

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • MARCH 2004

Ensign

**Becoming a Temple-
Motivated People, p. 38**

**Do You Value Relief
Society? p. 16**





Labor of Love, by Lynde Mott

Young Jane Snyder Richards of Nauvoo mends a treasured quilt as her daughter, Wealthy, sits nearby. She was the wife of Franklin D. Richards, who would later serve as a member and then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Ensign



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16 *Oh, How We Need Each Other!*

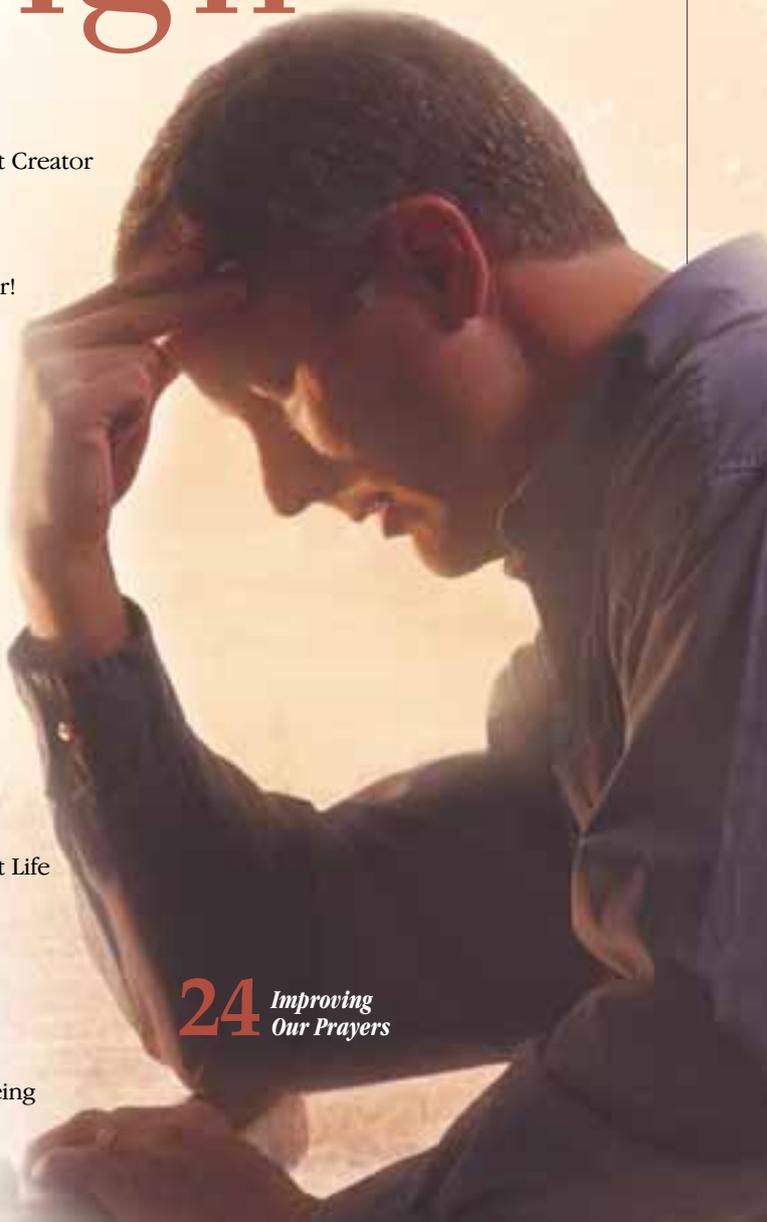


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Finding Peace

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

First Counselor in the First Presidency

In a world where peace is such a universal quest, we sometimes wonder why violence walks our streets, accounts of murder and senseless killings fill the columns of our newspapers, and family quarrels and disputes mar the sanctity of the home and smother the tranquility of so many lives.

Perhaps we stray from the path which leads to peace and find it necessary to pause, to ponder, and to reflect on the teachings of the Prince of Peace and determine to incorporate them in our thoughts and actions and to live a higher law, walk a more elevated road, and be a better disciple of Christ.

The Enemies of Peace

The ravages of hunger in Africa, the brutality of hate in the Middle East, and the ethnic struggles across the globe remind us that the peace we seek will not come without effort and determination. Anger, hatred, and contention are foes not easily subdued. These enemies inevitably leave in their destructive wake tears of sorrow, the pain of conflict, and the shattered hopes of what could have been. Their sphere of influence is not restricted to the battlefields of war but can be observed altogether too frequently in the home, around the hearth, and within the heart.

So soon do many forget and so late do they remember the counsel of the Lord: “There shall be no disputations among you. . . .

“For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

“Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.”¹

As we turn backward the clock of time, we recall that some 65 years ago a desperately arranged peace, a conference of peace, convened in the Bavarian city of Munich. Leaders of the European powers assembled even as the world tottered on the brink of war. Their purpose, openly stated, was to pursue a course which they felt would avert war and maintain peace. Mistrust, intrigue, a quest for power doomed to failure that conference. The outcome was not “peace in our time,” but rather war and destruction to a degree not previously experienced. Overlooked, or at least set aside, was the hauntingly touching appeal of one who had fallen in an earlier war. He seemed to be writing in behalf of millions of comrades—friend and foe alike:



Perhaps we stray from the path which leads to peace and find it necessary to pause, to ponder, and to reflect on the teachings of the Prince of Peace and determine to incorporate them in our thoughts and actions.

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.²*

Are we doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past? The famed statesman William Gladstone described the formula for peace when he declared: “We look forward to the time when the power of love will replace the love of power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace.”

The Peace of God

World peace, though a lofty goal, is but an outgrowth of the personal peace each individual seeks to attain. I refer not to the peace promoted by man, but peace as promised of God. I speak of peace in our homes, peace in our hearts, even peace in our lives. Peace after the way of man is perishable. Peace after the manner of God will prevail.

We are reminded that “anger doesn’t solve anything. It builds nothing, but it can destroy everything.”³ The consequences of conflict are so devastating that we yearn for guidance—even a way to ensure our success as we seek the path to peace. What is the way to obtain such a universal blessing? Are there prerequisites? Let us remember that to obtain God’s blessings, one must do God’s bidding. May I suggest three ideas to prompt our thinking and guide our footsteps:

1. Search inward;
2. Reach outward; and
3. Look heavenward.

First: Search inward. Self-evaluation is always a difficult procedure. We are so frequently tempted to gloss over areas which demand correction and instead dwell endlessly on our individual strengths. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) counseled us: “The price of peace is righteousness. Men and nations may loudly proclaim, ‘Peace, peace,’ but there shall be no peace until individuals nurture in their souls those principles of personal purity, integrity, and character which foster the development of peace. Peace cannot be imposed. It must come from the lives and hearts of men. There is no other way.”⁴

Elder Richard L. Evans (1906–71) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles observed: “To find peace—the peace within, the peace that passeth understanding—men must live in honesty, honoring each other, honoring obligations, working willingly, loving and cherishing loved ones, serving and considering others, with patience, with virtue, with faith and forbearance, with the assurance that life is for learning, for serving, for repenting, and improving. And God be thanked for the blessed principle of repenting and improving, which is a way that is open to us all.”⁵

The place of parents in the home and family is of vital importance as we examine our personal responsibilities in this regard. A distinguished group met in conference to examine the increase of violence in the lives of individuals, particularly the young. Some observations from their deliberations are helpful to us as we examine our priorities:

“A society that views graphic violence as entertainment . . . should not be surprised when senseless violence shatters the dreams of its youngest and brightest. . . .

“. . . Unemployment and despair can lead to desperation. But most people will not commit desperate acts if they have been taught that dignity, honesty and integrity are more important than revenge or rage; if they understand that respect and kindness ultimately give one a better chance at success. . . .

“The women of the anti-violence summit have hit on the solution—the only one that can reverse a downward

spiral of destructive behavior and senseless pain. A return to old-fashioned family values will work wonders.”⁶

So frequently we mistakenly believe that our children need more things, when in reality their silent pleadings are simply for more of our time. The accumulation of wealth or the multiplication of assets belies the Master’s teachings:

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

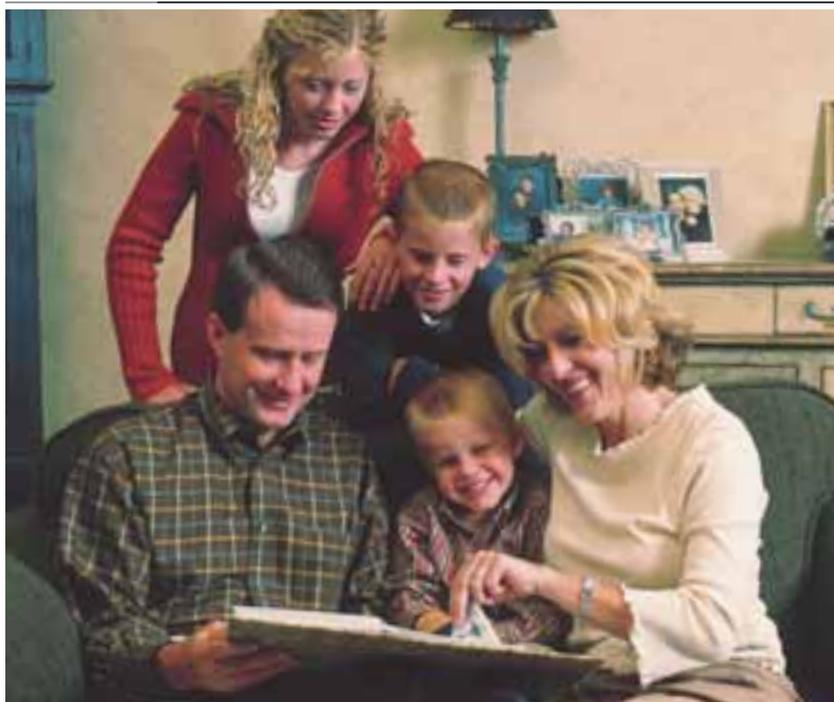
“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”⁷

One evening I saw large masses of parents and children crossing an intersection in Salt Lake City en route to a large arena to see a production of *Beauty and the Beast*. I actually pulled my car over to the curb to watch the gleeful throng. Fathers, who I am certain were cajoled into going to the event, held tightly in their hands the small and clutching hands of their precious children. Here was love in action. Here was an unspoken sermon of caring. Here was a rearrangement of time as a God-given priority.

Truly peace will reign triumphant when we improve ourselves after the pattern taught by the Lord. Then we will appreciate the deep spirituality hidden behind the simple words of a familiar hymn: “There is beauty all around When there’s love at home.”⁸

Second: Reach outward. Though exaltation is a personal matter, and while individuals are saved not as a group but indeed as individuals, yet one cannot live in a vacuum. Membership in the Church calls forth a determination to



serve. A position of responsibility may not be of recognized importance, nor may the reward be broadly known. Service, to be acceptable to the Savior, must come from willing minds, ready hands, and pledged hearts.

Occasionally discouragement may darken our pathway; frustration may be a constant companion. In our ears there may sound the sophistry of Satan as he whispers, “You cannot save the world; your small efforts are meaningless. You haven’t time to be concerned for others.” Trusting in the Lord, let us turn our heads from such falsehoods and make certain our feet are firmly planted in the path of service and our hearts and souls dedicated to follow the example of the Lord. In moments when the light of resolution dims and when the heart grows faint, we can take comfort from His promise: “Be not weary in well-doing. . . . Out of small things proceedeth that which is great. Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind.”⁹

During one year, the Primary organization conducted an effort to have the children become better acquainted with the holy temples of God. This frequently entailed a visit to the temple grounds. The laughter of small children, the joy of unfettered youth, and the

World peace, though a lofty goal, is but an outgrowth of the personal peace each individual seeks to attain. I refer not to the peace promoted by man, but peace as promised of God. I speak of peace in our homes, peace in our hearts, even peace in our lives.



As we look heavenward, we find it comforting and satisfying to communicate with our Heavenly Father through prayer, that path to spiritual power—even a passport to peace.

exuberance of energy displayed by them gladdened the heart of this observer. As a loving teacher guided a boy or girl to the large door of the Salt Lake Temple and the little one reached out and up to touch the temple, I could almost see the Master welcoming the little children to His side and could almost hear His comforting words: “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”¹⁰

Third: Look heavenward. As we do, we find it comforting and satisfying to communicate with our Heavenly Father through prayer, that path to spiritual power—even a passport to peace. We are reminded of His Beloved Son, the Prince of Peace, that pioneer who literally showed the way for others to follow. His divine plan can save us from the Babylons of sin, complacency, and error. His example points the way. When faced with temptation, He shunned it. When offered the world, He declined it. When asked for His life, He gave it.

On one significant occasion, Jesus took a text from Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the

opening of the prison to them that are bound”¹¹—a clear pronouncement of the peace that passeth all understanding.

Frequently, death comes as an intruder. It is an enemy that suddenly appears in the midst of life’s feast, putting out its lights and its gaiety. Death lays its heavy hand upon those dear to us and, at times, leaves us baffled and wondering. In certain situations, as in great suffering and illness, death comes as an angel of mercy. But to those bereaved, the Master’s promise of peace is the comforting balm which heals: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”¹² “I go to prepare a place for you . . . ; that where I am, there ye may be also.”¹³

How I pray that all who have loved then lost might know the reality of the Resurrection and have the unshakable knowledge that families can be forever. One such was a Major Sullivan Ballou, who, during the time of the American Civil War, wrote a touching letter to his wife—just one week before he was killed in the Battle of Bull Run. With me, feel the love of his soul, his trust in God, his courage, his faith.

“July 14, 1861

“Camp Clark, Washington

“My very dear Sarah:

“The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days—perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more. . . .

“I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. . . . I am . . . perfectly willing . . . to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this Government. . . .

“Sarah my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me with mighty cables that

nothing but Omnipotence could break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me unresistibly on with all these chains to the battle field.

“The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together, and seen our sons grown up to honorable manhood, around us. I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me—perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar, that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battle field, it will whisper your name. Forgive [me] my . . . faults, and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have often times been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears every little spot upon your happiness. . . .

“But, O Sarah! if the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the gladdest days and in the darkest nights . . . *always, always*, and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath, as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again.”¹⁴

Our Message of Peace

The darkness of death can ever be dispelled by the light of revealed truth. “I am the resurrection, and the life,” spoke the Master. “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”¹⁵

Added to His own words are those of the angel, spoken to the weeping Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as they approached the tomb to care for the body of their Lord: “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.”¹⁶

Such is our message. He lives! And because He lives all shall indeed live again. This knowledge provides the

peace for loved ones of those whose graves are hallowed resting places in Flanders fields, where the poppies blow in springtime, and for those who rest in countless other locations, including the depths of the sea. “Oh, sweet the joy this sentence gives: ‘I know that my Redeemer lives!’ ”¹⁷ ■

NOTES

1. 3 Nephi 11:28–30.
2. John McCrae, “In Flanders Fields,” in *The Best Loved Poems of the American People*, sel. Hazel Felleman (1936), 429.
3. L. Douglas Wilder, quoted in “Early Hardships Shaped Candidates,” *Deseret News*, 1 Dec. 1991, p. A2.
4. “Purposeful Living,” *Listen, A Journal of Better Living*, Jan.–Mar. 1955, 19.
5. In Conference Report, Oct. 1959, 128.
6. “Family Values in a Violent Society,” *Deseret News*, 16 Jan. 1994, p. A12.
7. Matthew 6:19–21.
8. “Love at Home,” *Hymns*, no. 294.
9. D&C 64:33–34.
10. Mark 10:14.
11. Isaiah 61:1; see Luke 4:17–20.
12. John 14:27.
13. John 14:2–3.
14. Quoted in Geoffrey C. Ward, *The Civil War* (1990), 82–83.
15. John 11:25–26.
16. Luke 24:5–6.
17. “I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” *Hymns*, no. 136.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. Show a newspaper with current headlines about troubles in the world, and ask family members if they have ever felt fear because of these problems. Talk about ways in which the Savior can help us find peace and overcome fear despite the troubles in the world.

2. Ask a child or youth in the family if he or she has ever needed help because of someone who was being unkind or because things were not going well at school. Ask family members to share ways the Savior might help.

3. Has someone you teach lost a loved one to death? Bear your testimony of the Savior’s Resurrection and its effect on all of us, or if appropriate, have that individual share his or her testimony with others in the family.

The Merciful Plan of the Great Creator



In 2 Nephi, Jacob teaches the basic doctrine of the plan of salvation with great clarity.



BY ELDER ADHEMAR DAMIANI

Of the Seventy

Why does life seem so difficult? Why does there seem to be so much sadness, hate, and unhappiness in the world? Why do the innocent suffer? Through the prophetic words of Father Lehi, we know the intent of the Lord is for each person to find joy; indeed “men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). Why, then, are there so many unhappy people?

Our Heavenly Father has prepared a plan for us to be happy. This plan is known as the plan of salvation. It is also mentioned in the scriptures as the plan of happiness (see Alma 42:8), the plan of mercy (see Alma 42:15), or the plan of redemption (see Alma 42:11). The Father’s objective is to grant immortality and eternal life to each of His children (see Moses 1:39). His plan includes the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement, with all the laws, covenants, and ordinances that allow us to be exalted and live forever as a family with God.

Nephi’s brother Jacob teaches us the basic

doctrine of the plan of salvation with great clarity in 2 Nephi, chapter 9. He calls it “the merciful plan of the great Creator” (v. 6). The central figure of the plan of salvation is Jesus Christ, who made exaltation possible through His infinite and eternal Atonement. Our Heavenly Father has revealed the plan of happiness through His prophets.

The Creation

The Lord created all things spiritually before He created them physically: “For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. . . . And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men; and not yet a man to till the ground; for in heaven created I them” (Moses 3:5).

Before this world was organized, we had spirit bodies and lived in a premortal world with Heavenly Father, the father of our spirits. We knew Him personally just as He knows us.

The central figure of the plan of salvation is Jesus Christ, who made exaltation possible through His infinite and eternal Atonement.



He desired that we become as He is—having eternal life and exaltation. He presented His plan to us in a great council during our pre-mortal existence. As He taught us the great plan of happiness, we learned that, as spirits, our progress was limited. We needed to obtain a physical body. God’s plan would demand much of us; some would be lost if they did not have faith or keep the commandments.

Satan opposed this plan, and disregarding agency he promised that if we followed him no one would be lost (see Moses 4:1). A third

of the spirits chose to follow Satan, rejecting the Father’s plan (see D&C 29:36). We, who accepted the plan of the Father, were born into this earthly existence. We agreed to do the best we could. We knew that we would make some mistakes, and because of our mistakes, we would not be worthy to return to the presence of the Father. But as a central portion of the plan, a Savior—who would make it possible for us to repent and be forgiven—was presented to us. We rejoiced when the great plan of happiness and our

Through the prophetic words of Father Lehi, we know the intent of the Lord is for each person to find joy; indeed “men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25).



Savior and Redeemer were presented to us (see Job 38:7).

Temporarily leaving our Father's presence, we were sent to this earth. Through mortal fathers and mothers, our spirits were placed in mortal bodies. A main purpose of our mortal life is to test our willingness to do all our Heavenly Father asks of us. Obedience is essential for us to obtain exaltation and eternal life and thus become like our Father—beings of flesh and bone, immortal, exalted, and glorified. Only then will we be heirs of all He possesses.

Amulek taught that “this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God” (Alma 34:32). With our conscience, which comes from the Light of Christ, every one of us can discern between good and evil, between truth and error (see Moroni 7:16–19). With our agency, the right to choose and act for ourselves, we can choose to do what is right or what is not. We can choose to follow the plan of happiness and obey the commandments of God, or reject the commandments of God and not be happy, for “behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). The progress we make and the happiness we attain depend upon our choices (see 2 Nephi 2:27).

The Fall

Adam was the first man created upon the earth. He is the father and patriarch of the human race. Eve, his companion

and helpmeet, was the first woman. Their transgression in the Garden of Eden—partaking of the forbidden fruit—caused them to “fall” and become mortal. The Fall is the process by which humankind and all things upon the earth fell and became mortal (see Alma 12:22). The Fall was a necessary step for our progress.

As mortals, Adam and Eve became subject to sin and death:

“Our first parents were cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence of the Lord. . . .

“Therefore, as the soul could never die, and the fall had brought upon all mankind a spiritual death as well as a temporal, that is, they were cut off from the presence of the Lord, it was expedient that mankind should be reclaimed from this spiritual death” (Alma 42:7, 9).

Death is a part of the plan of salvation. Physical death is the temporary separation of the physical body (which is mortal) from the spiritual body (which is immortal). After death, our physical body decomposes to its basic elements. As for our spiritual body, the scriptures teach:

“Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection— . . . the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body . . . are taken home to that God who gave them life. . . .

“ . . . The spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise. . . .

“ . . . The spirits of the wicked . . . shall be cast out into outer darkness. . . .

“ . . . Thus they remain in this state, as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection” (Alma 40:11–14).

The Atonement

Atonement means reconciliation of man with God. *Atoning* means suffering the punishment for sin, thus removing the effects of the transgression of the repentant sinner and allowing him or her to be reconciled with God. Jesus Christ was the only one capable of making a perfect atonement for all humankind. He was able to do this because He was chosen and foreordained in the great council held before this world was created, because He was the literal Son of God in the flesh, and because He was completely obedient to the Father's will. His Atonement includes the suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane for the sins of humankind, the shedding of His blood, and His death and subsequent Resurrection. Because of the Atonement, all will arise from the grave with an immortal body. The Atonement also provides the means by which our sins may be forgiven and we may live forever with God. However, this reconciliation is possible only if we have faith in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, receive the ordinances of salvation, and keep the commandments of God.

Because of His love for us, our Heavenly Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth to show us the way and help us return to His presence: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection, we will all be resurrected. Jesus Christ is our Savior, for He saves us from physical death:

"For as death hath passed upon all men, to fulfil the merciful plan of the great Creator, there must needs be a power of resurrection, and the resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall; and the fall came by reason of transgression; and because man became fallen they were cut off from the presence of the Lord. . . .

"O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more.

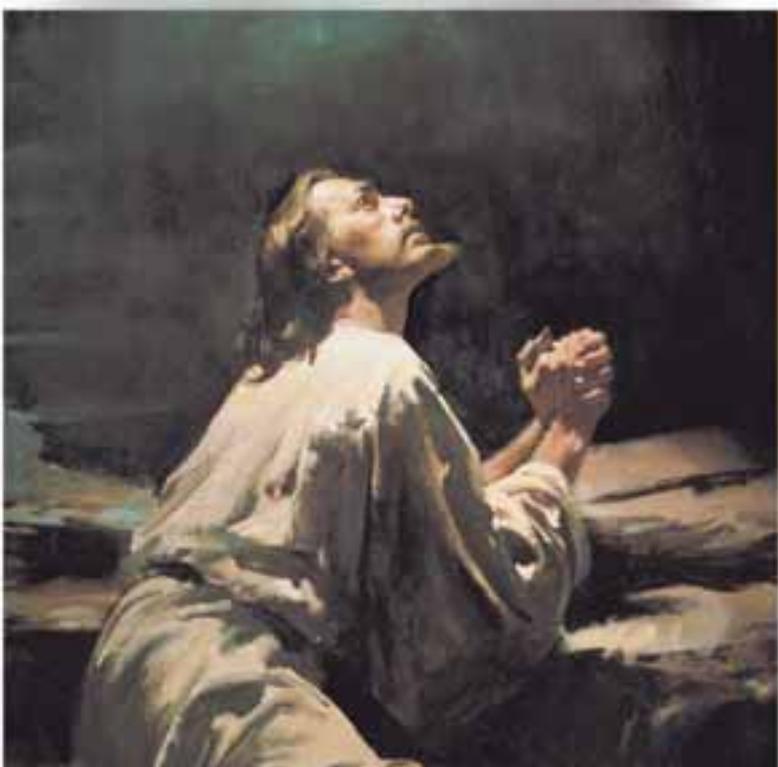
"And our spirits must have become like unto him, . . . shut out from the presence of our God. . . .

"O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit" (2 Nephi 9:6, 8–10).

Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ we may be freed from spiritual death as well as physical death. If we repent of our sins, He takes from us the suffering we must

otherwise endure because of our individual transgressions. "For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all," said the Savior, "that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I" (D&C 19:16–17).

This redemption is conditioned on our having faith in His Atonement, our repenting from our sins, our keeping the covenants we make with the Lord, our obeying all His commandments, and our enduring to the end. Obeying the sacred covenants



For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I" (D&C 19:16–17).



ILLUSTRATED BY KEITH LARSSON

Behold, the righteous, the saints of the Holy One of Israel, they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel, they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it, they shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and their joy shall be full forever” (2 Nephi 9:18).

and all the commandments qualifies us to receive the remission of our sins, allowing us to live clean and pure lives in the presence of God as resurrected and exalted beings:

“O how great the plan of our God! . . . The spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls. . . .

“. . . And the righteous shall have a perfect knowledge of their enjoyment, and their righteousness, being clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness” (2 Nephi 9:13–14).

True Happiness

Why does life seem so difficult? Why does there seem to be so much sadness, hate, and unhappiness in the world? Why do the innocent suffer? Why are there so many unhappy people? Many are unhappy because they do not know the plan of salvation; others do not believe the plan of salvation; and others, although they believe, are not willing to pay the price for happiness now and for all eternity. Do you believe in the plan of salvation?

Are you willing to pay the price for happiness?

Jacob described those who are willing to pay this price: “Behold, the righteous, the saints of the Holy One of Israel, they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel, they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it, they shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and their joy shall be full forever” (2 Nephi 9:18).

Our Heavenly Father wants each one of us to receive a fulness of His blessings. Will we become discouraged because of the adversities of the world? No! Let us be optimistic. Let us have faith in the future, knowing that the plan of salvation is true. Let us trust the Father and endure to the end. Let us never forget that we are children of Heavenly Father and that each one of us has the potential to become like Him. Let us have faith in Jesus Christ; let us have faith in ourselves. Then we will have joy in this life and throughout eternity. ■

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Discuss the four questions in the first paragraph. Then read this article looking for ideas and scriptures that could help answer these questions. Consider in 2 Nephi 9 the first sentence of verses 8, 10, 13, 17, 19, and 20 and bear testimony of the Lord’s plan of happiness.

2. Invite family members to select a piece of paper from three labeled with “Creation,” “Fall,” or “Atonement.” Have them report what they learned from the article on the part of the plan they chose. What is the role of Jesus Christ in each part? What effect does each part have on us?

3. Read the last section of this article and share an experience when understanding the plan of happiness helped you through a difficult time.

Comforted in My Distress

BY COLLEEN M. PATE

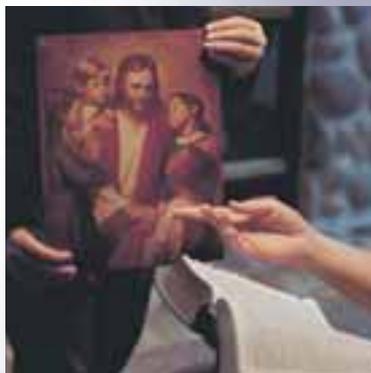
Following my divorce, my children and I found solace in simple gospel practices.

I had been married for 18 years when my temple marriage ended in separation and then divorce. How could my family and I survive spiritually and emotionally? During this difficult time, the basic building blocks of a Christ-centered home became our fortress and defense. Here is how using these familiar, basic gospel practices gave us support and comfort, binding us to each other and helping us to know more fully the love of the Savior.

The Loving Miracle of Family Home Evening

As the waves of uncertainty pounded on our door during and after the divorce, our commitment to family home evening became more vital than ever. Regardless of whether or not all of us felt like attending, we pushed

through and held an “official” family home evening each week. Sometimes emotional tirades preceded the event, but once the opening hymn began, the Spirit was evident and usually all was calm.





By leaning on the Savior through simple gospel practices, we can continue to find strength for each moment, each hour, and each day of our lives.

Even those who refused to join the group would leave their bedroom doors open, allowing the sweet sounds of hymns, prayers, and scriptures to do their holy work. By the time we began singing the closing hymn, I would glance around from the piano bench and often see all my children sitting together—a loving miracle and a testimony of the spirit that comes only when we follow the counsel of the prophet.

The Comforting Power of Music

During this difficult time, I developed the habit of sitting down at the piano at the end of each day and, with one hand, plunking out favorite hymns and Primary songs. I would play “Our Savior’s Love,” “When He Comes Again,” “I Feel My Savior’s Love,” “I Am a Child of God,” and many others, always ending with “Abide with Me; ’Tis Eventide.” This nightly ritual became a comfort to my family. No matter what the day had been like, if Mom

sat down at that keyboard and played some hymns, it seemed all was right with the world—or at least more bearable.

One day when I felt I had had all I could take, I sent the children into the house and sat in the car to have a good cry. After I had calmed down and prayed, I went inside. As I opened the door, I heard the soft notes of one of my favorite hymns. My son was at the keyboard, playing hymns to soothe and comfort me in my distress, as I regularly did for him and his sisters.

The Vital Anchor of the Scriptures

During this trying time, the scriptures were a vital anchor for our spiritual health and progress. Although we didn’t read them together every day, they were interwoven into our daily life and conversations. We turned to them during controversies or conflicts, for confirmation of our choices, and for direction in our lives. After discussing



feelings or concerns, we would often share a verse of scripture or part of a conference talk to fortify, validate, or comfort each other. Our well-worn sets of the standard works became almost an extension of our hands and hearts.

One evening as I crawled into bed, I reached for my scriptures and opened them but found I couldn't focus my eyes to read. After a full day of school, two jobs, homework—and my usual four hours of sleep—I was quite literally out of energy. Calling to my daughter who was up finishing her homework, I asked her to read my scriptures to me. What a special moment was the sweet ministering of that beloved daughter. I don't recall what she read, but I will never forget her love and tenderness as she tucked me into bed that night—as I had done so many times for her.

The Unity of Prayer

Kneeling for morning and evening prayer not only brought our family together in one room, but it also brought us together spiritually. Prayer gave us a way to quell upset feelings, express love, share our burdens, and reunite as a group to face the world. Prayer turned our

attention to the Lord, focused our energy as a family, and reinforced our strength. No matter what we faced individually that day, we each knew, nothing doubting, that we loved and supported each other and would help one another in any way we could. I cherish the memory of times we did not know what to do, but we silently reached out, held hands, and began to pray. After these sacred prayers we always felt strengthened by His love for whatever we had to face—ostracism from friends, consternation in court, or a quandary with the checkbook. We always kept going; prayer kept us going.

Strength for Each Moment

During times of trial and transition, enduring to the end becomes a matter of enduring day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment. I do not know what the next trial or transition will be. But I do know that by leaning on the Savior through simple—but profound—gospel practices, we can continue to find strength for each moment, each hour, and each day of our lives. ■

Colleen M. Pate is a member of the West Valley Second Ward, West Valley Utah Stake.



Oh, How We Need Each Other!

*Heavenly Father has provided
His daughters a haven
from the harshness of the world.*

BY BONNIE D. PARKIN
Relief Society General President

On 17 March 1842 the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the Relief Society—the Lord’s organization for women. Relief Society is important to the Lord. I know that. He provided women a safe haven from the harshness of the world when He gave us Relief Society. From the beginning our association together and our direction from priesthood leaders have helped us come unto Christ. There was no greater cause then; there is no greater cause today.

Relief Society was not man-made or woman-made. It

was, as President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) explained, “divinely made, divinely authorized, divinely instituted, divinely ordained of God to minister for the salvation of the souls of women and of men.”¹ There is no other organization for women that has such a place in the Lord’s kingdom. So the question is, do we value this divine organization? Do we value our membership in Relief Society? Do we value Relief Society as individual sisters?

We Need Each Other

When asked to share one phrase that described how she felt about Relief Society, a sister in her 80s wrote: “Relief Society has been, and is, a divine university for women. Even though I received a college degree, I credit Relief Society for enlightening my whole being with a most valued and meaningful education. Certainly it has blessed my life with eternal perspective.”²

Regardless of age, do we see ourselves as part of the sisterhood of Relief Society? Sister Marjorie Hinckley said: “Oh, how we need each other. Those of us who are old need you who are young. And, hopefully, you who are young need some of us who are old. It is a sociological fact that women need women. We need deep and satisfying and loyal friendships with each other.”³ We need each other, and Relief Society needs to be a safe place where women care for each other, where they nurture each other and come to understand each other’s hearts as they hear one another testify of Christ.

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has

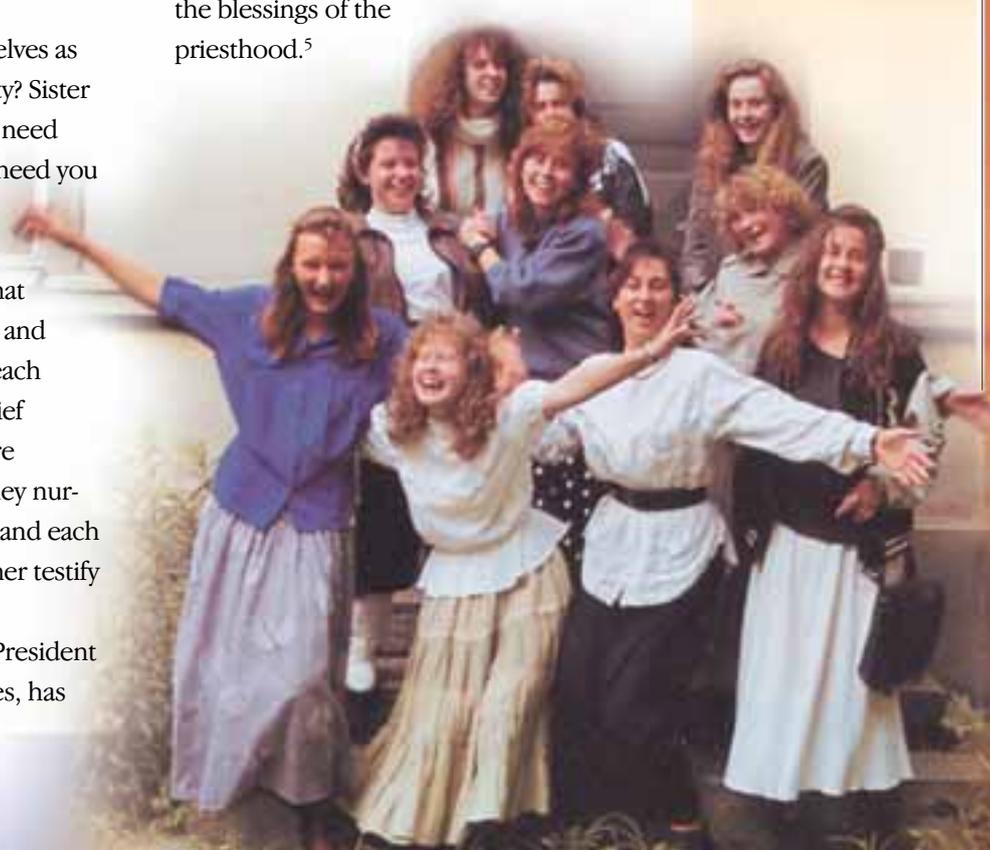
cautioned us not to drift from the cause of Relief Society: “Too many sisters . . . think that Relief Society is merely a class to attend. The . . . sense of *belonging* to the Relief Society rather than just attending a class must be fostered in the heart of every woman.” And then he makes this earnest assignment: “Sisters, you must graduate from *thinking* that you only *attend* Relief Society to *feeling* that you *belong* to it!”⁴

Belonging is more than having your name on a roll. Both individually and collectively as sisters of Relief Society, we are called to make a difference in these six ways:

- Build faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and teach the doctrines of the kingdom.
- Emphasize the divine worth of each sister.
- Exercise charity and nurture those in need.
- Strengthen and protect families.
- Serve and support each sister.
- Help sisters become full participants in the blessings of the priesthood.⁵



***I love Relief Society!
It has helped define
me as a woman. I am
who I am because of
good women I have
associated with in
Relief Society.***





Through Relief Society we can nurture each other and grow closer to Christ.

These are the objectives of Relief Society. They show the vastness of our purpose and the breadth of our mission,⁶ and they define us, setting us apart from all other associations.

The Contributions of Young Adult Sisters

Let me share an experience of a Relief Society sister who made a difference and exemplified the objectives of our organization.

This young adult sister, who was teaching English language classes in Japan, found herself on the playground surrounded by a group of Japanese children who were full of questions. “Do you like Japanese or American kids better?” “Do you eat sushi?” “How do you say *basketball* in English?” Amid the commotion, the young Relief Society sister felt someone tapping her arm. She turned around to see a little girl with pigtails and glasses. “I bent down to look her in the face and waited for what was sure to be some trivial question,”

she says. “It was as if all the commotion stopped when she asked in a soft, almost timid voice, ‘Do you know Jesus?’ I was stunned by such a poignant and important question. I smiled and felt amazing love as I told her, ‘Yes, yes, I know Jesus.’”⁷

Dear young adult sisters, you know Jesus. And with that knowledge you bring a clarity, a freshness, and an energy that our sisterhood needs. We value your membership in Relief Society, and you bless us with your faith in the Savior and in His work. An older sister described you in these words: “We are spiritually nourished as we observe you younger, vibrant women who not only have so much vigor and vitality but also who are spiritually mature, with tremendous inner strength of character and testimony—just beautiful to behold. We count our blessings because you are the ones who reassure us and give such faith and ‘a perfect brightness of hope’ for the future”⁸ (see 2 Nephi 31:20).

What Can We Give?

On the 100th anniversary of Relief Society in 1942, the First Presidency issued a message stating, “We ask our Sisters of the Relief Society never to forget that they are a unique organization in the whole world, for they were organized under the inspiration of the Lord.” And then they reminded us, “No other women’s organization in all the earth has had such a birth.”⁹

I wonder if we have somehow forgotten the uniqueness, the divineness of our organization. I wonder if we have not become too casual about our membership. Sisters, we can’t let that happen. We must prize our Relief Society and our sisters. The Lord





counseled Emma Smith, the first president of Relief Society, “Lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better” (D&C 25:10). Wise words in 1830; wise words for us today.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said to us as a Relief Society general presidency that “our women need fellowship with one another in an environment that will bolster their faith. That’s the work of Relief Society.”

For many years Relief Society was part of the National Council of Women in the United States. Shortly after Sister Belle Spafford was called as the Relief Society general president, she said to President George Albert Smith (1870–1951) that going to the meetings in New York was costly and of little benefit. “President Smith gently chastised [Sister Spafford], ‘Do you always think in terms of what you get? Don’t you think it’s well to think in terms of what you have to give?’”¹⁰

Sisters, what do you bring to Relief Society? What are you willing to share? Do you view Relief Society as a place to go on Sundays because you have nowhere else to go? Do you view it as a place to give as well as to get? Would

we value our membership in our beloved society more if we lost ourselves in giving?

With a giving mentality, we would prepare for Sunday lesson discussions in order to make a contribution. We would faithfully attend home, family, and personal enrichment meeting because we had something to offer—maybe just a word of encouragement to the sister sitting next to us. We would use our visits with each other to witness of the Lord’s truth as we discuss the Visiting Teaching Message. The value we place on our membership in Relief Society should be evident in all we do and say.

One sister shared an experience she had with her mother at a community sewing class they attended together: “As we worked, my mother just sat. One woman said, ‘Margaret, you’re not doing anything.’ My mother paused and then shared how we had spent the last several days at the doctor, that she had a tumor on her back. All the women in the group put their work aside and looked at her. One group member said, ‘Oh, Margaret, can we fast and pray for you? We’ll do that as a group,’ not even thinking that half the women were not members of the Church.

FAR LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT CASEY, POSED BY MODEL; LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND; TOP RIGHT: PAINTING BY HOWARD POST



The value we place on our membership in Relief Society should be evident in all we do and say.

The teacher looked at me and said, ‘What do we do when we fast and pray?’ I explained that we set aside the things of this mortal experience and turn ourselves to the Lord, seeking divine assistance. The teacher stood there a moment and then said, ‘I can do that.’”¹¹

A group of God’s daughters met together; they exercised charity and nurtured one another. A Relief Society sister, sure of who she was, showed her faith in the Savior as she invited all to fast and pray. These women made a difference.

Devote Yourself to Relief Society

I love Relief Society! It has helped define me as a woman. I am who I am because of good women I have associated with in Relief Society—women who have encouraged me, who have loved me, who have believed in me. Such women include my mother, my grandmother, and a dear sister named Pauline

Tholmander. Pauline was in her 60s; I was in my early 30s. She strengthened me through her love of the Savior. It was clear in every way that she loved Jesus Christ. When I bore testimony, Pauline was there to tell me her spirit was stirred. When I served in a calling, she was there to share with me my success or failure. I needed that in my 30s and 40s. There just aren’t enough Paulines in this life. If there were, we would all feel accepted, friendshiped, included, and loved. I wanted to be like her, and I still do.

I invite you to devote yourself to Relief Society. Work at it. Organize and participate and sustain this great work we have been given by God. Trust each other. Lift each other spiritually in your thoughts, teachings, and discussions. Show charity and love—not by assignment but from the heart.

Relief Society should be a safe place where we feel the love of the Lord in our lives as we learn to strengthen families, exercise charity, and value our covenants. And when we value sacred covenants, we value our membership in an organization, in a church, that will bring us to Christ. Dear sisters, oh, how we need each other! ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 184.
2. Personal letter.
3. In Virginia H. Pearce, ed., *Glimpses into the Life and Heart of Marjorie Pay Hinckley* (1999), 254–55.
4. “The Relief Society,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 73.
5. See *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* (1998), 193.
6. See “As Sisters in Zion,” *Hymns*, no. 309.
7. Personal letter.
8. Personal letter.
9. As quoted in Boyd K. Packer, “The Circle of Sisters,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 111.
10. As quoted in Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (1992), 336.
11. Personal letter.



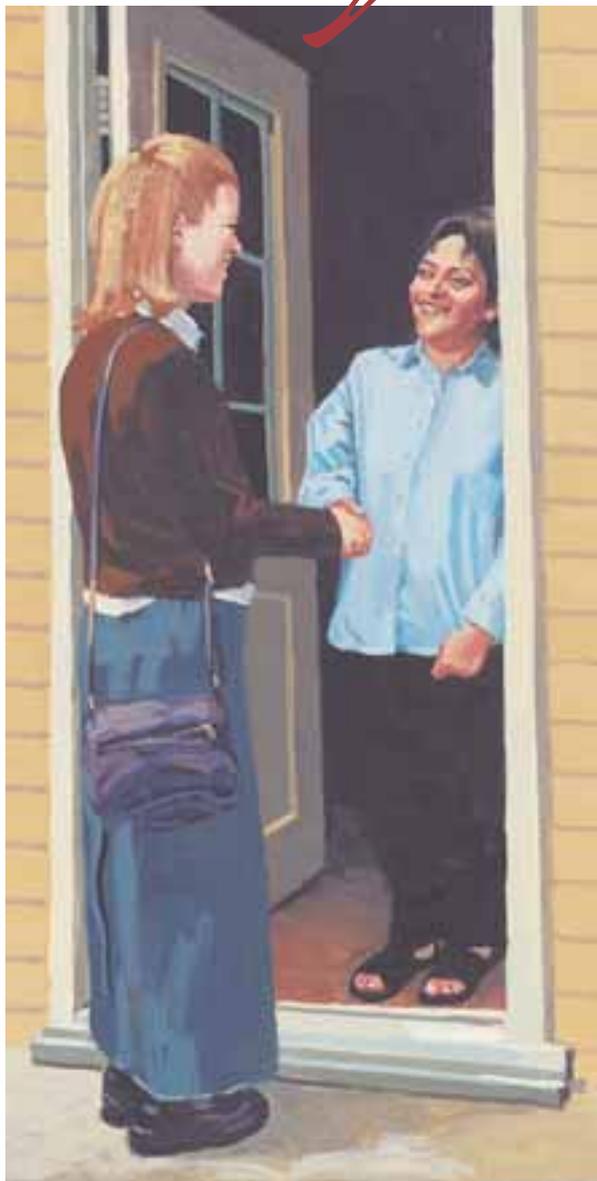
In the Vineyard

BY ROBYN ROMNEY EVANS

Shortly after we were married, my husband and I moved to New Jersey. As a first-year medical student, my husband rarely returned home before 11:30 P.M. I worked as a substitute teacher in the local high schools but spent a lot of time at home by myself. I hadn't made friends quickly. This move had been lonely and difficult for me.

The bishop of my new ward asked me to head up a program for our ward's Spanish-speaking members. This meant translating in sacrament meeting, teaching the gospel doctrine class, and overseeing the Relief Society. Outside of the native Spanish speakers, I was the only woman in the ward who spoke Spanish fluently.

To add to my responsibilities, the Relief Society president gave me a visiting teaching list of 12 sisters who lived in a barrio across town. I'll admit I was not thrilled about my new assignment. I was busy with my other callings, and I was afraid that I wouldn't know how to reach out to these Latina sisters. But I made some visiting teaching appointments, and before I knew it I was sitting in the Dumez's living room.



You're my visiting teacher? Welcome."

"You're my visiting teacher?" Sister Dumez asked as she entered the room. "Welcome to my home. I haven't had a visiting teacher in two years." She listened intently to the message, we visited, and she thanked me again and again for coming.

Before I left she called her five children together to sing "I Am a Child of God" in Spanish. She hugged me and squeezed my hand. As I thought about the experiences and difficult trials she had shared with me, I felt a little remorseful about considering my calling to be such a sacrifice.

I drove to my next appointment and knocked on the door. Sister Martinez pushed the door open with her cane and peered out. I had only spoken a few words of introduction in Spanish when she threw her arms around me and said, "Come in, come in! Finally someone has come who understands my language."

"I like this woman already," I thought. We laughed together like old friends as she recounted tales of her life and talked about her experiences in the Church.

"I can't understand much of sacrament meeting, but I never miss it," she said. "Somehow the Lord fills my heart with the spirit of the meeting."

The sisters gleaned the fields, loaded the tomatoes into the car, and headed for my kitchen. Amid mounds of tomatoes, we laughed and cried as we swapped stories. Each sister took home a dozen jars.

As I got up to leave, I admired the yarn purses she was crocheting. “Which one do you like best?” she asked.

“The black and yellow pattern,” I answered.

“Take it. It’s for you because you’re my visiting teacher.”

All of the visits during that first outing went better than I had anticipated.

Throughout the following months, as the sisters graciously welcomed me into their homes, I began to look forward to my visits. But I was unprepared for the stories of tragedy and adversity I heard as I got to know these beautiful people better. I decided to at least try to make life more comfortable for these sisters and their families, many of whom struggled financially. I began taking casseroles when I visited. I took the families on outings. I drove them to doctor appointments and grocery stores.

I quickly forgot about my own loneliness as I served others. The sisters whom I had at first considered so different from myself soon became my dear friends. They were loyal, steadfast friends who were grateful for even the slightest thing I did for them. And they anticipated my needs: I regularly received calls and gifts from the heart. One sister crocheted a doily for my table. Another composed a poem for my birthday.

Yet, after several months in my callings, I was frustrated at my inability to make life safer or more comfortable for my friends. I was also frustrated that many of them didn’t attend church regularly—some would only come on Sunday if I had visited them during the previous week.

One night I felt especially discouraged. I knelt to pray, pleading with the Lord to show me the direction to take. I felt impressed that the Lord wanted me to help these sisters become more self-reliant and serve each other. I’ll admit that I was skeptical that persons carrying such tremendous burdens would have the strength required to lift one another, but I knew I needed to follow the prompting.

I began by reorganizing the visiting teaching program in the Spanish-speaking Relief Society. One of my faithful friends, Sister Moreira, volunteered to visit

six of the sisters by herself. My first response was to protest, “You can’t possibly handle that route without a car. It’s too far to walk!” But then I remembered my impression to let the sisters serve each other. I put all six sisters on Sister Moreira’s new visiting teaching list.

Upon returning from her marathon visiting teaching course, Sister Moreira called me, filled with the Spirit. As she had visited with her sisters, she had been inspired to share examples from her own life to help them. Her feet were sore, but the Lord had lightened her load and her heart.

After a few more visits, Sister Moreira recruited another sister to walk the route with her. Together they carried pots of rice and handmade cards to the sick. They served and loved their sisters, and soon the families they visited started coming to church more often. Some of the sisters even began preparing to go to the temple for the first time.

Once I started looking, I found all sorts of ways to help these sisters help themselves and each other. When a ward member offered to let us harvest her tomato fields, it occurred to me that my friends and I could gather the tomatoes and bottle them for food storage. But when several sisters responded to my idea by saying, “Put tomatoes in bottles?” I quickly realized these sisters were unfamiliar with the bottling process. They were all eager to try new things though, so we piled into my sedan and headed for the fields.

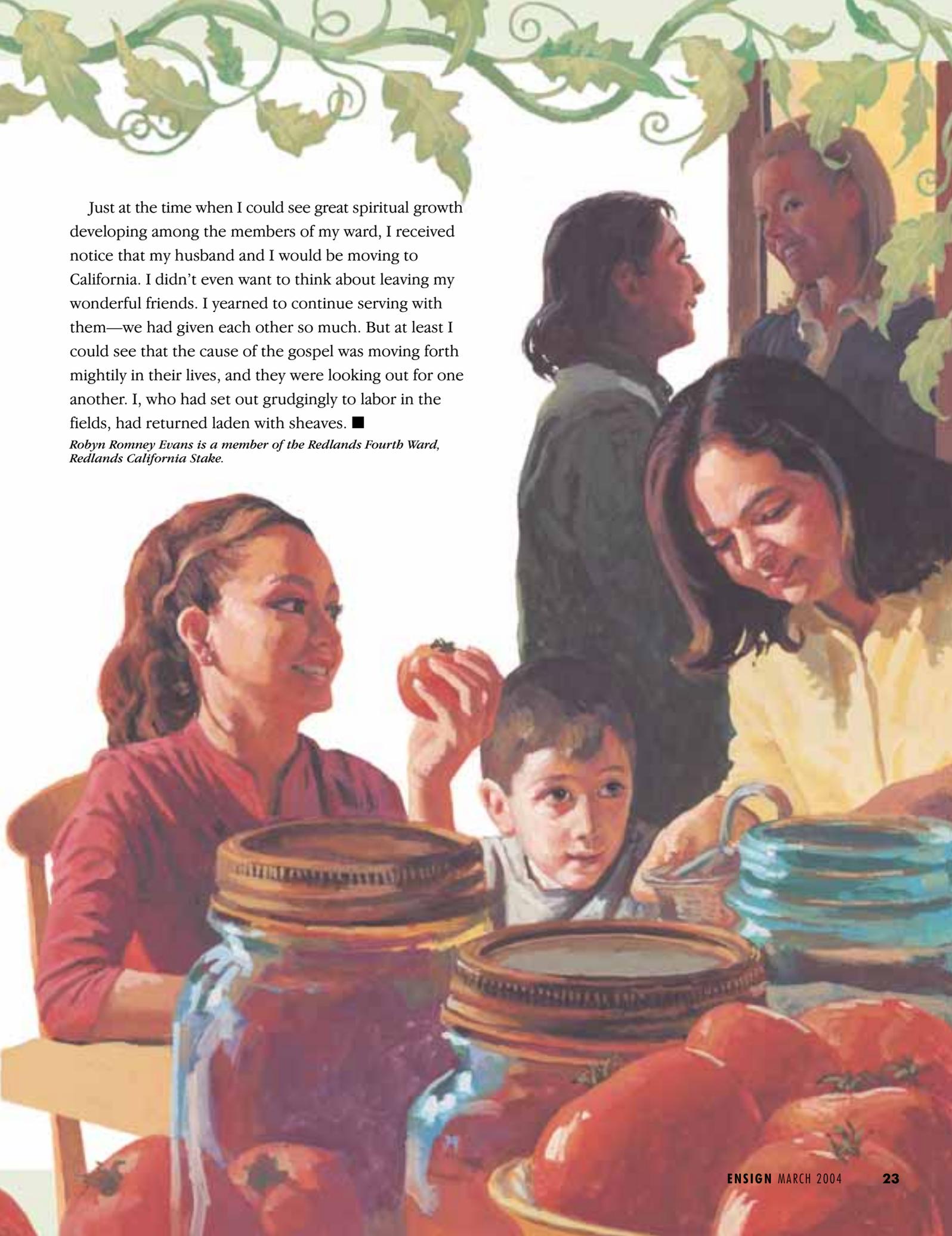
The sisters gleaned the fields rapidly and thoroughly. When we finished, we loaded bushels of tomatoes into the car and returned to my house for a bottling lesson. Amid mounds of tomatoes, we laughed and cried as we swapped stories. Each sister took home a dozen jars. A few of the sisters developed an interest in bottling; they found a good price on peaches and soon added bottles of fruit to their home storage. Families who had often been faced with

hunger were learning new ways to provide for themselves.



Just at the time when I could see great spiritual growth developing among the members of my ward, I received notice that my husband and I would be moving to California. I didn't even want to think about leaving my wonderful friends. I yearned to continue serving with them—we had given each other so much. But at least I could see that the cause of the gospel was moving forth mightily in their lives, and they were looking out for one another. I, who had set out grudgingly to labor in the fields, had returned laden with sheaves. ■

Robyn Romney Evans is a member of the Redlands Fourth Ward, Redlands California Stake.



Improving Our

Prayers



BY ELDER JOSEPH B. WIRTHLIN

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Do you feel that the time you spend in prayer enriches and uplifts your soul? Is there room for improvement?

Every person on the earth today lived at one time in heavenly realms. We walked with our Heavenly Father. We knew Him. We heard His voice. We loved Him. And although we were eager to enter mortality and continue our progression, we must have regretted the separation that would accompany it. We must have sorrowed that a veil would cover our eyes and the bright memories of our lives would be cloaked in the forgetfulness of mortality. How we must have yearned to stay close to our Father in Heaven. How we must have covenanted to ever reach after Him and commune with Him.

Undoubtedly our separation from our Heavenly Father was softened when He promised that as we sought after Him in prayer, He would reach toward us.

Now we are here. Our memories of our premortal life are dim and dark. We have

forgotten those things we supposed we could never forget. Unfortunately and tragically we sometimes even forget our Heavenly Father, whom we loved so dearly.

Have you considered the effectiveness of your prayers, your efforts to reach toward Him from this mortal life? How close do you feel to your Heavenly Father? Do you feel that your prayers are answered? Do you feel that the time you spend in prayer enriches and uplifts your soul? Is there room for improvement?

Make Prayers Meaningful

There are many reasons our prayers may lack power. Sometimes they become routine. Our prayers become hollow when we say similar words in similar ways over and over so often that the words become more of a recitation than a communication. This is what the Savior described as “vain repetitions” (see Matthew 6:7). Such prayers, He said, will not be heard.

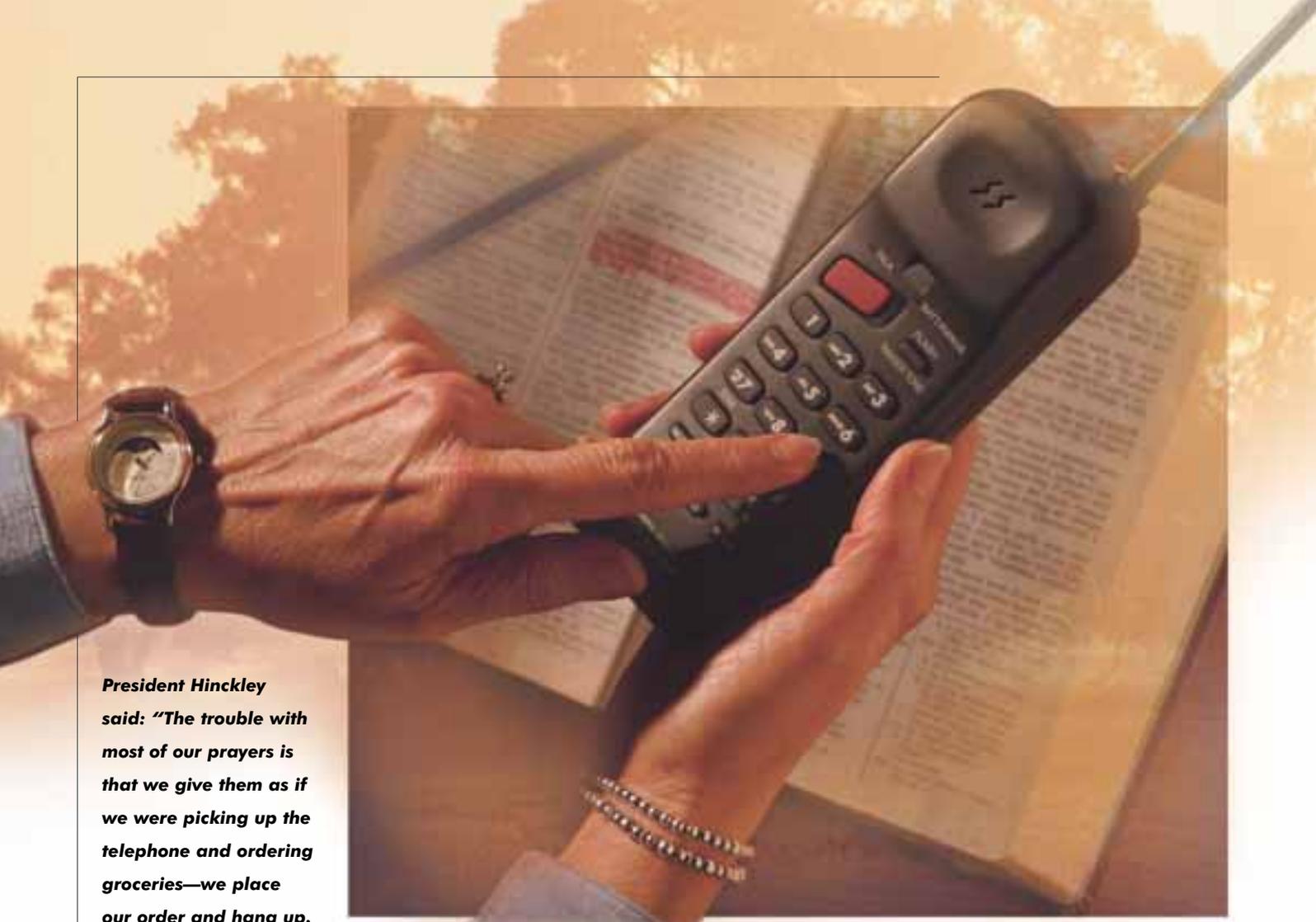
Our beloved prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, has observed:

“The trouble with most of our prayers is

A large, close-up photograph of a man with short dark hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt. He is looking down and to the left, with his right hand resting on his forehead in a contemplative or distressed pose. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

The Savior tells us,
“Behold, I stand
at the door, and
knock: if any man hear
my voice, and open the
door, I will come in to
him, and will sup with
him, and he will be with me.”





President Hinckley said: "The trouble with most of our prayers is that we give them as if we were picking up the telephone and ordering groceries—we place our order and hang up. We need to meditate, contemplate, think of what we are praying about and for and then speak to the Lord as one man speaketh to another."

that we give them as if we were picking up the telephone and ordering groceries—we place our order and hang up. We need to meditate, contemplate, think of what we are praying about and for and then speak to the Lord as one man speaketh to another."¹

Do your prayers at times sound and feel the same? Have you ever said a prayer mechanically, the words pouring forth as though cut from a machine? Do you sometimes bore yourself as you pray?

Will prayers that do not demand much of your thought merit much attention from our Heavenly Father? When you find yourself getting into a routine with your prayers, step back and think. Meditate for a while on the things for which you really are grateful. Look for them. They don't have to be grand or

glorious. Sometimes we should express our gratitude for the small and simple things like the scent of the rain, the taste of your favorite food, or the sound of a loved one's voice.

Thinking of things we are grateful for is a healing balm. It helps us get outside ourselves. It changes our focus from our pains and our trials to the abundance of this beautiful world we live in.

Think of those things you truly need. Bring your goals and your hopes and your dreams to the Lord and set them before Him. Heavenly Father wants us to approach Him and ask for His divine aid. Explain to Him the trials you are facing. Set before Him your righteous desires.

Our prayers can and should be focused

on the practical, everyday struggles of life. If we should pray over our crops (see Alma 34:24), then why not over other important challenges we face?

Some believe that the more eloquent a prayer, the more effective. Too often these prayers are not so much meant for the ears of the Almighty as they are for the ears of the audience. Do you want to commune with the Infinite? Then approach Him with reverence and humility. Don't worry so much about whether your words are polished or not. Worry instead about speaking from your heart.

Pray with Faith

Another reason many prayers have little power is that we lack faith. We approach our Heavenly Father like a child who asks something of his or her parents, knowing they will refuse. Without faith, our prayers are merely words. With faith, our prayers connect with the powers of heaven and can bring upon us increased understanding, hope, and power. If by faith the worlds were created, then by faith we can create and receive the righteous desires of our heart.

What is faith? Faith is absolute confidence in that which is in absolute conformity to the will of heaven. When we combine that confidence with absolute action on our part, we have faith.

Faith without works is dead. Sometimes we expect Heavenly Father to answer our prayers when all we have done is utter a prayer. The doors of heaven will ever be closed to those who hold out their hands, waiting for blessings to drop from heaven upon them.

The powers of faith are activated by action. We must do our part. We must prepare. We must do all that is in our power, and we will be blessed in our efforts.

Prayer is a private matter between you and Heavenly Father. Both He and you know when you have done what

you can. Do not give a thought as to whether or not your best compares with others. In the eyes of Heavenly Father, that doesn't matter.

The Challenge of Prosperity

Perhaps one of the great challenges the Church faces in our day is that of prosperity. President Brigham Young said:

“The worst fear that I have about this people is that they will get rich [and] forget God. . . . This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear for them is that they cannot stand wealth.”²

Prosperity can deaden us to spiritual things. It can give us the illusion of power. When we are sick, we can go to a doctor and get healed. When we are hungry, we can feed ourselves. When we are cold, we can get warm. In short, most of the problems of life we can solve ourselves—we can answer many of our own prayers.

Because of the relative ease many have in acquiring their daily bread, they can become deceived into thinking they are saviors unto themselves. In their pride and foolishness they feel they have little need of a Heavenly Father. They think little of the power that created the universe or of Him who gave His life that they might live.

In the Doctrine and Covenants we are warned of these modern-day idolaters: “They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world” (D&C 1:16).

Those who worship the things of this world will one day cry to their riches and plead with them to save them.



Undoubtedly our separation from our Heavenly Father was softened when He promised that as we sought after Him in prayer, He would reach toward us.

In that day they will learn the coldness of their god and realize the terrible error of their ways.

The Need for Charity

Another reason our prayers have little power is that we fail to succor those in need around us. The Book of Mormon teaches, “If ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing” (Alma 34:28).

Our willingness to aid those in distress around us has ever been the benchmark of the disciples of Christ. Indeed, the Savior taught that our very salvation depends upon the level of our compassion for others (see Matthew 25:31–46). If we turn our backs upon the poor and the distressed, can we, in turn, suppose that our Heavenly Father will be merciful to us? As we are to those in need, so our Heavenly Father will be to us in our time of need.

A Pattern for Prayer

In Psalm 37 David revealed an inspired process for active prayer and faith. It is a step-by-step process that may serve as a pattern for us to follow as we seek to increase our faith and improve the efficacy of our prayers.

“Fret not” is the first step (see verse 1). To fret means to worry or to brood about something. The first thing we must do is stop worrying. When we worry about the future, we create unhappiness in the present. Righteous concern may lead us to take appropriate action, but worrying about things we cannot control can paralyze and demoralize us.

Instead of worrying, focus on doing all that you can, and then leave the worrying to your Heavenly Father. If

your heart is right with Him, He will take care of the worry and the fear. We must learn to “fret not.”

The second step is to “trust in the Lord” (see verse 3). Why should we trust in Him? Because He is our loving and all-wise Father in Heaven. Because He is the giver of all good gifts. Because He knows us and wants us to be happy and successful and to return to Him. God is in His heaven. He is perfect. He loves us.

I remember the many times my dear mother trusted in our Heavenly Father for my safety. I played quarterback at East High School in Salt Lake City and running back at the University of Utah. During all that time I don’t think my mother ever stopped praying for my safety. She trusted in our Father in Heaven, depending on Him to protect me from major injury during the games. Although I had my share of bumps and bruises, I never

had a major injury.

I suppose my mother breathed a sigh of relief when I told her I was going to leave the football field for a season. I met

with my beloved bishop, Marion G. Romney, to express a desire to serve a full-time mission. But that short, worry-free season soon ended when I was called to serve in the German-Austrian Mission. Three months after I arrived in Salzburg, the name of the mission was changed to the Swiss-Austrian Mission.

The year was 1937. I arrived in Salzburg, Austria, at the very time Hitler was amassing 300,000 troops on the border for the Anschluss, his invasion of Austria.

My mother and father gathered the family to kneel in prayer morning and night and pled for my safety. I know that I felt the influence of those prayers. I trusted my



Our Heavenly Father expects our actions to serve as a living testimony to our words. As we do good, the Lord can bless our efforts.





Perhaps one of the great challenges the Church faces in our day is that of prosperity. President Brigham Young said: “The worst fear that I have about this people is that they will get rich [and] forget God. . . . This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear for them is that they cannot stand wealth.”

Heavenly Father would hear their prayers. I trusted in my prayers that He would preserve my life.

A month before Hitler invaded Austria, I was transferred to Switzerland. My testimony is that our prayers had been answered.

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding,” we read in the scriptures. “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6).

The third step is “do good” (see Psalm 37:3). We do good because we are followers of Christ. We do good because we are members of His church. We do good because we have made solemn covenants to serve as a light unto the world. Our Heavenly Father expects our actions to serve as a living testimony to our words. As we do good, the Lord can bless our efforts.

This is not to say that we must never make a mistake, “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). The Lord requires that we seek Him with a humble heart, that we repent of our sins, and that we continue to do the best we can. As we make mistakes, we should learn from them and strive not to repeat them. As we do so, we become ever more Christlike, ever more as men and women of God.

As our actions contradict our professions of faith, our prayers become weak. When we do good, the Lord can work through us and magnify our efforts.

The fourth step is to “delight thyself also in the Lord” (see Psalm 37:4). What a wonderful doctrine! Instead of worrying or grumbling that our prayers have gone unanswered, we should delight ourselves

If we turn our backs upon the poor and the distressed, can we, in turn, suppose that our Heavenly Father will be merciful to us? As we are to those in need, so our Heavenly Father will be to us in our time of need.



in the Lord. Be grateful. Be happy. Know that the Lord, in His time, will bring about all your righteous desires—sometimes in ways we predict, sometimes in ways we could not have possibly foreseen. What a wonderful recipe for happiness and peace.

The fifth step is to “commit thy way unto the Lord” (see verse 5). No matter what your worries are, commit yourself to keeping His commandments. Brethren, honor your priesthood. Sisters, cleave unto the principles of light and truth.

The sixth step is to “rest in the Lord” (see verse 7). Sometimes the hardest thing we can do is wait. The Lord has His own timetable, and although it may frustrate us, His timing is always perfect. When we rest in the Lord, we allow Him to work His will for us in His own time and in His own way.

Prayer Brings Light

As we commune with our Father in humble prayer, our hearts receive the gentle outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Lord tells us, “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24).

Those who do not have this light ever struggle with disbelief. They cannot understand the things of God because their souls have little light. On the other hand, as our souls become filled with light, we begin to understand clearly things that once were dark.

You recall the Prophet Joseph Smith’s experience with darkness and light in the Sacred Grove. President Lorenzo Snow

(1814–98) wrote of an experience of his own:

“Some two or three weeks after I was baptized . . . I began to reflect upon the fact that I had not obtained a *knowledge* of the truth of the work . . . , and I began to feel very uneasy. I laid aside my books, left the house, and wandered around through the fields under the oppressive influence of a gloomy, disconsolate spirit, while an indescribable cloud of darkness seemed to envelop me. I had been accustomed, at the close of the day, to retire for secret prayer, to a grove a short distance from my lodgings, but at this time I felt no inclination to do so. The spirit of prayer had departed and the heavens seemed like brass over my head. At length, realizing that the usual time had come for secret prayer, I concluded I would not forego my evening service, and, as a matter of formality, knelt as I was in the habit of doing, and in my accustomed retired place, but not feeling as I was wont to feel.

“I had no sooner opened my lips in an effort to pray, than I heard a sound, just above my head, like the rustling of silken robes, and immediately the Spirit of God descended upon me, completely enveloping my whole person, filling me, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and O, the joy and happiness I felt! No language can describe the almost instantaneous transition from a dense cloud of mental and spiritual darkness into a refulgence of light and knowledge, as it was at that time imparted to my understanding. I then received a perfect knowledge that God lives, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and of the restoration of the holy Priesthood, and the fulness of the Gospel. . . .

“. . . That night, as I retired to rest, the same wonderful manifestations were repeated, and continued to be for several successive nights. The sweet remembrance of those glorious experiences, from that time to the present,

bring them fresh before me, imparting an inspiring influence which pervades my whole being, and I trust will to the close of my earthly existence.”³

My brothers and sisters, spiritual experiences are available to all who come before their Eternal Father with a broken heart and contrite spirit. One of the things we must do in this mortality is chase away the darkness. We must fill our souls with the light of the Holy Spirit.



As our actions contradict our professions of faith, our prayers become weak. When we do good, the Lord can work through us and magnify our efforts.

Blessings Available to All

The rich blessings that can come into our lives through prayer are available to all. The poor have as much access as the rich. The movie star has no advantage over the laborer. We are all equal in our ability to approach the throne of our Heavenly King.

The Savior tells us, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

As we approach our Heavenly Father in the name of Christ, we open the windows of heaven. We can receive from Him truth, light, and knowledge.

Prayer is the doorway through which we commence our discipleship to things heavenly and eternal. We will never be alone so long as we know how to pray.

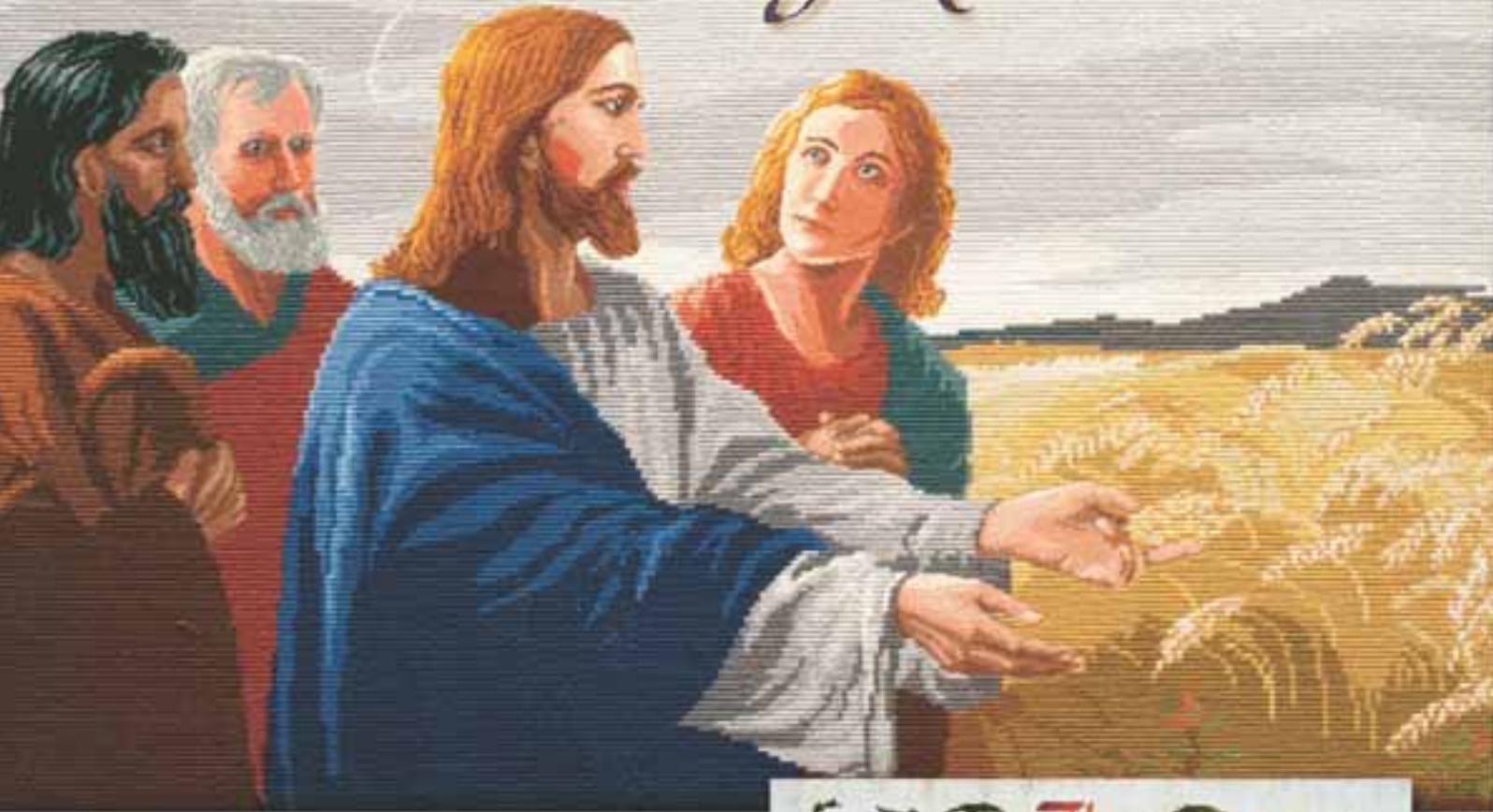
It is my earnest desire that members of the Church will reexamine their own lives through the context of prayer. That we may ever lift up our voices to our Heavenly Father and fill our souls with celestial light is my prayer. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University—Provo on 21 January 2003.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 469.
2. Quoted in James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer* (1971), 122–23.
3. Quoted in Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (1884), 7–9.

With Every Stitch



BY LOREE ROMRIELL

Guest Curator, Museum of Church History and Art

For some time prior to the 20th century, the education of most middle and upper class young women in England and America focused almost exclusively on domestic skills and the arts. Skill at embroidery was considered essential. As part of the learning process, young women created samples of all the embroidery stitches and motifs they would need to know to beautify clothing and home furnishings. Samplers were evidence that a young woman had attained a certain level of skill. Thus a “sampler” became a combined reference point and exercise sheet to indicate that skill.



Today many women around the world still find great pleasure and expression in the creation of decorative needle crafts. A resurgent interest in high quality needlework reminiscent of the earlier sampler tradition has led many contemporary designers to create beautiful new pieces of art.

Left: A Sower Went Out to Sow, 1988, by Katharina Bulla, stitched in the Germanic needlework tradition. Below left: The Lord Is My Shepherd, by an unknown maker. Right: Mother's Sampler, about 1815, by convert Elizabeth Hesketh [Liptrot]. After Elizabeth died, her daughter Grace took her own sampler and her mother's treasured sampler to Zion. Strawberries in the border represent the perfect fruit because they have no pit or peel. Below right: From Maine to Utah, 1811 and 1848, by Patty Bartlett Sessions. Patty started this sampler at age 16 in Bethel, Maine. She completed it in August 1848 at age 53, after arriving in the Salt Lake Valley. A beloved midwife, Patty Sessions filled her sampler with pictures of animals as well as numbers, an alphabet, and verse.



Following are examples of historic and contemporary needlework gathered by the Museum of Church History and Art. They embody core values of faith, family, and industry. Some include family genealogy. All are family treasures handed down from mother to daughter as a reminder of family unity and love. ■

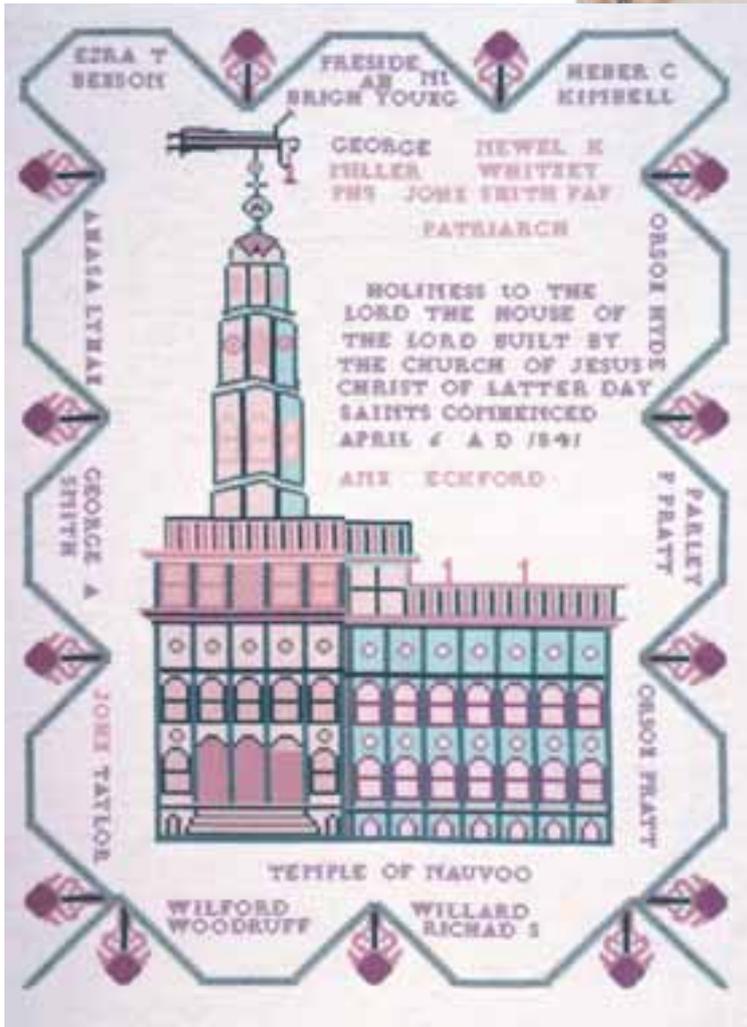
Loree Romriell is a member of the Hidden Valley First Ward, Sandy Utah Hidden Valley Stake.





Above: Utah Sampler, 1994, by Carolyn Standing Webb. Consistent with early samplers, this modern example includes an alphabet and a scriptural verse. Symbolic Utah motifs include the roses at the bottom representing the biblical prophecy that the desert shall

blossom as a rose, the Lombardy poplar tree, sunflowers, a log cabin, bees, and beehives. Surrounding the body of this sampler is a border of sego lilies, the Utah state flower. Notice the mountain range and the family dressed in pioneer clothing.



Left: Nauvoo Temple Sampler, Historic Reproduction, 1986–87, 1989, by William H. Ormond and Mindy Chisholm. This work is a reproduction of two nearly identical samplers originally made in England about 1850. Top left: In Our Lovely Deseret, 1990, by Elaine Thatcher. Deseret is a Book of Mormon word that means “honeybee.” President Brigham Young taught that everyone should be as “busy as a bee” in doing good works. Even today Utah is known as the Beehive State. Above: Child of Grace, 1844, by Helena Lydia Robinson [Richards]. Symbols include baskets of fruit for prosperity, lions for strength and hope, birds for the Spirit, and a house for protection. On the third line of the verse, Helena placed the “e” above “plac” to avoid unstitching the whole line. Such modifications were common.



Clockwise from left:
Sturdivant Family Register, about 1830, by Jane Sturdivant. Family registers became popular in the 19th century, and in many cases were the



only record left of a person or family. Minister One by One, 1985, by an unknown maker. This original needlework, which once hung in the Primary general offices, celebrates the simple idea that the best teaching occurs one-on-one. Inscription on a Sun-dial, 1835, by convert Mary Ann Freir [Smith]. Flowers in the border represent purity and protection; the castle is a symbol of a great quest, which when achieved bestows prosperity; and honeysuckle, below the verse, represents enduring faith. Families Are Forever, 1998, by Carolyn Standing Webb.



Decorative needle crafts are among the most ancient of mankind's crafts. In virtually every culture of the world, people have decorated their possessions with needlework. Pictorial embroidery preceded oil painting by centuries. For example, Jehovah instructed Moses to build a tabernacle using fine linen curtains embroidered with cherubim. Right: The First Vision, 1990, by Jacinta R. Freire Rosales Zumaeta. In many countries, replicating well-known images seen in Church magazines and manuals is considered a compliment to the artist and is a way of embracing the Latter-day Saint tradition. This image is from a 1989 Greg K. Olsen oil painting.



A TEMPLE- MOTIVATED PEOPLE



It is the Lord Himself who, in His revelations to us, has made the temple the great symbol of our discipleship with Him.

**BY PRESIDENT HOWARD W. HUNTER
(1907–95)**

Fourteenth President of the Church

The gospel proclaimed to the world by the Latter-day Saints is the gospel of Jesus Christ as restored to the earth in this dispensation and is for the redemption of all mankind. The Lord Himself has revealed what is essential for the salvation and exaltation of His children. One of these essentials is that temples are to be erected for the performance of ordinances that cannot be performed in any other place.

When this is explained to people from all over the world who come and look at our temples, the question these people most frequently ask is, what are the ordinances that are performed in temples?

In response, we often first explain the ordinance known as baptism for the dead. We note that many Christians believe that at the time of death, our status before the Lord is determined for all eternity, for did not Christ say to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom

of God”? (John 3:5). Yet we know that many people have died without the ordinance of baptism, and thus, according to Christ’s statement to Nicodemus, they would be eliminated from entering into the kingdom of God. This raises the question, is God just?

The answer is, of course God is just. It is evident that the Savior’s statement to Nicodemus presupposes that baptisms may be done for those who have died who have not been baptized. Latter-day prophets have told us that baptism is an earthly ordinance that can be performed only by the living. How then can those who are dead be baptized if only the living can perform the ordinance? That was the theme of the Apostle Paul’s writing to the Corinthians when he asked this question:

Portrayed in a scene likely in fall 1835, the Prophet Joseph Smith (center) assists Joseph and Brigham Young (top) with window installation in the Kirtland Temple, the first of the latter-day temples. Oliver Cowdery (left) and Sidney Rigdon (right) assisted in the temple’s preparations.



Doing work for others is accomplished in two steps: first, by family history research to ascertain our progenitors, and second, by performing the temple ordinances to give them the same opportunities afforded to the living.

“Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?” (1 Corinthians 15:29).

In fact, as we study ecclesiastical history, we find that baptism for the dead was practiced by the early Christians. There was vicarious work for the dead at that time, and there is today. Indeed, vicarious work is not something new or strange. We remember that the Savior Himself in a vicarious manner atoned for the sins of all mankind. Today, baptisms are again performed by the living in behalf of individuals who have died, as is also the laying on of hands for the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Ghost for these same deceased people. These ordinances for the deceased, however, are performed only in the house of the Lord.

The endowment is another ordinance performed in our temples. It consists of two parts: first, a series of instructions, and second, promises or covenants that the person receiving the endowment makes—promises to live righteously and comply with the requirements of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The endowment is an ordinance for the great blessing of the Saints—both living and dead. Thus it is also an ordinance performed

by the living in behalf of deceased individuals; it is performed for those for whom baptismal work has already been performed.

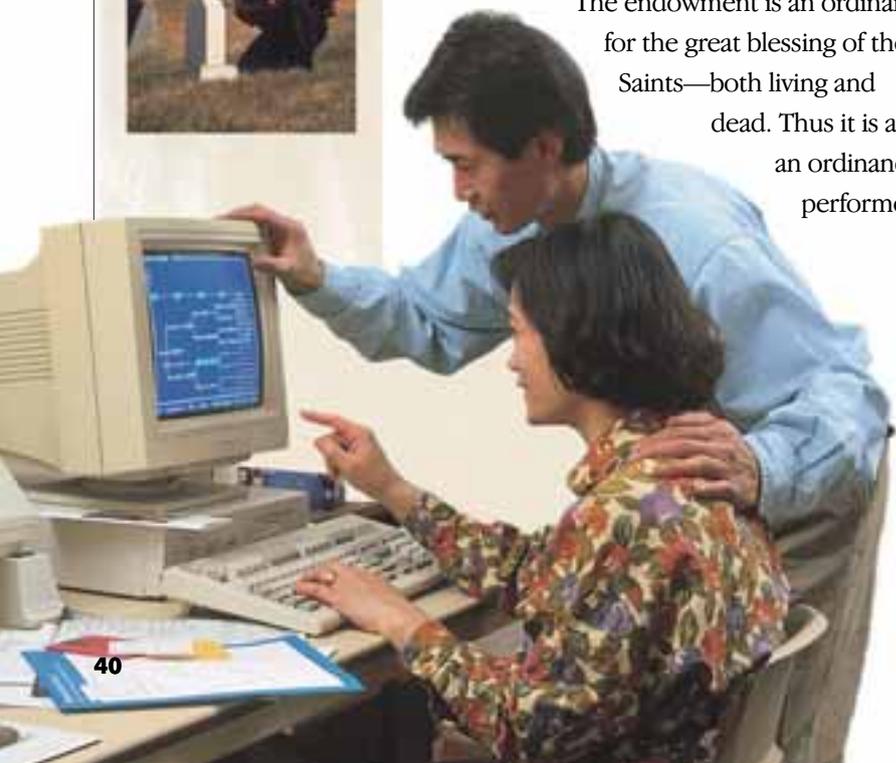
Another temple ordinance is that of celestial marriage, where wife is sealed to husband and husband sealed to wife for eternity. We know, of course, that civil marriages end at death, but eternal marriages performed in the temple may exist forever. Children born to a husband and wife after an eternal marriage are automatically sealed to their parents for eternity. If children are born before the wife is sealed to her husband, there is a temple sealing ordinance that can seal these children to their parents for eternity, and so it is that children can be sealed vicariously to parents who have passed away.

In the ordinances of the temple, the foundations of the eternal family are sealed in place. The Church has the responsibility—and the authority—to preserve and protect the family as the foundation of society.

All of these priesthood temple ordinances are essential for the salvation and exaltation of our Father in Heaven’s children.

Doctrine and Covenants section 137 records a vision given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple. In that vision, he saw his brother Alvin, who had departed this life, and his parents. The voice of the Lord came to him and said that “all who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God” (D&C 137:7).

Section 138 records a divine manifestation given to President Joseph F. Smith [1838–1918] that also pertains to the work of redemption of the dead. President Smith had been pondering our Lord’s visit to the spirit world as he read the First Epistle of Peter and



reflected upon the verse that states, “For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (1 Peter 4:6).

A vision then unfolded to President Smith. That vision is recorded in section 138. President Smith saw that “the Lord went not in person among the wicked and the disobedient who had rejected the truth, to teach them;

“But behold, from among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority,

accomplish the priesthood temple ordinance work necessary for our own exaltation; then we must do the necessary work for those who did not have the opportunity to accept the gospel in life. Doing work for others is accomplished in two steps: first, by family history research to ascertain our progenitors, and second, by performing the temple ordinances to give them the same opportunities afforded to the living.

Furthermore, the dead are anxiously waiting for the Latter-day Saints to search out their names and then go into the temples to officiate

Temple baptismal fonts are placed on the backs of oxen, which signify the tribes of Israel. Today, baptisms are performed in these fonts by the living in behalf of individuals who have died.



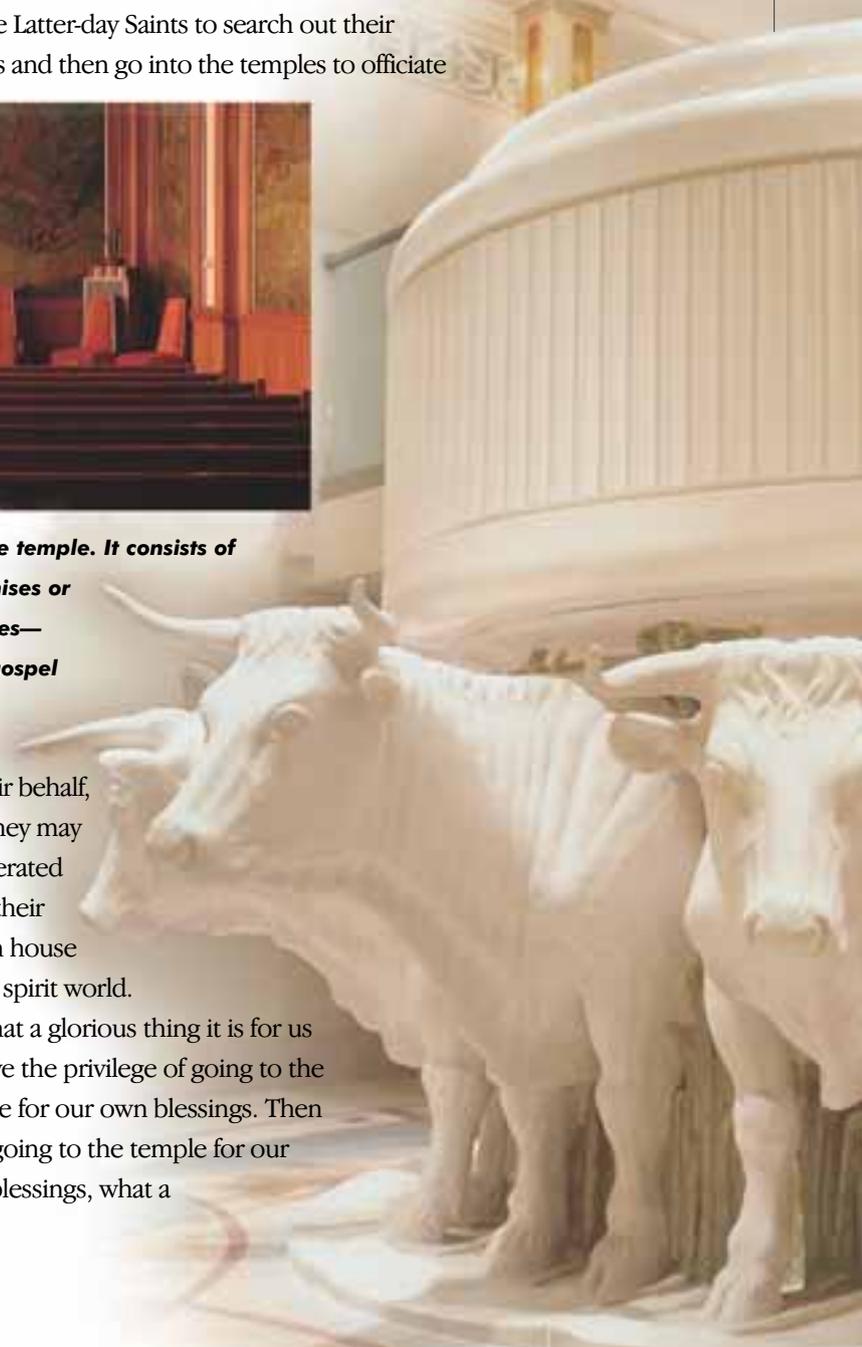
The endowment is one of the ordinances performed in the temple. It consists of two parts: first, a series of instructions, and second, promises or covenants that the person receiving the endowment makes—promises to live righteously and in compliance with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead” (D&C 138:29–30).

Surely we on this side of the veil have a great work to do. For in light of all the above-noted facts about temple ordinances, we can see that the building of temples has deep significance for ourselves and mankind, and our responsibilities become clear. We must

in their behalf, that they may be liberated from their prison house in the spirit world.

What a glorious thing it is for us to have the privilege of going to the temple for our own blessings. Then after going to the temple for our own blessings, what a





glorious privilege to do the work for those who have gone on before us. This aspect of temple work is an unselfish work. Yet whenever we do temple work for other people, there is a blessing that comes back to us. Thus it should be no surprise to us that the Lord does desire that His people be a temple-motivated people.

The Great Symbol of Our Membership

It is the Lord Himself who, in His revelations to us, has made the temple the great symbol for members of the Church. Think of the attitudes and righteous behaviors that the Lord pointed us toward in the counsel He gave to the Kirtland Saints through the Prophet Joseph Smith as they were preparing to build a temple. This counsel is still applicable:

“Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 88:119). Are these attitudes and behaviors indeed reflective of what each of us desires and seeks to be?

We have no record that temples were built in either the Old or New World during the long period of apostasy before the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored in these latter days. The priesthood, which is essential to temple ordinances, did not exist upon the earth. After the Restoration of the gospel through a prophet of the Lord, raised up for that very purpose, and the establishment of The Church of

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, temples were again erected according to divine commandment.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie [1915–85] of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:

“The inspired erection and proper use of temples is one of the great evidences of the divinity of the Lord’s work. . . . Where there are temples, with the spirit of revelation resting upon those who administer therein, there the Lord’s people will be found; where these are not, the Church and kingdom and the truth of heaven are not” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 781).

Let us consider some of the promises connected to the temple that the Lord has given us. Consider the lifestyle we must live in order to be beneficiaries of these promises:

“And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it;

“Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God.

“But if it be defiled I will not come into it, and my glory shall not be there; for I will not come into unholy temples.

“And, now, behold, if Zion do these things she shall prosper, and spread herself and become very glorious, very great, and very terrible.

“And the nations of the earth shall honor her, and shall say: Surely Zion is the city of our God, and surely Zion cannot fall, neither be moved out of her place, for God is there, and the hand of the Lord is there;

“And he hath sworn by the power of his might to be her salvation and her high tower.

“Therefore, verily, thus saith the Lord, let Zion rejoice, for this is Zion—THE PURE IN HEART; therefore, let Zion rejoice” (D&C 97:15–21).

What promises to us as a people! What a symbol for us—as individuals, as families, and as a people—to be known before the Lord as the pure in heart!

Consider the majestic teachings in the great dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, a prayer the Prophet Joseph Smith said was given to him by revelation. It is a prayer

that continues to be answered upon us individually, upon us as families, and upon us as a people because of the priesthood power the Lord has given us to use in His holy temples.

“And now, Holy Father,” pleaded the Prophet Joseph Smith, “we ask thee to assist us, thy people, with thy grace . . . that we may be found worthy, in thy sight, to secure a fulfillment of the promises which thou hast made unto us, thy people, in the revelations given unto us;

“That thy glory may rest down upon thy people. . . .

“We ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them;

“And from this place they may bear exceedingly great and glorious tidings, in truth, unto the ends of the earth, that they may know that this is thy work, and that thou hast put forth thy hand, to fulfil that which thou hast spoken by the mouths of the prophets, concerning the last days. . . .

“We ask thee to appoint unto Zion other stakes . . . that the gathering of thy people may roll on in great power and majesty, that thy work may be cut short in righteousness. . . .

“And may all the scattered remnants of Israel, who have been driven to the ends of the earth, come to a knowledge of the truth, believe in the Messiah, and be redeemed from oppression, and rejoice before thee. . . .

“Remember all thy church, O Lord, with all their families, and all their immediate connections, with all their sick and afflicted ones, with all the poor and meek of the earth; that the kingdom, which thou hast set up without hands, may become a great mountain and fill the whole earth; . . .

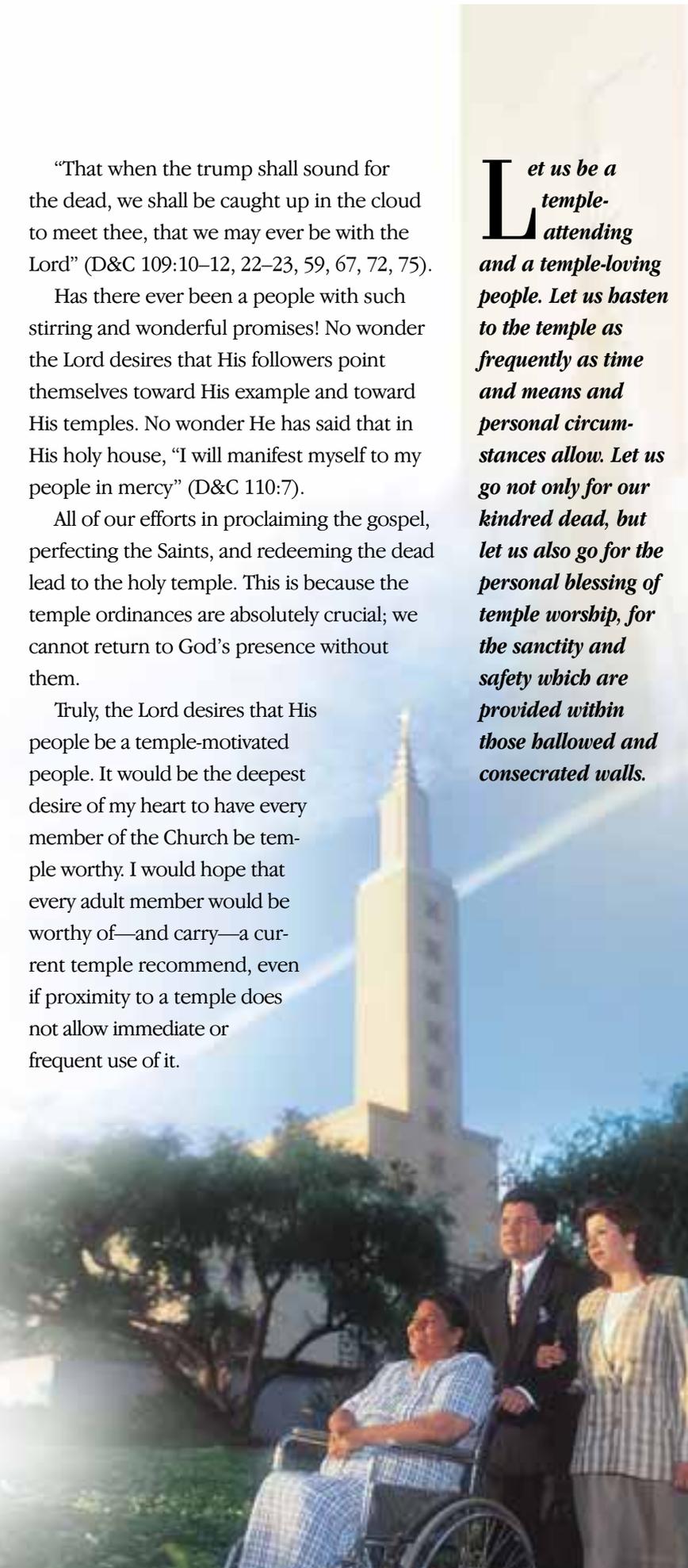
“That when the trump shall sound for the dead, we shall be caught up in the cloud to meet thee, that we may ever be with the Lord” (D&C 109:10–12, 22–23, 59, 67, 72, 75).

Has there ever been a people with such stirring and wonderful promises! No wonder the Lord desires that His followers point themselves toward His example and toward His temples. No wonder He has said that in His holy house, “I will manifest myself to my people in mercy” (D&C 110:7).

All of our efforts in proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead lead to the holy temple. This is because the temple ordinances are absolutely crucial; we cannot return to God’s presence without them.

Truly, the Lord desires that His people be a temple-motivated people. It would be the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church be temple worthy. I would hope that every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent use of it.

Let us be a temple-attending and a temple-loving people. Let us hasten to the temple as frequently as time and means and personal circumstances allow. Let us go not only for our kindred dead, but let us also go for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety which are provided within those hallowed and consecrated walls.



Let us share with our children the spiritual feelings we have in the temple. And let us teach them more earnestly and more comfortably the things we can appropriately say about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it.

Let us be a temple-attending and a temple-loving people. Let us hasten to the temple as frequently as time and means and personal circumstances allow. Let us go not only for our kindred dead, but let us also go for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety which are provided within those hallowed and consecrated walls. The temple is a place of beauty; it is a place of revelation; it is a place of peace. It is the house of the Lord. It is holy unto the Lord. It should be holy unto us.

Let us share with our children the spiritual feelings we have in the temple. And let us teach them more earnestly and more comfortably the things we can appropriately say about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it. Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing.

It is pleasing to the Lord for our youth to worthily go to the temple and perform vicarious baptisms for those who did not have the opportunity to be baptized in life. It is pleasing to the Lord when we worthily go to the temple to personally

make our own covenants with Him and to be sealed as couples and as families. And it is pleasing to the Lord when we worthily go to the temple to perform these same saving ordinances for those who have died, many of whom eagerly await the completion of these ordinances in their behalf.

To have the temple indeed be a symbol unto us, we must desire it to be so. We must live worthy to enter the temple. We must keep the commandments of our Lord. If we can pattern our life after the Master, and take His teaching and example as the supreme pattern for our own, we will not find it difficult to be temple worthy, to be consistent and loyal in every walk of life, for we will be committed to a single, sacred standard of conduct and belief. Whether at home or in the marketplace, whether at school or long after school is behind us, whether we are acting totally alone or in concert with a host of other people, our course will be clear and our standards will be obvious.

The ability to stand by one's principles, to live with integrity and faith according to one's belief—that is what matters. That devotion to true principle—in our individual lives, in our homes and families, and in all places that we meet and influence other people—that devotion is what God is ultimately requesting of us. It requires commitment—whole-souled, deeply held, eternally cherished commitment to the principles we know to be true in the commandments God has given. If we will be true and faithful to the Lord's principles, then we will always be temple worthy, and the Lord and His holy temples will be the great symbols of our discipleship with Him. ■

For original article text, see Tambuli, Nov. 1994, 2-7; Liahona, May 1995, 2-7; Ensign, Oct. 1994, 2-5; Feb. 1995, 2-5.



Letter from the First Presidency

*The First Presidency sent the following letter, dated 11 March 2003,
to priesthood leaders to be read in sacrament meeting.*

We are grateful for the increased availability of temples worldwide and invite adult members to have a current temple recommend and visit the temple more often. Where time and circumstances permit, members

are encouraged to replace some leisure activities with temple service.

“Millions of our ancestors have lived upon the earth without receiving the benefit of temple ordinances. We particularly encourage newer members and youth of the Church who are 12 years of age and older to

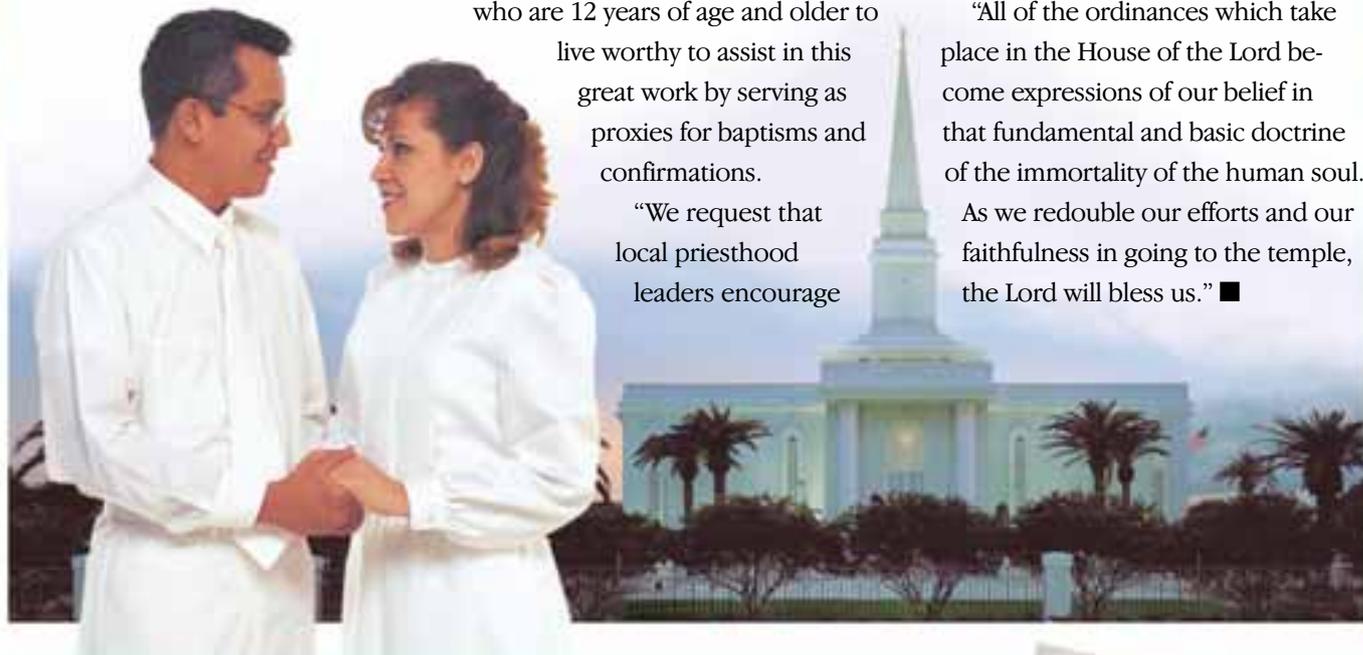
live worthy to assist in this great work by serving as proxies for baptisms and confirmations.

“We request that local priesthood leaders encourage

temple-worthy members to consider ways in which more frequent day-time temple attendance could occur. Home and visiting teachers may wish to arrange transportation for those who need it, particularly during the daytime.

“All of the ordinances which take place in the House of the Lord become expressions of our belief in that fundamental and basic doctrine of the immortality of the human soul.

As we redouble our efforts and our faithfulness in going to the temple, the Lord will bless us.” ■



From the Distribution Center

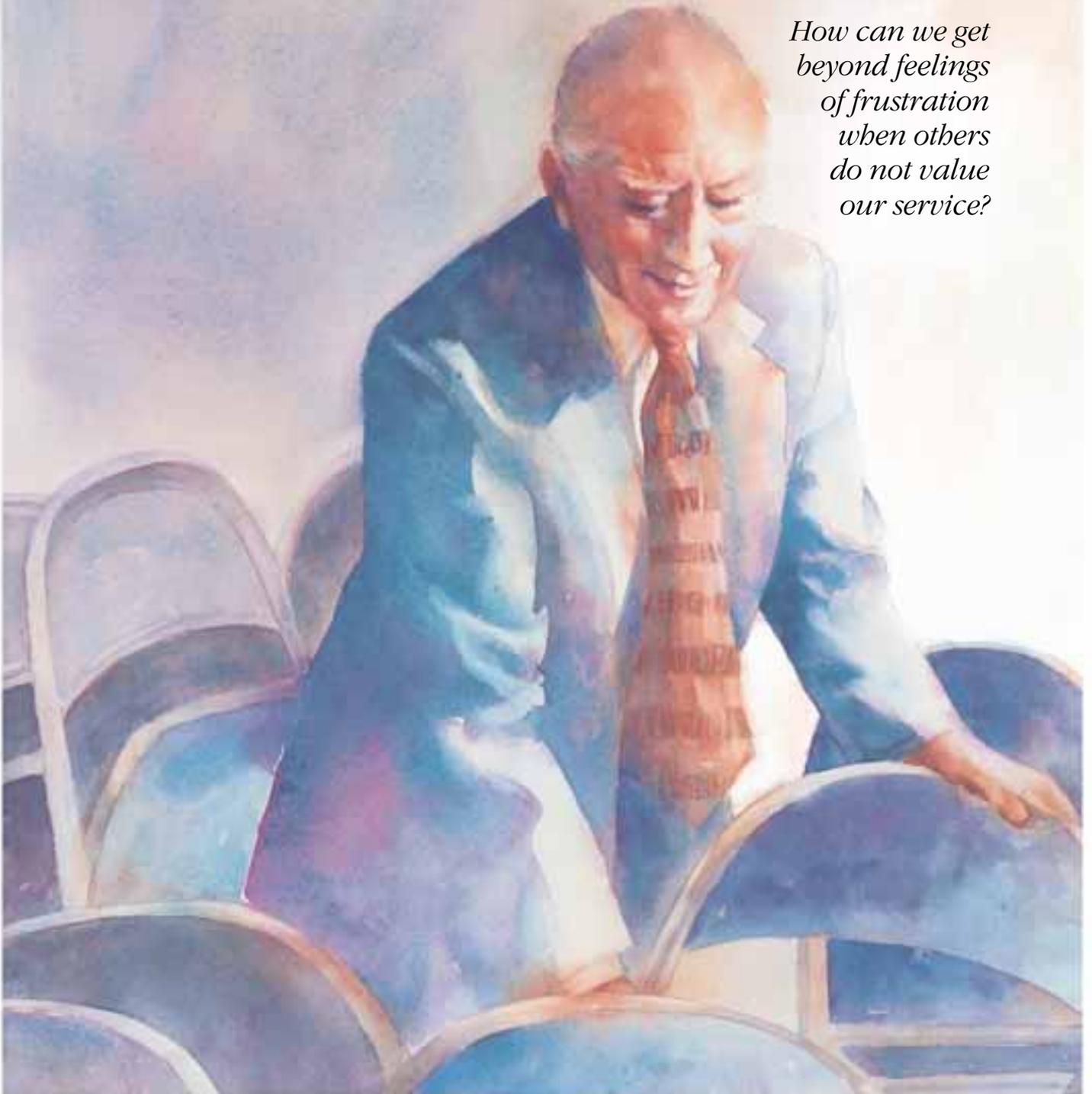
Did you know that *Temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (item no. 35863) is available in many languages? This booklet is published to provide helpful information about temples and their importance to members of the Church. It can help parents teach their children about the temple and can also help members planning to attend the temple for the first time prepare for sacred covenants and ordinances. Contact your local distribution center or your ward or branch leaders for ordering and price information.



PHOTOGRAPH OF COUPLE BY STEVE BUNDERSON, POSED BY MODELS; PHOTOGRAPH OF ORLANDO FLORIDA TEMPLE BY MARK A. PHILBRICK

GETTING OVER FEELING UNDERAPPRECIATED

*How can we get
beyond feelings
of frustration
when others
do not value
our service?*



BY BRAD WILCOX

A mother fixes dinner for hungry family members who eat and then disappear without offering a kind word or help with the dishes. A father returns from a long business trip, and his teenage daughter welcomes him home by asking for money. An aunt and uncle plan the family reunion but are only told that it wasn't as good as last year. Certainly there is no shortage of people who have experienced the discouragement and frustration of feeling underappreciated.

I remember one occasion when, as a young elders quorum president, I was seeking out a family who had attended our ward once but did not return. It was raining, and I would much rather have been at home with my wife and young family. Still, I felt obligated to reach out to this new family.

"Do you realize that not one person shook my hand in priesthood meeting?" complained the father.

"Not a single sister even asked my name in Relief Society," added his wife.

How many hands had he shaken? How many names had she asked? That was beside the point in their minds. They had been offended. But wait—wasn't I visiting them now? I was extending my hand and asking their names.

That day I was reminded that some people are never satisfied, even when we try our best. "This is a nice Christmas tree, but where are the lights?" "This is a nice casserole, but where is dessert?" "This is a nice visit, but where is the rest of the ward?"

At one time or another, each of us feels the sting of being underappreciated. In these moments it is important to choose happiness, cultivate magnanimity, and seek God.

Choose Happiness

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: "It is very important to be happy in this work. We have a lot of gloomy people in the Church because they do not understand, I guess, that this is the gospel of happiness. It is something to be happy about, to get excited about."¹

On our kitchen wall hangs a plaque that reads, "Happiness is a city in the state of mind." I keep it there to remind myself that we are in charge of our own attitudes. Emotional maturity is evidenced by a person's willingness to take responsibility for actions and feelings. If I am having a bad day, I can't blame others, even when I feel underappreciated. It is not someone else's job to change so I can feel better.

The second article of faith teaches that we are responsible for our own sins. In the same way, we are responsible for our own attitudes and our own happiness. Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has written, "At the center of our agency is our freedom to form a healthy attitude toward whatever circumstances we are placed in!"²

If we let our happiness rest on the actions and moods of others, we will always be disappointed. If our happiness is dependent on perfect situations, it will always be a future dream forever out of reach. President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, "Our search for happiness largely depends on the degree of righteousness we attain, the degree of selflessness we acquire, the amount and quality of service we render, and the inner peace that we enjoy."³ Notice that he did not say happiness depends on thank-you cards or public praise. Each of the requirements outlined by President Faust is completely within our control.

Cultivate Magnanimity

To be magnanimous means to be noble and generous in forgiving. It means a person strives to be free of petty feelings and acts. The word comes from Latin roots: *magnus*, meaning "great," and *animus*, which means "spirit." A magnanimous person, then, shows a great spirit by acting toward people and circumstances rather than reacting to them.

One woman prepares a flower arrangement for the chapel each week. It is not her calling. She just does it because she hopes it will add to the spirit of the meetings. A man writes letters to missionaries by the dozens. Rarely does he receive a response. He worries more about whether missionaries get mail than whether he



One woman prepares flower arrangements for the chapel. A man writes letters to missionaries. A widow and her grandson repair hymnbooks. These are examples of magnanimity.

does. A widow and her grandson repair broken hymnbooks they gather from around the chapel. No one beyond their family is even aware of their private efforts. These are examples of magnanimity.

Booker T. Washington was born into slavery in the United States. He lived through some of the worst times of prejudice and unfairness this world has known. Still, he showed his great spirit by seeking his own education after the Civil War was over and then educating many others. He faced small-minded people on all sides, yet he resolved that he “would permit no man . . . to narrow

and degrade my soul by making me hate him.”⁴

The Prophet Joseph Smith’s magnanimity was demonstrated by his willingness to forgive W. W. Phelps, who had left the Church for a time and actually caused great problems for the Saints by speaking out against the Prophet. When Brother Phelps later repented and sought fellowship with the Saints once more, Joseph wrote, “Come on, dear brother, since the war is past, / For friends at first, are friends again at last.”⁵

The Savior, our example in all things, was magnanimous. President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) wrote:

HEAVENLY FATHER IS PLEASED WHEN WE SERVE



“The greatest act of service in all of history—the atonement—was clearly unappreciated. It was fully understood only by the Savior and the Eternal Father while it was in process. But it was completed to the glory and eternal benefit of all humanity. . . .

“ . . . Service keeps us from forgetting the Lord our God, because being among and serving our brothers and sisters reminds us that Father is ever there and is pleased when we serve, for while the recipients of our service are our neighbors, they are His children.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* (1979), 63, 65.



THE LORD ACCUSED, BY FRANK ADAMS

“When Jesus Christ came to the Jews . . . he offered them life and salvation; yet he was the most unpopular man in all Judah. The high priests, the [Sadducees], the sectarians of the day, were the strongest enemies he had on earth. No matter what he did, it was imputed to an evil source. When he cast out devils it was imputed to the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. When he opened the eyes of the blind they said: ‘Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.’ This unpopularity followed the Lord Jesus Christ to the cross where he gave up the ghost.”⁶

The Savior paid the ultimate price for the greatest gift that has ever been given to mankind—even though people may never fully appreciate the significance of that gift. He is our perfect example of magnanimity.

Turn to God

Cast your bread upon the water, we are told, and it comes back to you (see Ecclesiastes 11:1). Sometimes when credit and appreciation are being withheld, it seems all we have received for our efforts is soggy bread. Of course, it is easier to serve others when thanked, but Jesus Christ, who transformed five loaves into food for thousands, will return our bread to us when ungrateful recipients will not—and He will magnify it a thousandfold.

Yet it is not merely for a reward that we should serve. While pondering over why so many young people are willing to serve missions when they aren’t even getting paid, a branch president at the Provo Missionary Training

Center came up with an interesting analogy: “They were like salmon. They had originated in one place but had gone to live in another. After spending time away from their origins there was a pull, unyielding, subtle, but very dramatic in its persistence. It beckoned them to return or find a way to commune with what they had once known.” He described a mission as “a joining between a mortal soul who prepares and embraces the things of God, and God’s Spirit. When this happens, every missionary learns he or she is part of something greater and more important than self. . . . As they feel the Spirit and share [God’s] work, they come to know and love his Son—and to understand why they serve.”⁷

Why do bishops serve complainers? Why do teachers continue to teach when students are rude and misbehave? Why do missionaries serve when they are greeted with slammed doors? Why do elders quorum presidents go out of their way to visit people they don’t know?

To serve a God they do know. In serving others, grateful or ungrateful, we are serving God. For as the Savior told His disciples, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40; see also Mosiah 2:17). ■

Brad Wilcox is president of the Chile Santiago East Mission.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 256.
2. *Deposition of a Disciple* (1976), 30–31.
3. “Our Search for Happiness,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2000, 6.
4. *Up from Slavery* (1901), 85.
5. *History of the Church*, 4:164.
6. *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, ed. G. Homer Durham (1990), 26.
7. A. Lynn Scoresby, “Why Missionaries Serve,” *New Era*, June 1989, 11.

May I Serve



Prayerfully ♩ = 72-80

mp

Text and music by
Tammy Simister Robinson

1. Lord, _____ take these hands; _____ Let me
2. Lord, _____ take these lips; _____ Let the
3. Give _____ my heart song; _____ Let the

Both hands 8va 1st time. As written on repeat.

Sing cue notes last time.

touch a life and serve Thee will - ing - ly. Lord, _____ take these ears; _____ Let me
words I speak be formed at Thy com-mand. Grant _____ me the will _____ To gain
notes com-bine to ring e - ter - nal truth, Lift - ing my _____ soul, _____ Ev - ry

mf

hear Thy words and hum - bly fol - low Thee _____ I de - sire to re - ly _____ On the
know - ledge all hearts can un - der - stand. _____ mo - ment let my song be - gin a - new. _____

loco (Both hands as written.)

To Coda ◊

One whose might-y pow-er can do an - y-thing. Sim-ple gifts I now bring; _____ These I

Thee

of - fer to set be - fore my King. 1., 2. May I serve Thee.



an - y - thing. All I have I now bring *rit.* To set be - fore my Sav - ior, Lord, and



King. *a tempo* May I serve Thee, *f* May I serve Thee, Lord. *a tempo* May I



mp hum - bly live for Thee. *p* *rit.* *sva-*



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It Wasn't a Sacrifice

BY CASSANDRA LIN TSAI

When I was a young woman, my world was my family and friends. But when I found the gospel of Jesus Christ, much of this world was lost to me. Friends teased me because I lived the Word of Wisdom, honored the Sabbath, and tried to keep the commandments. Schoolmates cut off friendships with me.

My parents at first refused to give me permission to be baptized, and my father even stopped speaking to me. For a young girl,



I could never have received some blessings if I had not been willing to give up my dream, trusting in the harvest to come.

such personal losses might be considered quite a sacrifice. But God knew that these “sacrifices” for His Church and kingdom would in reality bring not loss but gain.

The Lord taught: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (John 12:24–25). We are accustomed to defining our losses as sacrifice and our increases as gain. But often our losses are actually the beginning of what will later

be a great harvest.

A famous doctor once visited a dejected and despondent old woman. He found that she was alone and separated from the world but that she also had a beautiful greenhouse where she raised African violets.

The doctor gave the woman a prescription. She was to subscribe to her church’s newsletter, and whenever there was a baptism, marriage, sickness, or death, she was to send an African violet. Following the doctor’s instructions, the old woman



gave away hundreds of potted plants. At her death the newspaper headline read, “The Queen of African Violets Passes Away and Is Mourned by Thousands.” What turned this dejected old woman into someone loved by so many? It was giving to others, not keeping for herself.

Sometimes what we must give up is not a possession but a cherished dream. Growing up in Taiwan, I had always dreamed of going to school in England. After receiving a university degree and studying in the United States, I returned home and made arrangements to continue my studies in England. At this same time I received a calling in the Relief Society. At first I planned to accept the calling for a short time—just until I left for England. Then after much consideration, I decided to postpone my studies abroad for a year.

It was during this year when I was “sacrificing” my studies in England that an amazing blessing came into my life. One day as I was walking by a bulletin board at church, I saw a notice that the Church’s Translation

The Lord taught: *“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”*

Department was seeking to hire a Chinese language supervisor. I felt the Holy Ghost prod me to apply, but I hesitated. The year was almost up, and it was time for me to go to England. But the Spirit encouraged me, and I applied and was hired. For me, working as a language supervisor for the Church is not just a job. It is a great privilege and blessing.

But I could never have received this blessing if I had not been willing to give up my dream of studying in England.

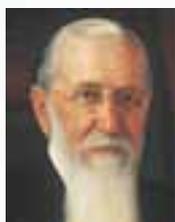
Do we sometimes hold onto our one grain of wheat, not willing to impart it, so that in the end it remains just a single grain? Or do we trust that, planted and cultivated, this single grain can become fruit? Giving up friends, possessions, or dreams can certainly be a trial. But I have learned that, with faith in God’s plan for us, we can confidently plant our grain of wheat, trusting in the bountiful harvest to come. ■

Cassandra Lin Tsai is a member of the Taipei Second Ward, Taipei Taiwan Central Stake.



Sacrifice

KEY TO THE ABUNDANT LIFE



JOSEPH F. SMITH
(1838–1918)
SIXTH PRESIDENT
OF THE CHURCH

“If He should require me to give all I possess unto

him, I wish to feel that it should be done cheerfully and willingly. . . . Now, how many of us have the confidence in the Lord that Abraham had? Supposing, He were to ask from you your first born, or any of your loved ones, or your wealth, could you endure it without murmuring? . . . Can we expect to attain a celestial exaltation if we have some corner—something put away—upon which our hearts or dearest affections are set? Ask yourselves, if you are worthy to receive exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God?” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* [1998], 420–21).



SPENCER W. KIMBALL
(1895–1985)
TWELFTH PRESIDENT
OF THE CHURCH

“We must lay on the altar and sacrifice

whatever is required by the Lord. We begin by offering a ‘broken heart and a contrite spirit.’ We follow this by giving our best effort in our assigned fields of labor and callings. We learn our duty and execute it fully. Finally we consecrate our time, talents, and means as called upon by our file leaders and as prompted by the whispering of the Spirit. In the Church . . . we can give expression to every ability, every righteous desire, every thoughtful impulse. . . . And in the end, we learn it was no sacrifice at all” (“Becoming the Pure in Heart,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 81).



EZRA TAFT BENSON
(1899–1994)
THIRTEENTH PRESIDENT
OF THE CHURCH

“Just as when one loses his life to God he really finds the abundant life; so also, when one sacrifices all to God, then God in return shares all that he has with him. Try as you may, you cannot put the Lord in your debt—for every time you try to do his will he simply pours out more blessings upon you. Sometimes the

blessings may seem to you to be a little slow in coming; perhaps this tests your faith, but come they will and abundantly” (“Jesus Christ—Gifts and Expectations,” in *BYU Speeches of the Year 1974* [1975], 311).



GORDON B. HINCKLEY
(1910–)
FIFTEENTH PRESIDENT
OF THE CHURCH

“Sacrifice is the very essence of reli-

gion; it is the keystone of happy home life, the basis of true friendship, the foundation of peaceful community living, of sound relations among people and nations. . . .

“Without sacrifice there is no true worship of God. I become increasingly convinced of that every day. ‘The Father gave his Son, and the Son gave his life,’ and we do not worship unless we give—give of our substance, give of our time, give of our strength, give of our talent, give of our faith, give of our testimonies” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 565). ■

Feeling the Love of the Lord through Obedience

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.

President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“Why are we such a happy people? It is because of our faith, the quiet assurance that abides in our hearts that our Father in Heaven, overseeing all, will look after His sons and daughters who walk before Him with love and appreciation and obedience. We will ever be a happy people if we will so conduct our lives” (“What Are People Asking about Us?” *Liabona*, Jan. 1999, 85; *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 72).

How Can You Find the Strength to Be Obedient?

President Spencer W. Kimball

(1895–1985): “When we are inclined to think it is vain to serve the Lord, we should stir our faith, believe in the rich promises of God, and obey—and patiently wait. The Lord will fulfill all his rich promises. . . . To the faithful, lavish rewards are offered. Blessings beyond one’s understanding will come. . . . Great as are the blessings in mortality which follow righteousness, they are dwarfed beside those awaiting in the world to come” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 305–6).

Elder Henry B.

Eyring of the Quorum of the

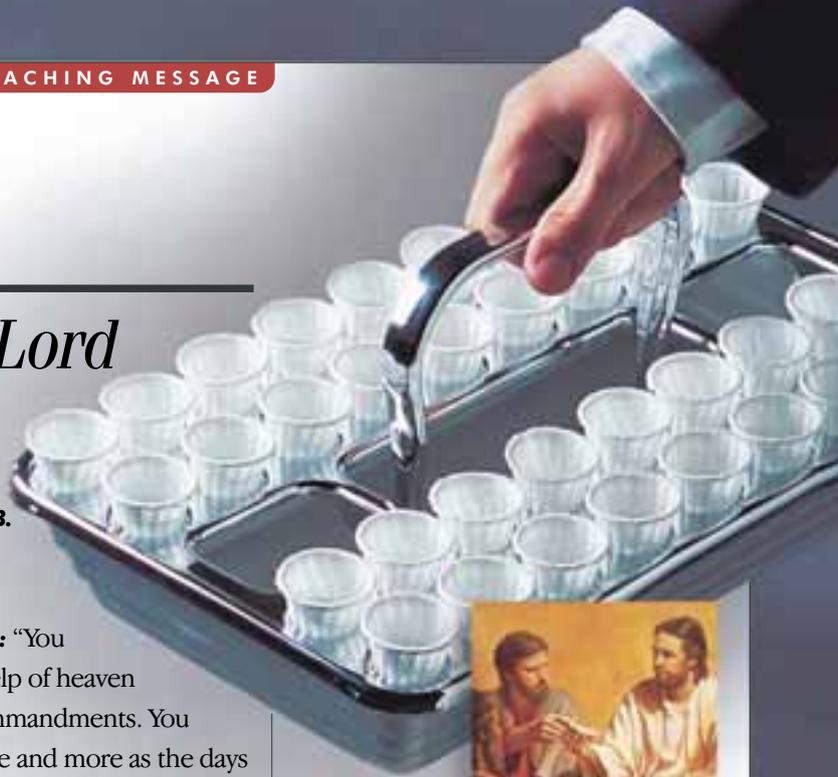
Twelve Apostles: “You will need the help of heaven to keep the commandments. You will need it more and more as the days go on. . . . But you can bring the protective powers of heaven down on you by simply deciding to go toward the Savior, to wait on him” (*To Draw Closer to God* [1997], 98).

How Has Obedience Blessed Your Life?

Mosiah 2:41: “Ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. . . . They are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “We can . . . know, through obedience, how much God loves us as his immortal children. It happens just as President Brigham Young said it would: ‘How shall we know that we obey [God]? There is but one method by which we can know it, and that is by the inspiration of the Spirit of the Lord witnessing unto our spirit that we are His,



that we love Him, and that He loves us.

It is by the spirit of revelation we know this’ (*Deseret News Semi-Weekly*, 26 Nov. 1867, n.p.). If we can get that witness for ourselves . . . , then we can cope with and endure well whatever comes” (“The Pathway of Discipleship,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1998, 7).

Susan W. Tanner, Young Women

general president: “Each week we renew our baptismal covenants to take His name upon us, to ‘always remember him,’ and to ‘keep his commandments’ (see D&C 20:77). We are steadfast in Christ when we do these things, and our spirits are lifted and our hearts are filled with love. . . . Covenants enlarge our hearts and allow us to feel the ‘love of God and of all men’ (2 Nephi 31:20)” (“Steadfast in Our Covenants,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2003, 101–2).

John 15:10: “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.” ■

“Find the Missionaries for Me”

By Luis Roberto Ramos de Sá Filho

In 1998 my father was suffering from a serious illness. A year earlier his leg had been amputated just above the knee. This resulted in various circulatory problems and a great deal of pain and infection. Finally the doctors determined that a portion of his femur—the thighbone—

would also have to be amputated. We spent many days in deep concern and sadness.

Since my hometown is small and did not have the resources to treat such a serious health problem, my father went to a hospital in Marília, Brazil, where my sister lives, to be

tested and receive aggressive treatment. Nothing

seemed to help, however, and many days passed. I went to Marília to be with my parents, and we all sought to strengthen and comfort each other.

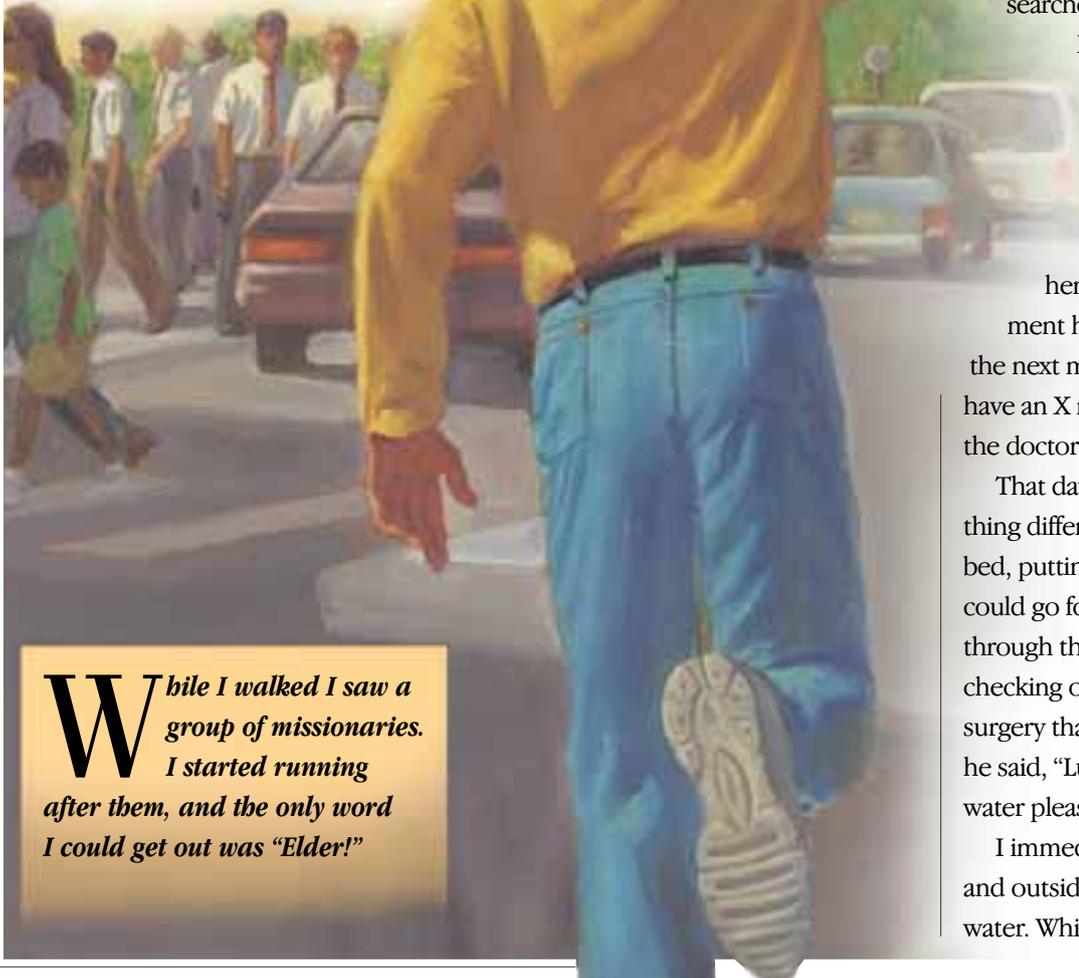
My parents were members of the Church, but I wasn't. At times I had even acted against the Church and had denied the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. But every time I went to visit my father in the hospital, he spoke to me about only one thing: “Luisinho, find the missionaries for me! I need a blessing.” I had searched for the missionaries, but

I couldn't find them. Now time was getting short.

The day before he was to have surgery, I went to visit him again. That day we were particularly apprehensive. We knew the treatment had not been effective, and the next morning my father would have an X ray to determine how high the doctor would have to amputate.

That day my father asked something different. He was sitting on his bed, putting on his prosthesis so he could go for a walk with my mom through the corridors of the hospital, checking on his friends who had had surgery that morning. As he stood up, he said, “Luisinho, go buy me some water please.”

I immediately went down the stairs and outside to search for a bottle of water. While I walked I saw a group of



While I walked I saw a group of missionaries. I started running after them, and the only word I could get out was “Elder!”

missionaries down the street. I forgot about the water. I started running after them, and the only word I could get out was “Elder!” They stopped, and I managed to explain my father’s situation.

When my mother and I left the hospital later that day, we saw Elder Alves and his companion enter to visit my father. And that night we received a telephone call from my father. He told us that the mission president had also been there, and my dad had finally received the blessing he wanted so much.

We spent the night wondering what would be the result of the X ray the following morning. Nonetheless, something comforted us.

The next morning we awoke to the sound of the telephone. It was my father. “Come and get me,” he said. “I am free to go.” Joy overcame us as he explained that the nurse and doctor who examined him couldn’t understand what had happened. “What did you do during the night that caused your X ray to come out so clean and your bone so perfect?” they asked.

When I remember that day, I feel more and more that the priesthood is real and that it is on the earth once again. Within three months, I had received a testimony and was baptized. Later I served in the Brazil Rio de Janeiro North Mission, sharing my testimony and my love for the things that I know are true. ■

Luis Roberto Ramos de Sá Filbo is a member of the Avaré Branch, Botucatu Brazil District.

A Perpetual Education Fund Loan Changed Our Lives

By Kim Citlalpilli Sánchez
Aldana Camacho

I had always dreamed that I would study something relating to medicine. And as a missionary I learned that the Lord always prepares the way for His children to achieve what He desires them to do.

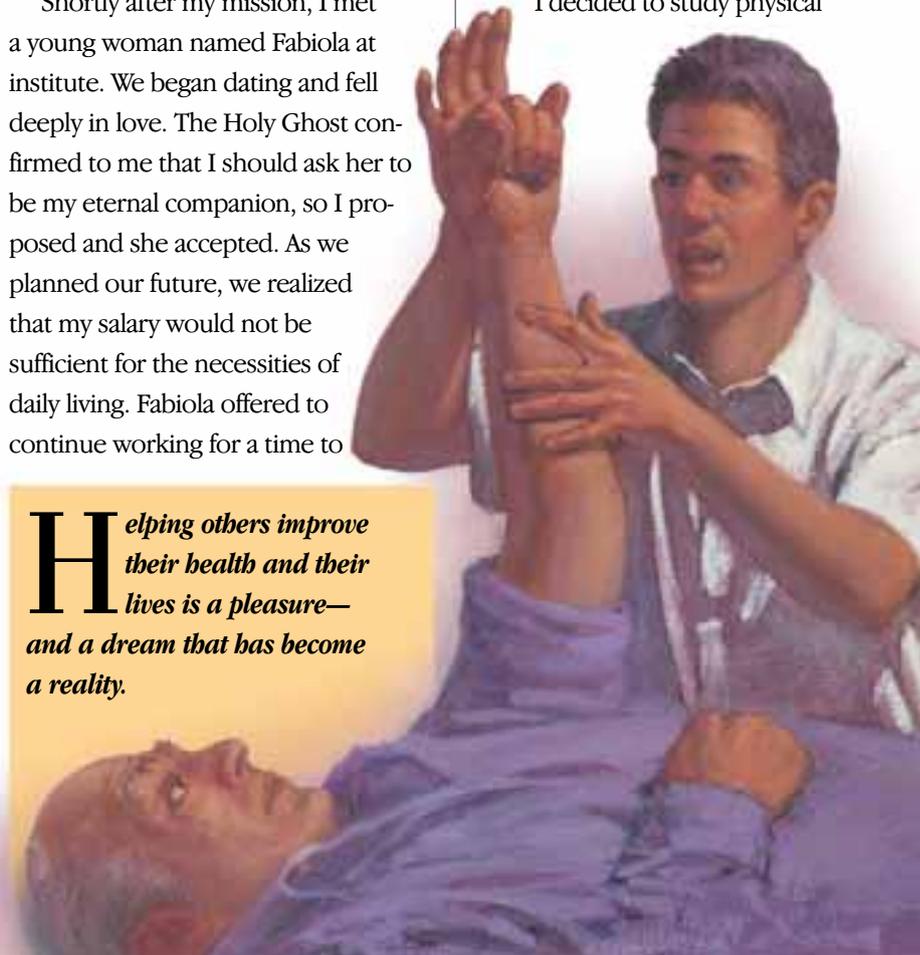
Shortly after my mission, I met a young woman named Fabiola at institute. We began dating and fell deeply in love. The Holy Ghost confirmed to me that I should ask her to be my eternal companion, so I proposed and she accepted. As we planned our future, we realized that my salary would not be sufficient for the necessities of daily living. Fabiola offered to continue working for a time to

support me as I finished school. But that would take quite a bit of time, and we wanted to have a family. So we prayed to Heavenly Father for His help. We wanted to do His will.

During my mission I had heard President Gordon B. Hinckley speak about the Perpetual Education Fund. As a returned missionary, I had attended some meetings at the institute about the PEF program. My eyes were opened and my hopes encouraged; I knew it was a program that could help my future family progress. So I spoke with Fabiola, and we set goals regarding my education.

I decided to study physical

Helping others improve their health and their lives is a pleasure—and a dream that has become a reality.



therapy. I wanted to wait a while to fill out my PEF application, but my fiancée insisted I do it right then. I submitted my loan request in December 2001, and also that month—on 22 December—Fabiola and I were sealed in the Mexico City temple. My loan was approved in January 2002, and I started school soon after.

One day when I was making a tuition payment, I met the director of my school. During our conversation I mentioned that I was a member of the Church and explained the PEF program to him. He told me he knew some Latter-day Saints and they were good people. He also said he had had some LDS students.

After I had attended one month of classes, the director invited me to finish my major early by taking double classes, graduating in 14 months instead of 24. I explained to him that I would not be able to pay the extra tuition until the next year when I renewed my loan, but he told me that my word was good enough since I was a Latter-day Saint. So again I was blessed. I began taking more classes, even though this required more studying and more hours in class, while continuing my part-time job.

I was amazed as I attended school how the Lord blessed me by increasing my knowledge. As part of my education I have helped people who had back problems, scoliosis, sprains, sciatica, and neck pain. Helping others improve their health and their lives through rehabilitation therapy is a

pleasure—and a dream that has become a reality.

Everything is going well. I am elders quorum president in my ward. By the time I graduated in April 2003, I had taken all the required steps to have my own practice, and Fabiola and I were expecting our first child.

I know that the Lord has established the PEF and that this program helps us to be self-reliant. With my new employment I can better provide for my family, serve in the Church, bless the lives of others, and pursue further studies at the university.

Our lives have changed thanks to the Church and the PEF program. I know that the lives of many young people can change if they will follow this inspired program. ■

Kim Citlalpilli Sánchez Aldana Camacho is a member of Las Rosas Ward, México City México Villa de las Flores Stake.

Alone in the Dark

By Trisa Martin

Sometimes it takes a challenging experience to help us realize that if we put our trust in the Lord, He will support us in our trials (see Alma 36:3).

This principle was reinforced in my heart some years ago when our little family stayed for seven months in the North African country of Tunisia, where my husband, Keith, did research for his doctoral degree.

As students on a tight budget, we had no phone and no television. Our home was a tiny fifth-floor apartment in El Menzah, a suburb of the capital city of Tunis, and our daily routine was simple: Keith studied at the national library while I stayed home with our baby boy, David.

As far as our Church involvement went, we *were* the Church in Tunis. Each Sunday, Keith administered the sacrament and we read the scriptures. We sang our favorite hymns and listened to conference tapes. Then we finished with a lesson from Keith's priesthood manual.

Although we met some wonderful people and made some good friends, there were still times when I felt alone and even fearful. One of those times was when I returned home from grocery shopping to find that we had no electricity. A thin blue envelope had been shoved under the door, and inside the envelope was a letter written in French and Arabic. When Keith got home he translated the letter. To our dismay, we discovered that the previous tenants had failed to pay their electricity bill and that we were now responsible for it. We wouldn't have lights until the bill was paid.

We used candles over the weekend, and on Monday morning we rode the bus to the electric company. After we paid the bill, we were assured that within two days the lights would be turned on.

But would two days be soon enough? Suddenly I realized that

Keith's night class was on Tuesday. He had to attend to keep his scholarship, which meant that little David and I would be alone in the apartment. Solitude was difficult even under normal conditions. What if David and I ended up being all alone in the darkness with only a few candles? Even thinking about it frightened me.

Monday passed, and we still had no electricity. On Tuesday afternoon, Keith returned from studying to find that the people from the electric company still had not come. We discussed our options, and finally Keith said, "I feel we should pray."

With humble hearts we asked for help. After we finished, Keith hugged

me and said, "Everything's going to be all right. The lights will be turned on by tonight."

I still felt skeptical, but I depended on his faith. By 4:45 that afternoon, however, doubts filled my mind. After a silent prayer, I again felt a peaceful assurance. Then at 4:55 the people from the electric company arrived to turn on the lights.

Experiences like this increased

my faith and helped me know that I was not alone. During the months of our stay in Tunisia, I depended on the power of prayer often. I am grateful to Heavenly Father for His watchful care and love, and I am also grateful

for the faith-building experience

our family had in Tunisia—
an experience that is still a
source of strength to us
today. ■

*Trisa Martin is a
member of the
Bountiful 30th
Ward, Bountiful
Utah East Stake.*

I returned home to find that we had no electricity. A thin blue envelope had been shoved under the door, and inside was a letter written in French and Arabic.





THE WONDER OF



The very Creation of the earth is a manifestation of God’s love for us.

BY MARK J. NIELSEN

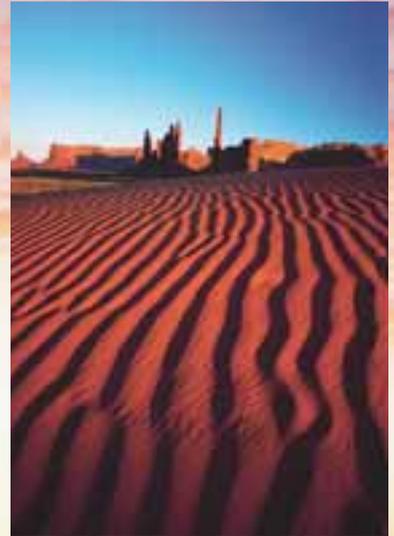
I awoke before sunrise, as I always do when camping. My wife and I and two friends were camped at the

base of one of the many mountain ranges in the western Utah desert. It was late spring, and sunrises came early, but the waiting adventures of the new day drew me from the warmth of my sleeping bag. Unable to coax anyone to join me, I walked alone a short distance from camp to the top of a rocky knoll. The area was remote: the nearest paved road was more than 20 miles away, the nearest settlement more than 50. From where I stood, all that was visible was untouched by human hands. Around me, sharp-edged white boulders were interspersed with juniper and occasional blossoms of cacti and globe mallow. Ahead of me, a serene shadowed valley gave way to ridge after purple ridge of mountains stretching toward the growing dawn. Directly behind me, a towering peak of white rock caught the orange blush of sunrise.

There was a certain timelessness to that moment—waiting for the sun to clear the distant crest of the Wasatch Plateau. I could imagine a time even more ancient—a time when no mortal eye had viewed that scene—when perhaps even the hosts of heaven surveyed the landscapes of the newly prepared earth with gratitude, wonderment, and awe. I thought of these words in Genesis: “God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). I wondered if it might have been at such a time “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). As I reflected on those verses, my spirit confirmed that “all things which [God] had made were very good” (Moses 2:31).

That sunrise was, for me, an intensely religious experience. I was dressed only in blue jeans and a sweatshirt, covered with the dust of the previous day’s rockhounding and saturated with the smell of the previous night’s campfire—not the usual setting for a spiritual experience. But

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THE CREATION

the feeling of wonder for the gift of this earth I derived from that experience is one I will never forget. Since that time I have tried to renew that feeling by reflecting again on those verses, on the beauties of our world, and on the kindness of its Creator.

Of course, we need not travel to the desert to gain such a perspective. As we read and discuss the Creation story, we may also experience feelings of reverent awe as we give thoughtful consideration to what the gift of the Creation means to us and to what the Creator would have us learn from it.

Scriptural Symbols

Many features found on earth give rise to powerful scriptural symbols. The wildernesses of Jared (see Ether 2:6), Moses (see Exodus 16), and Lehi (see 1 Nephi 2) symbolize the testing of faith. The thorns and thistles that came after the Fall (see Genesis 3:18) typify the trials of mortal life. These symbols teach us about the nature and purpose of

mortality, but they do *not* teach us that we should think negatively of the earth. After all, the Lord Himself has declared the earth to be good. Features of the earth used symbolically need not detract from our appreciation of the reality of nature's beauty. There can be appreciation for sunsets, snapdragons, and streams—and the joy we feel in experiencing them—alongside the thorns, thistles, and thunderstorms.

Testimony to a Creator

We can draw three lessons from nature's grandeur: first, God exists; second, God is powerful; and third, God loves us. One way we can feel a surety of the Creator's existence is to observe His handiwork. While it is the Holy Spirit that conveys such a testimony to our hearts, we may first prepare our hearts to receive it. A marvelous way to do this is to gaze into a star-filled sky on a moonless night or at the intricate patterns on the back of a single maple leaf. As Alma taught, "All things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all



things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator” (Alma 30:44).

The same things that prepare our hearts for the knowledge of God’s existence teach us of His power. The Lord Himself has stated:

“The earth rolls upon her wings, and the sun giveth his light by day, and the moon giveth her light by night, and the stars also give their light, as they roll upon their wings in their glory, in the midst of the power of God.

“Unto what shall I liken these kingdoms, that ye may understand?

“Behold, all these are kingdoms, and any man who hath seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power” (D&C 88:45–47).

We are keenly aware of God’s majesty and power when we see His handiwork in motion. Next time you stand at the foot of a roaring waterfall or at the toe of a

mighty glacier, reflect on the power of the Creator.

Along with teaching us that God exists and that He is powerful, the very existence of this earth impresses upon us the reality that God loves us. God’s manifest power in the universe leads us to say, as did David, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (Psalm 8:3–4).

Our answer may be found in asking another question: how important must mankind be to God, seeing that He has created all of this for us? We are surrounded by signs of God’s love for us. The beauty of Creation itself is “love which from our birth over and around us lies” (“For the Beauty of the Earth,” *Hymns*, no. 92).

The teachings of the restored gospel heighten our realization of how the very Creation of the earth is a manifestation of God’s love for us. Modern revelation teaches that life is a blessing—an opportunity to prove ourselves, gain



a physical body, and further our eternal progress. We were present at the Creation, singing with joy for the opportunities this earth would afford us. Though we don't remember that event now, the beauty around us is a constant reminder of our Heavenly Father's love and concern for His children.

Attendant Responsibilities

There are other fundamental lessons to draw from the Creation—lessons of what the Creator might expect from us. It seems to me that by virtue of living upon the earth we shoulder two responsibilities. The first is to care for our beautiful home. At the Creation of the world God placed



PHOTO BY CRAIG DIMOND

By our actions we show respect for the creations of God. It is pleasing to the Lord when we use the earth's resources wisely.

Adam and Eve as caretakers, with dominion over “every living thing that moveth upon the earth,” and gave them instructions to “replenish the earth, and subdue it” (Abraham 4:28). The earth, then, was created for us and given into our care. It is within our power to do with it what we like, but since it is God who entrusted it to us, it is to Him we shall answer for what we choose to do.

Words that come to mind from the story of the Creation in Genesis chapter 1 are *dominion* and *subdue*. Sometimes these words conjure up

images of an ultimate rule over powerless subjects. But no gift or station granted to us by God comes without



responsibilities and expectations. Proper dominion over nature requires us to use the earth's resources wisely. They are here for our benefit, and it is pleasing to God when they are used well. "The earth is full," the Lord tells us, "and there is enough and to spare" (D&C 104:17). Any shortcomings of earth's resources needed to support mankind are not due to a lack of proper preparation of the earth. Consider how the verse concludes: "I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves." Thoughtful, righteous dominion is what God expects of us; any other kind of dominion is likely to cause shortages and suffering among mankind.

Humanity as a whole is doing a poor job of caring for the earth. Individually, we can do better. We can, of course, not litter. In fact, we can help pick up after those who do. We can practice conservation of resources where possible. All of our actions can display respect for the creations of God.

A second responsibility man owes, it seems to me, is

gratitude. Gratitude is an essential ingredient in accepting any gift from God, and failing to show gratitude for the gift of the earth risks offense to its Creator. Indeed, our most well-known scripture commanding us to give thanks to God applies specifically to the Creation. After giving a description of the goodness of the earth in section 59 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord closes with these words:

"And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion.

"And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments" (vv. 20–21).

When I was a teenager, a good brother in our ward whom I admired pronounced a blessing on his new baby daughter. This man had a tremendous appreciation for the creations of God. I remember that the blessing he gave was quite unusual, and several thoughts from it stuck in my



mind. He blessed his infant with a sense of wonder for the natural beauty that would surround her in this life—to “find wisdom in the trident leaf of the sage.” Now, many years later, through experiences like the sunrise in the desert, I have come to appreciate the value of that blessing. That daughter is by now a young woman. I hope she treasures the gifts pronounced by her father in that blessing. I would wish the same blessing on us all: to find wisdom in the beauty of nature and to glean from each part of Creation that which it would teach us about its Creator. ■

Mark J. Nielsen is a member of the Moscow Third Ward, Pullman Washington Stake.

PHOTO BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN



The earth was created for us and entrusted to our care. Expressing gratitude is an essential ingredient in accepting any gift from God.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Take a walk with family members and look for the beauty of nature. Invite them to describe how each creation blesses them. Discuss why God would create all of this for us. Read from this article the section “Testimony to a Creator.” Express your gratitude for God and His creations.

2. Read the section “Attendant Responsibilities.” Discuss ways we can care for our beautiful home on earth. Plan an activity, such as cleaning up a nearby park, that helps preserve the earth’s beauty.

3. Have family members take turns describing something in nature while the

others try to guess what it is. Example: It falls from the sky and makes plants grow. Answer: Rain. Read and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 59:20–21. How can we show our appreciation for the beauty of nature?

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5 STEPS TO FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

Anyone can achieve financial well-being by relying on the Lord and following prophetic counsel on monetary matters.

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BY LANE V. ERICKSON
Bankruptcy Attorney

What are we going to do, Todd?" Mary pleaded as she surveyed the late notices, account statements, and documents threatening foreclosure that littered the kitchen table. Todd gazed at the calculations on his note pad. "I don't know," he mumbled. "I just don't know."

Todd and Mary (names have been changed) are months behind on bills and are in serious financial trouble. Creditors are threatening to foreclose on their home and repossess their cars, boat, and other possessions. Five credit cards are maxed out. Todd and Mary again waited until the end of the year to pay tithing. In the past, a cash advance from a credit card or "borrowing" money from their retirement account always worked, but none of the regular sources are available this year. Todd and Mary have considered getting additional credit cards to pay their bills. It appears that the only other solution is for Mary to find a job and earn "extra" money. For Todd and Mary, and many like them, managing finances seems to be an impossible task. But there is hope. By

following prophetic counsel on five simple steps, anyone can obtain and maintain financial well-being.

Tithing

The most important step toward achieving financial well-being is to pay tithing first—no excuses and no exceptions. President Gordon B. Hinckley counseled: "Some of you have money problems. I know that. There is never enough money in your homes. I know that. You are struggling to get along. What is the cure? The only thing I know of is payment of tithing. . . . It was God who made the promise that He would open the windows of heaven and pour down blessings upon those who walked honestly with Him in the payment of their tithes and offerings, and He has the capacity to keep His promise."¹

The Lord has repeatedly commanded His people to pay tithing.² Tithing tests our faith, but the Lord blesses us bountifully when we faithfully obey His commandment. Simple, unquestioning faith and strict obedience in observing the law of tithing result in miraculous blessings; they are vital to both our financial and spiritual well-being.

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Pay Yourself

In addition to paying tithing first, we must take a second step in order to obtain or maintain financial well-being: pay ourselves. Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: “After paying your tithing of 10 percent to the Lord, you pay yourself a predetermined amount directly into savings. . . . It is amazing to me that so many people work all of their lives for the grocer, the landlord, the power company, the automobile salesman, and the bank, and yet think so little of their own efforts that they pay themselves nothing.”³

But what does it mean to pay ourselves? President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945) clarified: “If there is any one thing that will bring peace and contentment into the human heart, and into the family, it is to live within our means. And if there is any one thing that is grinding

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Regularly putting some money away into savings or other safe investments is equivalent to paying yourself.



The most important step toward achieving financial well-being is to pay tithing first—no excuses and no exceptions.

and discouraging and disheartening, it is to have debts and obligations that one cannot meet.”⁴ When we live within our means, we spend less money than we make, and we pay ourselves by putting the rest in savings or in some other safe investment. These savings must remain untouchable except for specific purposes like education, missions, retirement, or legitimate emergencies.

Obviously, after paying yourself there still needs to be enough money for necessities. I am convinced that everyone knows what “necessities” are, but I am astonished at the number of times I am asked, “Does this mean our family can’t take vacations every year?” or “Does this mean we have to cut back on eating out?” The answer to both of these questions is yes. These are *luxuries*, not necessities.

What about purchasing a large and spacious home? Most people would be happier and better off financially following the counsel of President Hinckley:

“When I was a young man, my father counseled me to build a modest home, sufficient for the needs of my family, and make it beautiful and

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PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT REIER

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attractive and pleasant and secure. He counseled me to pay off the mortgage as quickly as I could so that, come what may, there would be a roof over the heads of my wife and children. I was reared on that kind of doctrine.”⁵

In my professional life I have observed that the more luxury items a person buys on credit, the greater the likelihood that person will file for bankruptcy. To avoid this, luxuries should *never* be purchased on credit. As President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961) advised, “the ordinary family will do well to purchase by installment only the actual necessities of life, leaving the luxuries to be bought as they can be paid for when purchased.”⁶

In paying yourself first, keep in mind that the more automatic the savings or investment program, the better. It only requires one decision. After that, the deposit takes place automatically with each paycheck. Also, the best savings plans are those based upon a percentage of income rather than a fixed amount of money. For many people, automatic savings plans are already available at work. These include IRAs or 401k’s and are often coupled with an employer-matching program.

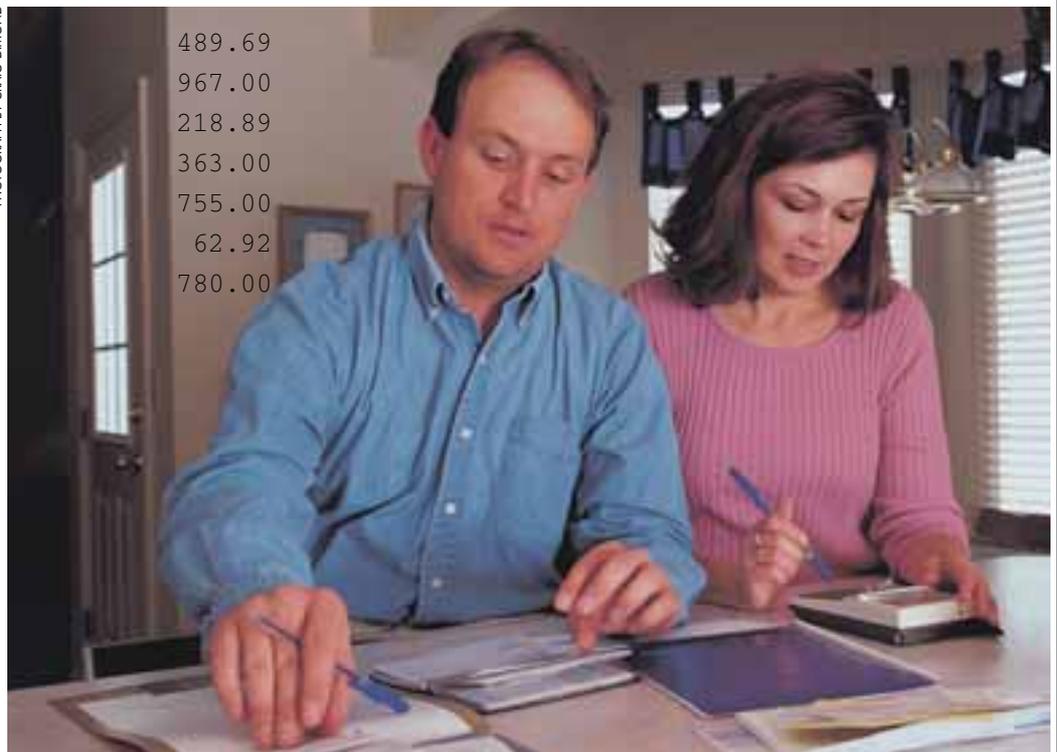
Create a Budget

The next significant step leading to financial well-being is budgeting. President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982) once stated:

3 *Sit down and create a budget where you track purchases and expenses and develop a written plan to save a certain amount of money each month.*

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PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND



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“I am convinced that it is not the amount of money an individual earns that brings peace of mind as much as it is having *control* of his money. Money can be an obedient servant, but a harsh taskmaster.”⁷

Budgeting has been the topic of numerous *Ensign* articles.⁸ Simply put, budgeting means tracking purchases and expenses and creating a written plan to save a certain amount of money each month.

But why should we budget?

“Many people think a budget robs them of their freedom,” President Tanner said. “On the contrary, successful people have learned that a budget makes real economic freedom possible.”⁹ Budgeting provides economic freedom because it allows us to control our money rather than allowing our money to control us.



M*any people think a budget robs them of their freedom,” President Tanner said. “On the contrary, successful people have learned that a budget makes real economic freedom possible.”*



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Get out of debt and rid yourself of the terrible bondage that debt brings. . . . Discipline yourselves in matters of spending, in matters of borrowing, in practices that lead to bankruptcy and the agony that comes therewith.

When preparing a budget remember that it must be written to reflect an accurate record of all income and expenses. Some people who have never written a budget before are shocked when they see where their money actually goes. They are amazed at how just a few small purchases can add up over a short time. However, they will not accurately know how much money went to eating out, movies, groceries, or bills unless they keep track by writing it down.

Creating a budget should be a family task. We are encouraged to teach our children about money, interest, debt, investments, and credit. Elder M. Russell Ballard

of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled, “Parents need to teach children very early that a solid financial base is a very important element in a happy home.”¹⁰ Additionally, Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) declared: “Money in the lives of Latter-day Saints should be used as a means of achieving eternal happiness. Careless and selfish uses cause us to live in financial bondage. We can’t afford to neglect personal and family involvement in our money management.”¹¹ Budgeting as a family provides the perfect opportunity for parents to guide their children in the proper use of money.

Finally, to adjust for life’s inevitable changes a budget must be reviewed and revised regularly. With a typical family, if more than six months go by without the budget being reviewed or revised, it is generally not an effective tool.

One way to avoid unnecessary debt is by reducing the number of credit cards you have and using them only when you have the cash saved to immediately pay off the balance each month.

Avoid Unnecessary Debt

The next step in obtaining and maintaining financial well-being is avoiding unnecessary debt. Limiting debt means paying less money in interest. Elder Perry pointed out that those who understand interest earn it rather than pay it.¹²

For those who must pay it, however, interest is a relentless taskmaster. President Clark explained: “Interest never sleeps nor sickens nor dies; . . . Once in debt, interest is your companion every minute of the day and night; you cannot shun it or slip away from it; you cannot dismiss it; it yields neither to entreaties, demands, or orders; and whenever you get in its way or cross its course or fail to meet its demands, it crushes you.”¹³

The problem is, most of us don’t have enough cash to pay for a home, a car, or an education. Commenting on incurring debt, President Hinckley counseled: “Reasonable debt for the purchase of an affordable home and perhaps for a few other necessary things is acceptable. But from where I sit, I see in a very vivid way the terrible tragedies of many who have unwisely borrowed for things they really do not need.”¹⁴

To avoid the unnecessary debt President Hinckley spoke of, reduce the number of credit cards you have and use



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5

Financial freedom is achieved only by eliminating debt. Pay off your debts as quickly as possible, thereby avoiding the amount you have to pay in interest.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Read about Todd and Mary's situation from the first two paragraphs. Discuss ideas of what they should do to obtain and maintain financial well-being. Use the section headings of this article to help begin the discussion.

2. Use a group of pennies to represent the monthly family income, and divide them up to show where the money goes each month. For example, take 10 percent of the pennies out for tithing. Discuss the difference between needs and wants. Based on the suggestions in this article, invite family members to share ideas on how the money should be spent.

3. Share an experience and bear testimony of how paying a full tithing has helped you feel a sense of financial well-being.

them only when you have the cash saved to immediately pay off the balance each month. The ease of obtaining and using credit cards beguiles their destructive potential. Don't fall into the trap of thinking, "I'll buy it now and figure out a way to pay for it later." In my experience, credit card debt is the number one cause of bankruptcies filed by individuals. In addition to cutting back on credit cards, families should shun all other types of short-term, high-interest loans.

Eliminate Debt

Finally, financial well-being is achieved only by eliminating debt. President Hinckley advised: "Get out of debt and rid yourself of the terrible bondage that debt brings. . . . Discipline yourselves in matters of spending, in matters of borrowing, in practices that lead to bankruptcy and the agony that comes therewith."¹⁵

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) provided a sound program for eliminating debt. He advised, "Let us use the opportunity we have to speed up repayment of mortgages and to set aside provisions for education, possible periods of decreased earning power, and emergencies the future may hold."¹⁶ We can do as President Benson counseled by paying more than just the minimum payment due on a debt. In the mortgage example suggested by President Benson, any surplus amount prepaid would reduce the principal owed on the mortgage. Applying the prepayment to the principal reduces both the total interest and the total number of payments over the life of the loan.

Prepayment is especially useful when numerous debts exist if the "roll-over" technique is used. Under this technique, the prepayment is applied to the smallest debt first

until it is completely paid for. Once the smallest debt is paid off, the money used toward the smallest debt is rolled over to the next smallest debt until it too is paid off. This continues until all debts, small and large, are completely paid.

Financial freedom is possible in the latter days. The Lord, through His chosen leaders, has taught what Latter-day Saints like Todd and Mary can do to obtain and maintain financial well-being. Paying tithing proves our obedience to the Lord and brings promised blessings. Paying ourselves insures that we will have money when needed. Budgeting allows family members to evaluate their spending habits and control their money. Finally, avoiding unnecessary debt and eliminating legitimate debt loosen the chains of financial bondage and provide a family with the financial freedom to aid the building of the Lord's kingdom. ■

Lane V. Erickson is a member of the Alameda Sixth Ward, Pocatello Idaho Alameda Stake.

NOTES

1. "Inspirational Thoughts," *Ensign*, Aug. 1997, 6.
2. See Malachi 3:7–11; 3 Nephi 24:7–11; D&C 119.
3. "Becoming Self-Reliant," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 66.
4. *Gospel Standards*, comp. G. Homer Durham (1941), 111.
5. "The Times in Which We Live," *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 73.
6. In Conference Report, Apr. 1938, 105.
7. "Constancy amid Change," *Ensign*, June 1982, 4.
8. See Janene Wölsey Baadsgaard, "Escaping the Debt Trap," *Ensign*, Aug. 1996, 17; L. Tom Perry, "Becoming Self-Reliant," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 64; W. Steve Albrecht, "Make Money Your Ally," *Ensign*, Dec. 1988, 49; Robin Zenger Baker, "Where Does the Money Go?" *Ensign*, June 1985, 51; Marvin J. Ashton, "One for the Money," *Ensign*, July 1975, 72; Rulon T. Burton, "Know Where Your Money Goes," *Ensign*, June 1973, 45.
9. "Constancy amid Change," *Ensign*, June 1982, 6.
10. "Providing for Our Needs," *Ensign*, May 1981, 86.
11. "One for the Money," *Ensign*, July 1975, 73.
12. See "Becoming Self-Reliant," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 66.
13. In Conference Report, Apr. 1938, 103.
14. "I Believe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1992, 6.
15. "To Men of the Priesthood," *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 58.
16. "Pay Thy Debt, and Live," *Ensign*, June 1987, 5.

Healthwise at Home

I love to eat! I hate to exercise!” This is how I used to think and act. But at age 29, after a visit to the cardiologist because of heart palpitations, I was forced to improve my poor health habits. To help me succeed, I involved my family in

making some necessary lifestyle changes. The following two tips helped us to get started and stay on track.

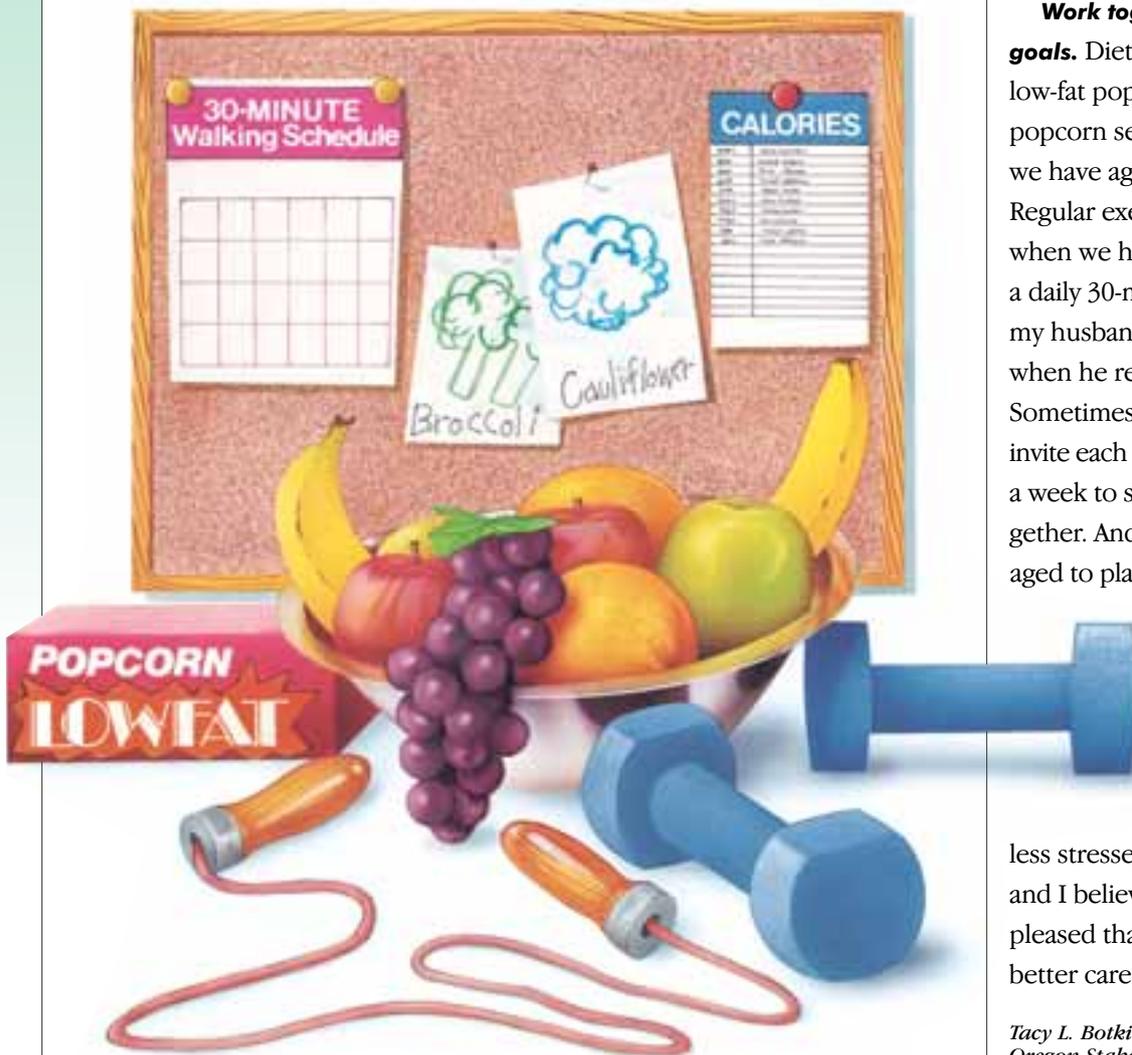
Become healthwise. For a week we had daily, short lessons about a variety of health topics, including the Word of Wisdom (see D&C 89). Rather than focus on the “thou shalt nots,” we talked about the good foods Heavenly Father has provided us. A subsequent discussion of the

food pyramid also helped us to better understand what constitutes a well-balanced diet. Using pictures from magazines and hand-drawn illustrations, we made a list of good and poor food choices to aid us in planning healthy menus. We also recorded what we ate for a day and discussed appropriate serving sizes for our ages, genders, and activity levels. We then discussed how many calories our favorite physical activities burned.

Work together to accomplish your goals. Dietary changes such as eating low-fat popcorn instead of buttered popcorn seem more doable when we have agreed to them in advance. Regular exercise also becomes easier when we help each other. I can enjoy a daily 30-minute brisk walk because my husband watches the children when he returns home from work. Sometimes I walk alone, but I also invite each child to walk with me once a week to spend one-on-one time together. And our children are encouraged to play outside more to boost their activity levels.

Though we are not perfect in our efforts to live a healthier lifestyle, we are improving overall. I feel less stressed, our family is happier, and I believe Heavenly Father is pleased that we are trying to take better care of ourselves.

Tacy L. Botkin, John Day Ward, La Grande Oregon Stake





Making More of Our Fast Sunday

As a family, we felt we were not focusing enough on fast Sunday. Sometimes we forgot this important day until Sunday morning when someone would pull out the cereal boxes, and then we would remember. Other times, because we were concentrating more on our stomachs' growls than on the true meaning of our fast, we became irritated with each other. As a result, our family was not receiving the blessings that can come from honoring fast Sunday. To help us do better, we pondered and prayed about our need, then made three changes in our home that have helped us.

1. The Saturday before fast Sunday, we remind each other what the next day is and ask if anyone has special needs or concerns that we as a family should include in our prayers and fasting.

2. We begin with a prayer dedicated to the purposes of our fast and give thanks for all we have, especially for blessings received that month.

3. Before church on fast Sunday, we gather for a special family time dedicated to tithing and our fast. We prepare our tithing and fast offering to give to a member of the bishopric. During this time, we also focus on our blessings by taking turns to

"I'll Be Nephi"

A couple of years ago, my husband and I discovered an effective teaching method to involve our young children: dramatizations. Using items found around the house, we decided to bring to life segments of the "journey in the wilderness" made by Lehi's family (see 1 Nephi 3:9).

Before the lesson, we sketched a cityscape of Jerusalem on a large piece of paper and attached it to one of our living room walls. Next, we found linens to create simple character costumes and kitchen items to resemble a Liahona. A card table draped with a blanket served as our tent in the wilderness.

Draped in our costumes, we listened as the lesson began to unfold from 1 Nephi. My husband, dressed to represent Father Lehi,

shared a message about the importance of obeying Heavenly Father (see 2:2–3). Then we departed from "Jerusalem" and camped in our tent (see 2:6). Father Lehi then awoke from a dream and instructed our children to return to Jerusalem to obtain the brass plates (see 3:2–4). They returned, lugging their father's set of scriptures. We then used our Liahona to wend our way slowly to the land of "Bountiful," represented by our ficus tree and a dried fruit mix (see 16:10–16; 17:5).

Our couch then became the turbulent ship that we sailed to the promised land (see 17:1–4; 18:8–25).

By weaving scripture stories with a hands-on activity, our initial lesson was such a success that our children immediately requested more reenactments. Our "journey in the wilderness" taught us that children crave experiences that draw them closer to gospel teachings.

Ellen Gregory, Preston Third Ward, Preston Idaho North Stake

For more ideas on creative teaching, refer to Teaching, No Greater Call (item no. 36123; U.S. \$2.00), pages 159–84.



express our gratitude for the Lord's goodness.

By making these three simple changes, our family has been blessed. We feel the Spirit of the Lord more in our home, and we are more grateful. We also feel more peace and unity as

we fast and pray for one another in times of need. Making fast Sunday more meaningful to our family has drawn us closer to each other and to the Lord.

Staci Swinton Brooks, White Oak Ward, Silver Spring Maryland Stake



Members of the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the general presidents of the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary auxiliaries addressed thousands of Church leaders in 76 different countries during the third Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting.

Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting Highlights Auxiliaries' Supporting Roles

In a world where the traditional family is under attack, the auxiliary organizations of the Church are meant to support the family in bringing individual members to Christ, local leaders were told during the Church's third Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting, held on 10 January 2004.

The broadcast, presided over by President Gordon B. Hinckley, reached priesthood and auxiliary leaders in 76 countries and 56 different languages worldwide. "You can see only those assembled in your own chapel," said President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, as he welcomed everyone to the training. "There are similar congregations . . . in more than 5,000 other buildings in 76 countries. So it really is a congregation of the Saints worldwide."

The training meeting

focused on the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary auxiliaries. Instructions for the leaders of the Young Men and Sunday School auxiliaries will be given in future broadcasts. Printed copies and DVDs of the broadcast will be distributed to leaders worldwide.

Challenges That Face the Family

President Gordon B. Hinckley and President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, emphasized the importance of the family and warned of threats to its survival in our day.

"No one need tell you that we are living in a very difficult season in the history of the world," said President Hinckley. "Standards are dropping everywhere. Nothing seems to be sacred anymore. . . . The traditional family is under heavy attack. . . . In the Church we are working very hard to stem

the tide of this evil."

President Faust cited statistics showing a worldwide increase in the postponement of marriage and in cohabitation, divorce, and births out of wedlock. Statistics also point to the "devaluation" of children. Worldwide, more than 25 percent of all pregnancies are aborted.

"The challenges facing families today are many and great. Our family relationships need every protection that can be instituted," President Faust taught. The auxiliaries and the priesthood are meant to support the family in strengthening individuals against the evils of the world.

The Roles of Auxiliaries and the Priesthood

The purpose, function, and inner workings of Church auxiliaries, and how auxiliaries relate to the priesthood, took the spotlight for the remainder of the meeting.

"The fundamental role and

purpose of an auxiliary organization of the Church is to help plant and make grow a testimony of Jesus Christ," said Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Scott explained how auxiliaries work under the direction of the priesthood and warned against replacing the family as the primary support for building testimonies. He instructed auxiliary leaders to rely on the Spirit for direction.

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president, Susan W. Tanner, Young Women general president, and Coleen K. Menlove, Primary general president, reinforced Elder Scott's instruction. "Our mission is to bring all to Christ," Sister Parkin said. Their presentation used video vignettes and commentary to demonstrate how priesthood and auxiliary leaders should work together and how auxiliary presidency meetings should be conducted.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, speaking from the Philippines, emphasized the role of priesthood leaders in overseeing the work of auxiliary organizations. "All who work in the auxiliary organizations must have hands placed upon their heads to give them the authority to lead and teach in the kingdom of God. . . . The priesthood authorities who preside over the auxiliary organizations must direct and supervise their work." His instructions included examples of how priesthood and auxiliaries should work hand in hand. ■



Members attend one of three dedicatory sessions for the Accra Ghana Temple, held on 11 January 2004.

African Saints Celebrate New Temple, Old Culture

By Marged Kirkpatrick

Latter-day Saint youth, children, and missionaries in Ghana and throughout west Africa combined their creative efforts to celebrate the dedication of the Accra Ghana Temple (see accompanying story) and to honor President Gordon B.

Hinckley's visit to their country on 10 January 2004.

At the direction of President Hinckley, and after much work and planning, the LDS youth of Ghana performed a special cultural "folklorica" called "A Day of Celebration." Almost 2,000



Young Latter-day Saints performed during a cultural celebration held the day before the temple dedication.

President Hinckley Dedicates Ghana Temple

The Accra Ghana Temple, open to the public 3–20 December 2003, was dedicated by President Gordon B. Hinckley in three sessions on Sunday, 11 January 2004. Sister Marjorie Hinckley, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Elders Sheldon F. Child, H. Ross Workman, and R. Conrad Schultz of the Africa West Area Presidency were also present at the dedication.

President Hinckley said the dedication of the temple marks "a new day in west Africa," fulfilling the hopes and dreams of many, according to a *Deseret Morning News* interview. During his time in Africa, President Hinckley visited with Ghana President John Agyekum Kufuor.

The temple, constructed solely of native materials, features a Namibian granite facade, African granite floors, and *makore* wood moldings. It is adorned with carved carpets, handcrafted furniture, original artwork, and



President Gordon B. Hinckley presided at the temple dedication.

unique art-glass windows. The largest room seats 80 people.

Missionaries first entered Ghana nearly 26 years ago in 1978. The Accra Ghana Temple is the 117th temple dedicated. Eleven more have been announced or are under construction. The next scheduled temple dedication is in Copenhagen, Denmark, in May. ■

youth sang and danced in this the largest Church youth activity ever held in Africa.

Youth, Primary children, and missionaries came to the Accra Sports Stadium from all over Ghana to perform. In the audience were President Hinckley and his wife, Marjorie; Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; members of the Africa West Area Presidency and their wives;

the Ga Tribal Council; Church members; and other spectators.

Based on the folktales and dances of west Africa, the storyline of the celebration followed a folk character named Kwaku Anansi, a spider whose stories are sometimes used to teach values to children. Desmond Ahwireng played the legendary spider, weaving together the different dance numbers of the youth.

In the show, Anansi searched from village to village for all the good things in the world to keep for himself. As he approached the various villages on stage, each stake and district sang and danced and gave him something good, like

courage, love, or family. At the end of his journey, when Anansi saw the Accra Ghana Temple, its beauty convinced him that he should share the good things he had collected with the world.

Anansi's good deed was

rewarded by about 800 Primary children, all dressed in white, entering the stage to sing "I Love to See the Temple" (*Children's Songbook*, 95). They were followed by the entire cast singing "I Am a Child of God" (*Hymns*, no. 301). ■

life-sustaining water existed in the planet's past.

As for Brother Anderson and his team of drivers, they are as close to living on Mars as they can get without being there. "We see this world through a camera's eye, and it is as if we were there ourselves," Brother Anderson said. "It is incredible to me that we can do things like this."

The team is living and working on Mars time. A day on Mars is 40 minutes longer than an Earth day, which means that Brother Anderson has seen a number of Mars sunrises while at work in the middle of the night.

Brother Anderson holds degrees in psychology, electrical engineering, and astronomy. He was a mission controller for the space shuttle program and has worked more recently on projects with the Hubble Space Telescope and probes to Jupiter and Saturn. ■



This 360° panoramic photo of Mars is one of thousands sent back by the rovers.

Daily "Commute" to Mars Nearing End for LDS Man

By Adam C. Olson, Church Magazines

Gary Anderson has enjoyed a new perspective during the past few months on the lessons he's taught in his East Pasadena Ward, Pasadena California Stake, Gospel Doctrine class. While his lessons on Sunday have followed Nephi across the ocean to the promised land and seen the Nephites into the wilderness, during the week Brother Anderson has helped pilot two spacecraft across the vastness of space to Mars and watched the Red Planet's "wilderness" unfold. He is one of seven NASA rover "drivers" on a historic exploration of the Martian landscape.

"I don't think anyone can look up at the stars at night and not feel awed at the marvelous universe we are a part of, whether you are an astronomer studying the heavens or a Boy Scout on an

overnight hike," said Brother Anderson, a mission control engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena.

"It is fascinating to me that we are able to go millions of miles through space, land on another planet, and maneuver about . . . as if we were here on Earth exploring some place we had not been to before."

The rover Spirit landed on Mars on 4 January 2004 and, barring unforeseen problems, is nearing the end of its projected 90-day mission. The rover Opportunity was set to have landed on 25 January on the opposite side of the planet. The rovers are capable of transmitting tremendous amounts of data to Earth, including measurements of radiation, magnetic fields, temperature, weather, and soil, as well as thousands



Brother Gary Anderson is part of the NASA team that controls the Mars rovers.

of photos. It could be some time before scientists can analyze all of the information gathered during the mission. Among other objectives, scientists hope the rovers will find evidence in the rocks and soil that potentially

Results of Service Seen in Wake of Wildfires

By Amber Meager

Full-time missionaries serving in California have made a lot of new friends after helping out when massive wildfires swept through the state in October and November of last year. The fires, which left more than 3,400 families homeless and killed 20 people, affected communities in the California



Elders from the California San Diego Mission haul off the ruined garage door of a home burned during the wildfires.

Arcadia, Carlsbad, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Fernando, and Ventura Missions.

Missionaries around the world give regular service as part of their weekly schedules. But following the devastation late last year, many California missionaries were instructed to put aside their regular schedules and pitch in where they were needed.

Missionaries in the Carlsbad and San Diego missions, for example, could often be found working from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., hauling ash, sorting clothing at various distribution centers, or generally lending a hand to whoever needed one—and then going out to do their regular teaching in the evenings.

Missionaries in the San Diego mission volunteered long hours with the Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Relief Center. The center served hundreds of thousands of meals, set up shelters, helped find temporary housing, and delivered necessities to residents who had lost their homes.

“Without the missionaries’ help, we would not have been

able to do what we have done,” said Major Glen Madsen, commanding officer for the Salvation Army. He said he was impressed by their efforts, along with their integrity, work ethic, and commitment. “Their loving spirit came out, and it changed the complexion of the setting and spilled out to the other volunteers and employees.”

After 20 homes burned in Scripps Ranch, missionaries from the Carlsbad mission sifted through ashes by hand helping the residents look for valuables such as jewelry, coin collections, and heirlooms.

“We couldn’t have been more thankful to have them,” said Julianne North, a member of St. Gregory’s Catholic Church and in charge of organizing the fire relief at St. Gregory’s in the community of Scripps Ranch. “They came from out of the blue. I can’t speak highly enough about them.”

In the community of Loire Valley, Amy Colbert, a resident of two years, returned home to find that 31 of her neighbors’ homes had burned to the ground.

Seeing the missionaries working in the area, she asked if they could help her friends with clearing their property. The next morning, 40 missionaries showed up ready to work.

It was all in a day’s work for the missionaries, but to residents of evacuated or otherwise affected communities, they were angels.

“It is amazing to watch them make a difference in so many people’s lives,” said Mrs. Colbert. “It is great to see the love of others given to people they don’t know. It rekindles my belief in kindness. . . . They are part of our [neighborhood] family now.”

Carlsbad Mission President

Stephen M. Studdert said there has been no end to the stories of how missionaries in California have affected others. “A San Diego City engineering official told me they had assessed what was needed to complete a project by week’s end,” President Studdert said. “He said, ‘We’ll need either 195 men or five Mormon missionaries.’ That official is now reading the Book of Mormon.”

The wildfires burned more than 800,000 acres. About 400,000 Latter-day Saints were affected, with 67 families losing their homes. All members and missionaries were reported safe, and no Church buildings were damaged. ■

Youth Collect Winter Clothing for Mongolians

By Elisabeth Liljenquist, Church Magazines

The combined efforts of several Church youth groups in northern Utah and southeastern Idaho resulted in nearly 50,000 articles of clothing for the people of Mongolia, who suffered through an unusually cold winter. Temperatures reached -40° Fahrenheit (-40° C).

When Sandra Curtis heard about the widespread need for warm clothing from her brother serving a full-time mission there, the Laurel from the North Logan Second Ward, North Logan Utah Green Canyon Stake, decided she could help.

Sandra invited her seminary class to collect clothing to send to Mongolia. “They were really excited,” she said. “They thought it was a good

idea, especially since it was during the Christmas season.”

Word of the project spread to four nearby seminaries. Within two weeks, nearly 3,000 students from seminaries in northern Utah and southeastern Idaho had collected coats, gloves, shoes, socks, belts, suits, sweaters, and blankets. One student knitted hats; another bought socks and gloves. Others searched their closets at home to find warm clothing suitable to donate.

With permission from their priesthood leaders, students asked ward members to participate, using their Mutual activities to collect donations. Chuck Summers of the Newton First Ward, Benson Utah Stake, said

members made considerable and generous contributions. "The project was absolutely phenomenal," he said.

Even with the Christmas season in full swing, the students diligently collected clothing until school was released for the holidays. By the last day of school, the hallways, foyers, and classrooms at Sky View Seminary in Smithfield, Utah, were filled with clothing. Deseret Industries in Logan, Utah, collected and packaged the clothes, filling nearly four semitrailers. The clothing was shipped in 900-pound (336-kg) bales to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital. ■

In the News

Elder Nelson Dedicates Republic of Tanzania

By Ferrin and Peggy Orton

Overlooking Oyster Bay on the Indian Ocean, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicated the United Republic of Tanzania on 18 November 2003, and pronounced a blessing upon its leaders, citizens, missionaries, and members of the Church. Meeting with a small number of members on a promontory near Dar Es Salaam, Elder Nelson dedicated the land and asked God to bless the nation's leaders "that they will lead in righteousness, mercy, and compassion," and the country's citizens "that they may pursue righteous endeavors. . . . Bless them to learn Thy commandments and prosper in the land. Help them to raise

righteous families with honesty, integrity, and love for Thee and one another."

Elder Steven E. Snow of the Seventy, President of the Africa Southeast Area, observed: "It was thrilling to be present as an Apostle gave this special blessing to the country of Tanzania. While the gospel has been established here, it will now firmly take root and grow and flourish."

Elder Nelson later spoke to about 300 of the approximately 500 Tanzanian Church members. There are currently three branches in Tanzania, organized under the Kenya Nairobi Mission: the Kinin Doni, Changombe, and Ubungo Branches.

Church Member Killed in California Earthquake

Marilyn Southam Zafuto, 55, of the Paso Robles Second Ward, San Luis Obispo California Stake, was killed on 22 December 2003 in a central California earthquake.

Zafuto, a retired schoolteacher from Vernal, Utah, was found along with another woman amid the debris of a 19th-century clock tower building in Paso Robles, a town of 25,000. Several stores within the building collapsed, while the structure's roof vaulted into the street, crushing numerous cars.

The 6.5-magnitude earthquake struck 20 miles west of Paso Robles near the coastal town of Cambria, affecting areas from San Francisco to Los Angeles. It was the largest California quake in four years.

California Ventura Mission President David J. Henderson reported that no missionaries

were harmed and that they had been instructed on earthquake safety in recent zone conferences. Two member families were displaced from their homes due to structural damage. Two Church buildings in Paso Robles and Morro Bay required minor repairs.

LDS Soldier Killed During Ambush in Iraq

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Stephen Bertolino was killed during an ambush on his



Stephen Bertolino

military convoy on 29 November 2003 in Haditha, Iraq. Brother Bertolino, a member of the San Diego 19th Ward, San Diego California East Stake, leaves behind a wife and four children. Brother Bertolino was posthumously awarded a Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and Meritorious Service Medal during funeral services.

Church Aids Survivors of Quake in Iran

Latter-day Saint Charities was among the first non-government organizations to respond to the earthquake in Iran that killed 37,000 in late December 2003. The Church sent four and a half tons

(4,500 kg) of emergency medicines, including enough antibiotics and allergy medicines to treat 90,000 people.

Church Humanitarian Emergency Response worked with M. Javad Zarif, ambassador from Iran to the United Nations, to assess needs, then collaborated with a company in Holland to rush the supplies to Iran. Garry Flake, director of the Church's Humanitarian Emergency Response, said the shipment was an initial response and that the Church will monitor the need for additional aid.

In a letter to Brother Flake, Ambassador Zarif wrote: "I have been aware all along of the sincere efforts of Latter-day Saint Charities. . . . Such support provides an invaluable source of comfort to those bereaved quake survivors and the whole Iranian people as they note that the outside world shares in their sorrow."

Eastern Malaysia Teens Gather for First Conference

Three years ago there was no organized Young Men or Young Women program in the Miri Branch in Malaysia. Now 10 young women attend regularly, know the Young Women theme, and are working toward completing the Personal Progress program.

These young women are some of the 80 teenagers from various parts of Malaysia who attended the year-old Kuching East Malaysia District's first youth conference last December.

The remarkable growth of the Young Women program in Miri is mirrored by

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CHURCH NEWS



Youth in the Kuching East Malaysia District held their first youth conference in December.

the success of the Bintulu Branch's program, which has grown from one to 14 young women in the past year.

"These wonderful young women . . . cried tears of joy when the Young Women program was explained to them," said Sharon Bray, district

Young Women president. "Their personal growth has been tremendous. These young people are hungry for the gospel."

The youth of the district prepared for months to perform in a variety show as part of the 2003 youth conference.

The show featured singing, dancing, and acting that represented how the youth's cultural roots had helped prepare them for the gospel. The Kuching East Malaysia District is one of four districts covering the country of Malaysia. ■

Comment

December Ensign Brings Christmas Spirit

My grandmother died about six years ago, and after that, Christmas wasn't the same. I forgot its true meaning. But after joining the Church about six months ago, I now understand that while I lost a relative who was dear to me, I have found a family that is bigger than I had ever imagined. The spirit of Christmas is back in my life.

After reading the December Ensign I was overcome with the Spirit. I had never before understood the importance of the Ensign. I now realize it is an integral part of any Latter-day Saint's life. After watching the video *Joy to the World*, I realized that while decorations and gifts are nice, the greatest gift anyone can give this or any other Christmas is that of love, peace,

happiness, and the glorious news of Christ's birth.
Kellie Oldfield
Kings Meadows, Australia

Subscription as Christmas Present

I just received my December Ensign. I can hardly wait for it each month. I'm in a senior rest home, but I've always received the Ensign, and its stories, pictures, and articles have always been what I've needed. I have always sent an Ensign subscription to someone as a Christmas present. Thank you for the work that goes into the magazine.
Ruth Christensen
Elk Grove, California

Art Credits

The artwork in the Ensign is beautiful! Could you please identify the names of the paintings and the artists' names? My thanks to the art

director for adding to the spiritual message of a wonderful magazine.
Joan Bybee
Oakton, Virginia

Editor's note: Photo and art credit lines appear in the small print in the margins of each article. If a painting has a title, that title is listed, along with the artist's name. Some of the art used in Church magazines is owned by the Church, while some is commissioned specifically for a particular article. If no art credit appears, this usually means that the art in question comes from a collection of stock photos that require no credit or that the artist or photographer is unknown but the original is either in Church possession or in the public domain. In some cases, a photo or painting is copyrighted and the Church's contract with the artist does not permit readers to photocopy or otherwise reproduce the image used in the magazine. These

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Call for Articles

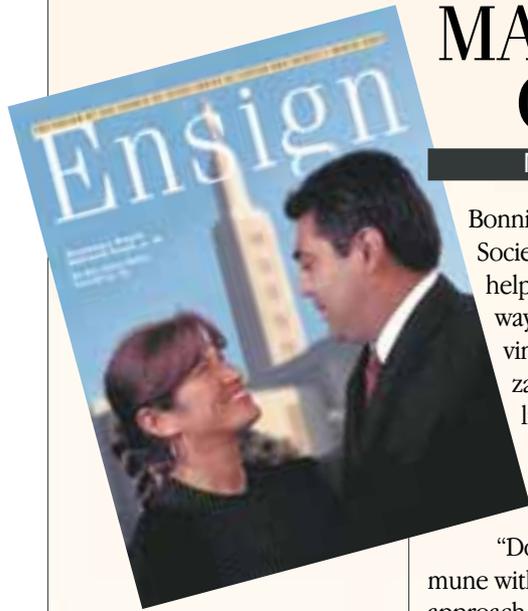
If you have had experience with the following situation, we invite you to share your suggestions:

I am an elderly woman, and due to my fragile health, I recently came to live with my daughter and her family. It has been difficult to leave behind my friends, my home, and especially my independence. I know it hasn't been easy for my daughter's family, either. What can I do to make the change easier for all of us?

Send responses by

15 April 2004 to *Ensign* Editorial, 24th Floor, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA, or to **cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org**. Clearly mark your submission "Questions and Answers," and at the top of your submission, write your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, 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, 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 4

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president, helps us appreciate the ways in which this divinely inspired organization can affect our lives. See page 16.

More Meaningful Prayers

“Do you want to commune with the Infinite? Then approach Him with reverence and humility,” writes Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Don’t worry so much about whether your words are polished or not. Worry instead about speaking from your heart.” For other ideas on how to make prayers more meaningful, see page 24.

How We Can Help

One sister’s story suggests how we can help others help themselves. See “In the Vineyard,” page 21.

Solace in Gospel Practices

Are you experiencing some sort of distress in your life? To see how practicing basic gospel principles can bring peace and comfort in times of turmoil, turn to “Comforted in My Distress,” page 13.

Sacrifice?

Has the Spirit prodded you to give up something you’d prefer to hold on to? Sometimes sacrifice brings not a loss but a great gain. See “It Wasn’t a Sacrifice,” page 52.

Feeling Underappreciated?

It isn’t easy to serve when our efforts are not valued. For ideas on how to deal with such a situation, see “Getting Over Feeling Underappreciated,” page 46.

The Lord’s Organization for Women

As sisters in the Church, do we truly value our membership in Relief Society?

PEF Blessings

Have you wondered where your donations to the Perpetual Education Fund are helping? See page 57 for an example of the blessings these donations create for worthy young people around the world.

Financial Freedom

Are you struggling with your finances? Find out how following prophetic counsel in five simple ways can help you



obtain and maintain financial well-being. See page 66.

Seeing into the Past

The beautifully stitched samplers found on page 32 in “With Every Stitch” give us a glimpse of life and family values in pioneer and modern times.

Learning from the Creation

Contemplating the grandeur of nature can often help us draw closer to God. The beauty and wonder of the earth are discussed in “The Wonder of the Creation” on page 60.

Home Teachers, Visiting Teachers

Find your monthly messages on pages 2 and 55.



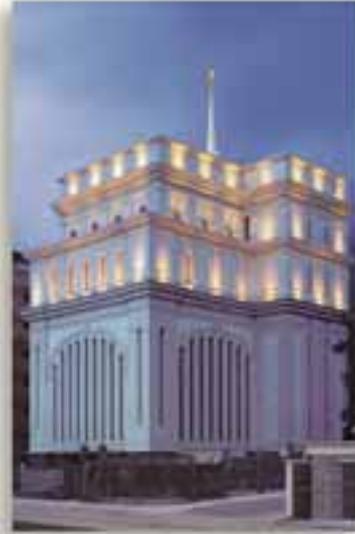
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Come to the House of the Lord, by Grant Romney Clawson

“The mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob” (Micah 4:1–2).



“All of the ordinances which take place in the House of the Lord become expressions of our belief in that fundamental and basic doctrine of the immortality of the human soul. As we redouble our efforts and our faithfulness in going to the temple, the Lord will bless us.” See “Letter from the First Presidency,” p. 45; see also President Howard W. Hunter, “A Temple-Motivated People,” p. 38.

