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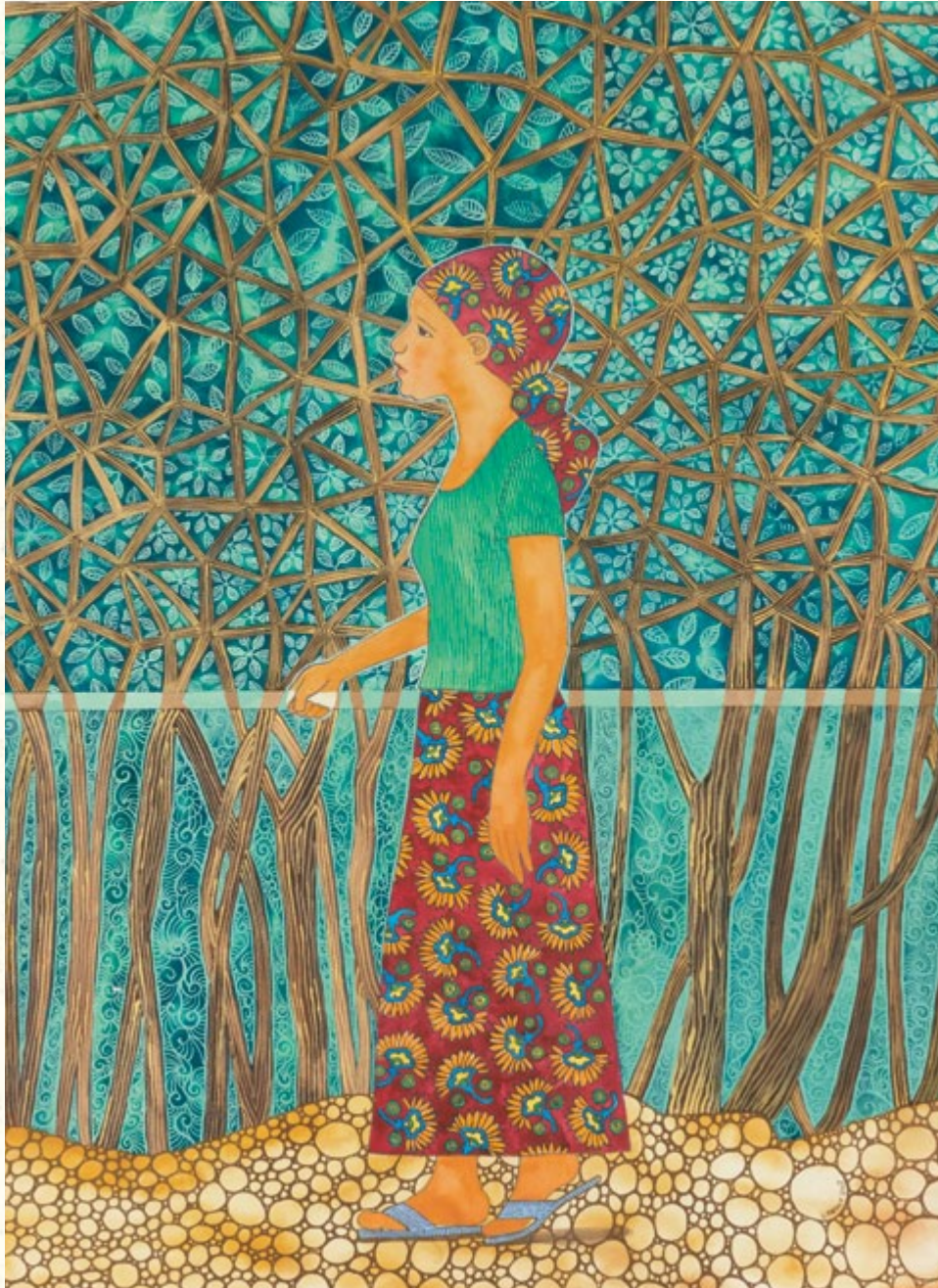
A religious painting depicting Jesus Christ with long brown hair and a beard, wearing a white robe with his arms raised in a gesture of blessing or healing. He stands in the center, surrounded by a group of people. To his left, a woman in a dark blue headscarf looks up at him with a prayerful expression. In the foreground, an elderly man with a long white beard and a yellow robe sits on the ground, holding a staff. To the right, a man in a red robe kneels, touching the hem of Jesus' white robe. Other figures in the background show various expressions of awe and hope. The background is a simple blue sky.

He Can Heal Us, Every One, p. 44

Preparing Youth to Defend
the Family, p. 12

What Prospective Missionaries
Need to Know, p. 22

Elder and Sister Holland on
Relief Society, p. 40



Holding to the Iron Rod, by Louise Parker

In her painting of a woman holding fast to the iron rod, this artist from South Africa reminds us that we are part of a worldwide Church linked together by many things, including our belief in the Book of Mormon.

“And I beheld a rod of iron, and it extended along the bank of the river, and led to the tree by which I stood.

“And I also beheld a strait and narrow

path, which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree by which I stood; . . .

“And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree” (1 Nephi 8:19–20, 24).



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Back: Photo illustration by David Stoker.



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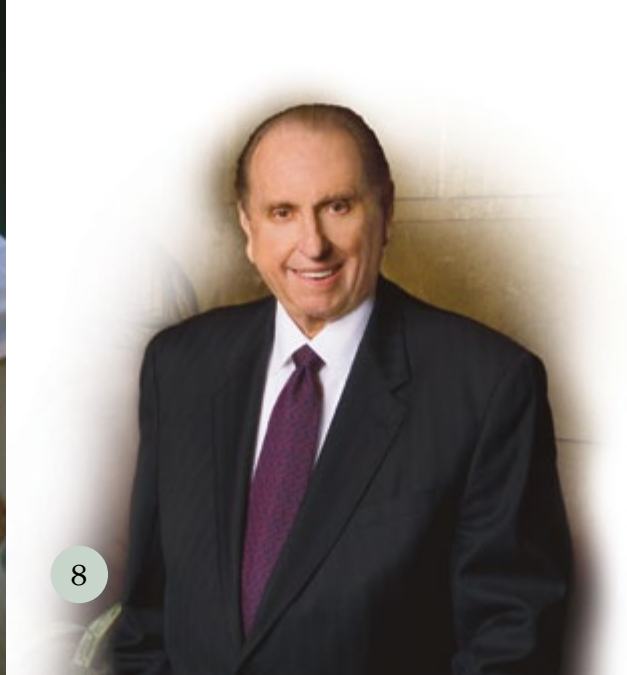
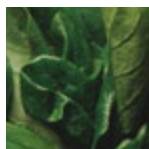
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AN OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
MARCH 2011 VOLUME 41 • NUMBER 3

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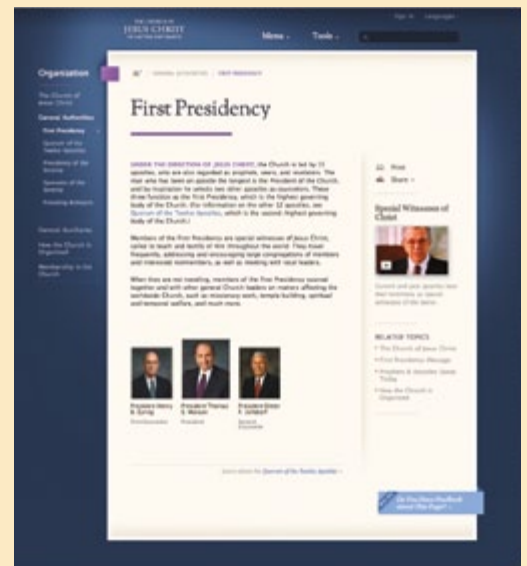
GENERAL AUXILIARIES BIOGRAPHIES

The Church's new Web site includes biographical information about the leaders of Church auxiliaries. The chart contains links to biographies about each leader.

Visitors can learn about the careers, missions, families, and accomplishments of the auxiliary leaders of the Sunday School, the Relief Society, the Young Women, the Young Men, and the Primary. Visit lds.org/church/leaders.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Both printable and online activities for children to help them prepare for—and benefit more from—general conference can be found at lds.org/general-conference/children.



DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

We welcome donated submissions showing the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. On each submission, please include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and the name of your ward and stake (or branch and district).

Please submit articles through ensign.lds.org, or send them to Ensign Editorial, 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA. Authors whose work is selected for publication will be notified.

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By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Second Counselor in the
First Presidency



Looking FOR THE GOOD

While looking for a new home, a young Latter-day Saint couple talked to potential neighbors about the neighborhood and the schools in the area.

One woman they spoke to said of the school her children were attending: “This is the most incredible place! The principal is a wonderful and good man; the teachers are well qualified, kind, and friendly. I am so pleased that our children can attend this wonderful school. You’ll love it here!”

A different woman said of her children’s school: “It’s a terrible place. The principal is self-absorbed; the teachers are unqualified, rude, and unfriendly. If I could afford to move out of this area, I’d do it in a heartbeat!”

The interesting thing was that both women were speaking about the same principal, the same teachers, and the same school.

Have you ever noticed that people can usually find whatever they are looking for? Look hard enough, and you can discover both good and bad in almost anyone and anything. People have done the same with The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints since its beginning. Those who look for the good will find a kind and compassionate people—a people who love the Lord and desire to serve Him and bless the lives of their fellowman. But it is also true that those who look for the bad will certainly find things that are not so ideal.

Unfortunately, at times this happens even within the Church. There is no end to the creativity, ingenuity, and tenacity of those who look for reasons to criticize. They cannot seem to release their grip on grudges. They gossip and find fault with others. They nurse wounds for decades, taking every opportunity to tear down and demean others. This is not pleasing to the Lord, “for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (James 3:16).

President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901) knew President Brigham Young (1801–77) well, working closely with him for many years, both as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and as his counselor in the First Presidency. After the death of President Young, President Cannon wrote in his journal: “I never criticized



or found fault with [Brigham Young's] conduct, his counsel or his teachings at any time in my heart, much less in my words or actions. This is a pleasure to me now. The thought that ever was with me was: If I criticize or find fault with, or judge Brother Brigham, how far shall I go; if I commence, where shall I stop? I dared not to trust myself in such a course. I knew that apostasy frequently resulted from the indulgence of the spirit of criticizing

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

"You may feel that you lack understanding of a certain principle that you are preparing to teach," notes *Teaching, No Greater Call* ([1999], 19). "However, as you prayerfully study it, strive to live it, prepare to teach it, and then share it with others, your own testimony will be strengthened and deepened."

As you look for the good in life and in others this month, you will be more prepared to teach this message and to testify of its truth.

Some look at this glass and see it as half full. Others see it as half empty. How you see it is up to you.

and faultfinding. Others, of greater strength, wisdom and experience than myself, might do many things and escape evil consequences which I dare not do."¹

President Cannon's powerful counsel is something we members of the Church should consider with great care. The word of God admonishes the followers of Christ to be "pure, . . . peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." For those who make peace, "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace" (James 3:17, 18).

We have a choice. We can seek for the bad in others. Or we can make peace and work to extend to others the understanding, fairness, and forgiveness we so desperately desire for ourselves. It is our choice; for whatever we seek, that we will certainly find. ■

NOTE

1. George Q. Cannon, Journal, Jan. 17, 1878; spelling modernized.

The Bright Side of a Dog Bite

By Tara Stringham

In the summer of 2009, I was bitten on my face by my friend's dog. Unfortunately, the bite split my lip open, and I had to get stitches.

Following the injury, I was very downhearted. I allowed adversity to take over my thoughts, and I felt like my whole life had been ruined. I was self-conscious about my lip and didn't want to go out in public at all. In my mind my plans for piano, volleyball, church, swimming, and school were crushed by my injury.

But whenever I prayed, received priesthood blessings, talked with my parents, or had visits by my family and friends, my spirits were lifted and I felt happiness at a time

of sadness. I soon realized that if people were thinking about my injury, they were feeling compassion.

This experience helped build my character, and I learned not to be as worried about what other people thought about me. I was also blessed because my injury helped me realize that I should think less about myself and start caring more for others. My spirit was greatly strengthened during this time.

I learned that adversity is a part of Heavenly Father's plan for us. If we look for the good and not the bad, we can overcome adversity, become a better person, and let the experience strengthen our testimony.

CHILDREN

Look for the Good around You

You can see good all around you if you learn to look for it. One way you can learn to recognize blessings is by making it a habit each night to count the good things you saw that day.

Look at this picture. How many good things can you find?

Take time tonight to tell a family member about some of the good things you saw in your own life today.





Faith • Family • Relief

Under the Priesthood and after the Pattern of the Priesthood

Study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life.

My dear sisters, how blessed we are! Not only are we members of the Church, but we are also members of Relief Society—“the Lord’s organization for women.”¹ Relief Society is evidence of God’s love for His daughters.

Doesn’t your heart thrill as you recall the exciting beginnings of this society? On March 17, 1842, the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the sisters “under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood.”²

To be organized “*under the priesthood*” gave sisters authority and direction. Eliza R. Snow, second Relief Society general president, taught that Relief Society “cannot exist without the Priesthood, from the fact that it derives all its authority and influence from that source.”³ Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained, “The authority to be exercised by the officers and teachers of the Relief Society . . . was the authority that would flow to them through their organizational connection with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and through their individual setting apart under the hands of the priesthood leaders by whom they were called.”⁴

To be organized “*after the pattern of the priesthood*” gave sisters sacred responsibilities. Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president, explained: “We operate in the manner of the priesthood—which means that we seek, receive, and act on revelation; make decisions in councils; and concern ourselves with caring for individuals one by one. Ours is the priesthood purpose to prepare ourselves for the blessings of eternal life by making and keeping covenants. Therefore, like our brethren who hold the priesthood, ours is a work of salvation, service, and becoming a holy people.”⁵

Barbara Thompson, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency.

What Can I Do?

1. How can I help the sisters I visit enjoy the blessings of Relief Society’s sacred work?
2. What will I do this month to increase my ability to receive personal revelation?

From the Scriptures

1 Corinthians 11:11; Doctrine and Covenants 25:3; 121:36–46

From Our History

During the construction of the Nauvoo Temple, a group of sisters desired to organize to support the building effort. Eliza R. Snow drafted bylaws for this new group. When she showed them to the Prophet Joseph, he responded: “Tell the sisters their offering is accepted of the Lord, and he has something better for them. . . . I will organize the women under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood.”⁶ A short time later, the Prophet told the newly organized Relief Society: “I now turn the key to you in the name of God, and this Society shall rejoice, and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time.”⁷ The sisters were expected to rise to a new level of holiness and to prepare for the priesthood ordinances soon to be administered in the temple.

NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “Relief Society—Its Promise and Potential,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1976, 4.
2. Joseph Smith, quoted in Sarah Granger Kimball, “Auto-biography,” *Woman’s Exponent*, Sept. 1, 1883, 51.
3. Eliza R. Snow, “Female Relief Society,” *Deseret News*, Apr. 22, 1868, 81.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Relief Society and the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 36.
5. Julie B. Beck, “Relief Society: A Sacred Work,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 111.
6. Joseph Smith, quoted in Kimball, “Auto-biography,” 51.
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 451.

For more information, go to www.reliefsociety.lds.org.



GOD REVEALS TRUTH TO HIS PROPHETS AND TO US

A prophet is a special witness for Jesus Christ and testifies of His divinity. God calls a prophet to be His representative on earth. A prophet teaches truth, interprets the word of God, and otherwise follows God's directions in blessing our lives. When a prophet speaks for God, it is as if God is speaking (see D&C 1:38). Prophets are on the earth today just as they were anciently.

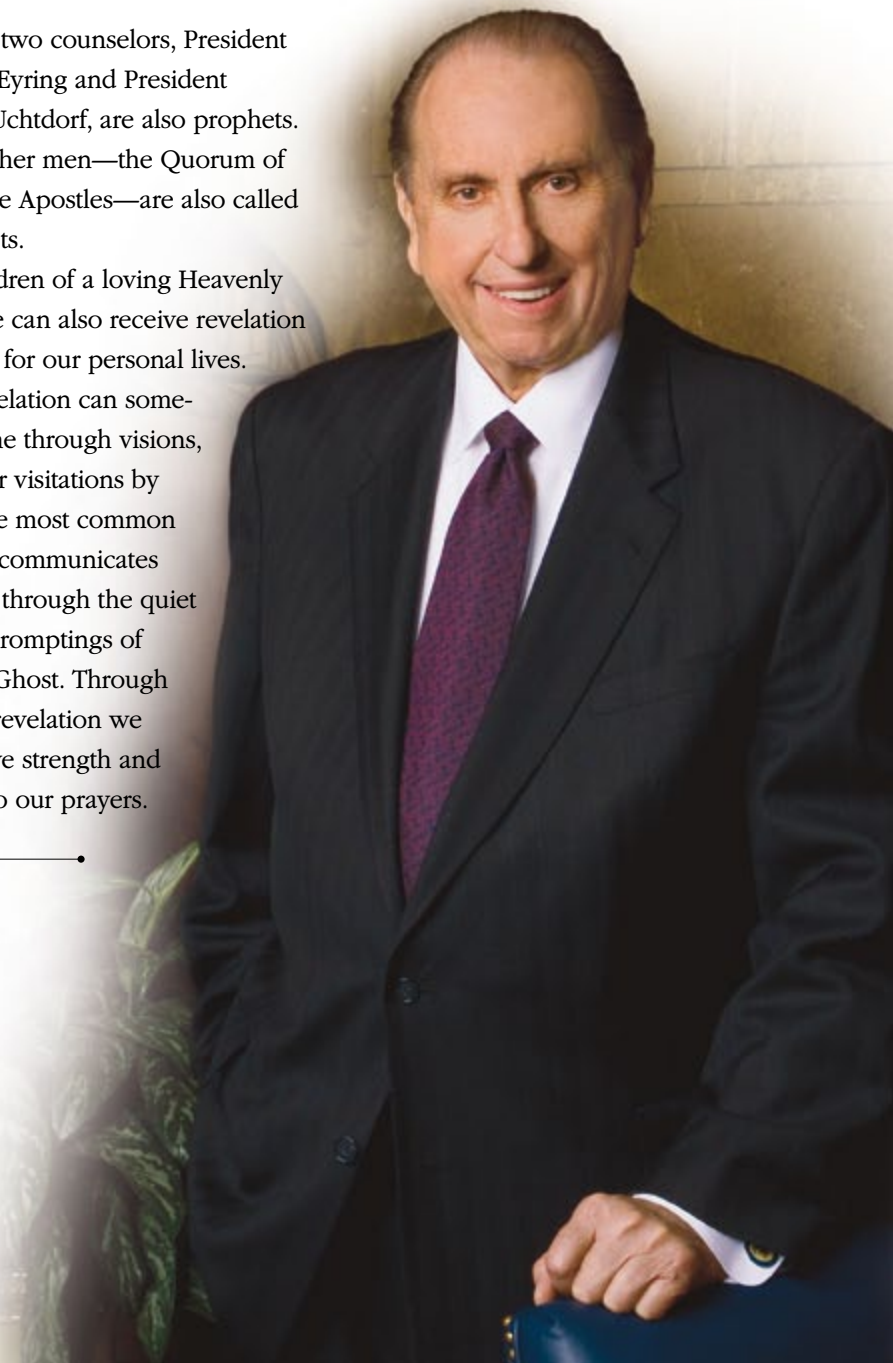
Revelation for the whole Church comes through the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Thomas S. Monson. He is a prophet of God. When members of the Church speak of “the prophet,” they are referring to the President of the Church. However, there are other prophets on the earth today. President

Monson's two counselors, President Henry B. Eyring and President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, are also prophets. Twelve other men—the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—are also called as prophets.

As children of a loving Heavenly Father, we can also receive revelation from Him for our personal lives. While revelation can sometimes come through visions, dreams, or visitations by angels, the most common way God communicates with us is through the quiet spiritual promptings of the Holy Ghost. Through personal revelation we can receive strength and answers to our prayers.

How grateful we are that the heavens are indeed open, that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored, and that the Church is founded on the rock of revelation. We are a blessed people, with apostles and prophets upon the earth today.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Closing Remarks,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 109–10.



Where can we read inspired teachings from modern prophets?

1. *The Doctrine and Covenants* is a collection of revelations given to modern prophets. It can be found online at www.scriptures.lds.org.



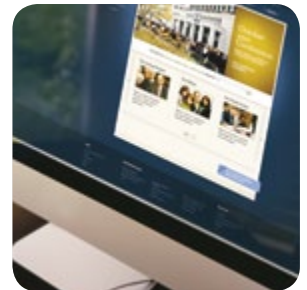
2. A message from the President of the Church or one of his counselors is printed each month in the *Liahona* and *Ensign* magazines (available in some languages at LDS.org).



3. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" and "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles" are prophetic declarations of truths about the family and the Savior. Both are on LDS.org.



4. All members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles speak every six months in the Church's general conference. Read the text or see videos of their addresses at www.conference.lds.org.



1. Fast, ponder, and pray for guidance.

How can we receive personal revelation?



2. Read the scriptures. They are a means by which Heavenly Father can answer our prayers and give us guidance as the Holy Ghost helps us understand what we read.



3. Attend church each Sunday and, if possible, attend the temple.



4. Keep the commandments so you can be worthy to receive inspiration from the Holy Ghost. ■

"I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.

"Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation" (D&C 8:2–3).

For more information, see Dallin H. Oaks, "Two Lines of Communication," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 83; *Gospel Principles* (2009), "Prophets of God," 39–43; and *True to the Faith* (2004), "Revelation," 140–44.

TO BIND UP THE BROKENHEARTED



By Georges A. Bonnet

In the 1990s my employment with the Church took our family to Africa, where I was assigned to help with relief efforts in Burundi, Rwanda, and Somalia. This was during a devastating period of famine, brutality, and war, and the suffering was overwhelming.

Thousands were in refugee camps. Hundreds of orphaned children lived in rudimentary shelters they constructed themselves. Cholera, typhoid, and malnutrition were ever present. The stench of waste and death added to the hopelessness.

I felt driven to offer all the help I could. The Church worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross and other organizations, but I couldn't help wondering sometimes if our efforts were making a difference in the face of such widespread atrocity and tragedy. It was hard to shake feelings of helplessness and discouragement, and often when I retired for the night, I cried.

It was during this discouraging time that a familiar passage took on a deeper dimension for me. Citing Isaiah, it tells us that the Savior was “anointed to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound” (D&C 138:42).

I had seen and spoken with many people who were “brokenhearted” in the most striking ways. They had lost their loved ones, homes, and peaceful way of life.

All of us can have the sure hope that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ our hearts can be bound up and made whole.

And yet many of them showed signs of having been “bound up.” For instance, often when we approached a makeshift home, its inhabitants would ask, “Will you pray with us?” The people seemed to find happiness and peace in making supplications to the Lord.

Of course, we cannot look for the impact of the Atonement only in this life. It also comes after. I know there is redemption for the dead and resurrection for all because of the Savior. The pain we experience in this life—however extreme—will be removed and healed through the Atonement.

Mormon and Moroni, who lived in times of great slaughter and death, wrote about having hope anchored in a loving God whose mercy and justice surpass all understanding (see, for instance, Moroni 7:41–42). Studying these prophets' statements bolstered my own faith. When I wondered if our efforts were making a difference, I felt assurance that the Savior's grace is the ultimate redemptive power. Our best efforts may be limited, but His are infinite and eternal.

There's no doubt that the world's conditions create many forms of despair, but none are beyond the reach of the Redeemer to heal. All of us can have the sure hope that through the Atonement of Christ our hearts *can* be bound up and made whole. With this knowledge, I could go on in my work, knowing that His efforts *always* succeed. ■

Helping Youth Track Their Progress or Their Duty—

As parents, leaders, or teachers, we can help teens use the interactive, online versions of Duty to God and Personal Progress.

ONLINE ↗

Personal Progress

Now a young woman can connect to the Personal Progress website and easily track her progress online. The complete booklet is there with experiences and project information listed for each value.

At PersonalProgress.lds.org a young woman can:

- Work on and complete value projects and value experiences online.
- Link to the scriptures in each value.
- Keep her Personal Progress journal online. She is the only one who can view her journal or search it for specific content.
 - Submit her project and experience plans online to her parent or leader for approval.
 - Submit her completed work for final approval.
 - Track her progress toward her medallion.

Duty to God

When a young man connects to the Duty to God website, he makes keeping track of his plans fast and easy. The complete booklet is there, including all of the learning activities and links to scriptures and other resources.

At DutyToGod.lds.org, a young man can:

- Enter, view, and update his plans online.
- Prepare outlines he can use to teach about the doctrines he is studying.
 - Get ideas to help him make his Duty to God plans.
 - See videos related to Duty to God.
 - Record his thoughts and impressions as he carries out his plans.
 - Link to scriptures and other resources to help him complete learning activities.

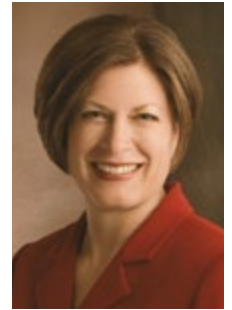
HOW TO REGISTER ONLINE

In order to use any of the tracking and journal features of the Personal Progress and Duty to God websites, youth must have an LDS Account and then register on the site. To get an LDS Account and register, they will need to follow these steps:

1. They will need their membership number. If they don't know it, they can get it from their ward membership clerk. They will also need to enter their date of birth.
2. They will then fill in a profile form with information such as their name, e-mail address, user name, and password. They may also need a parent's e-mail address to complete the process.
3. Now they can register by signing in at the Duty to God or Personal Progress website welcome page.



By Julie B. Beck
Relief Society General
President



TEACHING THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAMILY

As I meet with young single adults around the world, I ask them, “Why does the First Presidency care so much about you and provide so many resources for you?” These are some of the answers I get: “We are future Church leaders.” “We need training so we can stay strong.” “Our testimonies are strengthened in our seminary and institute classes.” “We need to meet other great Latter-day Saint youth.” “We are the hope of the future.” I have rarely heard, “So I will someday be a better father or a better mother.” Their responses are generally about self, because this is the time of life they are in.

Nevertheless, parents, teachers, and leaders of youth need to teach the rising generation the doctrine of the family. It is essential to help them achieve eternal life (see Moses 1:39). They need to know that the theology of the family is based on the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. They need to understand the threats to the family so they will know what they are fighting against and can prepare. They need to understand clearly that the fulness of the gospel is realized in temple ordinances and covenants.

The Theology of the Family

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have a theology of the family that is based on the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. The Creation of the earth provided a place where families could live. God created a man and a woman who were the two essential halves of a family. It was part of Heavenly Father’s plan that Adam and Eve be sealed and form an eternal family.

The Fall provided a way for the family to grow. Adam and Eve were family leaders who chose to have a mortal experience. The Fall made it possible for them to have sons and daughters.

The Atonement allows for the family to be sealed together eternally. It allows for families to have eternal growth and perfection. The plan of happiness, also called the plan of salvation, was a plan created for families. The rising generation need to understand that the main pillars of our theology are centered in the family.

When we speak of qualifying for the blessings of eternal life, we mean qualifying for the blessings of eternal families. This was Christ’s doctrine, and it was

This generation will be called upon to defend the doctrine of the family as never before. If they don’t know the doctrine, they can’t defend it.



*We have a theology
of the family that
is based on
the Creation,
the Fall, and the
Atonement.*



LEFT: DETAIL FROM UNIVERSE, BY SIDNEY KING; DETAIL FROM LEAVING THE GARDEN OF EDEN, BY JOSEPH BRICKEY; DETAIL FROM NOT MY WILL, BUT THINE, BE DONE, BY HARRY ANDERSON; COURTESY OF PACIFIC PRESS PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION, INC.; PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY WESTON C. COLTON AND CRAIG DIMOND

restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 2:1–3:

“Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

“And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.

“If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.”

This scripture is talking about temple blessings—ordinances and covenants without which “the whole earth [is] utterly wasted.”

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” was written to reinforce that the family is central to the Creator’s plan.¹ Without the family, there is no plan; there is no reason for mortal life.

Threats to the Family

In addition to understanding the theology of the family, we all need to understand the threats to the family. If we don’t, we can’t prepare for the battle. Evidence is all around us that the family is becoming less important. Marriage rates are declining, the age of marriage is rising, and divorce rates are rising. Out-of-wedlock births

are growing. Abortion is rising and becoming increasingly legal. We see lower birth rates. We see unequal relationships between men and women, and we see cultures that still practice abuse within family relationships. Many times a career gains importance over the family.

Many of our youth are losing confidence in the institution of families. They’re placing more and more value on education and less and less importance on forming an eternal family. Many don’t see forming families as a faith-based work. For them, it’s a selection process much like shopping. Many also distrust their own moral strength and the moral strength of their peers. Because temptations are

Among the threats to the family is divorce, which is on the rise.



so fierce, many are not sure they can be successful in keeping covenants.

Many youth also have insufficient and underdeveloped social skills, which are an impediment to forming eternal families. They are increasingly adept at talking to someone 50 miles (80 km) away and less able to carry on conversations with people in the same room. That makes it difficult for them to socialize with each other.

We also face the problem that we read about in Ephesians 6:12: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Public policies are being made every day that are antifamily, and the definition of family is changing legally around the world. Pornography is rampant. For those who create pornography, their new target audience is young women. Parents are being portrayed as inept and out of touch. Antifamily media messages are everywhere. Youth are being desensitized about the need to form eternal families.

We see how this can happen when we read the words of Koriath, an anti-Christ: “Thus he did preach unto them,

leading away the hearts of many, causing them to lift up their heads in their wickedness, yea, leading away many women, and also men, to commit whoredoms” (Alma 30:18). Satan knows that he will never have a body; he will never have a family. So he targets young women, who will create the bodies for the future generations.

Korihor was an anti-Christ. Anti-Christ is antifamily. Any doctrine or principle our youth hear from the world that is antifamily is also anti-Christ. It’s that clear. If our youth cease to believe in the righteous traditions of their fathers as did the people described in Mosiah 26, if our youth don’t understand their part in the plan, they could be led away.

Teaching the Rising Generation

What is it we hope this rising generation will understand and do because of what we teach them? The answers to that question as well as the key elements of the doctrine of the family are found in the family proclamation. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said that the proclamation was “a declaration and reaffirmation of standards, doctrines, and practices” that this Church has always had.²

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said, “This order . . . of family government where a man and woman

Parents, as well as leaders and teachers of youth, should teach the doctrine of the family to the rising generation as found in the scriptures and the family proclamation.



THE FAMILY IS ETERNAL

“The family is not an accident of mortality. It existed as an organizational unit in the heavens before the world was formed; historically, it started on earth with Adam and Eve, as recorded in Genesis. Adam and Eve were married and sealed for time and all eternity by the Lord, and as a result their family will exist eternally.”

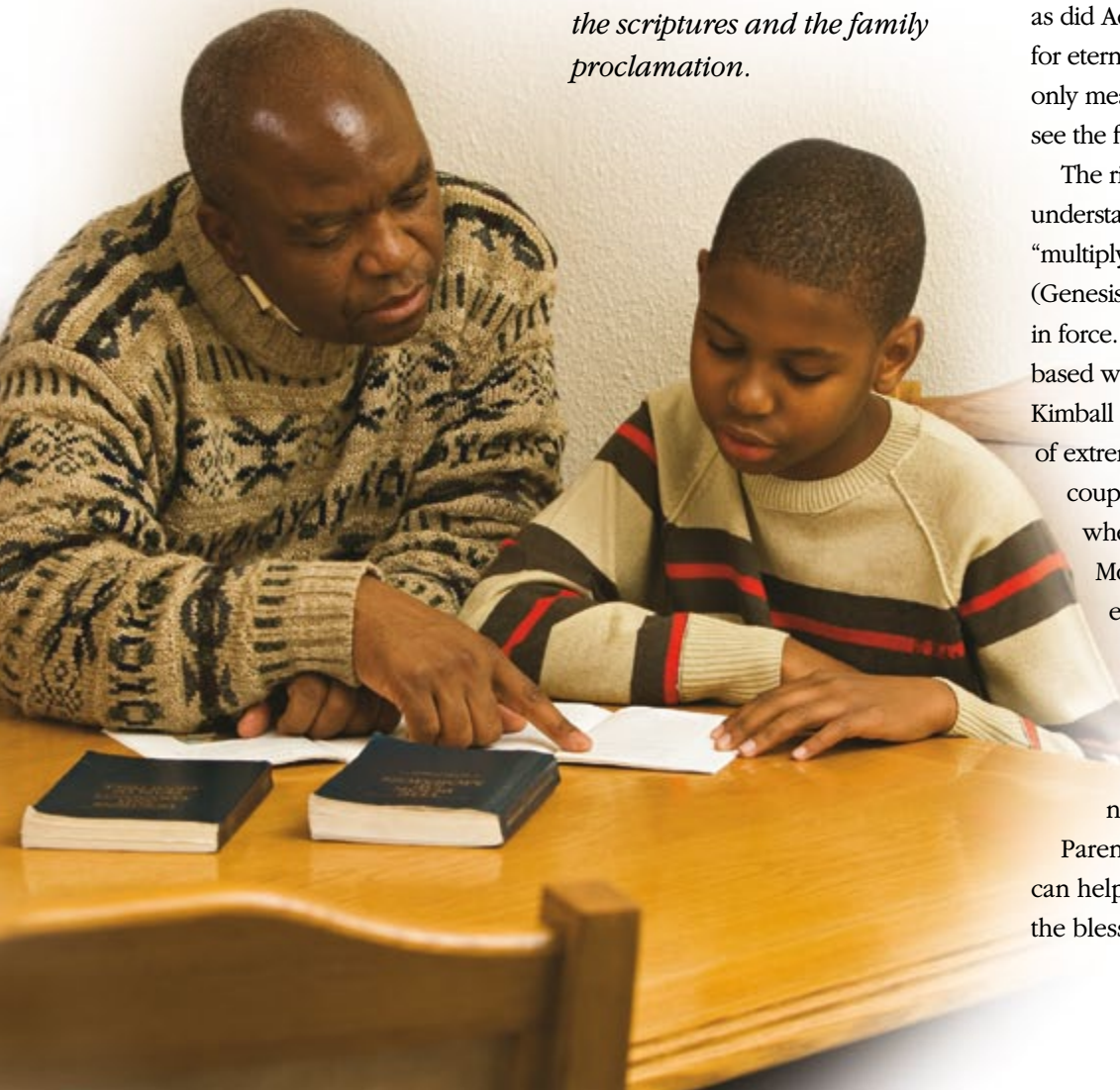
Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” in Dawn Hall Anderson, ed., *Clothed with Charity: Talks from the 1996 Women’s Conference* (1997), 134.

enter into a covenant with God—just as did Adam and Eve—to be sealed for eternity, to have posterity . . . is the only means by which we can one day see the face of God and live.”³

The rising generation need to understand that the command to “multiply, and replenish the earth” (Genesis 1:28; Moses 2:28) remains in force. Bearing children is a faith-based work. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said, “It is an act of extreme selfishness for a married couple to refuse to have children when they are able to do so.”⁴

Motherhood and fatherhood are eternal roles. Each carries the responsibility for either the male or the female half of the plan. Youth is the time to prepare for those eternal roles and responsibilities.

Parents, teachers, and leaders can help young people prepare for the blessings of Abraham. What are





TO TEACHERS

“Your chief interest, your essential and all but sole duty, is to teach the gospel of the Lord Jesus

Christ as that has been revealed in these latter days. You are to teach this gospel using as your sources and authorities the standard works of the Church and the words of those whom God has called to lead His people in these last days.”

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), First Counselor in the First Presidency, *The Charted Course of the Church in Education*, rev. ed. (1994), 10; see also *Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders* (2001), 4.

those blessings? Abraham tells us in Abraham 1:2. He says he wanted “the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer; . . . to be one who possessed great knowledge, . . . to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.”

Where are these blessings Abraham received? They come only to those who have a temple sealing and marriage. A man cannot become a “father of many nations” without being sealed to his wife. Likewise, Abraham could not hold the right belonging to the fathers without a wife who had the right belonging to the mothers.

The stories of Abraham and Sarah and of Isaac and Rebekah are found in Genesis. Abraham and Sarah

had only one son, Isaac. If Abraham was to be the “father of many nations,” how important was Isaac’s wife, Rebekah? She was so important that he sent his servant hundreds of miles to find the right young woman—one who would keep her covenants, one who understood what it meant to form an eternal family.

In Genesis 24:60, Rebekah is blessed to be “the mother of thousands of millions.” Where do we find those kinds of blessings? They are received in the temple.

The story of Isaac and Rebekah is an example of the man, who has the keys, and the woman, who has the influence,

working together to ensure the fulfillment of their blessings. Their story is pivotal. The blessings of the house of Israel depended on a man and a woman who understood their place in the plan and their responsibilities to form an eternal family, to bear children, and to teach them.

In our day we have the responsibility to send “Isaac” and “Rebekah” forth from our homes and classrooms. Every young man and young woman should understand his or her role in this great partnership—

that they are each an “Isaac” or a “Rebekah.” Then they will know with clarity what they have to do.

We are preparing our youth for the temple and for eternal families.





USING "THE FAMILY: A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD"

- Hang a copy of the proclamation in your home or classroom.
- Encourage youth to keep a copy of the proclamation in their scriptures.
- Link key statements in the proclamation to lessons taught from the scriptures.
- Study and refer to the proclamation in family home evening.

Live the Hope of Eternal Life

Parents, teachers, and leaders: live in your homes, in your families, in your marriages so that youth will develop hope for eternal life from watching you. Live and teach with so much clarity that what you teach will cut through all the noise youth are hearing and so that it will pierce their hearts and touch them.

Live in your home so that you're brilliant in the basics, so that you're intentional about your roles and responsibilities in the family. Think in terms of precision not perfection. If you have your goals and you are precise in how you go about them in your homes, youth will learn from you. They will learn that you pray, study the scriptures together, have family home evening, make a priority of mealtimes, and speak respectfully of your marriage partner. Then from your example the rising generation will gain great hope.

This I Know

We are preparing our youth for the temple and for eternal families. Many threats are coming to them that can discourage them from forming an eternal family. Our role in this is to teach them so they don't

misunderstand. We must be very clear on key points of doctrine, which we find in "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."

This generation will be called upon to defend the doctrine of the family as never before. If they don't know it, they can't defend it. They need to understand temples and priesthood.

President Kimball said:

"Many of the social restraints which in the past have helped to reinforce and to shore up the family are dissolving and disappearing. The time will come when only those who believe deeply and actively in the family will be able to preserve their families in the midst of the gathering evil around us. . . .

". . . There are those who would define the family in such a nontraditional way that they would define it out of existence. . . .

"We of all people, brothers and sisters, should not be taken in by the specious arguments that the family unit is somehow tied to a particular phase of development a moral society is going through. We are free to resist those moves which downplay the significance of the family and which play up the significance of selfish individualism.

We know the family to be eternal."⁵

The gospel of Jesus Christ is true. It was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. We have the fulness of the gospel this day. We are sons and daughters of heavenly parents, who sent us forth to have this earthly experience to prepare us for the blessing of eternal families. I bear you my testimony of our Savior, Jesus Christ, that through His Atonement we can become perfect and equal to our responsibilities in our earthly families and that through His Atonement we have the promise of eternal life in families. ■

From a broadcast address given to seminary and institute of religion teachers on August 4, 2009.

NOTES

1. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 100.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, "What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple," *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 6.
4. Spencer W. Kimball, "Fortify Your Homes against Evil," *Ensign*, May 1979, 6.
5. Spencer W. Kimball, "Families Can Be Eternal," *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 4.



HOME TEACHING AND VISITING TEACHING: A WORK OF **Ministering**

: *New to home or
: visiting teaching?
: Consider these
: nine suggestions.*

I know it's the end of the month, and I'm so sorry we haven't had a chance to discuss the Visiting Teaching Message," said Sister Julie B. Beck's visiting teacher. But even as she made this statement, she was leaving the home of the general Relief Society president with a basket of ironing to complete and return to Sister Beck. "Do you think we could count this?" she asked Sister Beck hesitantly.

When Sister Beck recounts this incident, tears come to her eyes as she asks, "How could this dear friend and dedicated visiting teacher ever feel that I had *not* been visit taught and watched over? This wasn't the first time she'd stopped in to meet a need that month. How could she not realize that she was constantly ministering to me and blessing my family? Her care and concern for me are the epitome of visiting teaching. Of course, she could report that I had been visit taught!"

As Sister Beck's experience illustrates, inspired visiting and home teaching are more than a formal visit and aren't ever complete. Home and visiting teaching are about taking care of people more than completing processes, and when done correctly, they represent caring and not counting. These assignments are to provide watchcare and to minister to each other as the Savior ministered. Here are some ideas that may help you:

- **Know whom you are assigned to visit and who your companion is.** The priesthood or Relief Society leaders in your ward or branch should provide you with the name and contact information of each family or individual you are assigned to visit. Introduce yourself to your companion and to the people you visit and start building a relationship.
- **Visit.** Meet in the person's home when possible. If that's not feasible, you might consider meeting near the person's workplace, taking a walk together, or gathering before or after Sunday meetings. Teach and inspire each other—perhaps by starting with the First Presidency or Visiting Teaching Message. Share your testimony. Share what's going on in your lives. Develop love by being friendly and caring. Listen sincerely. Keep the confidences others entrust to you. Continue to be a friend, as time often leads to greater trust.
- **Pray with and for those you teach.** It might be appropriate to ask at the end of your visit, "Can we pray with you?" The head of the household should choose someone to say the prayer. In the days and weeks between visits, continue to pray for those you home or visit teach. Ask Heavenly Father for help to know how to watch over and love them.



YOUR FAITH WILL GROW



“I received a phone call from a distraught mother in a state far away from where I was. She told me that her unmarried daughter had moved to another city far from her home. She sensed from the little contact she had with her daughter that something was terribly wrong. The mother feared for the moral safety of her daughter. She pleaded with me to help her daughter.

“I found out who the daughter’s home teacher was. I called him. He was young. And yet he and his companion both had been awakened in the night with not only concern for the girl but with inspiration that she was about to make choices that would bring sadness and misery. With only the inspiration of the Spirit, they went to see her. She did not at first want to tell them anything about her

situation. They pleaded with her to repent and to choose to follow the path the Lord had set out for her and that her mother and father had taught her to follow. She realized as she listened that the only way they could have known what they knew about her life was from God. A mother’s prayer had gone to Heavenly Father, and the Holy Ghost had been sent to home teachers with an errand.

“... Your faith will grow as you serve the Lord in caring for Heavenly Father’s children as the Lord’s teacher to their home. You will have your prayers answered. You will come to know for yourself that He lives, that He loves us, and that He sends inspiration to those with even the beginnings of faith in Him and with the desire to serve Him in His Church.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Gifts of the Spirit for Hard Times” (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Sept. 10, 2006), lds.org/broadcast.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT CASEY, CRAIG DIMOND, JOHN LUKE, AND JERRY GARNIS



Blessings of Visiting Teaching

By Silvia H. Allred

First Counselor in the
General Relief Society Presidency

As an adult sister in the Church, you are given the opportunity and responsibility to serve as a visiting teacher. In this capacity you have the potential to do much good. As you visit your assigned sisters, you will:

- Know and love the sisters you visit teach and make new friends.
- Have the opportunity to share and testify of gospel doctrines.

- Be an influence for good and strength to the sisters.
- Have the opportunity to offer and give assistance when needed.
- Feel the Spirit guide your work.
- Experience joy through your service.
- Grow spiritually as a covenant daughter of God.



- **Minister.** Observe and anticipate needs. For instance, if a sister you visit has an upcoming test at school, perhaps you could make her dinner sometime during the week so she can have more study time. If the brother you home teach is looking for a job, introduce him to people who might be able to help.
- **Ask helpful questions.** Questions can lead to opportunities to give comfort, share relevant gospel principles, and provide meaningful service. You might ask: “What worries or concerns you?” “What questions do you have about the gospel?” Or you could be specific: “Could we help you with a household task?” “Would you like a ride to the store or a doctor’s appointment?” Questions will often bring better results than simply saying, “Call us if you need anything.”
- **Seek inspiration.** The Spirit can help you know how to help those you are assigned to teach. You might be prompted about topics to discuss or assistance to offer. As you get to know them better, you may even be prompted to encourage those you visit to receive further ordinances and covenants of the gospel or to further participate in all the blessings the gospel offers.
- **Report the right information.** Report on the temporal and spiritual well-being of those you visit, any service you have given, and any needs. Report confidential concerns directly to the Relief Society or quorum president.
- **Coordinate with your partner.** With your partner, divide assignments as necessary to make contact and to provide watchcare. You might need to take turns visiting, providing service, and reporting the well-being of those you teach.
- **Remember.** Keep track of important events in the lives of those you teach, such as birthdays and even day-to-day happenings that might be important to them. ■

The Fire of Teaching the Gospel

My home teaching companion and I visited an elderly couple. I had been home from my mission only a matter of weeks, but I was already starting to forget the feeling of teaching the gospel. But that visit and the

lesson we taught rekindled the fire. The Spirit burned strong in my heart, and all I could do was smile and try to hold back my tears.

Home teaching is important for young adults because all of us, whatever

our circumstances, need to be strengthened by the Spirit. The pull of the world is strong, and teaching the restored gospel is one of the best ways to avoid straying onto dangerous paths.

Ramon Kaspers, Netherlands



The Joy of the Lord

I face challenges, and when things don't go my way, it is easy to complain. But my perspective changed when my companion and I were assigned to home teach a family who had not attended church in a long time.

During one visit, I realized that this family's challenges made my problems seem like a raindrop in the ocean. Their attending church seemed unlikely, but my companion and I continued to work with them.

One Sunday morning before sacrament meeting, I felt impressed to stand at the door. To my great astonishment, I saw this family entering the chapel! Words cannot explain the joy I felt. My own challenges were swallowed up in the joy of the Lord (see Alma 31:38).

Rati Mogotsi, South Africa

Tomorrow's Friends

After I left home to study abroad in France, visiting teaching took on new meaning. The sisters I was assigned did not remain simply names to which I could vaguely associate a face; they became friends close to my heart. Several times I was touched by the Holy Ghost at specific moments

to pray and sometimes fast for them or to call, console, listen, write, go see, or just put my arm around them. These small gestures made a difference in their lives, but they also made a difference in mine.

All of the sisters were different. Some were my age; others were older. Some were young, married

Perfect at Any Age

When I was assigned to visit teach an elderly woman, I wondered whether we would have anything in common because of our age difference. I came to realize, however, that the Lord knew my companion and I were uniquely suited to visit this sister, who needed someone to talk with and to listen.

I came to find that I could be an instrument in the Lord's hands in serving this sister. I also discovered that I had a lot to learn from her. Spending time together brought happiness to *both* of our lives.

Teboho Ndaba, South Africa

mothers; others were single. Our visits allowed us to see beyond our differences.

Recently I moved to a new town. My heart rejoiced when I received an assignment to visit teach some sisters. Today they are just names. Tomorrow they will be friends.

Nirina J-Randriamiharisoa, Madagascar



Preparing Emotionally

FOR MISSIONARY SERVICE

What Prospective Missionaries and Their Parents Need to Know

By Robert K. Wagstaff

Preparing for missionary service is much different today than it was in 1830, when Samuel Smith was set apart to be one of the first full-time missionaries. He had no training, no money, and no living quarters. Today prospective missionaries prepare extensively for their missions. Doctor visits, missionary preparation classes, patriarchal blessings, prayer, scripture study, and temple endowments are among the ways they get ready to go into the world to share the gospel. I believe that today's missionaries enter the mission field better prepared, both physically and spiritually, to teach and bear testimony of the gospel than ever before.

But another aspect of preparation for missionary service is equally vital—emotional preparation. Speaking to future missionaries, Elder L. Tom Perry explained: “Missionary service is emotionally demanding. Your support system is going to be withdrawn from you as you leave home and go out into the world. . . . There will be days of rejection

and disappointment. Learn now about your emotional limits, and learn how to control your emotions under the circumstances you will face as a missionary.”¹

As a former mission president and president of the Philippines Missionary Training Center (MTC), I have noticed that most missionaries leave the MTC confident about their ability to teach the gospel and bear testimony. This is because of the excellent training they receive in the MTC, as well as at home, in seminary, and at church. However, I have also observed that many missionaries deal with some of the following concerns:

- Finances
- Homesickness
- Living with a different person and in a different culture
- Adjusting to missionary rules, schedule, and lifestyle
- Learning a new language
- Personal weaknesses



How Can Future Missionaries Prepare Themselves Emotionally?

1. *Work part time or full time before the mission call.* This experience helps potential missionaries learn how to manage money so they will be prepared to live within their budget in the mission field. Also, in my experience, missionaries who pay at least part of the cost of their mission are often more dedicated and have fewer concerns about money while in the mission field.

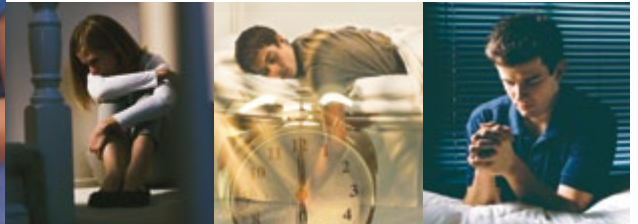
2. *Live away from home for a period of time before leaving for the mission field.* Whether future missionaries go away to college or for work, living away from home helps them adjust to the necessary independence of being a missionary. This also provides opportunities for them to wash their own clothing, clean their own living areas, prepare food, and be responsible for their own safety and well-being. Even if future missionaries cannot live away from home, they can be more independent by taking on these responsibilities.

Generally, a young person who has been allowed to take responsibility and develop appropriate independence will have an easier time adjusting to missionary service. This means that it is important for parents to nurture their children in such a way

Each of these concerns is normal, and almost every elder or sister experiences at least one of them. Such concerns do not make missionaries unworthy or disobedient, and most often they successfully overcome their worries.

However, some missionaries have difficulty coping with these kinds of emotional challenges to the point of debilitation. According to Judi Moore, a doctor and former medical adviser in the South America South Area, stress may contribute to many of missionaries' most common physical complaints, including headaches, back pain, heart palpitations, insomnia, fatigue, stomach problems, dry mouth, and even frequent sore throats. For some, stress can also lead to panic attacks, anxiety, depression, and difficulty functioning. Because of these challenges, it is important that future missionaries do all they can to prepare emotionally for full-time missionary service. The following advice will help.

Among the things prospective missionaries can do is to work part time or full time, learn to care for themselves, and practice talking to others.



Daily exercise, living away from home, resolving emotional concerns, sleeping from 10:30 p.m. to 6:30 a.m., and learning to rely on the Lord to strengthen personal weaknesses are some ways young people can begin preparing to serve a mission.

that encourages independent, responsible decision-making skills founded on gospel principles.

3. Practice meeting and talking to others.

Missionary work involves meeting and interacting with new people daily. This can be a significant source of anxiety to missionaries who are naturally shy. Many young people today are used to interacting via text messaging or social networking sites on the Internet rather than through face-to-face interaction. Future missionaries can prepare themselves for tracting and other missionary activities by challenging themselves, in an appropriate and safe manner, to talk with people they do not know well and by striving to be friendly, courteous, and respectful to others.

4. Resolve emotional concerns before submitting mission papers. Some young people suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, depression, or eating disorders before they enter the mission field. Dr. Moore recommends that parents take notice of symptoms of emotional distress and take actions to help. Most young people will not overcome such problems in the mission field. In fact, these problems often become exacerbated under the stresses of a mission. Counseling and medical treatment may be beneficial to stabilize these conditions before applying to serve a mission. LDS Family Services and family doctors are excellent sources of help, as are local priesthood leaders—particularly your bishop.

Dr. Moore points out that the rigors of missionary service may cause unresolved issues from the past to resurface. For example, several months before an elder entered the mission field, his father passed away. After his father's death, the young man took on heavy responsibilities to help keep the family financially afloat and to comfort and support his mother. But he never dealt adequately with his own grief. Halfway through his mission, the elder began to have serious difficulty functioning. Under his mission president's guidance, the elder visited a counselor and was able to recover and successfully complete his mission.

5. Practice living a balanced life. Missionary life is structured and intense. Learning how to live by a schedule and keep appointments is critical to success. For a period of time before entering the MTC, a prospective missionary may want to follow the missionary schedule of going to bed at 10:30 p.m. and arising at 6:30 the next morning. Using a day-planning system and taking part in extracurricular activities can help young people learn to manage time and meet deadlines. Examples include holding a job or participating in activities such as sports, drama, clubs, student government, or community service.

6. Find appropriate outlets for stress. Before their missions, many young people relax by playing video games, watching TV, hanging out with friends, surfing the Internet, or participating

in other recreational activities. In the mission field, such activities are not an option, so missionaries need to find new ways to cope with stress.² Taking advantage of 30 minutes each morning to exercise, as outlined in *Preach My Gospel*, can be a tremendous stress reliever. Adequate rest, exercise, and turning to the Lord for guidance rather than comparing oneself to others also help.

Sometimes it just helps to talk about things. As a mission president, I noticed that missionaries who shared their concerns with another person—a missionary companion, district leader, or the mission president—often found their concerns diminished. On the other hand, missionaries who kept concerns bottled up usually felt that their concerns seemed larger and more difficult to manage.

7. *Learn to view personal weaknesses with proper perspective.* Some conscientious missionaries have great difficulty when they feel their efforts are imperfect or less than “the best.” They may worry excessively if they feel inadequate in mastering a language or in achieving some missionary goals. They may feel distressed when the demands of being a missionary show them weaknesses they had never encountered before. But, as the prophet Ether taught, recognizing our weaknesses can teach us humility and reliance on the Lord and success in overcoming our weaknesses (see Ether 12:27).

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) told of two missionaries he met as a young man on his own mission: “One was a superstar. He was educated. He was bright. He was quick. He was a little arrogant. We had another who was a sign painter. . . . with very little education, but he knew his inadequacies and he relied on the Lord. When he prayed, you knew he was talking with the Lord. . . . That young man accomplished wonders while the other young man went through the motions. The power that was in the one and the absence of power in the other was so apparent.”³

8. *Learn to put trials in the proper perspective.* Occasionally, accidents, serious illnesses, and other traumas happen in the mission field—just as they do in regular life. They are not a sign that a missionary is unworthy or that the Lord is not watching over him or her. Ammon, one of the great missionaries of the Book of Mormon, faced serious

trials on his mission. Recording the Lord’s words to him and his missionary companions at a time of deep discouragement, Ammon wrote: “Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success” (Alma 26:27). Success came for them—and will come for faithful missionaries after they patiently persist in doing the work they have been called to do.

Becoming a Supportive Missionary Mom or Dad

Parents, your influence in the lives of your children doesn’t stop after they enter the Missionary Training Center. It does shift, however. Here are some ways you can support your son or daughter in your new role as a missionary parent:

1. *Let your missionary be responsible for the success of his or her mission.* Parents who insist on being informed about every detail of their son or daughter’s mission unintentionally place a great burden on the missionary. Missionaries must take personal ownership of their own missions. Every missionary fulfills his or her mission under the direction of the mission president, not under the direction of parents.

2. *Allow your son or daughter to live on the missionary budget.* Parents who send extra money so missionaries can eat fast food rather than cook their own food not only detract from one of the great learning experiences of

TYPICAL MISSIONARY DAILY SCHEDULE*

6:30 a.m.	Arise, pray, exercise, and prepare for the day.
7:30 a.m.	Breakfast.
8:00 a.m.	Personal study.
9:00 a.m.	Companion study.
10:00 a.m.	Begin proselyting. Missionaries learning a language study for 30 to 60 minutes.
Schedule lunch and dinner to fit best with proselyting.	
9:00 p.m.	Return to living quarters. Write in journal, prepare for the next day, pray.
10:30 p.m.	Retire to bed.

*See *Preach My Gospel*, page viii.



Parents can support their missionaries by praying for them daily, communicating by letter or e-mail once a week, and only speaking to them as is outlined in the mission rules.

the mission, but also encourage missionaries to break mission rules. This “assistance” reduces the spiritual growth of the missionary. It also prompts missionaries to criticize the missionary program.

3. Communicate properly with your missionary.

This means sending a letter or e-mail no more than once a week. Your communication should emphasize spiritual and faith-promoting experiences. Details about family problems burden and discourage missionaries. Likewise, it is inappropriate for the missionary to ask parents for a solution to a missionary problem over which the parents have no control. Parents who call their missionary at times other than Christmas and Mother’s Day are encouraging him or her to break mission rules.

If a serious accident or a death should occur in a missionary’s family, the family should notify the mission president by calling either the Missionary Department in Salt Lake City or the local Area President. This enables the mission president to personally notify the missionary of the event. The mission president can then help the missionary with any serious emotional concerns. If appropriate, the mission president will authorize the missionary to call home. Such emotional care is essential for the well being of the missionary.

4. Trust in the Lord to watch over and bless your missionary son or daughter. As President Thomas S. Monson has explained, the Lord has promised His blessings on the missionaries. “Each missionary who goes forth in response to a sacred call becomes a servant of the Lord, whose work this truly is. Do not fear, young men, for He will be with you. He never fails. He has promised: ‘I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and

on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.’”⁴

Just as missionaries rely on the Spirit for guidance in the work, you can also rely on the Spirit to guide you in the best ways to support your missionary.

5. Pray in faith for your missionary daily.

President Gordon B. Hinckley also described the role of daily prayer in a missionary’s life: “Every morning . . . missionaries should get on their knees and plead with the Lord to loosen their tongues and speak through them to the blessing of those they will be teaching. If they will do this, a new light will come into their lives. There will be greater enthusiasm for the work. They will come to know that in a very real sense, they are servants of the Lord speaking in His behalf.”⁵ As missionary parents join their prayers each day with those of their sons and daughters, they will share in the blessings of missionary service.

Conclusion

Throughout the world an army of faithful young men and women are helping fulfill the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who foresaw a day when “the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country.”⁶ Prospective missionaries need to prepare themselves emotionally, as well as spiritually and physically, to fulfill their part in this great work. Then, as they share the gospel of Jesus Christ with their brothers and sisters throughout the world, they will have some of the sweetest, most richly rewarding experiences of their lives. ■

NOTES

1. L. Tom Perry, “Raising the Bar,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 48.
2. See “Raising the Bar,” 48.
3. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, (1997), 469.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Your Eternal Voyage,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 48.
5. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Missionary Service,” *First Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, January 11, 2003, 20.
6. *History of the Church*, 4:540.

“I SPEAK OF Missionary Work”



PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURENI ADEMAR FOCHEITTO



PHOTOGRAPHY BY WEIDEN C. ANDERSEN

Fijian elders tract in their homeland.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID BLANCHARD

This missionary takes advantage of a few minutes to read his scriptures.

“Every worthy, able young man should prepare to serve a mission. Missionary service is a priesthood duty” – Thomas S. Monson

In the Saturday morning session of October 2010 general conference, President Thomas S. Monson issued a call for more missionaries. To the young men and sisters he said, “I admonish you to prepare for service as a missionary. Keep yourselves clean and pure and worthy to represent the Lord. Maintain your health and strength. Study the scriptures. Where such is available, participate in seminary or institute. Familiarize yourself with the missionary handbook *Preach My Gospel*.”

To mature brothers and sisters he said, “I urge you to prepare now for the day when you and your spouse might [serve a couples mission]. . . . There are few times in your lives when you will enjoy the sweet spirit and satisfaction that come from giving full-time service together in the work of the Master.”

Let us open our hearts to the words of a living prophet and follow him. The following photographs feature various facets of missionary work. ■

Above: Brazilian couple, Elder and Sister Lopes, were called to help collect and write the history of the Church in Brazil.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT REIER



Sister missionaries enjoy talking about the gospel with a local woman.

Elders head out for an evening appointment during their day of missionary work.

“Sisters . . . you also make a valuable contribution as missionaries, and we welcome your service”

– Thomas S. Monson



Sister missionaries help an elderly woman with her groceries.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT REIER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRISHA KUNZ, © TRISHA KUNZ



PHOTOGRAPH BY HOWARD M. COLLETT



Missionaries in Houston, Texas, help clean up after Hurricane Ike in 2008.



PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH SPUS

The Rehses, who serve in the Frankfurt Germany Temple, study together—enjoying the “sweet spirit and satisfaction” that comes from serving together, as President Monson said.

“To you mature brothers and sisters: we need many, many more senior couples”

– Thomas S. Monson



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SMITH

Sister Grace Chan (right) helps a patron locate her Chinese ancestry at the Family History Library.

PHOTOGRAPH BY FARRELL BARLOW



A senior couple at a spring in the DR Congo.

For the complete text of President Thomas S. Monson’s talk go to lds.org/general-conference/2010/10/as-we-meet-together-again

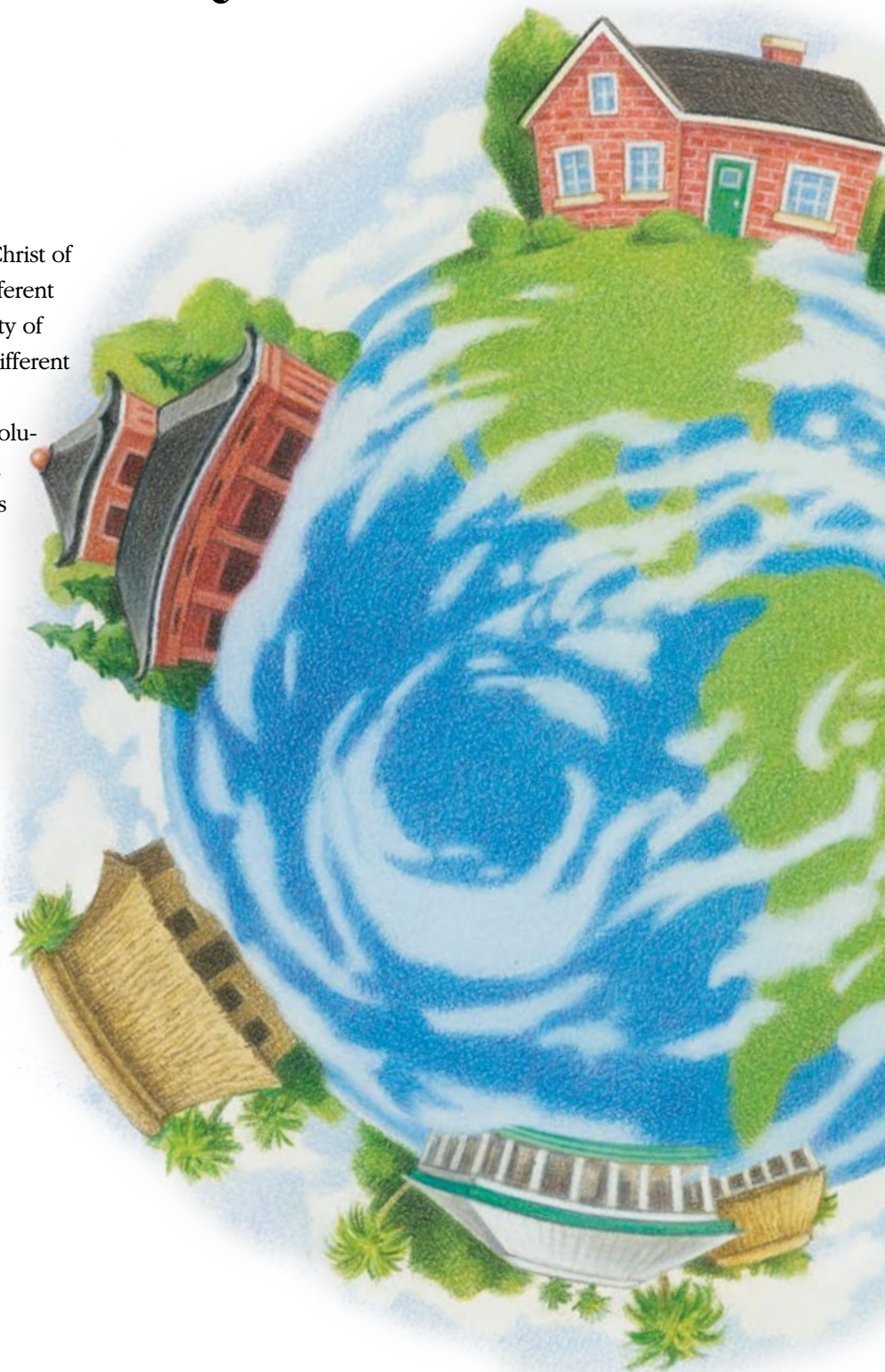
A GREAT Community of Saints

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are found in different countries, are engaged in a variety of occupations and callings, and face many different challenges.

But the Savior and His gospel provide solutions to our problems, unite us in love and common purpose, and bring us together as a worldwide community.

Whether you meet with 13 others in a small branch in Ukraine or with 200 in a ward in Mexico, you belong to something much grander. Our shared faith in the Savior makes us literally “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19).

As you get to know some of your neighbors from around the world in this article (and through each issue of the Church magazines), we hope you find assurance that the gospel of Jesus Christ offers what you need to face your own challenges.





Vi'iga Faatoia of Samoa

Age 60
Mayor
First counselor
in bishopric

The tsunami that struck Samoa in September 2009 took my grandson. It took my sister's son. I lost my home, two cars, and almost everything I owned. Nearly our entire village is moving into the hills so that this doesn't happen again.

I know God loves those who survived because, through the Church, He has given us new homes, food, and water. I know He loves those who did not survive because, through His power, we can be together again. We have been blessed.



Lucia Leonardo of Guatemala

Age 23
Student
Second counselor in stake
Young Women presidency

The problems I face are the same that everyone my age has. What should I do with my life? What should I study? Whom should I marry? How do I deal with pressure from nonmember friends to lower my standards? Sometimes it is easy to get down or feel sad or nervous.

The gospel has directed my life in every way. Even though I still have to work out some of the details, I know what I want, and I know where I'm going because of the gospel. I'm grateful for that. It really makes me happy. It helps me stay strong and help others, because I know that when I need help, I can pray to my Heavenly Father.



Valerina M. of Utah, USA

Age 10

Being an older sister isn't always easy. Sometimes I get frustrated. But I've learned to be a good friend to my little sister and brother by watching my mom and the relationship she has with her sisters. She teaches me to set a Christlike example for those around us. I can do these things to show how much I appreciate the love of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, as well as the love of my mom and dad.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVE KROPP



**Elizabeth Kangethe
of Kenya**
Age 27
Freelance journalist
Ward Relief Society president

Before I received the gospel, my world was a dark place. I was slow to forgive and harbored ill feelings against anyone I felt had wronged me. I was disillusioned with marriage, seeing all around me husbands who were drunk and women who were battered.

Embracing the gospel of Jesus Christ changed me. It was wonderful to go to church and find families sitting together, to be taught about love, mutual respect, and understanding. I found myself abandoning traditions not in harmony with the gospel.

I felt compelled to make peace with a perceived enemy. We now keep in touch often. I met a wonderful returned missionary and will be married in the temple soon.

I am convinced that I am in the right place. The love and concern the members have for each other gives me a sense of belonging. My life has become more meaningful. I know it is absolutely essential that I remain faithful to the end by avoiding backward glances toward the darkness and remorse of the past.

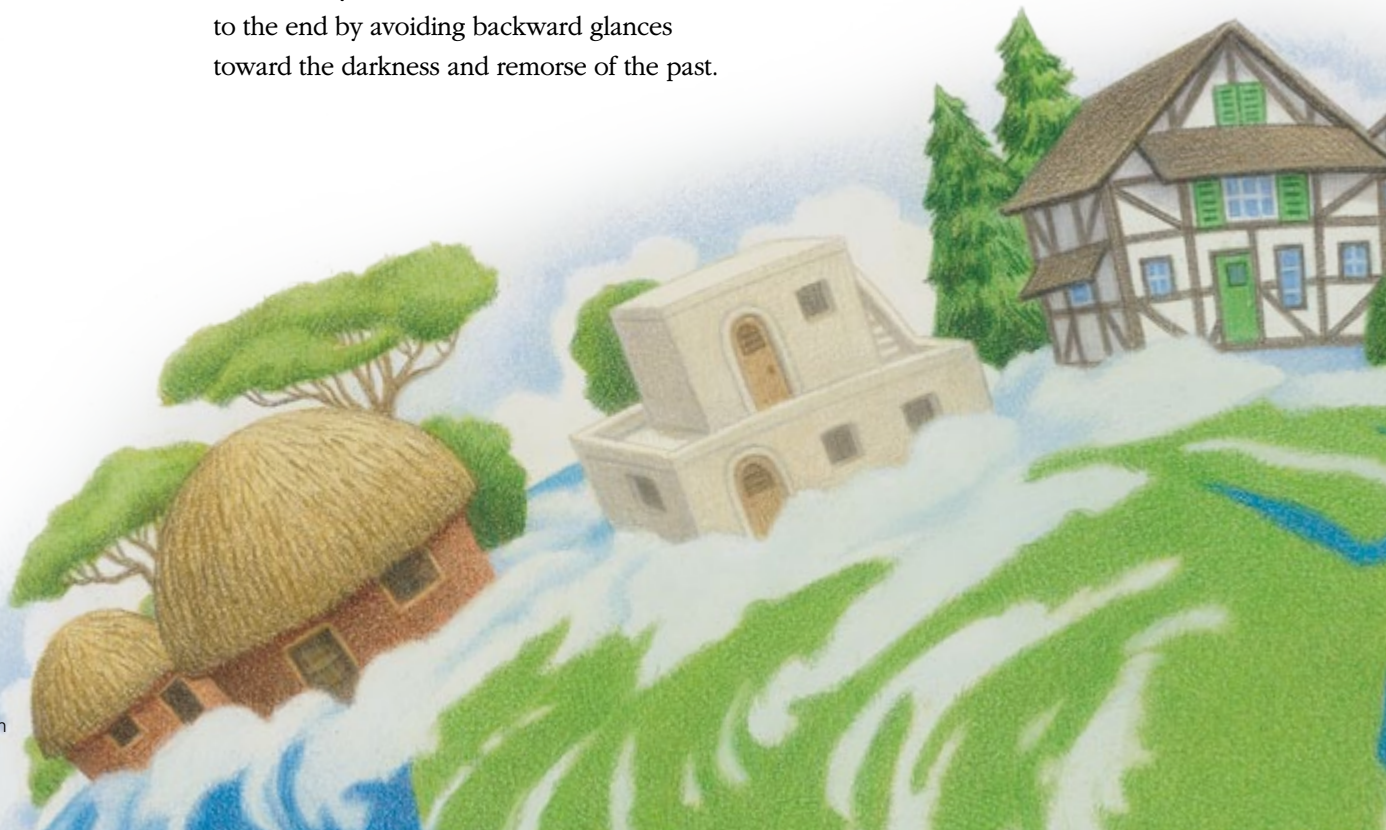


**Harrison Lumbama
of Zambia**
Age 46
Officer in a charitable non-
governmental organization
District president

Just making ends meet has been one of the greatest trials of my life. The cost of living is high compared to my earnings. Each day my mind is busy thinking about how the rent is due, food is running out, the children have school fees, and so on.

The gospel that I now know has really helped to keep me sane in spite of the challenges. By my keeping the commandments and my covenants, somehow things seem to be bearable. By our keeping the law of tithing, Heavenly Father has blessed us that we never go hungry, and by His grace we manage to hurdle the obstacles of life. The gospel has become a soothing remedy for life's perils. It has given us hope for a better future if we are obedient and faithful.

Whatever trial I've faced, the gospel has had an answer for me. Without it, my life would simply have been without direction or purpose.





**Varvara Bak
of Russia**
Age 25
Student
Seminary teacher



**Chhoeun Monirac
of Cambodia**
Age 18
First counselor in Young Men
presidency, seminary teacher

I want to be more Christlike—not that I expect perfection, but I want to remember who I am and be better today than I was yesterday. That can be difficult when the standards of the world around us are so low. It would be easy to let my standards slip.

But in a way, it's not that hard to keep the Church's standards. I think people appreciate those with high standards. I have always liked people who don't smoke or drink and who have good morals. So when I investigated the Church, I was already living many gospel standards, and because I was keeping those commandments, I gained a testimony of them quickly.

We all face unanticipated problems in life. After my family returned from being sealed in the Hong Kong China Temple and just before one of my sisters was to leave on a full-time mission, my older brother and sister lost their jobs and my father's salary was cut in half. It was a difficult time for the 11 of us in our small home, but we held to the promises made in the temple.

In that time the Holy Ghost reminded me of a scripture: "But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God" (Jacob 2:18). It brought me hope. I trusted that God would bless me and my family.

My brother and sister have now found jobs that allow our family to eat, and I've had several promising interviews. It's a miracle that has increased our faith in Christ. I know the Lord loves us and knows us. He knows our needs. If we'll keep His commandments, we'll prosper in the land (see Mosiah 2:22). ■





WHEN BROKEN HEARTS Become One

During 2006, the Issaquah Fifth Ward experienced several crises within a few months' time. Their response is an example of the gospel in action—and of the blessings of ward unity.

By Amanda B. Lewis

Church Magazines

The day that school got out for the youth in the Issaquah Fifth Ward in Washington State, USA, seemed like the start of any normal summer. That Monday in June 2006 the young men, young women, their leaders, and several other ward members gathered at noon to leave for youth conference. After an hour-long drive to their campsite, the group settled in for three days of swimming, playing, and team- and testimony-building activities.

Alexa Jensen

On the second day, however, 13-year-old Alexa Jensen was swimming in a lake with some other young women when she had a seizure and slipped beneath the water.

Alexa suffered from a rare liver disease that had left her with developmental disabilities, but she was a good swimmer—she had won many swimming medals at the region and state levels of Special Olympics. When Alexa's mother, Denise, couldn't spot her, she suspected a seizure had led to Alexa's disappearance and yelled for help.

The youth immediately started searching for Alexa. After four or five minutes, they found her and pulled her onto a nearby dock. The youth gathered around and watched as their friend received CPR.

"We were all in shock," recalls Chandler Balkman, the Jensens' home teacher at the time. Chandler, who had been playing a game with Alexa before she disappeared, stood nearby, waiting to help if he could. But all that was left to do was watch and pray. "We just were thinking, 'How could this be happening?' It felt surreal," he says.

Alexa arrived at the hospital with no pulse. The medical team at the hospital stabilized her heartbeat, but her brain function never returned to normal. Two days later, Alexa died.

The Jensens' overwhelming shock and grief were softened by the love and support they received from the ward. Members of the ward helped with the funeral arrangements, visited, sent cards expressing their love, brought meals, called to see how they were doing, and above all, made sure the Jensens knew they were loved and remembered.

"Because the accident happened at a church activity, going through the grief together was comforting, in a lot of ways," Denise says. "Not that you want others to have to suffer too, but it was very good for us, her family, because we saw how much everyone loved Alexa."

Alexa's father, Gary, recalls: "We realized we needed to help each other and comfort each other. Love from our ward got us through that initial tough time."

Chandler Balkman

As the ward continued to grieve Alexa's death, another accident happened. Like several ward members, the Balkman family lives on Lake Sammamish and spends a lot of time on the water. One August evening at sundown, 16-year-old Chandler and his father, Steve—the Jensens' home teachers—were swimming and decided to race one another to a nearby buoy. On the way back to shore, Steve heard a boat approach and saw it pass directly over where he thought Chandler was swimming underwater.

Chandler's older sister, Jessica, was driving the boat home after visiting friends. Neither Chandler nor Steve had noticed the boat was missing from the covered boat lift at the dock, so they hadn't been listening or watching for it to return. Because of the time of day and the direction she was driving, Jessica couldn't see anything in the water.

It wasn't until Chandler surfaced that Jessica realized that Chandler's right leg had been caught in the boat's propeller and had been nearly severed at the hip.

Steve swam to Chandler and held him up. "It was just a horrible feeling," says Steve. "At that moment I didn't think he was going to make it. I thought these were my last few moments with my son. So I held him close, and we started swimming in."

The boat had stalled, so Jessica was unable to go to them, but she called for paramedics on her cell phone. Geoff, Chandler's older brother, was painting the house when he heard the yelling. He hurried out in a canoe to Steve and Chandler, and got both of them on board without tipping over the canoe. As soon as they reached the dock, Steve gave Chandler a blessing.

Gary Folkman, who was then serving as the bishop



Alexa's father, Gary, recalls: "[Our ward] realized we needed to help each other and comfort each other. Love from our ward got us through that initial tough time."

of the ward, lived four houses away and came running when he heard the commotion. He helped Geoff and Steve carry Chandler inside the house, where it was warm. Chandler's femoral artery had been severed, and he was losing blood rapidly. Steve was trying to stop the blood flow when Bishop Folkman asked if he could give Chandler another blessing. Although the blessing never said Chandler's life would be saved, the bishop promised Chandler his "intellect and sense of humor would be preserved." This gave Steve hope that his son would live. But Chandler's life was still in immediate danger.

Susan and Stephanie, Chandler's mother and younger sister, arrived home about that time. An ambulance came and rushed Chandler—and Steve—to the hospital. Susan paused for a moment after they left, wondering what to do. She knew she needed to be with Chandler, but she also knew Jessica was still on the lake, uninformed and distraught. Jessica didn't know whether her brother was dead or alive.

Susan told Stephanie to call Jessica's Young Women leader, Tami Glauser, who came over to the Balkmans' home and stayed with Jessica until she could join her family at the hospital. "I knew that Jessica would be in good hands," says Susan.

Meanwhile, doctors were trying to save Chandler. When he arrived at the hospital, he had no pulse, had lost 60 to 75 percent of his blood, and was considered dead. But doctors were able to revive and then stabilize him. After several blood transfusions, they began surgery to amputate his leg and treat several broken bones and deep cuts. It was the first night of many Chandler would

spend in the hospital, and the first of 30 surgeries.

Members of the Issaquah Fifth Ward rallied around the Balkmans as they had the Jensens. Although the needs of each family were different, the ward quickly responded with thoughtful acts of kindness and support.

People provided meals, cleaned, did laundry, completed yard work, and performed a host of other tasks, Susan remembers. A nurse in the ward helped coordinate Chandler's visiting schedule. More than 100 ward members visited Chandler. Chris Kelly, Chandler's Sunday School teacher and also a doctor, took time to talk with Chandler in depth about a prosthetic leg and to answer his questions. Several families in the ward helped care for Stephanie while her mother spent time at the hospital. Chandler's priest quorum set up a projector and had a movie night in his room for an activity.

Christine Callans

Chandler made steady progress. Three months later, as he was nearing his release date, the ward was rocked again when 34-year-old Christine Callans' heart suddenly failed.

Chris, who had been a member of the Church for three years at the time, has a condition called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Among



ENDURING TOGETHER

"From bearing one another's burdens as ward members, we have learned several lessons:

"1. The Lord's organization is fully adequate to know and care for those with even the most dire emotional and spiritual needs.

"2. Adversity can bring us closer to God, with a renewed and enlightened appreciation for prayer and the Atonement, which covers pain and suffering in all their manifestations.

"3. Members who suffer tragedy firsthand often experience an increased capacity for love, compassion, and understanding. They become the first, last, and often the most effective responders in giving comfort and showing compassion to others.

"4. A ward, as well as a family, draws closer together as it endures together—what happens to one happens to all.

"5. And perhaps most important, we can each be more compassionate and caring because we have each had our own personal trials and experiences to draw from. We can endure together.

"I rejoice in belonging to such a loving and caring organization. No one knows better how to bear one another's burdens, mourn with those



who mourn, and comfort those who stand in need of comfort. I choose to call it 'enduring together.' What happens to one happens to all."

Bishop Richard C. Edgley, "Enduring Together," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 11.



other side effects, it can cause the heart to experience arrhythmia, or disruption of electric pulses, and to stop beating. Chris was aware of her condition, but it had never caused her any trouble before. The morning of October 4, she had started her early-morning exercise routine when her heart experienced uneven pulses and she collapsed. Her son, Brian, who was 10 years old at the time, found her lying on the floor and ran for his father, Joe.

Brian called for emergency help, and Joe started CPR. Before long, paramedics arrived and started Chris's heart again. As the ambulance drove off, Joe wondered what to do with his children. A neighbor offered to take care of his daughters, and Joe called ward member Sabrina Larsen, who lived a couple of streets away, to watch his sons. Joe, who is a member of another church, knew Sabrina because he occasionally attends LDS Sunday services with his family. "She was here in what seemed like 60 seconds," Joe recalls. She took the Callans' sons and told Joe not to worry about them.

As the ambulance sped to the hospital, Chris's heart failed again, and when she arrived at the emergency room, she was clinically dead. As doctors worked to resuscitate Chris, another emergency-room doctor arrived. Eric Shipley, a friend, ward member, and doctor, was not on call that day, but when he heard what had happened, he came to see if he could offer Joe support.

"As I was driving to the hospital, I called the emergency room, and they said she still didn't have a heartbeat," says Eric. "I knew her chances were abysmal."

Eric remembers that when he arrived, it was a "pretty chaotic scene." After nearly an hour of resuscitation



"I really believe this—the ward family—is the way God intended for things to work," says Christine Callans. "It's a whole different way of thinking about relationships and people."

efforts, "for reasons that aren't completely clear to me, she regained a pulse," Eric recalled.

After Chris was moved to a cardiac unit, Joe became aware that members of the ward were in the waiting room. Matt Balkman, a member of the bishopric and Chandler's uncle, told Joe he didn't want him to have to worry about anything but Chris. Matt insisted that he and other ward members coordinate the logistics of picking up extended family members, watching over the Callans' home, and making sure their four children were well cared for. They also promised to be a buffer for Joe, keeping people at arm's length until he was ready for visitors.

"The ward was great," recalls Joe. "People mobilized like nothing else I've ever seen."

Although Chris's heartbeat was back to normal, doctors warned Joe that it was unlikely she would recover all of her brain functions. If she did wake up, they cautioned, she might not be anything like the Chris he knew. At this news, ward members steeled themselves to handle yet another tragedy.

But the morning after her collapse, Chris woke up on her own. Over the next several days, her heartbeat remained stable and her brain functions and memory returned. On October 12—the same day Chandler was released—Chris went home.

The ward's support continued. For months, ward members brought meals and visited, while still respecting the family's privacy. For Chris, it was a testament of the truthfulness of the gospel.

"I really believe this—the ward family—is the way God intended for things to work," she says. "It's a whole

different way of thinking about relationships and people.”

Claire Calhoun

Not every family who was in crisis that summer experienced trial as a result of a single catastrophic incident. Mike and Debbie Calhoun faced a trial that started long before Alexa’s accident and continued after Chris and Chandler were released from the hospital.

Their daughter Claire was born in 2005 with bone marrow failure. The Calhouns were not aware of her condition; none of the tests before or after Claire’s birth had suggested any problems. But when Claire was about six weeks old, she went into respiratory failure and cardiac arrest. When doctors tested her blood level, it was one-seventh of what it should have been.

For the next year, Claire received blood transfusions every three weeks. The ward consistently visited the Calhouns at the hospital and at home, sending notes, bringing meals, completing household tasks, and taking their sons to Scout activities. Claire’s medical needs continued; she received frequent transfusions during the four-month period that the Jensen, Balkman, and Callans families’ experiences took place.

“When Alexa drowned, Claire was in the hospital. When Chandler had his accident, Claire was in the hospital. When Chris Callans had her heart failure, Claire was in the hospital,” Debbie says. Yet the Calhouns were still eager to serve. For instance, Debbie had taken a meal to the Balkmans in the first few days after Chandler’s accident. It was then that she learned that Susan would appreciate a visit from her. “I was so happy to be able to serve,” she remembers. “All these things had been done



Debbie said, “I wouldn’t change the experiences I have had because in the worst of times, you see the grace of God and the absolute goodness of others.”

for us; this was one thing I could do for somebody else.”

A Ward Family

Debbie’s attitude of being willing to serve was common for members of the Issaquah Fifth Ward who were quick to respond to each successive event. “As the difficulties continued, the ward’s capacity to deal with those issues became larger,” Debbie says. “I wouldn’t change the experiences I have had because in the worst of times, you see the grace of God and the absolute goodness of others.”

“The ward has been right there with us,” says Mike, Claire’s father. “They rise to any occasion.”

Although the incidents of 2006 were dramatic, ward members realize that others’ struggles are just as real even if they’re not as apparent. “Everybody has adversity,” Susan Balkman says. “Because it’s not always public, like ours was, we have to watch and listen for ways to help others.”

The events of five years ago “stretched all of us to a great degree,” says former bishop Gary Folkman, “but it was also very unifying.”

Today, members of the Issaquah Fifth Ward remain a tight-knit group. “What really made the difference to me was the outpouring of love from the ward as a whole,” says Steve Balkman, who now serves as bishop. “When you feel loved, you feel like you can get through most anything, and we definitely felt loved. That feeling is something I will never forget.

“To me it was the gospel of Jesus Christ in action, the way that it’s supposed to work.” ■

To read an update on the Balkman, Calhoun, Callans, and Jensen families, visit ensign.lds.org.

“CHARITY NEVER FAILETH”: A DISCUSSION ON Relief Society



Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Patricia T. Holland, share insights into the role of Relief Society.

I can't imagine living life without Relief Society," says Patricia T. Holland in an interview with Church magazines staff about the importance of Relief Society. "That is because I can't imagine living life without the gospel, and Relief Society has been one place where I have personally learned so much about the gospel."

Sister Holland and her husband, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, both acknowledge the power of the gospel in their lives. They also appreciate the influence of Relief Society in building a strong home. "Relief Society has always been a strength to the Church," says Elder Holland. "It has always helped provide what was needed in each stage of the Church's development. Today its contribution becomes more poignant because of the difficult times in which we live. It's not a program per se. It is the gospel—the gospel in action in the lives of our remarkable women. In difficult times we realize it offers its members, and by extension the whole Church, just what we need to help us right now."

Here Elder and Sister Holland share their thoughts about Relief Society and the strength that comes to families

and to wards and branches when priesthood and Relief Society leaders work together.

What is the role of Relief Society in strengthening faith and families?

Sister Holland: Relief Society is needed now more than ever before because of the challenges we face in the world today. The women of the Church have a greater need to be righteous, to live close to the Spirit, and to be faithful. And women need each other too, in order to keep and sustain their faith.

Elder Holland: What the Relief Society is doing is helping teach the gospel in a uniquely powerful way, with a special women's voice. Relief Society is one of the vehicles for bringing gospel doctrines and values into the lives of women. Remember, however, that gospel principles are not restricted to gender. Love, charity, and compassion as well as strength, leadership, and decisiveness are all gospel virtues. We should all be embracing as many of these virtues as we can, men and women alike.

Each one of us who makes the journey down the gospel path is an individual—a daughter or a son of God. As individual members, we must be absolutely rock solid. No organization is going to be any stronger than its people, no home any stronger than its foundation.

Sister Holland: When I think of all the blessings we as Latter-day Saints share in our temples, our wards and branches, our marriages, and our families, I realize it all comes back to how the priesthood and Relief Society—men and women—



“Given the challenges facing women and families, no other organization in the world is going to be more helpful in the future than Relief Society.”

Patricia T. Holland

work together in a home as well as in the Church.

Elder Holland: Women go home from Relief Society each week and share with the men in their lives what they have learned. Likewise, my wife and daughters have been blessed over the years by priesthood instruction our sons and I have received and shared.

Sister Holland: I think it could be said that, given the challenges facing women and families, no other organization in the world is going to be more helpful in the future than Relief Society. We need to rally the women of the Church to their calling as leaders and as “captains” of the welfare of children, especially now as we see families crumbling. We have to march together, hand in hand, to be able to get the work done.

How has Relief Society strengthened you and your family?

Sister Holland: The influence of Relief Society on me began even before I was born because both my mother

and grandmother served in Relief Society. When I was a child, I learned from them. I wanted to be like them. They told me stories of my great-grandmother Elizabeth Schmutz Barlocker, who served as a Relief Society president for 40 years. She gave everything she had, including her own food and clothing, for her sisters in the gospel. She had the faith that God would protect and bless her in this service, and He did. The example of these three women and their service in Relief Society still inspire me today.

Elder Holland: I haven’t attended



Relief Society, but I grew up with it shaping my life. My mother served in

our ward Relief Society presidency for most of my teenage years. It was a great thing for a young boy to watch. Certainly those blessings can come from our ancestors to us and bless our children and our grandchildren.

But my testimony of Relief Society has also come through my wife. I’m proud to be married to a former Relief Society president. I’ve been blessed directly because of her devotion. I knew when I married Patricia Terry what kind of a woman she was because I had seen her in the service of the Lord. She had stepped up and shouldered the responsibility of the kingdom. To me she was larger than life. Now those values and virtues bless our marriage and our children. So, has Relief Society blessed me? Absolutely!

How can priesthood and auxiliary leaders work together to strengthen a ward or branch?

Sister Holland: Relief Society was organized after the pattern of the priesthood. This shows a lovely parallel

LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN © RI; PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATTHEW REIER AND CRAIG DIMOND

between the priesthood and Relief Society and reinforces the idea that men and women energize the righteousness within both. Men need the blessings of women, and women need the blessings of men. We learn that powerfully in the temple. Wards and branches will be stronger the more priesthood and auxiliary leaders work together. We have seen the power of ward council meetings in every place we have lived.

Men and women are all members of the body of Christ, and what a great



“The same skills and ideas for which Relief Society has always stood hold many of the answers to the challenges we are facing worldwide. ‘Charity Never Faileth’ is a flag under which the whole human family can unite.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

membership that is! We learn in the scriptures that “if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27) and “the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee” (1 Corinthians 12:21).

Elder Holland: With the complex issues of the day, ward or branch leaders need to work together. The bishop is the one who has the priesthood keys to lead the ward. The ward or branch council meeting is the place where the necessary coordination takes place. The better the council works, the better the Church works. This is true in every ward or branch.

The bishop can use ward council meeting as a time when he and other ward leaders analyze the needs of the ward. Are there members in need of temporal welfare? Is a young man getting ready to go on a mission? Are couples preparing to go to the temple? What can we do as a ward council to help?

Remember that the concerns of a mother cannot be separated from the needs of her children and her husband. Through visiting teachers, the Relief Society president sees the needs of the whole family as well as those

of individual members. That’s a powerful resource that can be drawn upon in ward council.

How can Relief Society help the Church meet the challenges of the 21st century?

Elder Holland: The present economic malaise covering the whole globe has reshaped the face of the earth financially. Yet teaching the principles of relief and provident living has always been a part of Relief Society. The world may think it



old-fashioned to bottle fruit or make quilts in the 21st century. Yet right now

there are people who are hungry and cold. To them, some bottled fruit and a warm quilt are literally god-sends. Provident living will never be out of fashion. This is not a retreat back to the 19th century but the direction we need to go as we move headlong into the 21st. The same skills and ideas for which Relief Society has always stood hold many of the answers to the challenges we are facing worldwide.

“Charity Never Faileth” is a flag under which the whole human family can unite. It is not a program—it is a clarion call of the gospel (see 1 Corinthians 14:8–10). The gospel will never fail, so it is appropriate that “Charity Never Faileth” is the Relief Society motto (1 Corinthians 13:8). It reinforces the fact that Latter-day Saint men and women are working toward the same goal—striving to become disciples of Christ.

And if the winds blow, the winds blow. If the storms come, the storms come. The gospel is always the answer,



whatever the question. It will always prevail. We are built on the rock that is Jesus Christ, and it is His solid rock-ribbed gospel that will get us through tough times.

Sister Holland: I think in the hearts of women is the desire to serve others in need. It doesn't matter if a woman is young or old, married or single. Relief Society provides the perfect opportunity for her to serve because there are always others in need. Likewise, every woman at some time or other will need to be served. Truly "Charity Never Faileth" is an eternal principle with a powerful message by which anyone can live.

Elder Holland: Remember that Relief Society service is not limited to serving members of the Church. We all try to take care of our own, but the great sisterhood of Relief Society—and specifically compassionate service—knows no borders. That helps us engage with the family next door who are not of our faith or join in an activity to help an inner-city school or assist in maintaining the clean, safe environment of our neighborhoods and communities.

What role will Relief Society play in the future?

Sister Holland: Obviously, Relief Society will play an essential role in the future. The darker the world gets, the brighter the gospel light will shine. Relief Society is key in teaching the doctrines of the gospel to our sisters. Most important among those teachings is that God, our Heavenly Father, sent His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to the earth. His Atonement, Resurrection, and example teach us to have faith in Him, repent, make covenants, and

WARD COUNCILS: WHERE LEADERS WORK TOGETHER

The ward council includes the bishopric, ward clerk, ward executive secretary, high priests group leader, elders quorum president, ward mission leader, and presidents of the Relief Society, Young Men, Young Women, Primary, and Sunday School. . . .

"Council members are encouraged to speak honestly. . . . Both men and women should feel that their comments are valued as full participants. . . . The viewpoint of women is sometimes different from that of men, and it adds essential perspective. . . .

"Ward council meetings should focus on matters that will strengthen individuals and families" (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 4.4; 4.6.1).

love one another. Jesus Christ is the light that never faileth—the bright light that will pierce the darkness.

Elder Holland: Matthew 7:16 says, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." For example, even when our children were very young, they could recognize their mother's devotion to the gospel and the role that a woman plays in it. They were often with her as she served her Relief Society sisters. Sometimes they had to pray that our old car would start. They saw her in an old coat trudging through the snow to care for Relief Society sisters in New England. They were only little, but they've never forgotten that. They saw their mother's sacrifice and faithfulness, and as a result our daughter is a Latter-day Saint woman deeply committed to service, and our sons have deep respect and admiration for the commitment and devotion of our daughters-in-law. It is clear from their mother's example that our children know the crucial, exalted place of women in their lives and in the kingdom of God.

Likewise, others are going to look to the example of the "fruits" of Latter-day Saint lives—the fruits that come as

we work to become disciples of the living God. This is the brightness that can never be darkened. The future of Relief Society is bright because the gospel is bright. The light of the kingdom of God will never go out. And as human need increases, the clarion call of the gospel will ring true. In the forefront of those bearing that message and providing their charitable contribution will be righteous priesthood men and Relief Society women of the Church. ■

This interview was conducted by LaRene Gaunt and Joshua Perkey of Church magazines.



The

The Savior can heal wounded hearts, misunderstanding, and hatred if we look to His word and His Atonement.

In August 1978 I received an assignment to attend a stake conference in Seoul, South Korea. After priesthood leadership meeting, I was in the hallway when a sister about 60 years old whispered in my ear in Japanese, “I don’t like Japanese people.”

I was shocked and surprised. I turned around and responded in Japanese, “I’m sorry you feel that way.” I wondered what she had experienced in her life that caused her to feel that way. What damage had my people done to her people?

In my talk during the evening session of stake conference, I spoke of the Savior’s Atonement and His great sacrifice. I shared with stake members the story of Nephi and how the Spirit of the Lord took him to a high mountain. There he saw the tree

By Elder
Yoshihiko Kikuchi
Of the Seventy



Healer's Art

of life, which his father, Lehi, had seen, and there he saw the baby Jesus (see 1 Nephi 11:1–20). Then an angel asked him if he knew the meaning of the tree his father had seen in vision.

Nephi answered, “Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things.” The angel added, “Yea, and the most joyous to the soul” (1 Nephi 11:22–23).

The love of God can help us overcome all prejudice and misunderstanding. We are truly God’s children, and we can take His love into our souls if we will.

*Savior, may I learn to love thee,
Walk the path that thou hast shown,
Pause to help and lift another,
Finding strength beyond my own.¹*

Who Am I to Judge Another?

Without planning to, I began to share my connection with the Korean people. I told the congregation that I had grown up with nine Korean cousins. They came to our home, and my siblings and I often went to their homes. I ate Korean food and learned



Korean songs. My aunt married a wonderful Korean man. They raised their children in Japan, in the same town where I grew up.

In the middle of my talk, I asked someone to play the piano as I sang a Korean folk song with President Ho Nam Rhee, the first stake president

in South Korea. Then I asked President Rhee to help me sing the Korean national anthem, though I hadn’t sung it since my boyhood. It had been a long time since I had learned it from my Korean uncle, but the words came back to me. I then asked the congregation to sing it with me. They all stood and sang their beautiful national anthem. Many tears were shed, and it was hard for me to sing. A wonderful and sweet spirit prevailed.

I told the members of the stake that just as I loved my Korean cousins, I also loved them—because we are all God’s children, because we are all brothers and sisters in the gospel, and because of the love of God (see 1 Nephi 11:22, 25). We all felt that eternal love, and almost everyone in the congregation wept. I told them, “I love you as my brothers and sisters in the gospel.”



TO BE TRUE DISCIPLES

"I am told that racial slurs and denigrating remarks are sometimes heard among us. I remind you that no [one] who makes disparaging remarks concerning those of another race can consider himself a true disciple of Christ. Nor can he consider himself to be in harmony with the teachings of the Church of Christ. . . .

"We are members of the Church of our Lord. We have an obligation to Him as well as to ourselves and others."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "The Need for Greater Kindness," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 58, 60.

After the evening session had ended, stake members made a long line to greet me. The last person in line was the 60-year-old Korean sister, who came to me with tears in her eyes and apologized. The Spirit of the Lord was strong. The Savior's healing wings carried all of us, and the spirit of peace spoke to the congregation. I felt as one with them.

*Who am I to judge another
When I walk imperfectly?
In the quiet heart is hidden
Sorrow that the eye can't see.*

Your Message Changed My Thinking

I was called as a member of the Seventy in 1977. Since then I have had the privilege of visiting hundreds of stakes. After one priesthood leadership meeting in Taylorsville, Utah, a large man approached me and whispered that his brother had been killed during World War II and that he hated Japanese people. Following the stake conference, however, this same man approached me with tears in his eyes. Crying for joy, he gave me a hug because I had shared my conversion story and my love for Americans and it had touched him.

On another occasion a sister approached me at a stake conference in Georgia, USA, and said she had lost her father in World War II. But after the meeting she said to me, "I have to apologize to you. Because my father was killed by Japanese people, I have harbored hatred in my heart." Then she said, "You told us that your father was also killed during the war, but later you accepted the gospel, which

changed your life. And now you are telling us that you love us. I am ashamed of myself. Though I was born in the Church, I have felt hatred toward your people even to this day. But your message has changed my thinking."

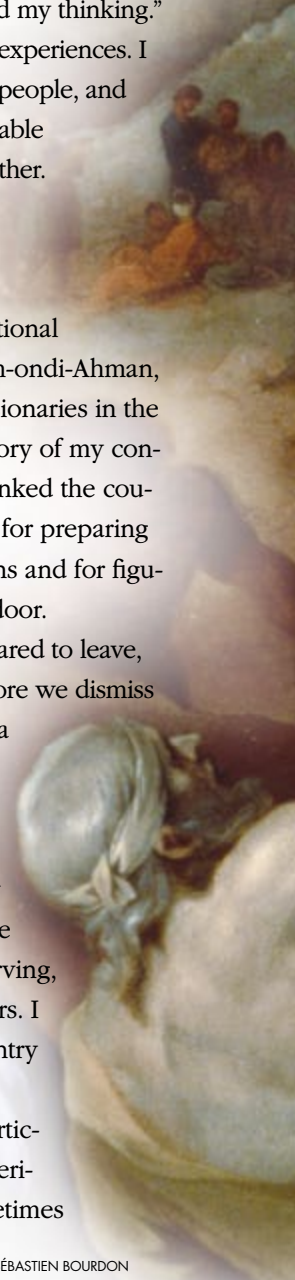
I have had so many similar experiences. I have been able to meet many people, and because of the gospel, we are able to love and understand each other.

All of My Guilt Has Been Taken Away

A few years later at a devotional held following a visit to Adam-ondi-Ahman, the supervisor of service missionaries in the area asked me to share the story of my conversion. I did so and then thanked the couples attending the devotional for preparing their children to serve missions and for figuratively sending them to my door.

As I shook hands and prepared to leave, the supervisor spoke up. "Before we dismiss this meeting," he said, "I have a personal confession to make." I don't remember his exact words, but in essence he said:

"As you know, I served my country as a U.S. Marine while I was a young man. While serving, I killed many Japanese soldiers. I thought I had served my country faithfully, but for many years, whenever I saw Orientals, particularly Japanese people, I experienced great depression. Sometimes



DETAIL FROM MOSES AND THE BRAZEN SERPENT, BY SÉBASTIEN BOURDON



I could not even function. I visited with Church authorities and discussed my feelings with professional counselors.

“Today, when I faced Elder and Sister Kikuchi and their son, a flash of memory returned. But then I listened to Elder Kikuchi share his testimony and conversion story, his love for the Lord and the gospel, and his love for each of us. He said he had hated Americans and American soldiers but that the gospel had changed his life through the Lord’s healing power. When I heard this, I also seemed to hear a voice from the Lord saying, ‘It is finished. It is OK.’”

He put his hands outward, raised them, and said, with tears in his eyes, “All of my guilt has been taken away. My burden is lifted!”

He came to me and hugged me. Then our wives approached, and we all hugged each other and wept.

I have learned that the Savior can heal wounded hearts, misunderstanding, and hatred if we look to His word and His Atonement. He heals us the same way He healed the Israelites of serpent bites (see Numbers 21:8–9; 1 Nephi 17:41; Alma 33:19–21). It is “the pleasing word of God . . .

which healeth the wounded soul” (Jacob 2:8), and it is “with his stripes [that] we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5; Mosiah 14:5).

*I would be my brother's keeper;
I would learn the healer's art.
To the wounded and the weary
I would show a gentle heart.*



He heals us the same way He healed the Israelites of serpent bites. It is “the pleasing word of God . . . which healeth the wounded soul,” and it is “with his stripes [that] we are healed.”



LOVE ONE ANOTHER

“Mother Teresa, a Catholic nun who worked among the poor in India most of her life, spoke this profound truth: ‘If you judge people, you have no time to love them.’ The Savior has admonished, ‘This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.’ I ask: *can we love one another, as the Savior commanded, if we judge each other?* And I answer—with Mother Teresa: no, we cannot.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Charity Never Faileth,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 124.

I’ll Give You 10 Minutes

I was born in a small community on the northern island of Hokkaido, Japan. When I was five years old, my father was killed by an attack from an American submarine. As a little boy I became bitter toward Americans. I grew up that way, not really knowing what had happened to cause the war.

When I graduated from junior high school, we were so poor. My mother could not afford to send me to senior high school, so I decided to go to work in order to fund my continued education. There was no work in our small village, but I found a job producing tofu (bean curd) nine hours away from home in Muroran, where my mother was raised.

Every day in Muroran I got up by 4:30 a.m., made tofu until noon, and then delivered it to various stores until 6:00 p.m. After work I washed, changed, ate, and ran to night school. I returned home about 10:30 p.m. and jumped into bed at 11:00 p.m. Because of my exhausting schedule, I soon lost all of my energy and became ill.

I was staying in the tofu shop owner’s home, but I quit my job and asked my uncle to take me in so I could finish my first year of high school. Despite medication, I remained sick. I didn’t know what to do, and I became desperate and felt that I might be dying. I prayed hard, saying, “If there is a God, wilt Thou bless me that I might be able to get well.” Then I prayed something somewhat presumptuous: “If I am cured, I want to repay Thee.”

While I was at my uncle’s home, two

foreigners knocked at the door early one evening. They were missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One, Elder Law—the senior companion—had been a farmer in St. Anthony, Idaho, USA; the other, Elder Porter—a new elder—was from Salt Lake City. It was cold, rainy, and nearly dark, and they were ready to go home. But for some reason they persisted in knocking on doors.

When they knocked on my door, I was alone. I answered the door and said, “No, thank you.”

These young men were humble and persistent, but I said again, “No, thank you.” Then I added, “You folks killed my father.” I was still bitter.

Undeterred, the elder from Idaho asked my age. I said, “What does my age matter? Please go.”

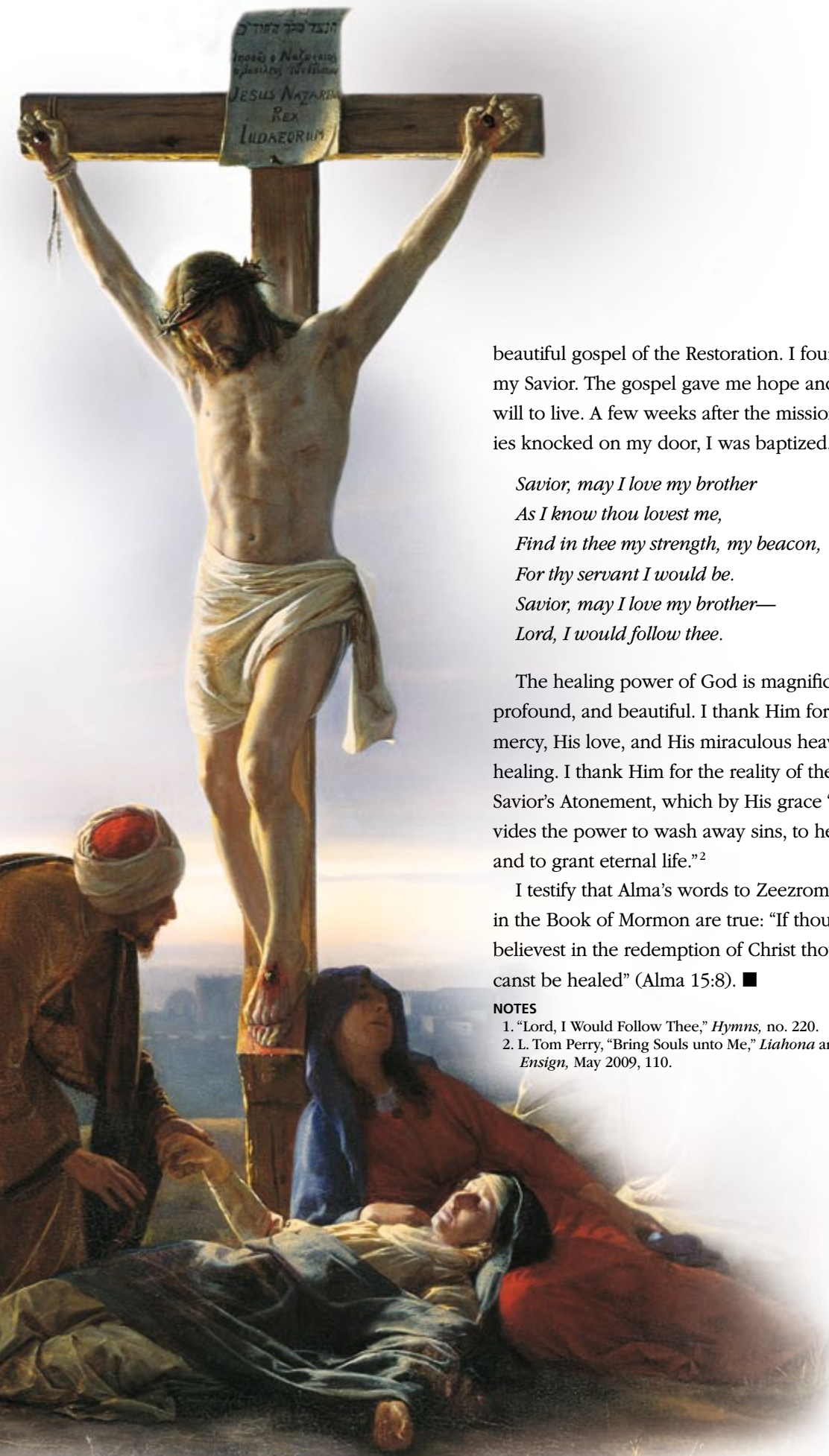
He replied, “I want to tell you a story about a boy your age who saw *your* Heavenly Father and *your* Savior, Jesus Christ. We want to share that story.” I almost froze at the door.

I said, “I’ll give you 10 minutes.”

Those 10 minutes touched me deeply and changed my life. The story the missionaries shared was so profound and beautiful. I found out that I am a child of God and that I came from Him.

The elders came every day because I was sick. During their discussions with me, the missionaries taught me the





beautiful gospel of the Restoration. I found my Savior. The gospel gave me hope and the will to live. A few weeks after the missionaries knocked on my door, I was baptized.

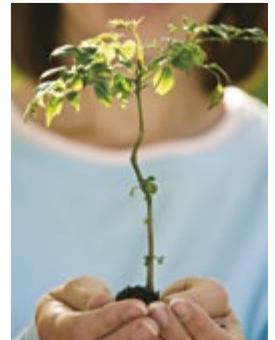
*Savior, may I love my brother
As I know thou lovest me,
Find in thee my strength, my beacon,
For thy servant I would be.
Savior, may I love my brother—
Lord, I would follow thee.*

The healing power of God is magnificent, profound, and beautiful. I thank Him for His mercy, His love, and His miraculous heavenly healing. I thank Him for the reality of the Savior's Atonement, which by His grace "provides the power to wash away sins, to heal, and to grant eternal life."²

I testify that Alma's words to Zeezrom in the Book of Mormon are true: "If thou believest in the redemption of Christ thou canst be healed" (Alma 15:8). ■

NOTES

1. "Lord, I Would Follow Thee," *Hymns*, no. 220.
2. L. Tom Perry, "Bring Souls unto Me," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 110.



The healing power of God is magnificent, profound, and beautiful. I thank Him for His mercy, His love, and His miraculous heavenly healing.

Separated by a Flood, United by Prayer

Trapped in their bedrooms, barricaded by furniture, and clinging to tree branches, the members of the Torres family did the only thing that could save them.

By Melissa Merrill

Church Magazines

September 25, 2005, started out as a calm, peaceful Sunday for Victor Manuel Torres Quiros, his wife, Yamileth Monge Ureña, and their family. They had returned from church and were resting, reading, and enjoying a quiet, rainy afternoon at their home in the mountains of Costa Rica.

It had been raining most of the weekend, nothing unusual for the area or the season. About 5:00 p.m., Brother Torres observed that the river running near their property had risen more than usual and was getting closer to the house. He calmly alerted his family, and as a precaution he and his 11-year-old son, Erick, began placing blankets at the doors to keep water from seeping inside.

Moments later the river swelled to the point that the water was more than a meter-and-a-half (five feet) deep around the house. Within seconds the water crashed through the

windows. (The family learned later that a landslide had caused the sudden surge of water.) Brother Torres shouted to his family to run for the backyard, where there were some trees and higher ground. His three teenage daughters, Sofia, Korina, and Monica, immediately left the house.

But Sister Torres couldn't make it outside. So she ran with Elizabeth, a young child in the family's care that weekend, to a bedroom. They quickly climbed onto the bed, which, amazingly, floated. Neither had any idea where the others were or whether they were OK. Little Elizabeth reminded Sister Torres, "Don't cry. Remember that our God loves us." Then they began to pray.

Brother Torres had been following his daughters outside when he realized he didn't know where Erick was. Fighting the current, he went back into the house. He found Erick standing on a pile of rubble—a displaced wall, some furniture, trash, and several branches

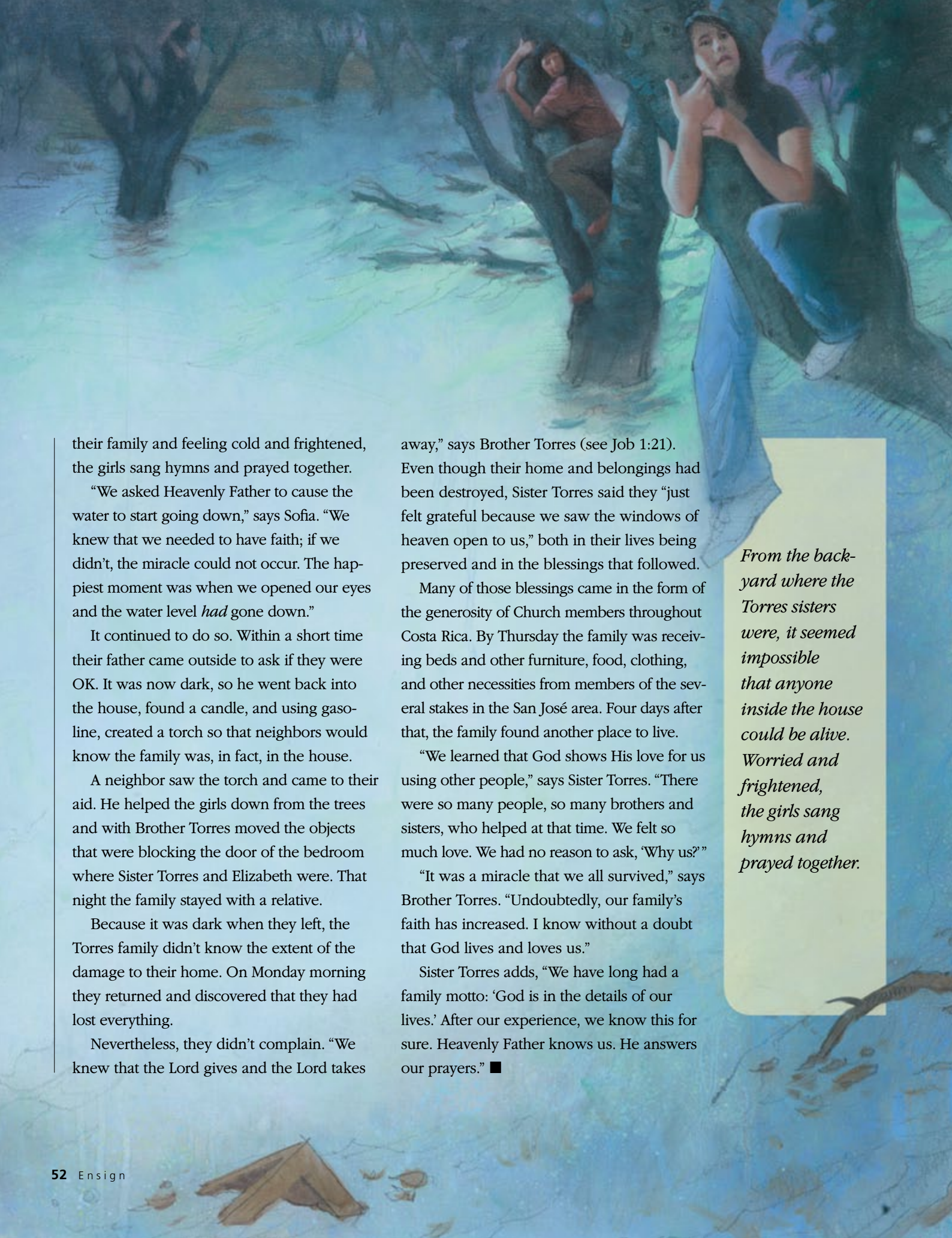
that the water had pushed against a closed door. Together, they moved to the kitchen, where Brother Torres set Erick in a safe, high place. Brother Torres then discovered that the water had wrapped a nylon cord around his legs, making it difficult for him to move. Even so, he managed to push the refrigerator and some furniture away, preventing the door from closing and trapping him and his son.

From the kitchen, Erick and Brother Torres could see the girls in the backyard, but they did not know how Sister Torres and Elizabeth were doing. Brother Torres suggested that together, they ask for Heavenly Father's help.

Meanwhile, outside and up a guava tree, the girls were also praying. Sofia, Korina, and Monica could see water gushing through their home. From all appearances, it seemed impossible that anyone remaining inside could be alive. Worried for

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BJORN THORIKELSON



An illustration of a flooded forest. The water is a deep blue-green color, and the trees are dark and silhouetted against the sky. In the foreground, a person is climbing a tree trunk. In the background, another person is visible on a higher branch. The overall mood is one of struggle and seeking refuge.

their family and feeling cold and frightened, the girls sang hymns and prayed together.

“We asked Heavenly Father to cause the water to start going down,” says Sofia. “We knew that we needed to have faith; if we didn’t, the miracle could not occur. The happiest moment was when we opened our eyes and the water level *had* gone down.”

It continued to do so. Within a short time their father came outside to ask if they were OK. It was now dark, so he went back into the house, found a candle, and using gasoline, created a torch so that neighbors would know the family was, in fact, in the house.

A neighbor saw the torch and came to their aid. He helped the girls down from the trees and with Brother Torres moved the objects that were blocking the door of the bedroom where Sister Torres and Elizabeth were. That night the family stayed with a relative.

Because it was dark when they left, the Torres family didn’t know the extent of the damage to their home. On Monday morning they returned and discovered that they had lost everything.

Nevertheless, they didn’t complain. “We knew that the Lord gives and the Lord takes

away,” says Brother Torres (see Job 1:21). Even though their home and belongings had been destroyed, Sister Torres said they “just felt grateful because we saw the windows of heaven open to us,” both in their lives being preserved and in the blessings that followed.

Many of those blessings came in the form of the generosity of Church members throughout Costa Rica. By Thursday the family was receiving beds and other furniture, food, clothing, and other necessities from members of the several stakes in the San José area. Four days after that, the family found another place to live.

“We learned that God shows His love for us using other people,” says Sister Torres. “There were so many people, so many brothers and sisters, who helped at that time. We felt so much love. We had no reason to ask, ‘Why us?’”

“It was a miracle that we all survived,” says Brother Torres. “Undoubtedly, our family’s faith has increased. I know without a doubt that God lives and loves us.”

Sister Torres adds, “We have long had a family motto: ‘God is in the details of our lives.’ After our experience, we know this for sure. Heavenly Father knows us. He answers our prayers.” ■

From the backyard where the Torres sisters were, it seemed impossible that anyone inside the house could be alive. Worried and frightened, the girls sang hymns and prayed together.



The Savior's *Compassion*

The Savior's miracle of the fishes testifies of the great power He commanded over nature. It may also have been a great act of compassion.

By S. Kent Brown

Emeritus Professor of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University

The account of a stunning miracle opens at Capernaum on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee and ends with the call of two pairs of brothers to discipleship—Peter and Andrew, James and John (Luke 5:1–11). As with all of Jesus's miracles, they touch those around Him in healing, lifting ways, and unveil Him as the gracious, compassionate Lord and Master of all. And this event in the Savior's life is no exception.

We read that a crowd is pressing Jesus “to hear the word of God” (Luke 5:1). Of course, news of His abilities has spread throughout the neighborhood (Luke 4:23, 40–41). Because of the press of people, Jesus looks to put some distance between Himself and the gathered listeners—most likely so that they can all hear. So Jesus effectively commandeers Peter's boat by climbing into it and asking that Peter push off a few yards from the bank so that He can address the whole multitude that has congregated on the shore. Peter, who hosted Jesus in his home on the prior Sabbath and saw His powers as He healed His mother-in-law (4:38–39), readily agrees to the request



PHOTOGRAPH BY ISTOCK

and pushes his boat into the water.

By the end of the sermon, Peter has now both heard Jesus's impressive words and witnessed His powers. As the crowd drifts away, Jesus elevates His request. In the first of Jesus's words recorded in this chapter, we read His instruction to Peter: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught" (verse 4). Peter's response to Jesus's directive betrays surprise: "we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing." In a word, the fishing has been awful. But Peter seems to have learned that this man from Nazareth is one to be obeyed. So he continues, "nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net" (verse 5).

Now comes the astonishing moment for Peter and Andrew—a series of plurals appear in the account, indicating the presence of a third man in the boat in addition to Jesus and Peter, probably Andrew (5:5–7). For "when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes" (verse 6). How big is the catch? The large net—likely a deep sea (trammel) or seine (drag) net—begins to break. In desperation, Peter yells to James and John, to come and assist. Although the record does not specify, I can imagine the Savior, who was used to working with His hands, reaching out to help Peter with the bursting net of fish. In the end, after a lot of work, the fishermen heave the catch of fish into the two boats, almost sinking them. Peter's response leaves little doubt that he recognizes the power of the teacher from Nazareth. He falls "down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." But Peter does not yet grasp all that the Savior is

offering to him and his partners. That comes in the next few hours.

We might be tempted to think of this

haul of fish as modest. However, we do have a model to compare the craft against. In 1986 an ancient boat dating to around the first century was discovered along the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. That boat measures 26.5 feet (8.8 meters) x 7.5 feet (2.5 meters), is 4.5 feet (1.25 meters) deep, and consists of a number of different woods in its construction.¹ This craft can carry a very large load of fish. Two boats filled in this manner will supply the needs of the fishermen's families for months if not a couple of years. Even if Peter's boat is smaller than this contemporary example, the catch of fish will have been substantial if it nearly sinks his craft and his partners' as well.

The question naturally arises, is the miracle simply an amazing demonstration of Jesus's enormous powers over the world of nature, or does the catch of fish carry an additional purpose? This question, in my view, brings us face to face with Jesus's deep compassion and concern for the families of the fishermen. And it is answered by deducing the answer to another question: what do they do with all that fish?

Even though Luke writes that the partners "brought their ships to land" and then "they forsook all" (Luke 5:11), we need not think that they promptly beach their craft on the shore, while the miracle is still buzzing in their heads, and walk away from the huge catch of fish. Such an act is senseless waste. And they of all people know the value of a

The newest Apostles likely rowed their fish-laden boats to nearby Taricheae, a fish-salting center. With their huge catch of fish preserved with salt, the fishermen could follow Christ, confident that their families would have enough fish to eat and sell.

big haul of fish. No, I believe that there is more going on here than meets the eye. Here is where a geographical detail plays a role.

Strabo, an ancient geographer who is roughly contemporary with Jesus (64 B.C.–21 A.D.), when writing about the Sea of Galilee, observes almost off-handedly, “At the place called Taricheae the lake supplies excellent fish for pickling.”² On the map of the lake, Taricheae lies about four-and-one-half miles (7.24 km) southwest of Capernaum, within easy rowing or sailing distance.³ More importantly, the name of the town links directly to the Greek word *tarichos* which means “dried or smoked fish.”⁴ The later rabbinic name for the town, Fish Tower, may also refer to the town’s fish salting industry.⁵

The town Taricheae, the fish-salting center on the lake’s western shore, was known to all the fishermen of the day. The effort to row or sail the two loaded boats four-and-one-half miles (7.24 km) along the shore from Capernaum would have cost a little time and effort, and the expense of the salting service, but not much else. With this huge catch of fish preserved by salting, the families of the fishermen would have enough food to eat for months on end, as well as enough to bring to the marketplace in Capernaum—either



CAST YOUR NET TO THE OTHER SIDE, BY MINERVA K. TEICHERT

to trade for other foods or to sell for income.

As He calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John, Jesus is calling the breadwinners away from their families, who will struggle for food and income without these men. For the Master “who notes the sparrow’s fall”⁶ and causes the rain to descend, and who is always aware of our needs, it is not hard to imagine Him compassionately doing more for these men and their families than meets the eye, as He so often does in our lives. In one stunning, momentous miracle witnessed by men whom Jesus will soon call into the apostleship, the needs of these families are met. The Savior’s

love for these men and His appreciation for what they will do in His service extends beyond them to their families. Thus, to me at least, the lesson of the Savior’s love and compassion becomes that much more deep and rich. ■

NOTES

1. Shelley Wachsmann, *The Sea of Galilee Boat: An Extraordinary 2000-Year-Old Discovery* (1995), 252, 302.
2. Strabo, *Geography*, 16.2.45.
3. Yohanan Aharoni, Michael Avi-Yonah, Anson F. Rainey, and Ze’ev Safrai, *The Carta Bible Atlas* (2002), 234–35.
4. Henry George Liddel and Robert Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, rev. ed. (1940), 1758.
5. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Bible: The Gospel According to Luke (I–IX)* (1981), 1:697.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “The Gift of Compassion,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Mar. 2007, 10.



LEARNING

Name withheld

When I was a child, my days and nights were filled with terror. Verbal, physical, and sexual abuse were all part of the way I was raised. I dreamed of the time when I could feel safe and accepted.

Sometime around age eight, I began to read the Bible in secret, under my blankets, in bed, with a flashlight. The Bible taught me right from wrong, and I realized how corrupt my family life had become. The Bible also taught me to pray as the Savior prayed. I sought my Heavenly Father and found Him. He became my best friend in these most difficult circumstances. Indeed, I witnessed many miracles as the Holy Ghost gave warnings and also helped me make decisions. At long last, I knew what love was.

But deep in my heart I harbored hatred for my father because he was the perpetrator of

the abuse. In my mind, the family situation was entirely his fault, while my mother was an innocent bystander.

Someone once said that hatred is like “burning down your own house to get rid of a rat.” My hatred for my father poisoned my soul, and my spiritual house was on fire.

I trusted no one except my Heavenly Father, poured myself into my schoolwork, and stayed away from home as much as possible. I learned to literally pray without ceasing. Still, the bitter feelings toward my father festered in my heart.

At age 12, I took matters into my own hands and left home to live with a teacher, the mother of two of my friends, who knew and understood my challenges. Living with them presented some legal difficulties, however, and before long I was placed in foster care. Soon I realized that even though I was

TO FORGIVE

I couldn't possibly forgive my father—his crimes against me had been cruel. Yet the Bible made it clear that forgiveness was essential. What was I to do?

no longer living under my father's roof, I had taken my hatred for him along with me.

I continued to read the Bible. In the New Testament I found scriptures that meant the most to me. The Sermon on the Mount taught me just how precarious my spiritual situation was. In Matthew 6:14–15 I read: “For if ye forgive men your trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you:

“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

I reasoned that the crimes against me had been unusual and cruel. Yet I read in Matthew 18:21–22 that Peter was told he must forgive “seven times seventy.” What was I to do?

I longed to let go of the hatred I carried like a millstone in my heart. The example of the Savior as He hung on the cross kept coming to mind. “Father, forgive them, for

they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

Why couldn't I be more like Him? If I was to have any chance at a normal life, forgiveness must come. I imagined that forgiveness could happen in one easy step. But for me, it was to be a long journey.

When I married and gave birth to my own children, I realized my mother had not been an innocent bystander, as I had so long thought. She had not protected me. So now I had another parent to forgive. Instead of getting better, my need to forgive was growing deeper, and I did not know what to do or where to turn. My husband and friends were sympathetic listeners and encouraged me in the healing process, but I needed something more.

Missionaries came to my door, and in 1969, I joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I was the only one among



THERE IS PEACE IN FORGIVENESS

“There is no peace in reflecting on the pain of old wounds. There is peace only in repentance and forgiveness. This is the sweet peace of the Christ, who said, ‘blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God’ (Matthew 5:9).”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “Of You It Is Required to Forgive,” *Ensign*, June 1991, 5.

my family who did, but I finally I felt completely at home. I read the Book of Mormon and learned many long-awaited truths. Forgiveness was a prevalent theme in this latter-day scripture. Mosiah 26:31 taught me that in not forgiving my parents, I was bringing condemnation upon myself. I continued to pray that I might forgive.

Soon after joining the Church I became keenly interested in genealogy. Family history started me down the path to genuine forgiveness. My maternal grandmother and great-uncle helped me unearth information about past generations. And what I found amazed me.

I learned that when my father was just a child, his father had robbed a bank. My grandmother found herself alone raising a young son. She turned to sinful behavior to support the two of them while her husband was in prison for 12 years. My father’s mental health worsened.

As far back as I could research my father’s family tree, I found ancestor after ancestor had fallen into grave error. This tradition of trespass had been passed from one generation to the next until my father’s day. I finally felt the stirring of sweet forgiveness for the young boy who inherited such a disturbing lineage.

I began to see myself in a new light. Error was a long chain, reaching back for generations. I was the breaker of that chain, daring to rear my own children in the light of truth.

A kind Heavenly Father also helped me find forgiveness through my talent for writing. I wrote a series of short pieces about my childhood for a prominent newspaper. The articles were light-hearted and even nostalgic.



Before writing these stories, I thought of my childhood as all bad. Afterward, I could clearly see there were good times to be recalled. The shackles of hatred were loosening their grip on my heart.

Reaching out to others by serving the elderly was another way I worked through my distressful feelings. As I made new friends and even offered assistance, I learned what it meant to “honor thy father and thy mother” (Exodus 20:12).

I also found relief in writing letters to my parents—letters that were never mailed and that were eventually destroyed. The first ones I wrote served primarily as an emotional outlet—I vented my anger and asked questions. Over time my letters evolved into decent exchanges, which later led me to making contact with them.

On Christmas, birthdays, and special occasions, I sent cards and small gifts to my parents with the best of feelings. (Of course, not everyone who has been abused by a family member should feel obligated to have

contact with that person. It was just something I chose to try.) My efforts were never acknowledged. I received a certified letter telling me they did not want even a long-distance relationship with me. But the small gifts were never returned.



TRUST IN HEAVENLY FATHER'S LOVE

"If you have been abused, Satan will strive to convince you that there is no solution. Yet he knows perfectly well that there is. Satan recognizes that healing comes through the unwavering love of Heavenly Father for each of His children. He also understands that the power of healing is inherent in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Therefore, his strategy is to do all possible to separate you from your Father and His Son. Do not let Satan convince you that you are beyond help.

"Satan uses your abuse to undermine your self-confidence, destroy trust in authority, create fear, and generate feelings of despair. Abuse can damage your ability to form healthy human relationships. You must have faith that all of these negative consequences can be resolved; otherwise they will keep you from full recovery. While these outcomes have powerful influence in your life, they do not define the real you.

"Satan will strive to alienate you from your Father in Heaven with the thought that if He loved you He would have prevented the tragedy. Do not be kept from the very source of true healing by the craftiness of the prince of evil and his wicked lies. Recognize that if you have feelings that you are not loved by your Father in Heaven, you are being manipulated by Satan. Even when it may seem very difficult to pray, kneel and ask Father in Heaven to give you the capacity to trust Him and to feel His love for you. Ask to come to know that His Son can heal you through His merciful Atonement."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "To Heal the Shattering Consequences of Abuse," *Ensign*, May 2008, 41.

I like to think that they were cherished to some degree.

I knew forgiveness didn't mean condoning or accepting the abuse or forgetting that it had occurred. It meant I needed to take what I could from life's experiences and through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the grace of God, find healing and forgiveness.

Forgiveness didn't come in one "warm fuzzy" moment either. It came gradually, over decades. Time is a great healer.

My father died in 1992. A year later, I submitted his name for saving ordinances in the temple. (I would do the same for my mother following her death 15 years later.) This brought me further healing. I knew I had done something good, and I knew it was not up to me to judge him. Around that time, the grip of hatred or anything like it was lifted from my soul. Forgiveness took its place.

I was freed at last from negative feelings that had haunted me for years. My heart was finally light, burdened no more. A kind Heavenly Father had given me a wonderful gift, one that I completely embraced.

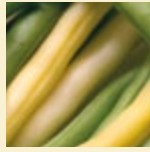
After my father died I tried to reconnect with my mother. My efforts were rebuffed. But in quiet moments I knew I had done my part. The desire to judge her was gone, and I saw her as a daughter of God. I am convinced that when she died in 2007, she knew that I loved her—and that I had forgiven her completely.

Both of my parents are now in a place where they may have the opportunity to hear the gospel. My prayer is that they will cling to the truths they are taught in the Spirit world. In the meantime, I see more clearly now that the debilitating cloud of hatred is gone from my life and I have learned to forgive. ■

If you or someone you know is a victim of physical, sexual, or verbal abuse, talk to your bishop or branch president. He will know how to assist you. Where necessary, he can help arrange counseling and other resources.

For more information, contact the LDS Family Services office in your area or visit ldsfamilyservices.org.





SEEDS OF Self-Reliance

Thanks to a Church Welfare Services initiative, members throughout the world are sowing seeds of self-reliance and reaping the blessings of gardening and food production.

By Allie Schulte

Welfare Services

As President of the Church, Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) encouraged members “to grow all the food that you feasibly can on your own property. Berry bushes, grapevines, fruit trees—plant them if your climate is right for their growth. Grow vegetables and eat them from your own yard. Even those residing in apartments or condominiums can generally grow a little food in pots and planters. Study the best methods of providing your own foods. Make your garden . . . neat and attractive as well as productive.”¹

Being prepared in the face of adversity is only one of the many blessings that come from planting a garden. It also brings improved nutrition, the satisfaction of working together to sow seeds and pull weeds, and the joy of a successful harvest.

Gardening also has spiritual lessons. It teaches that, in every aspect of life, “whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap” (D&C 6:33). Growing a garden fulfills the command given to Adam and Eve and their posterity, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). Gardening is work, an important principle of the gospel; “He that is idle shall not eat the bread . . . of the laborer” (D&C 42:42). Obedience to seeming temporal laws are important since all commandments are spiritual (see D&C 29:34).

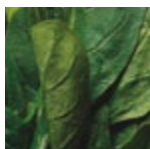
Through a major initiative of Welfare Services, Church members in urban areas and developing nations throughout the world are reaping the blessings of gardening. The Church’s food initiative gives priesthood leaders in these areas the tools and training necessary to teach members how to plant a garden. Even when faced with difficult terrain, limited resources, and minimal experience, members are learning techniques that will help them to become self-reliant not only in food production, but also in nutrition, food hygiene and preparation, and storage.

Cape Verde

Although the islands of Cape Verde are not technically classified as desert, with an average of 10.3 inches (26 cm) of rainfall each year, the soil is dry and barren, and water is scarce—hardly ideal conditions for gardening. In addition, most people on these islands, located about 500 miles (800 kilometers) off the western coast of Africa, live in small, cement homes with little outdoor space to plant a garden.

Despite such adverse conditions, in the summer of 2009 several Latter-day Saint families enjoyed home grown vegetables for the first time. Because 90 percent of the food in Cape Verde is imported, most people cannot afford to purchase vegetables. But with help from experienced





gardeners serving as humanitarian specialists, these families learned to plant gardens in whatever containers they could find—pots, bowls, bottles, or even used food containers. Families maintained their small gardens on the roofs or porches of their homes.

They learned how to improve the soil they use to plant their gardens by combining fertilizer and potting soil with the soil found in their region. Families also built small containers out of wire netting to create compost piles, where they began collecting table scraps, banana and orange peels, and other organic material. Now, the members are using the compost to make rich soil for their container gardens.

As the gardening season approaches, these families will also teach others in their communities the skills they have learned so more people can benefit from growing their own food. Each year, more families and individuals will be able to save money and enjoy the nutritional benefits as well as the personal satisfaction and financial savings of home grown vegetables as they plant their own gardens.

Bolivia

At 14,000 feet (4,267 meters) above sea level, the temperature in El Alto, Bolivia, changes drastically from morning to midday and at night becomes too cold for many plants to survive. With such a harsh climate for food production, most families have grown accustomed to a diet of only meat and potatoes. Children in particular suffer from the lack of nutrients.

Now, with help from the Church food initiative, families are learning to create a suitable climate for gardening using small, underground “greenhouses” they call *panqar huyu*. A roof made of inexpensive clear plastic covers the greenhouse and allows sunlight in, facilitating plant growth and warming the surrounding soil. At night, the warmed soil radiates heat back into the greenhouse.

With one of these simple structures, a family can produce up to six pounds of greens every three to four weeks, adding a substantial amount of essential nutrients to their diets. And with nearly 100 greenhouses already built, families are now working to tackle their next obstacle: getting their children to eat the vegetables they grow.

Volunteers and staff with the food initiative are teaching both parents and children about the nutritional benefits of vegetables through nutrition classes and workshops held in schools and at churches. Families are also learning ways to prepare the vegetables. They have already noticed a positive difference in their children’s health and performance at school and in other activities—just from eating a few vegetables each day.

Navajo and Hopi Nations

The climate and terrain on the Navajo and Hopi Indian reservations in Arizona, USA, and surrounding states is just as difficult as for those in Bolivia or Cape Verde. Yet after hearing about these and other food production projects, the Tuba City Stake president, Larry James Justice,



Right: Using improved soil and intensive growing methods, it's possible to grow surprisingly productive gardens, even in relatively small spaces.

Below left: In Bolivia's chilly highlands a simple below-ground greenhouse, the panqar huyu, creates a mini climate suitable for growing vegetables that otherwise couldn't thrive.



felt that the members of his stake could also benefit from learning how to plant gardens. With high levels of diabetes and obesity among his members—an increasing problem worldwide—he realized that fresh fruits and vegetables could supply the vitamins and minerals that most members lack in their typical diet of corn, beans, and mutton.

In 2009, the stake launched a pilot project with the help of the Church food initiative. Stake leaders and Church-service missionaries began by planting a demonstration garden at the stake center. Leaders used the garden to teach members the techniques that would help them succeed in planting their own gardens—which vegetables to plant, how to fertilize the soil, and even how to prevent birds from eating the crops.

That year, families in the Tuba City Stake planted 30 gardens, and many experienced success. Along with the vegetable gardens, a variety of fruit trees and vines are also thriving on the reservation, including peaches, apricots, raspberries, and watermelons.

Now that members have a basic knowledge of gardening, stake leaders are teaching members other provident living principles, such as how to use and store the fruits and vegetables they grow. Using the pilot project as a model, the Church launched eight more projects in 2010 on Navajo and Hopi reservations, allowing more families to reap the benefits of home food production.

Your Home

Many Church members throughout the world live in apartments or small homes with no yard space for a garden plot. Others live in dry regions where the soil is barren. Some feel that they do not have the time or financial means to grow their own food. Yet with study, faith, diligence, patience, and a little creativity, anyone can succeed in gardening.


Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “There have been very few years in my life when I have not been responsible for a garden. Even now as a city condominium dweller, I still plant and harvest a garden each year. . . .

“Each spring as I look over an insignificant, small seed and place it in a well-prepared seed bed, I marvel at how much it will produce.”²

As members prayerfully consider the counsel to plant gardens and search for ways to be obedient to this principle, they will be amazed at the solutions they find. Here are some experiences and advice from members who have followed the counsel to plant a garden.

1. Gardening on a Budget

While living in a small townhouse apartment, Noelle Campbell, of Houston, Texas, USA, discovered that most of the materials she needed to plant a garden were right in her own home. On her patio, she began planting vegetables in used containers—anything from laundry soap containers to kitty litter buckets.



Although gardening began as a hobby, Noelle was quickly amazed at the amount of food she could produce in the small containers. She then expanded her garden, still using materials collected from her home. Old bookshelves and bins became a vertical garden. The frame of an old mini-trampoline is now used to support beans, peas and other climbing plants. She even uses old grills from barbecues to keep her tomatoes from leaning.

“I love the challenge of container gardening, of seeing my patio transformed from a tiny 8-by-8-foot (2.5-by-2.5-meters) concrete slab into a green, living, producing garden,” Noelle says. “It is small, much smaller than the garden you might have with a house, but it brings my family and me joy and makes us feel as if we are doing all we can to follow the prophetic counsel to live providently.”

2. Sharing a Garden

It hardly resembles the farm he grew up on in Utah, but Glen Nelson and his family have a six-by-six-foot (1.83 by 1.83 meters) garden plot in the middle of New York City, New York, USA, a few blocks south of Central Park. Behind a community garden in the park is a series of plots given free of charge to the residents.

Although space is limited, the Nelsons are able to grow raspberries, strawberries, cucumbers, mesclun greens, cilantro, dill, mint, chives, four varieties of tomatoes, and three kinds of basil. Using cones and poles, they grow many of the plants vertically, making use of every inch of space they have.

“I never dreamed—but I always wished—that I would have a garden nestled between Manhattan’s skyscrapers,” Glen says. “I know my urban garden’s not as productive as my childhood farm was, but I think I love it just as much.”

3. Finding Space

Louise Hough inherited a passion for gardening from her mother. So while living in a third-floor apartment in London, England, she decided to plant a mini-garden on her balcony.

Louise went to the library and searched online for ideas on how to garden with minimal space. With help from a friend,



In urban settings, well-kept containers and raised beds provide a green and welcoming relief from asphalt and concrete—as well as truly fresh vegetables that may otherwise be hard to obtain.

she put baskets and planter boxes on her balcony wall and before long, vegetable plants and flowers were thriving.

“I have loved going out each morning to water the plants and watch them grow,” Louise says. “The flowers I have grown are stunning, and it has been lovely inviting friends over to eat the things I have grown. You can always manage to grow a little something with the space you have!”

4. Using Containers

Jennifer Dalley of Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, recently discovered that she could plant a successful garden in reused soda or juice bottles. It is an inexpensive and simple way to grow food in areas with access to only a window or a grow light—an electric lamp designed to promote plant growth.

In Alberta, Canada, Shirley Martin knows from experience that she can grow just about any kind of plant in a container—anything from flowers to vegetables to strawberry plants. She says the key to a successful container garden is adequate lighting and frequent watering (since the soil in containers dries out much more quickly than it does in a garden).

“This year,” Shirley says, “I am growing a kitchen garden in a few pots on my deck, complete with herbs, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, chives, and peppers. Your imagination is the limit.”

For more information on how to plant a garden, visit the gardening section at providentliving.org.

5. Learning by Doing

Wah Kam Kwan of Hong Kong first decided to plant a garden to supplement her home storage. She had never attempted to grow her own food but assumed she could learn all she needed to know by reading books.

Although the information she found was helpful, Wah Kam soon discovered that the greatest lessons she learned came through the process of actually planting the garden. With each additional year of experience, she has learned more about the best soil to use for different seeds, how to recognize good seeds, various ways to water and fertilize plants, and the best seasons to grow various vegetables.

The lessons Wah Kam learned were not limited to gardening alone, however. One evening, a terrible storm threatened to destroy her garden. In the morning, she was surprised to discover that the plants were not damaged, but instead, grew stronger from the additional water.

“From that experience, I learned that with faith in God, we can become stronger as we face our trials and difficulties with courage,” Wah Kam says. “The blessings I have received from gardening are both temporal and spiritual.”

6. Never Giving Up

After reading the words of President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) in the talk “Prepare for the Days of Tribulation,”³ Lynelle Swensen of Fountain Green, Utah, USA, felt the desire to plant a garden. Although she and her husband had little experience, they began cultivating a small garden plot. However, after several years with little success, Lynelle became discouraged.

As she prayed to Heavenly Father for guidance, Lynelle was filled with peace and a desire to keep trying. After a few more tries—and a few more failures—the Swensen family finally experienced an abundant harvest—so

much that they were able to share with friends, family, and neighbors.

“We are so thankful for the loving guidance of our Heavenly Father that helped us endure the years when we nearly gave up,” Lynelle says. “We feel blessed that we have been able to follow the counsel of the prophets and prepare for the days ahead.”

Reaping the Blessings

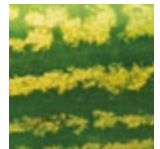
As these members discovered, the possibilities for planting a successful garden are endless—even with minimal space, money, or experience. As members strive to be obedient to this principle, they will realize that by planting small seeds in the pursuit of self-reliance, they will reap great blessings for their efforts.

Elder Perry encouraged, “Our labors will continue to bring forth a more abundant harvest each year as we follow the Lord’s law of the harvest. He has bound himself to provide us with abundance so long as we will live his law in righteousness and labor for that blessing.

“Have your own experience in planting a garden. Then make application in your own life of this great principle of the law of the harvest.”⁴ ■

NOTES:

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “Family Preparedness,” *Ensign*, May 1976, 124.
2. L. Tom Perry, “The Law of the Harvest,” *New Era*, Oct. 1980, 4.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, “Prepare for the Days of Tribulation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 32–34.
4. L. Tom Perry, *New Era*, Oct. 1980, 4.



I FINALLY FOUND A CHURCH

For most of my life I felt an emptiness and longed for something solid to cling to. I suspected that what I was looking for might be found in a church, so from the time I was very young, I investigated a number of religions and philosophies. Many of them were good and filled with good people. Some of them were strange and offered nothing like what I was seeking.

After many years of searching, I became bored and discouraged, so I gave up. I determined to build a relationship with God on my own and stay away from organized religion.

Some time after I had come to this decision, I was watching a television program that focused on spirituality. The program's host was interviewing a Latter-day Saint family. As I listened to this family, I felt the love and solid faith that I had long been looking for. I was also impressed to learn that Latter-day Saints highly emphasize the family. Maybe I would investigate just one more church.

On the bottom

of the television screen was a phone number for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Milan area. I called it and spoke with some members at the stake center, who arranged for the missionaries to call me.



I determined to stay away from organized religion. But some time after I had come to this decision, I saw a Latter-day Saint family interviewed on television.

This was a particularly busy time for me, so when the missionaries called to set up an appointment, I asked if I could call them back in a few weeks after things had settled down. They agreed and gave me the phone number of the local Relief Society president, who called and invited me to attend church on Sunday. I went, and I loved everything there: the lessons, the people, and the spirit. I left feeling very happy.

I went to church every Sunday for the next two months. Then, in October 2008, I was baptized. My search had not just ended; it had been completed. I no longer felt the thirst and the longing I once did.

I am immensely grateful to have found the truth, but in some ways I am sad that it took me so long to find the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, I am grateful for the experiences I had during my search. Because I looked in so many other places, I feel extra content knowing that I've found the right place—the place where I belong. ■

Barbara De Giglio,
Lombardy, Italy

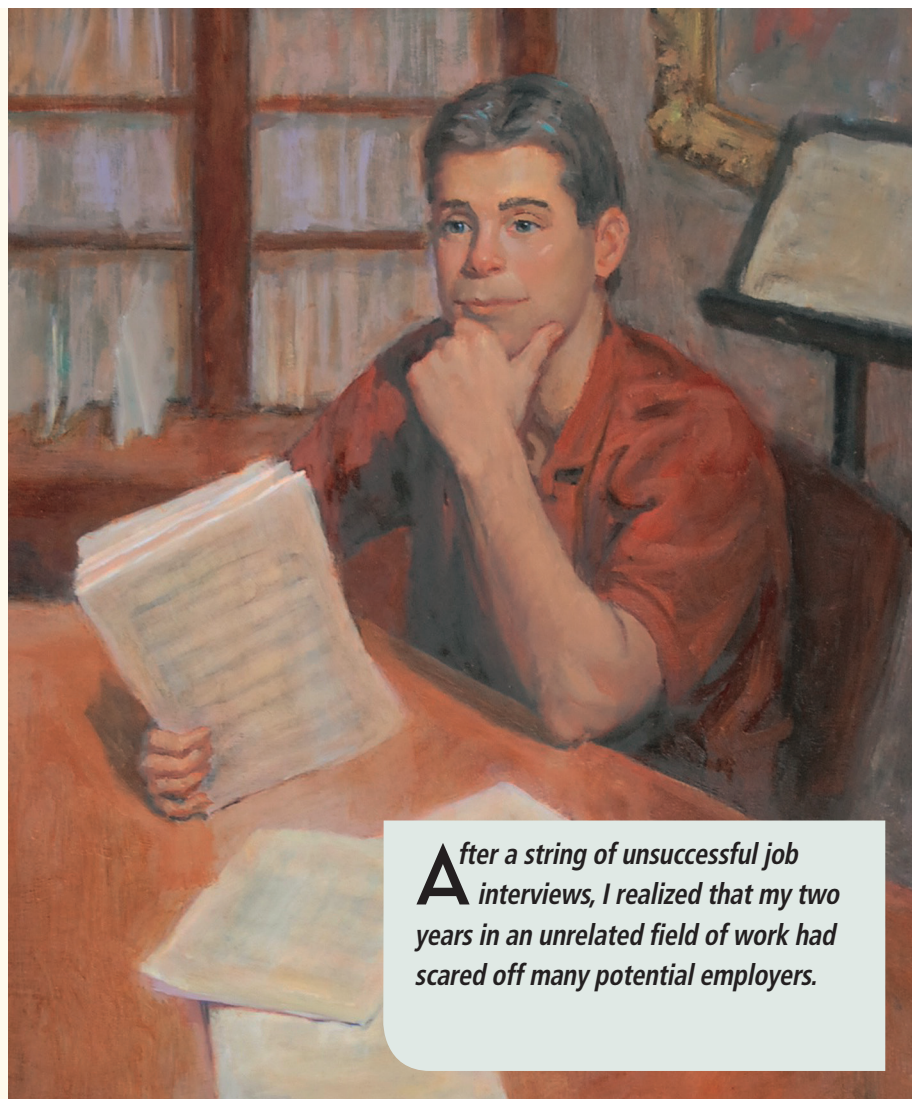
WHAT ABOUT MY CAREER?

Everything was starting to work out perfectly. I had graduated from Oxford University with a degree in music and had started working for a professional orchestra in Edinburgh, Scotland. My career was progressing, and I was making lots of friends.

While studying, I had decided to delay full-time missionary service. Now the idea of serving was far from my mind. Fear of many things, especially the fear of stifling my career plans, made me think that I was an exception and that I didn't need to serve. The sacrifices involved seemed too great.

Good friends and sweet experiences with the Spirit, however, began to change my heart. The love of a caring, watchful bishop helped me gain a stronger, deeper testimony of the restored gospel. Soon I knew that I needed to accept a call to serve. I had no idea how I would pick up my career in a competitive environment after a two-year break, but I trusted that the Lord would bless me for my decision. I left my job not knowing how things would work out.

I was called to serve in the West Indies Mission, speaking French. The challenges were hard, but I loved serving the people and seeing their lives change. During those two years I focused solely on seeking the will of my Father in Heaven. Serving others



After a string of unsuccessful job interviews, I realized that my two years in an unrelated field of work had scared off many potential employers.

selflessly brought me more joy than I had ever experienced.

After returning home, I saw the world from the perspective of new priorities and values, and I sought to keep my life centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ. I immediately sought employment, but opportunities were few. After a string of unsuccessful job interviews, I realized that my two years in an unrelated field of work had scared off many potential employers. Would my mission really cost me my career?

I'm thankful that the answer was no. Almost three months later I spotted a vacancy that was perfect for me. I had just the right set of skills for

the type of work involved. Not only that, but job candidates were required to speak fluent French! My mission opened the door for this opportunity. Three interviews later I was offered the job. My career was even further ahead than it would have been had I not served. I felt the Lord's mercy and love. I know that He prepares blessings for us when we do our part.

What the Prophet Joseph Smith taught is true: "Let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed" (D&C 123:17). ■

Name Withheld

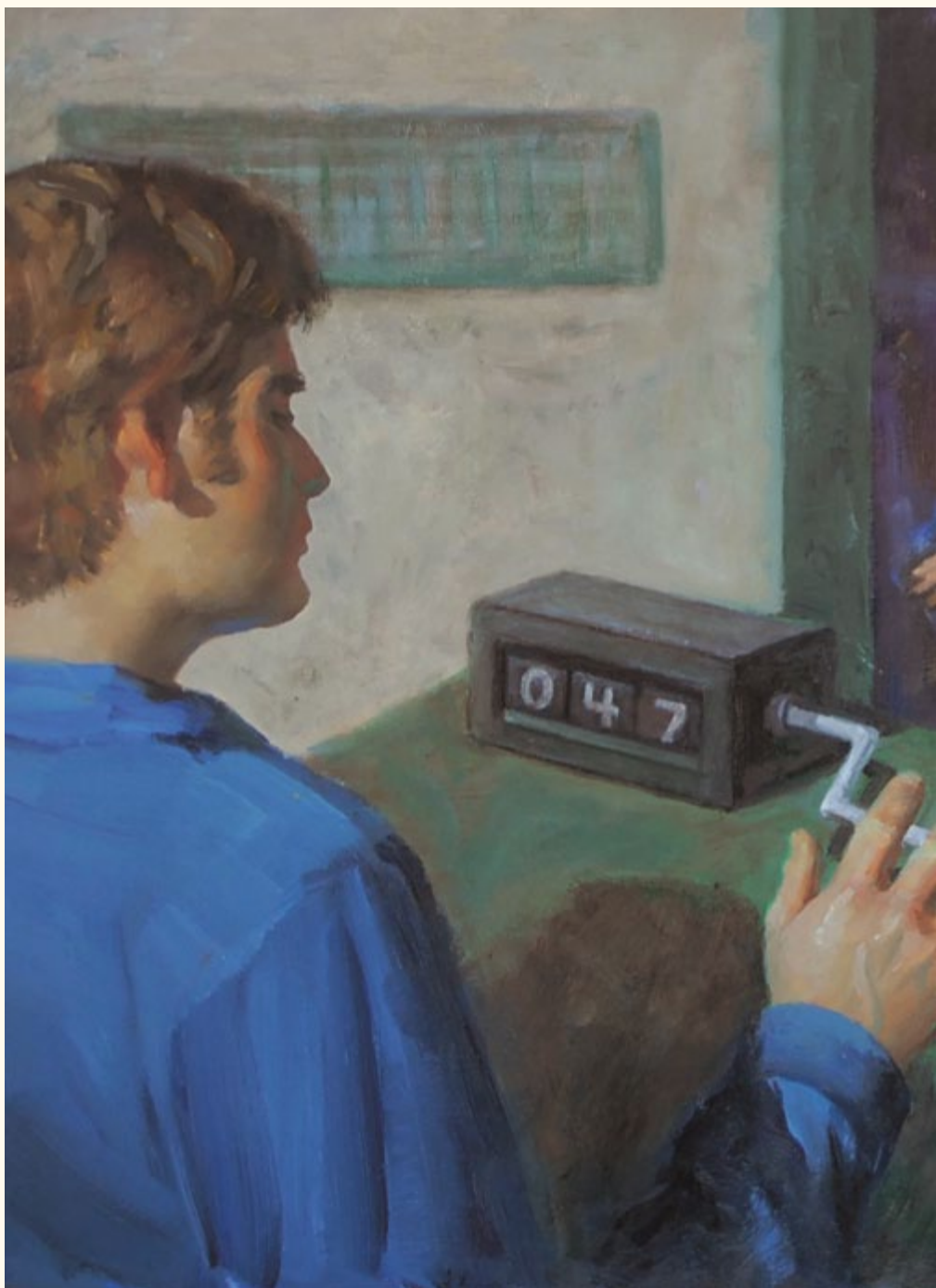
I STOOD UP TO MY CO-WORKERS

One morning at work the factory bosses told all employees that in addition to our hourly wage, we would begin receiving piecework incentive pay. The more we produced, the more we would earn. This happened four months before I left on my mission, so now I could make more money to help pay for it.

Production went up significantly, and so did our pay. I worked on a three-man rubber-curing press, and every time I saw a mold come out of the incubator and trip the automatic counter, I imagined my bank account balance increasing.

The new pay incentive, however, created an incentive to cheat. A co-worker would often sneak beside the automatic counter, give its trip lever a few extra yanks, and return to his workstation. I grinned when I saw this happen, shook my head, and continued my work. I felt that as long as I wasn't messing with the counter myself, then my integrity was still intact.

But before long I realized that because I got paid the same amount as the other men on my team, then it didn't really matter who pulled on the counter. I was just as guilty of stealing from the company as the others were. Was I going to fund my mission with stolen money?



I agonized over what to do. The extra money in our paychecks wasn't much. A lot of people would say it wasn't worth troubling over, but I was troubled. I knew I had

to confront my co-workers.

"Are you kidding me?" asked Bob (names have been changed), the senior team member. "Everybody cheats. Even the management. They expect it."



The new pay incentive created an incentive to cheat. A co-worker would often sneak beside the automatic counter and give its trip lever a few extra yanks.

He saw no need to change. What else could I do? Even without inflating our production numbers, our press was the most productive on our shift. I often heard workers on other

presses say they wished they worked on our team.

“I could trade places with Jack at the other press,” I suggested to Bob.

“I think you’re being stupid,” he told me, “but I can work with Jack.”

After Jack and I switched teams, Bob often reminded me how much more money he was making than I was. Lyrics from “How Firm a Foundation” came to mind: “Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be not dismayed.” Those words helped me shrug off Bob’s taunts.

Not long afterward, Bob approached me. He said Jack was not working

out, and my team wanted me back. I was surprised. I told Bob that I would return but there couldn’t be any cheating. He agreed. My old team welcomed me back warmly, and the cheating stopped.

I expected to be tested before going on my mission, but I had no idea that my honesty and courage would be tried. I am grateful that when I needed strength to do what was right, the Lord upheld me with His “righteous, omnipotent hand.”¹ ■
Kenneth Hurst, Alabama, USA

NOTE

1. “How Firm a Foundation,” *Hymns*, no. 85.

WE TURNED TO PRAYER

One Sunday our stake received the wonderful news that Elder Carlos H. Amado of the Seventy would be coming to speak to our stake on Tuesday evening. My family and I were thrilled, but I worried about how we would make it to the meeting.

As a high school teacher, I had to teach a class Tuesday evening. Unfortunately, I was rarely granted time off. Not sure what to do but determined to hear Elder Amado speak, my family and I turned to prayer, hoping the Lord would provide a way.

The day before the conference, I felt prompted to talk with the principal about leaving 20 minutes early so my family and I could make it to the

meeting. I arrived in her office, and before I could say a word, she asked me if I would mind changing my Tuesday class starting time to two hours earlier than normal. This meant that my class would get out two hours early.

What a blessing this was to us. We arrived at the meeting in plenty of time and felt the Spirit in the presence of one of the Lord’s disciples. Our five-year-old son even had the wonderful privilege of sharing a hug and small conversation with Elder Amado before the meeting began. Together with the rest of the congregation, we enjoyed an outpouring of the Spirit. In addition, we gained a testimony as a family that Heavenly Father knows our desires and hears our prayers. ■
Miguel Troncoso, Santa Cruz, Argentina

Small & Simple Things

“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).

CHURCH HISTORY AROUND THE WORLD

ON THE CALENDAR

The Netherlands

Fifty years ago this month, the first stake in the Netherlands, the Holland Stake, was organized in The Hague. It was the first non-English-speaking stake in the Church. One hundred years earlier, in August 1861, Paul Augustus Schettler and A. Wiegers van der Woude were the first missionaries to preach the gospel in Holland. Over the next 100 years, more than 14,000 people in the Netherlands were baptized, many of whom emigrated to the United States. Today nearly 9,000 members live in the Netherlands.

On September 8, 2002, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)

dedicated The Hague Netherlands Temple, which serves five stakes and one district in the Netherlands, Belgium, and part of France.



The Hague Netherlands Temple

General Young Women Meeting

All young women ages 12 to 18, their mothers, and Young Women leaders are invited to participate in the general Young Women meeting on March 26. The meeting will include addresses by a member of the First Presidency and by the Young Women general presidency. The theme for this year's meeting is “We Believe” (Articles of Faith 1:13).

Where possible, young women, their mothers, and their leaders are encouraged to meet together in chapels to view the broadcast. Check with your priesthood leader or at www.broadcast.lds.org for information about broadcast times and locations.



THE CHURCH IN THE NETHERLANDS	
Membership	8,909
Missions	1, shared with Belgium
Stakes	3
Wards and Branches	33
Temples	1

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE HAGUE NETHERLANDS TEMPLE BY CHARLES BAIRD © IRI; MAP BY THOMAS S. CHID; PHOTOGRAPH OF AIRPLANE COURTESY OF BOYD K. PACKER; OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS © GETTY IMAGES

How Well Do You Know Our Church Leaders?

General conference is next month, and among the many speakers will be members of the First Presidency and

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. See if you can match their names with events or other details from their lives.



- A. As a youth he enjoyed playing vanball, a modified version of volleyball.
- B. This leader shares his name with his father and is known among family and close friends as Hal.
- C. When this Apostle was a deacon, his father, an artist, took him to the Sacred Grove. Upon returning home, his father painted a picture of the Sacred Grove for him. Ever since that time, this Apostle has hung that painting in his office as a reminder of that special visit.
- D. When he was five, his family moved to a dairy farm in Pocatello, Idaho, USA, where he raised rabbits, rode horses, and played in the fields with his siblings.
- E. He is the only member of the First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to have been born outside the United States.
- F. As a high school student, he served as senior-class president and participated in debate.
- G. An avid athlete from a young age, he lettered in football, basketball, track, and baseball at his high school



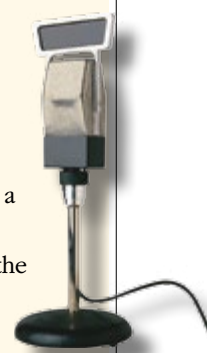
and was a member of state-championship football and basketball teams.

H. He played checkers with his young son nearly every night.

1. President Thomas S. Monson
2. President Henry B. Eyring
3. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf
4. President Boyd K. Packer
5. Elder L. Tom Perry
6. Elder Russell M. Nelson
7. Elder Dallin H. Oaks
8. Elder M. Russell Ballard
9. Elder Richard G. Scott
10. Elder Robert D. Hales
11. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
12. Elder David A. Bednar
13. Elder Quentin L. Cook
14. Elder D. Todd Christofferson
15. Elder Neil L. Andersen

His son remembers, “He’d play three games of checkers. He’d let me win one, then he’d beat me at one, and then we’d play give-away checkers, and either one of us could win that.”

- I. He served his country as a World War II pilot in his early 20s.
- J. To earn money for college, he worked on an oyster boat. Other fishermen ridiculed him for refusing to drink alcohol until a man went overboard; this Apostle, because of his commitment to abstain, was sober and was sent to rescue the man who had gone overboard.
- K. As a college student he worked as a radio announcer.
- L. Prior to his call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, he was president of Ricks College and helped the school make its transition to Brigham Young University–Idaho.
- M. He performed open-heart surgery on President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) a short time before President Kimball became President of the Church.
- N. Elder Scott was this Apostle’s mission president in Argentina.
- O. Before he was called as a General Authority, he, like his father, worked in the automobile business.



For additional biographical information about leaders of the Church, see www.newsroom.lds.org.

Answers: A. 5; B. 2; C. 10; D. 15; E. 3; F. 13; G. 11; H. 1; I. 4; J. 9; K. 8; L. 12; M. 6; N. 14; O. 8

A LEGACY OF GENERAL CONFERENCE

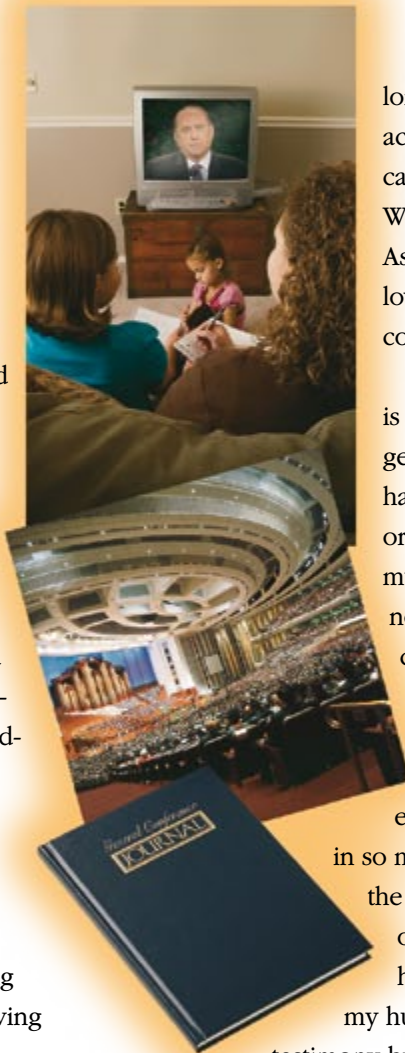
By Jeanie Hutchings

My first recollections of general conference were stories from my father. He was born in 1911 in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, and although his family was not very active in the Church, his mother faithfully bundled up her children and made going on the trolley to general conference a special, exciting event. Dad had wonderful memories of this, and his sharing them instilled in my mind the importance of conference.

That idea continued to develop during my own upbringing in Virginia and later Missouri. We were never able to attend general conference—it wasn't broadcast via satellite then—but once, when I was a teenager, the Sunday morning session was broadcast on TV. It was a huge event that no one wanted to miss.

A few years later, as a freshman at Brigham Young University, I was able to attend conference in person in April 1972. Going to the Tabernacle that spring morning impressed in my mind a testimony of the living prophet that I've never forgotten.

I married a man who shared my feelings about conference. Together, over 37 years of marriage, we have tried to create memories associated with conference and to involve our children in this important event. For most of their growing-up years, we went to our local meeting-house and participated in conference there. In these years,



long before the Internet and the conference activities many websites post, our children came up with their own conference games. We ate lunch together between sessions. As our children grew older, some of them loved taking notes and have kept their conference journals faithfully.

What we have learned through all of this is that there is just something special about general conference, and we as families have great opportunities to develop memorable traditions around the event. But as much as we love the traditions, they are not what make conference special. That comes from the opportunity to hear and be guided by the prophetic voice.

Gratefully, participating in a conference session is not a one-time experience. Because the messages are available in so many formats online and in print, we have the opportunity to research and use them for our own study, lessons, talks, and family home evenings. Now empty-nesters, my husband and I have shared powerful, testimony-building conversations as we have studied these materials.

Over the years, I have learned that conference answers our prayers, gives us insights about our lives, and allows us to access the inspiration of the Spirit. I am grateful to have experienced its blessings through others and firsthand. ■



A Simple Message, a Profound Sense of Peace

Not long ago our family moved from Korea to the United States. Things were hectic as we tried to get settled in. Our first Monday night in our new home we held a simple family home evening. A set of scriptures was our only resource, so we read in 3 Nephi about Christ's appearance to the Nephites. As we did so, we felt that even though we were in a totally new situation, place, and country, the Lord was mindful of us, just as He was of the Nephites.

As a family we knelt in a

circle and prayed. Despite our exhaustion from the move, we felt a deep sense of comfort, knowing that we would always have one another and Heavenly Father and the Savior to rely on. We knew that everything would turn out for the best. And it has.

Yun Jung Nam, Texas, USA

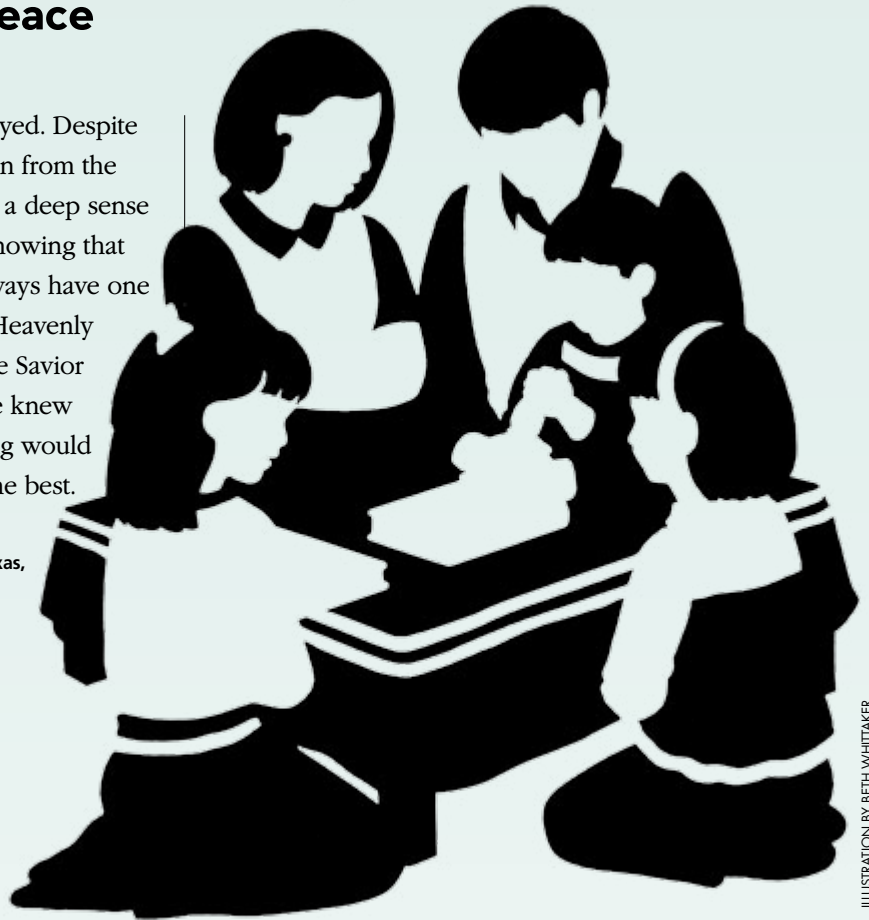


ILLUSTRATION BY BETH WHITAKER

HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

“Teaching the Doctrine of the Family,” page 12: While sharing Sister Julie B. Beck’s message, invite family members to discuss the importance of the doctrine of the family. Discuss the threats to the family and how these can be overcome through faith. Help resolve any concerns or hesitancy your youth may have about marriage and families.

“Preparing Emotionally for Missionary Service,” page 22: As you prepare this lesson in advance, prayerfully review the entire article and select topics that would be most helpful for your family. Consider discussing ways family members can begin now to prepare for missionary service. You may want to conclude by writing letters to missionaries in your family or ward.

“Seeds of Self-Reliance,” page 60: After sharing the article, you could involve your family in the necessary preparations for “plant[ing] seeds of self-reliance.” To do

this, consider discussing one or more of the suggestions in the article. Determine a plan for implementing some of these ideas and consider planting even one plant during family home evening in anticipation of “reaping the blessings of gardening.”



Applying Conference Changes Members' Lives

By **Melissa Merrill**

Church Magazines

Shortly after the October 2009 general conference, Jared and Kathleen Smith of Utah, USA, decided to take a drive around the neighborhood with their three children to enjoy the colorful autumn leaves. Before leaving, Brother Smith put a vial of consecrated oil in his pocket. The words of President Henry B. Eyring's priesthood address to be ready for priesthood service at all times had been on his mind (see "Serve with the Spirit," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 59).

On their way home, the Smiths happened upon a crowd gathering around a little girl lying on the ground, apparently suffering from some kind of head trauma. They heard a woman shout, "Please, does anyone have consecrated oil? Please!" Brother Smith quickly pulled over and handed his oil to the girl's father. After a priesthood blessing, the girl regained consciousness and began talking to her parents. Moments later, paramedics arrived and took her to the hospital.

"We felt a warmth and a peace in our hearts for having been in the right place at the right time, for having brought oil, and as President Eyring spoke of, having been ready," says Brother Smith. "Our children saw the blessing of priesthood power, and we left feeling Heavenly Father's love for both us and this young girl and her family."

Like the Smiths, many families have been blessed for following counsel received during general conference. As members prepare for another general conference, three families share here their stories of heeding the prophetic voice.

For more stories (in English) or to share your own experience (in any language),



A conference message by Elder James B. Martino provided Anne Te Kawa of New Zealand with the confidence to pray for the guidance she needed.

read the full version of this article on the Church News and Events section of LDS.org at lds.org/church/news/how-general-conference-changed-my-life.

Anne Te Kawa, Tararua, New Zealand

Early in 2010, I had been dealing with some serious personal challenges. My bishop suggested that I might benefit from meeting with a professional counselor. The idea shocked me. I work and am training in the field of drug and alcohol addiction treatment, so I thought, "I am practically a counselor myself! I don't need outside help."

I was still wrestling with some of my challenges—and my own pride—when April general conference came around. Elder James B. Martino of the Seventy gave a talk titled, "All Things Work Together for Good" (see *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 101)

centered on dealing with affliction.

His message touched me, and I determined to pray for direction about what I should do. I left conference wanting to seek faith and to trust the Savior to guide me through the Holy Ghost.

For two weeks I pondered and prayed and contemplated and ultimately decided I would try counseling. It has been a helpful, successful experience. In addition, rereading Elder Martino's talk, being buoyed by prayer to Heavenly Father,

and relying on the Atonement of His Son Jesus Christ have given me enduring security. I testify that humbly seeking the Lord is always the way to overcome trials. He will guide us to know what specific things we need to do.

Andrea Roueche, Texas, USA

My husband, Collin, and I became parents in October 2009. By the time our daughter, Eliza, was five months old, we started talking about when we would start including her in family home evening and scripture study. Was it worthwhile to hold family home evening when she was awake? Could she really get anything out of our reading the Book of Mormon out loud?

During the April 2010 general conference, Elder David A. Bednar said, "Youth of all ages, even infants, can and do respond to the distinctive spirit of the Book of Mormon" ("Watching with All Perseverance," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 40).

The changes we have made have been simple and gradual. We play a CD of Primary songs for Eliza regularly. We read a few verses from the Book of Mormon with her at dinner-time. We have started having family prayer just before Eliza goes to bed. On walks, I point out the birds and tell her, "Jesus made those birds for us." She may not understand right now, but she will.

I've found that these things have lifted much of my anxiety for the future. I feel that if I do my part by teaching Eliza what she needs to know and by following prophetic counsel, she will be blessed in the future.

Collin and Andrea Roueche found the answers they were seeking in a conference message by Elder David A. Bednar.



Sela Fakatou, West Midlands, England

In our family, everyone is busy. Sometimes we don't take time to listen carefully to each other or practice kindness or politeness. So in preparation for an upcoming general conference, we prayed to know how we could grow closer as a family.

Elder Robert D. Hales's talk, "Our Duty to God: The Mission of Parents and Leaders to the Rising Generation" (see *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 95), answered our prayers and our questions.

I was especially touched by the story about Elder Hales's grandson asking, "Grandpa! Are you in there?" Elder Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained, "Being *there* means understanding the hearts of our youth and connecting with them. And connecting with them

means not just conversing with them but doing things with them too."

We've worked to improve our interaction with each other. At dinner, we talk about the day. We talk about challenges we're facing and how the things we're learning from the scriptures help us confront and overcome those challenges.

Making time for these exchanges has taken effort. But as these good habits have become part of family life, I have felt a special love for my family. As I have followed the prophetic counsel I received at conference, answers to other questions have filled my mind, and I see ways I can be more like the Savior Jesus Christ. More than ever before, I feel a sense of peace instead of worry. ■

Church Announces 2011 Pageants

The first of five Church-sponsored pageants opens next month at the Mesa Arizona Temple. The others take place across the United States. Find out more about the pageants below.

Jesus the Christ

April 13–23, 2011
Mesa, Arizona, USA

The Mesa Arizona Easter Pageant focuses on the life of Jesus Christ from His birth to His ministry, Atonement, and Resurrection. The play consists of reenactments from the King James Version of the Bible to share the ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ. This large Easter pageant has a cast of more than 450 and a production staff of 400. Visit easterpageant.org.

The Nauvoo Pageant tells the story of Old Nauvoo and the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Mormon Miracle Pageant

June 16–25, 2011
Manti, Utah, USA

The stories of the Restoration, the witness of the Book of Mormon, and the pioneer journey to Sanpete Valley are intertwined in the Manti Pageant to tell of Jesus Christ's love for all people. The pageant is performed outdoors with the beautiful Manti Utah Temple in view. Visit mormonmiracle.org.

Nauvoo Pageant: A Tribute to Joseph Smith

July 5–30, 2011
Nauvoo, Illinois, USA

The spirit of Old Nauvoo is alive as the story of Joseph Smith and the early Latter-day Saints is unfolded on an outdoor stage near the reconstructed Nauvoo Temple. The Nauvoo Pageant began in 2005 to commemorate the 200th birthday



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOY GOUGH

of the Prophet Joseph and has been performed by Latter-day Saint volunteers every summer since. Visit nauvoopageant.org.

Hill Cumorah Pageant

July 8–16, 2011
Palmyra, New York, USA

The Hill Cumorah Pageant, *America’s Witness for Christ*, takes viewers on a journey through ten accounts from the Bible and Book of Mormon.



PHOTOGRAPH BY LONGJIN IONCZYNA, JR.

This magnificent production occurs each July on a 10-level stage equipped with sound and lighting to reenact earthquakes and lightning from the ancient stories. Visit hillcumorah.org/pageant.

Martin Harris: The Man Who Knew

July 29–August 12, 2011
Clarkston, Utah, USA

The Clarkston Pageant shares the incredible story and testimony of Martin Harris, one of the three special witnesses of the Book of Mormon. Viewers learn of his trials and testimony as he helped bring forth the Book of Mormon for our day. Visit martinharrispageant.org. ■

The Hill Cumorah Pageant reenacts accounts from the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

New Children’s Exhibits Open at Museum

Two new exhibits designed for children and their families are open at the Church History Museum.

The Gospel Blesses My Life features art by children between the ages of 5 and 12 from 42 countries. The artwork depicts how a knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ has blessed the life of each child. Artwork was gathered by the *Friend* magazine and can be found at Friend.lds.org.

A Book of Mormon Fiesta: A Latin American Celebration celebrates Latin heritage within the Church. It was designed to help children and their families understand that the Book of Mormon is a testimony of Jesus Christ and His teachings.

The Gospel Blesses My Life will continue through July 4, 2011, and *A Book of Mormon Fiesta: A Latin American Celebration* will remain at the museum well into the future. For more information, visit the museum’s website at www.churchhistorymuseum.org. ■

Friend Helps Children Bring Primary Home

Beginning with the January 2011 issues of the *Friend* and *Liahona*, parents will find ways to reinforce at home what their children learn in Primary.

With the creation of an enhanced sharing time outline that is distributed to Primary leaders each year, the magazines dropped the “Sharing Time Ideas” segment in 2010. “Bringing Primary Home” includes activities that can further children’s understanding of the month’s Primary theme. Parents can review the material to be aware of what their

WORLD BRIEFS

children are learning in Primary. The material from this section can also be used by children and their parents for family home evening lessons and activities.

The monthly themes for “Bringing Primary Home” are taken from the sharing time outline for 2011. ■

LDS Doctors Treat Cholera in Papua New Guinea

A handful of LDS doctors from Australia spent time treating victims of a cholera outbreak in remote villages of northwest Papua New Guinea in late 2010.

The doctors worked with hundreds of patients, saving one man who was minutes from death and others who would not have lasted 24 hours without treatment.

People flocked by land and canoe to the doctors. David Williams of Brisbane and Anthony Mahler of Cairns said that within one day of arriving at the village of Sogere, they had treated more than 200 cases of cholera. In referring to the overall experience, Dr. Mahler said, “[It] was the most professionally rewarding experience of my life,” in spite of the difficulties and the exhausting workload.

In addition to sending doctors, the Church has provided relief supplies, including medical aid and water purifiers. Food shipments and soap were also shipped to the crisis areas from the Church in Port Moresby, and shipments of personal hygiene kits are being sent from Port Moresby and Brisbane.

A missionary couple with expertise in water treatment went to Papua New Guinea to help coordinate relief efforts. ■

Church Accepting Entries for Ninth International Art Competition

The Church History Museum will make registration forms for the Church’s Ninth International Art Competition available online on April 4, 2011. Entries for the competition must be submitted online or postmarked by October 7, 2011. The theme of the upcoming competition is “Make Known His Wonderful Works” (D&C 65:4). For more information in English or to view selected art from past competitions, visit lds.org/churchhistory/museum/competition.

New Testament Stories Now in Action

In conjunction with 2011’s New Testament curriculum, the videos from the *New Testament Stories* book for children have undergone a makeover. The videos, previously available online as slideshows with narration, are now being animated using a method called parallax, which essentially cuts the existing illustrations apart and moves them as individual pieces. The 65 *New Testament Stories* videos are being prepared in 11 languages at scripturestories.lds.org.

Church Releases New Site for Youth

Youth.lds.org has been redesigned to feature videos, articles, quizzes, polls, and music downloads created especially for youth. It also highlights basic doctrines and standards from *For the Strength of Youth* as well as portions of the DVD *We Believe: Strength of Youth Media 2011*. The site will be made available in 11 languages. A mobile application has been designed to bring the site’s content to various mobile devices.

2011 Curriculum Materials Available on LDS.org

Manuals, multimedia support, and other resources are available at LDS.org to help teachers and students during 2011. In addition, LDS.org features new online tools that allow users to create a personalized study notebook, highlight text in multiple colors, underline, and make notes. For a summary of 2011 curriculum resources for adults, youth, and children, visit <http://lds.org/church/news/2011-curriculum-materials-available-on-lds.org>. ■

In Other Church Magazines

THE NEW ERA

On Tolerance

Teens are often asked to be tolerant of attitudes they do not believe in. On page 2 readers can find Elder Russell M. Nelson's advice on how teens should deal with being tolerant of others.

Keeping a Journal

Keeping a family history is not just important for those at the end of their lives. "Remember to Remember" shows ways to keep an interesting

and fresh journal that can remind you of the important times of your life. On page 16.



THE FRIEND

Preparing for Missionary Service

President Thomas S. Monson has said that the Lord needs more missionaries (*Ensign*, November 2010). Help your children answer the prophet's call for more missionaries by talking to them about the "I'll Prepare" certificate on page 11 of the March *Friend*. Children can sign the certificate and cut it out to remind them that the Lord wants them to be prepared to be missionaries.

Know Your Friend Better

Have you ever wondered how *Friend* editors choose which stories to publish or how *Friend* designers find the right art? What about how the



magazines are printed? Matt and Mandy will help you and your children find the answers to these questions and learn several other tidbits in "Behind the Scenes of the *Friend*" on pages 24–25.

COMMENTS

Frustrating Fonts

While I am a life-long subscriber of the magazines, I'm somewhat frustrated that the newer printing fonts are lighter and much smaller than the previous magazines, especially the sidebar notes. I'm hoping that this may not be a permanent thing.

Corene Bennett
Utah, USA

Great Temples Issue

What an incredible October magazine regarding temples. Excellent discussion and highlights on these magnificent temples.

Thank you! What a way to inspire us. This *Ensign* will be kept forever. Great work to those who put it all together.

Somebody had a wonderful idea. I love it.

Lucille Skanchy
Utah, USA

SAFE IN MY WARD FAMILY

By Caroline Kingsley

One of my fondest childhood memories is the clicking of my mother's high heels on the hardwood kitchen floor as she prepared our family for church. She was heavily involved in our ward and served for years as Relief Society president. I never dreamed anything would change.

When I was around 12 and she and I lived alone, she left the Church for reasons I didn't understand. Although my mom—my role model—had decided to take a different path, I knew the gospel was true, and I continued to attend church. Even though she disagreed with my decision, Mom did drive me to and from church every week.

It was often emotionally difficult to attend church, especially sacrament meeting where, sitting alone near the back, I had a clear view of all the mothers, fathers, and children sitting together. Many times I sat with a friend's family. I'll always be grateful for my "Mormon family" and others in my ward who took extra care to include me during this difficult time.

My home teachers, for example, were faithful even though it was only me they came to teach and I lived farther away than most ward members. I looked forward to the opportunity to discuss the gospel and to feel the strength of the priesthood and the Spirit in my home.

Many ward members were people I had known all my life. With their familiar faces,



When I began attending church alone at age 12, I found that Heavenly Father had blessed me with a ready-made safety net.

welcoming smiles, and friendly conversation, they became my ward mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters. Feeling a sense of belonging and love eased the heartache of attending church without my family.

I know I am not alone in experiencing this circumstance. Many youth attend church without one or both parents. But through example, friendship, and callings, we all can reach out to these sons and daughters of Heavenly Father and help them feel welcome, teach them gospel principles, and encourage them to be an active part of meetings and activities.

"Heavenly Father planned for us to be born into a family—the most basic, most hallowed, and most powerful group on earth," said Virginia H. Pearce, former counselor in the Young Women general presidency. "And it is within the family that some of the most important learning we'll ever gain takes place. In addition to that family group, the Lord also provided the ward or branch family. . . . Wards are not designed to replace the family unit, but to support the family and its righteous teachings. A ward is another place where there is enough commitment and energy to form a sort of 'safety net' family for each of us when our families cannot or do not provide all of the teaching and growing experiences we need to return to Heavenly Father. We need to expand our appreciation of the power of the ward family and renew our commitment to participate positively in that community of Saints."¹

How grateful I am for those who became my safety net, instilling in me a desire to do the same for others. ■

NOTE

1. Virginia H. Pearce, "The Rewards of a Ward," *New Era*, Mar. 1995, 41.



WORDS OF CHRIST

"I Shall Be Whole," by Al Young

"And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

"For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

"But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour" (Matthew 9:20–22).



The healing power of God is magnificent, profound, and beautiful,” writes Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi of the Seventy. “I thank Him for His mercy, His love, and His miraculous heavenly healing. I thank Him for the reality of the Savior’s Atonement, which by His grace ‘provides the power to wash away sins, to heal, and to grant eternal life.’” See “The Healer’s Art,” page 44.