benson. ■

Call for Articles

How can members of ward activities committees plan interesting activities that help bring people to Christ and unify their wards? Send your responses (no more than 800 words) by 1 May 2003 to *Ensign*, 24th Floor, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3224, USA, or to cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org. Clearly mark your submission "Ward Activities," and on the top of your submission, write your name, address, telephone number, ward, and stake (or branch and district).

While we cannot acknowledge receipt of individual responses, authors whose submissions are selected for publication will be notified. If you would like your manuscript returned, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope and allow up to a year.



MAKING THE MOST OF THIS ISSUE

M A R C H 2 0 0 3

Spiritual Security

- How does your character measure up against the Savior's teachings on humility? See page 48.

- One way to guard against evil is to fill your life with spiritually positive things so that there is no room for things of lesser value. See "The Parable of the Empty House," page 45.

- Do you ever feel you might be missing the gospel forest because you're too fascinated with one or two trees? See "Looking beyond the Mark," page 40.

Your Call to Serve

"An investigator who is brought to the missionaries through the members is 10 times more likely to be baptized than one the missionaries have found through their

own contacting efforts," says Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "Do these figures catch your attention on the importance of the members' role in finding people for the missionaries to teach?" See page 52.

Six Ways to Get Your ZZZs

Do you have trouble falling asleep or getting good rest? You're not alone. Learn some techniques to help you get the rest you need, page 68.

Moving Up from Young Women

Now that they've turned 18, how can we help young women feel comfortable in Relief Society? For some ways to help welcome young women, see page 24.

Sharing a Family Heritage

Rice cream, sweet cabbage, and Swedish meatballs—just one of the enjoyable ways you might share your heritage with your family. Find out more on page 69.

Home Teachers, Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pages 2 and 67.

Did you know?

You can share the messages of general conference with friends

and family in many languages either through the Internet or the *Liahona*, the Church's international magazine. Go to www.lds.org on the Internet, click on Gospel Library, then General Conference, and select one of 41 languages. Or you can subscribe to the *Liahona* through your ward or branch magazine representative and receive the conference talks in print in the language of your choice with each May and November issue. ■

Strengthening Your Family

- Want a prophet's help with your family home evening? See President Gordon B. Hinckley's advice in his message beginning on page 2.

- Wondering just how you're going to find time to teach your children gospel principles? Find out how a mother of 13 did it—with no automatic washer, no electric stove, no microwave, and no wash-and-wear! See page 18.

- How in this world can you teach your children modesty in dress? For some good ideas, see "Everything Good and Beautiful," page 62.

Financial Security

Have you ever felt that nagging feeling that you ought to be prepared for financial hard times, just in case? For some ideas about how to do it, read the counsel given to members at the beginning of the Great Depression, page 30.



GOSPEL TOPICS

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The First Relief Society Meeting, by Lynde Mott

On the afternoon of 17 March 1842 in the red brick store in Nauvoo, Illinois, the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo for the women of the Church. The figures depicted by the artist represent specific women who were among the 20 women present. Each also represents an important aspect of a Latter-day Saint woman's life. From left to right: Phebe Ann Hawks, representing service; Margaret Cook, representing home industry; Sarah Kimball, representing caring for the sick; Bathsheba Smith, representing motherhood; and Sarah Cleveland, representing refinement.



THE
Family
is ordained of God.

Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ"

(*"The Family: A Proclamation to the World,"*
Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102).



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