

Ensign



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Protecting Our Families, p. 50

Preparing for Marriage, p. 54



MAY NOT BE COPIED

God Liveth and Seeth Me, by Elspeth Young

“And the angel of the Lord found [Hagar] by a fountain of water in the wilderness. . . .

*And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly,
that it shall not be numbered for multitude . . . because the Lord hath heard thy affliction” (Genesis 16: 7, 10–11).*

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We also welcome other submissions that show the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. You can find this and other calls for articles online at <http://ensign.lds.org>.

Ensign Magazine Writers' Guidelines are posted on the same page under "Resources."

Send submissions to ensign@ldschurch.org or *Ensign* Editorial, 50 E. North Temple Street, Room 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA. Include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, ward (or branch), and stake (or district). Because of the volume of submissions we receive, we cannot acknowledge receipt. Authors whose work is selected for publication will be notified. If you would like your manuscript, photos, art, or other material returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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Ensign

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USING THIS ISSUE

Recognizing the Shepherd's

voice. Several accounts of conversion are included in this month's issue (see pages 10 and 16). As you read about how these members heard and responded to the voice of the Good Shepherd, consider times that you have done the same. How can you increase your ability to listen to such promptings?

Teaching our children to what source they might look.

We all carry responsibilities and face times of challenge and discouragement. Note the accounts of members who put their trust in the Lord (see pages 22, 29, and 62). What can you teach your children about where they can turn in times of trouble?

Protecting our families. Several articles in this issue focus on preserving and protecting families in the last days (see pages 15, 44, 50, and 58). How have you found safety in adhering to the principles described in these articles? The *Family Guidebook* (item no. 31180000), available at www.ldsatalog.com, may offer additional helps.



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COMING IN NOVEMBER

Addresses from the 178th Semiannual General Conference



Developing Christlike Attributes

BY PRESIDENT DIETER F. UCHTDORF

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

During my professional life as an airline pilot, passengers sometimes visited the cockpit of my aircraft. They asked about the many switches, instruments, systems, and procedures and how all this technical equipment would help such a huge and beautiful airplane fly.

I would explain that it takes a great aerodynamic design, many auxiliary systems and programs, and powerful engines to make such a flying machine equal to the task of bringing comfort and safety to those joining the flight.

To simplify my explanation by focusing on the basics, I would add that all you really need is a strong forward thrust, a powerful upward lift, and the right aircraft attitude, and the laws of nature will carry the airliner and its passengers safely across continents and oceans, over high mountains and dangerous thunderstorms to its destination.

Reflecting on my experiences with those visitors, I have often contemplated that being a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints invites us to ask similar questions. What are the basics, the fundamental principles of our membership in the kingdom

of God on earth? After all is said and done, what will really carry us at times of greatest need to our desired eternal destination?

The Gospel's Unchanging Core

The Church, with all its organizational structure and programs, offers many important activities for its members aimed at helping families and individuals to serve God and each other. Sometimes, however, it can appear that these programs and activities are closer to the center of our heart and soul than the core doctrines and principles of the gospel. Procedures, programs, policies, and patterns of organization are helpful for our spiritual progress here on earth, but let's not forget that they are subject to change.

In contrast, the core of the gospel—the doctrine and the principles—will never change. Living according to the basic gospel principles will bring power, strength, and spiritual self-reliance into the lives of all Latter-day Saints.

Faith is such a principle of power. We need this source of power in our lives. God works by power, but this power is usually exercised in response to our faith. "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). God works according to the faith of His children.

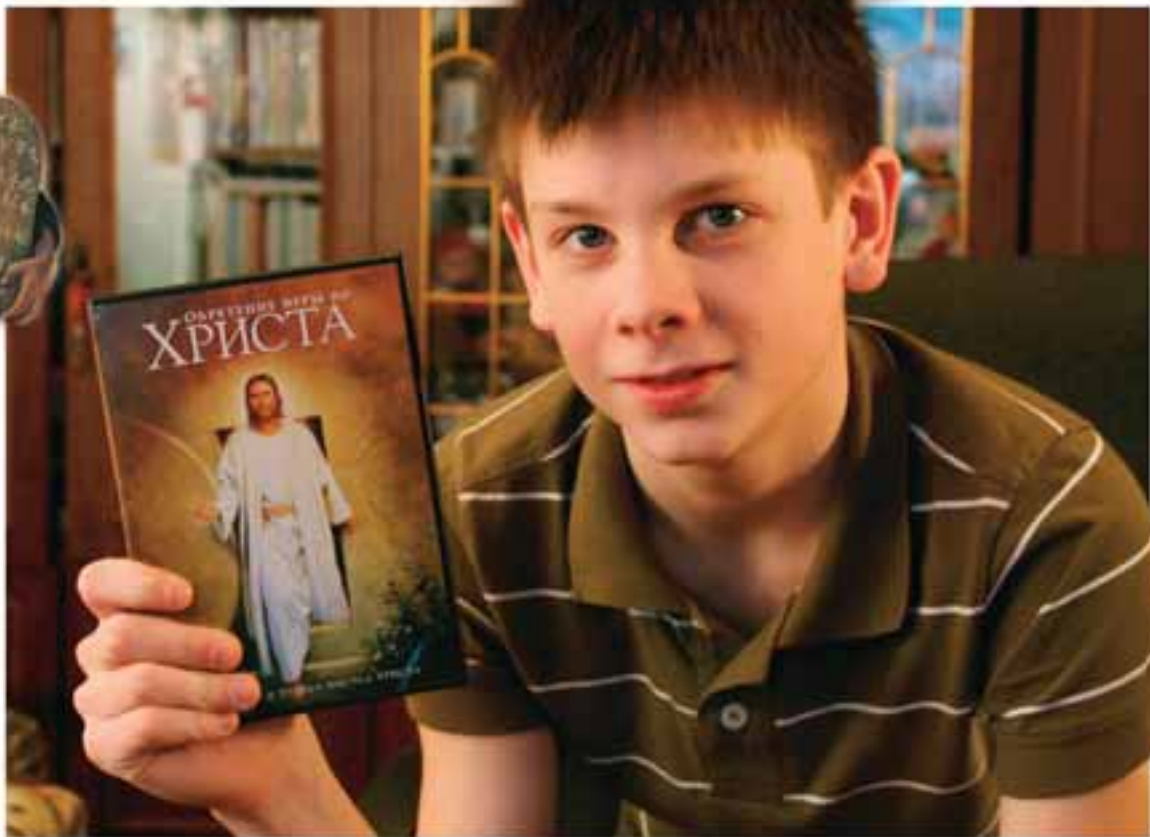


Living according to the basic gospel principles will bring power, strength, and spiritual self-reliance into the lives of all Latter-day Saints.





Faith in Jesus Christ leads to action. When we have faith in Christ, we trust the Lord enough to follow His commandments.



The Prophet Joseph Smith explained, “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”¹ To me, this teaching is beautifully straightforward. As we strive to understand, internalize, and live correct gospel principles, we will become more spiritually self-reliant. The principle of spiritual self-reliance grows out of a fundamental doctrine of the Church: God has granted us agency. I believe that moral agency is one of the greatest gifts of God unto His children, next to life itself.

When I study and ponder moral agency and its eternal consequences, I realize that we are truly spirit children of God and therefore should act accordingly. This understanding also reminds me that as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are part of a great worldwide family of Saints.

The organizational structure of the Church allows great flexibility according to the size, growth pattern, and needs of our congregations. There is the basic unit program with a very simple organizational structure and

fewer meetings. We also have large wards with great organizational resources to serve one another. All are established within the inspired programs of the Church to help members “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32).

All these varied options are equal in divine value because the doctrine of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is the same in each unit. I testify as an ordained witness of the Lord Jesus Christ that He lives, that the gospel is true, and that it offers the answers to all personal and collective challenges the children of God have on this earth today.

Strength of the Faithful

In 2005 my wife and I visited with members of the Church in many countries throughout Europe. In some parts of Europe, the Church has been present for many years, even since 1837. There is a great heritage of faithful members in Europe. Currently, we have more than 400,000 members on that continent. As



we look at all the generations who have emigrated from Europe to America during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, that total number could easily be multiplied a few times.

Why did so many faithful members leave their home countries in those early days of the Church? Many reasons can be named: to escape persecution, to help build the Church in America, to improve their economic circumstances, to be close to a temple, and many more.

Europe still feels the consequence of this exodus. But the strength that comes from several faithful generations of Church members is now becoming more apparent. We see more young men and women and more senior couples serving missions for the Lord; we see more temple marriages; we see more confidence and courage by the members to share the restored gospel. Among the peoples of Europe and many other parts of the world, there is a spiritual vacuum of Christ's true teachings. This vacuum must, can, and will be filled with the message of the restored gospel as our wonderful members live and proclaim this gospel with greater courage and faith.

With the expansion of the Church in Europe, there are countries where the Church has been for no more than 15 years. During our visit in 2005, I spoke with a mission president serving in his homeland of Russia who had been a member for only seven years. He told me, "The same month I was baptized I was called as a branch president." Did he feel overwhelmed at times? Absolutely! Did he try to implement the full range of Church programs? Fortunately not! How did he grow so strong in such a small congregation in such a short time? He explained, "I knew with all my soul the Church was true. The doctrine of the gospel filled my mind and my heart. As we joined the Church, we felt part of a family. We felt warmth, trust, and love. We were only few, but we all tried to follow the Savior."

The members supported each other, they did the best

they could, and they knew the Church was true. It was not the organization that had attracted him but the light of the gospel, and this light strengthened those good members.

In many countries the Church is still in its beginnings, and the organizational circumstances are sometimes far from perfect. However, the members may have a perfect testimony of the truth in their hearts. As the members stay in their countries and build the Church, despite economic challenges and hardships, future generations will be grateful to those courageous modern-day pioneers. They abide by the loving invitation of the First Presidency given in 1999:

"In our day, the Lord has seen fit to provide the blessings of the gospel, including an increased number of temples, in many parts of the world. Therefore, we wish to reiterate the long-standing counsel to members of the Church to remain in their homelands rather than immigrate to the United States. . . .

"As members throughout the world remain in their homelands, working to build the Church in their native countries, great blessings will come to them personally and to the Church collectively."²

May I add a word of caution to those of us who live in large wards and stakes. We have to be careful that the center of our testimony is not located in the social dimension

of the Church community or the wonderful activities, programs, and organizations of our wards and stakes. All of these things are important and valuable to have—but they are not enough. Even friendship is not enough.

Safety in Obedience

We recognize that we are living in a time of turmoil, disaster, and war. We and many others feel strongly the great need for a "defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth" (D&C 115:6). How do we find such a place of safety? President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught: "Our safety lies in the virtue of our lives. Our strength lies in our righteousness."³



Recall with me how Jesus Christ instructed His Apostles, clearly and directly, at the beginning of His mortal ministry: “[Come,] follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). This was also the beginning of the ministry of the Twelve Apostles, and I suspect that they had a feeling of inadequacy. May I suggest that the Savior Himself teaches us here a lesson about core doctrine and priorities in life. Individually, we need to first “follow Him,” and as we do this, the Savior will bless us beyond our own capacity to become what He wants us to be.

To follow Christ is to become more like Him. It is to learn from His character. As spirit children of our Heavenly Father, we do have the potential to incorporate Christlike attributes into our life and character. The Savior invites us to learn His gospel by living His teachings. To follow Him is to apply correct principles and then witness for ourselves the blessings that follow. This process is very complex and very simple at the same time. Ancient and modern prophets described it with three words: “Keep the commandments”—nothing more, nothing less.

Developing Christlike attributes in our lives is not an easy task, especially when we move away from generalities and abstractions and begin to deal with real life. The test comes in practicing what we proclaim. The reality check comes when Christlike attributes need to become visible in our lives—as husband or wife, as father or mother, as son or daughter, in our friendships, in our employment, in our business, and in our recreation. We can recognize our growth, as can those around us, as we gradually increase our capacity to “act in all holiness before [Him]” (D&C 43:9).

The scriptures describe a number of Christlike attributes we need to develop during the course of our lives. They include knowledge and humility, charity and love, obedience and diligence, faith and hope (see D&C 4:5–6). These personal character qualities stand independent of the organizational status of our Church unit, our economic circumstances, our family situation, culture, race, or language. Christlike attributes are gifts from God. They cannot be developed without His help.

Trusting in His Power

The one help we all need is given to us freely through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Having faith in Jesus Christ and in His Atonement means relying completely on Him—trusting in His infinite power, intelligence, and love. Christlike attributes come into our lives as we exercise our agency righteously. Faith in Jesus Christ leads to action. When we have faith in Christ, we trust the Lord enough to follow His commandments—even when we

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerfully studying this message, share it using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. Following are some examples:

1. Hold up a piece of paper and let it fall to the floor. Then fold it into a paper airplane and throw it softly so it flies. Compare the change in the sheet of paper to our acquiring Christlike attributes that will “create the wind beneath our wings” for the journey back to our heavenly home.
2. Show pictures of or tell about the first members of your family who joined the Church. They were pioneers, whether they crossed the plains or simply led the way in joining the Church and living faithfully the doctrines of Jesus Christ. Discuss how that same faith can motivate us to follow Him today.





The one help we all need is given to us freely through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Having faith in Jesus Christ and in His Atonement means relying completely on Him—trusting in His infinite power, intelligence, and love.

do not completely understand the reasons for them. In seeking to become more like the Savior, we need to reevaluate our lives regularly and rely, through the path of true repentance, upon the merits of Jesus Christ and the blessings of His Atonement.

Developing Christlike attributes can be a painful process. We need to be ready to accept direction and correction from the Lord and His servants. Through the Church's regular worldwide conferences, for example, with their music and spoken word, we feel and receive spiritual power, direction, and blessings "from on high" (D&C 43:16). It is a time when the voice of personal inspiration and revelation will bring peace to our souls and will teach us how to become more Christlike. This voice will be as sweet as the voice of a dear friend, and it will fill our souls when our hearts are sufficiently contrite.

By becoming more like the Savior, we will grow in our ability to "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost"

(Romans 15:13). We will "lay aside the things of this

world, and seek for the things of a better" (D&C 25:10).

This leads me back to my aerodynamic analogy. I spoke of focusing on the basics. Christlike attributes are the basics. They are the fundamental principles that will create the wind beneath our wings. As we develop Christlike attributes in our own lives, step-by-step, they will "bear [us] up as on eagles' wings" (D&C 124:18). Our faith in Jesus Christ will provide power and a strong forward thrust; our unwavering and active hope will provide a powerful upward lift. Both faith and hope will carry us across oceans of temptations, over mountains of afflictions, and bring us safely back to our eternal home and destination. ■

NOTES

1. Quoted by John Taylor, in "The Organization of the Church," *Millennial Star*, Nov. 15, 1851, 339.
2. First Presidency letter, Dec. 1, 1999.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Till We Meet Again," *Liabona*, Jan. 2002, 105; *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 90.



Finding My Faith

Over the course of several months, the missionaries invited me to be baptized a number of times, but I always said no.

BY JOSHUA J. PERKEY
Church Magazines

One night during my freshman year of college in 1989–90, a good friend of mine and I stayed up late studying for exams.

Suddenly, Matt asked me a question that would become one of the defining moments of my life. “What does your church think God is like? I mean, what do you think He looks like?”

I didn’t have an answer for him. Being sensitive to my circumstance, he gently let the matter drop. But I couldn’t forget it. I was in an extraordinary position: I was a Protestant attending Brigham Young University, and though I had doubts about my own faith and religion in general, I had no intention of changing religions. Instead, for the entire year I had carefully barricaded myself spiritually by deflecting religious conversation. With this simple question, my friend had at last succeeded in opening a tiny breach into my heart.

Searching for Faith

Over the next several months, I asked myself repeatedly, “What do I believe? More important, do I believe? Is there really a God, and, if so, what is He like? Could I come to know Him? Would He answer my prayers? Could I have faith like my Latter-day Saint friends do?”

It was not that I hadn’t had opportunities to consider such probing questions before; for years some of my best friends were LDS. These friendships had led me to attend BYU. But almost always I had pushed away their gospel overtures. The few times I had met with the missionaries, I didn’t listen with an open mind.

I was too afraid of the changes that would be required, changes that might socially and emotionally isolate me from my family. I was unwilling to believe that I had been wrong or that my traditions were incorrect. I did not believe that I could receive revelation from God or even that others could receive it. It seemed preposterous, illogical, and even strange that God would appear to the boy Joseph Smith, that He would reveal new scripture, and that only one religion had received the divine guidance for its establishment as the true Church.

Ironically, I doubted the authenticity of all religions, including my own. While I had a heart filled with love for family and friends, a heart that longed for answers, when it came to the whisperings of the Spirit, I had a heart of stone.

After my freshman year I returned home to Kentucky to continue my education. My Latter-day Saint friends soon left to serve missions, and I felt a profound loneliness at their



absence. I wanted to have some of the conviction that had inspired them to offer two years of their lives. At the same time, I was continually bothered that I still had no answer to Matt's question. I wanted to know truths for myself. At last, after many letters from my friends encouraging me to meet with the missionaries, I overcame my trepidation and accepted.

Considering Conversion

Nevertheless, I had reservations regarding the idea that the various principles of the

gospel were interconnected into one unified whole. The missionaries believed that since their message, in its entirety, was either all true or all false, once I gained a testimony of one principle, I could naturally accept all their teachings.

I did not believe them. I thought it was acceptable to pick and choose what I wanted to believe from a sort of spiritual and doctrinal smorgasbord.¹ At the same time, my logic demanded empirical evidence as proof, not faith-based conversion.

I asked myself repeatedly, "What do I believe? More important, do I believe? Is there really a God, and, if so, what is He like? Could I come to know Him? Would He answer my prayers?"



What I needed to do was to take a leap of faith into the darkness before the light would shine.

Unfortunately, my logic also left me unhappy and dissatisfied. All philosophical arguments I considered were competing postulates of pessimism that provided no real answers. I desired something more, something that would commune with my heart the way my friends and the missionaries described communing with the Holy Ghost. I participated in the missionary discussions in hopes that I might come to know what they said was true or, at the very least,

gain some satisfaction in learning it was false.

The missionaries were patient yet bold. Over the course of several months, they taught me many discussions and invited me to be baptized a number of times, but I always said no. I was waiting for some obvious and miraculous event that would provide me with a witness before I was willing to accept their invitation. I didn't receive that kind of witness, so I kept stonewalling their invitations.

One day the elders read a passage from the Book of Mormon: "Dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith" (Ether 12:6). Then they said, "Josh, every time we invite you to be baptized, you say no. What you have to do is say yes, and then the Spirit will confirm it to you."

In other words, I had not yet received a witness because I had not yet tried my faith. I had taken no thought but to ask, believing I would receive without trying (see D&C 9:7). I had effectively blocked the Spirit from being able to witness to me because I was unwilling to take the next step. What I needed to do was to take a leap of faith into the darkness before the light would shine. The confirming witness would come after I tried my faith, not before.²

My first thought was that the missionaries were manipulating me to get me baptized. Then it occurred to me that at the precise moment when I answered no to the baptismal invitation, something faint left my heart. It was a still, soft, and subtle feeling of peace urging me to follow the missionaries' counsel, but I had not recognized its presence until it was gone, leaving me confused, unhappy, and sorrowful.

I wondered if this faint feeling could be the Spirit leaving me and if the cause of my confusion was my own hard heart pushing Him away. With no other recourse, I decided to try the missionaries' challenge. I would say yes to the inevitable invitation, and then if I felt the Spirit as they promised me, I would go through with the baptism. On the other hand, if I did not feel the Spirit, I was perfectly prepared to tell the missionaries I was just joking.

Testing the Seed

The evening of our next appointment we watched a new Church video, *The Prodigal Son*. There was a special feeling in the room; the missionaries were visibly touched, tears welling in their eyes.

After the movie ended, we read several passages in the scriptures. At last Elder Critchfield turned to me and asked, "Josh, will you be baptized on Saturday, November 10, at 4:00 in the afternoon?"

I hesitated and then answered, "Yes."

The Spirit hit me with such an electrifying presence that the hairs on my arms rose, and I nearly cried. There could be no doubt that light had shone into the darkness. I had tested my faith, and I knew unequivocally that I had to be baptized.

I had gained a testimony of the goodness of one seed of faith, but I had yet to see it grow to fruition (see Alma 32:35–36), and I had not yet received a confirming witness of other gospel principles. My trial of faith was not yet over.

Not long after I was baptized and confirmed, doubts crept into my mind. I felt conflicted between the very personal experience I had had when deciding to get baptized and my old logic, which did not accept faith-based knowledge.

Soon I again felt the haunting feelings of confusion and sorrow, and I did not know what to believe. Nevertheless, I had made a commitment, and I determined to remain active in the Church and apply the principles I had been taught until the trial of my faith resolved my conflict one way or another.



AFTER OBEDIENCE COMES THE LIGHT

"It sounds so simple to build upon a foundation of truth that you may wonder why everyone doesn't succeed. For one thing, it takes great humility. It's hard to repent, to admit you are wrong on faith alone, before the evidence of a feeling of being forgiven and light comes. But that is the way it has to be. First comes obedience and then come the confirming assurances, the revelation of truth, and the blessing of light."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "A Life Founded in Light and Truth," *Ensign*, July 2001, 9.

Finding My Faith

The Lord did not leave me to wander alone. I was given a calling to serve with the missionaries, and as we went proselytizing each week, the missionaries continued to shepherd me. My home teachers were faithful. My home teaching companion was prompt and consistent. Many ward members developed friendships with me by involving me in their lives, inviting me into their homes for dinners and for family home evenings. They prayed with and for me. The bishop and his family cared for and encouraged me. I could sense the honest intentions of their hearts, and that strengthened my resolve.

One day, some months later, it dawned on me that every time I read the Book of Mormon, I felt a subtle, familiar feeling of peace, much as I had felt during the discussions and baptismal invitations. I had a sudden moment of clarity: this was the Spirit. As I thought the words—"If this is the Spirit, then this book must be true"—that subtle feeling swelled in my heart, and my faith turned to spiritual knowledge of that principle.

As my heart continued to become more "broken" and my spirit more "contrite" (see Ether 4:15), other confirming experiences followed. In time my doubts were replaced by convictions. I knew that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ,



The light did shine, and it continues to illuminate my way. I can say today that the gospel is true, for I have learned this for myself.

that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, not by my own intellect or by the persuasions of others, but by the undeniable presence of the Spirit speaking to my spirit. Precept upon precept opened to my mind (see 2 Nephi 28:30). As these confirming experiences built upon each other, my perceptions of the gospel expanded, and spiritual understanding came more quickly. Each experience required diligence, a willingness to listen and to follow, and a desire to yield to the enticings of the Spirit (see Mosiah 3:19).

I can say today that the gospel is true, for I have learned this for myself. Once the gospel seemed strange and illogical; now it is familiar and wonderful to me. The gospel principles are indeed all interconnected in one great whole. Even with relatively limited doctrinal knowledge, as a missionary I could testify of these truths. As my doctrinal knowledge expands, so does my testimony.

My collective testimony works as a carefully forged and constantly nourished bulwark against adversity. It sustains me through the challenges I face, most particularly the efforts of the evil one to sow seeds of doubt regarding things I have already received answers about (see D&C 6:22–23). When I feel weak, when doubts come, when pain lingers, I apply the same pattern that has yielded fruit from the first day I received a testimony: I reflect upon each testimony-building experience I have received, I reinvigorate my practice of the principles I have been taught, and I pay attention as the Spirit reaffirms my faith.

The gospel is true, all of it, and it is open to all who will, in the humility of their hearts, try their faith by taking a step of faith into the darkness. The Savior's light is there, hidden only by our unwillingness to find it. There may be many dark times in our lives or times when our testimonies are challenged. I discovered that the Savior's illumination awaits us when we willingly seek Him, and that illumination, if we seek it continually, leads us unto conversion. ■

NOTES

1. See Glenn L. Pace, "Follow the Prophet," *Ensign*, May 1989, 26.
2. See Boyd K. Packer, "The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ—Plain and Precious Things," *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 8.

LINES, LEVELS, AND LIVING THE GOSPEL

BY SANDI MATLOCK FAIRBANKS

After my husband and I finished some remodeling on our house, we decided to paint our daughter's bedroom. She requested that we paint the top half pink and the bottom half purple. I never imagined that such a simple task would teach me so much about the gospel.

On the day I wanted to start painting, I couldn't find a tape measure to mark the dividing line. I used painters' masking tape instead and decided to eyeball the line. After all, how hard is it to tape a straight line across a wall? After I had one wall taped, it looked so good that I thought I'd find a level and check my work. Initially, the line started out even, but to my surprise, it moved fractionally downward. By the time I got to the opposite corner, the difference was about half an inch (1 cm). Although the difference may seem insignificant, if I'd continued on all four walls, the ending line would have been at least two inches (5 cm) below the beginning line!

After discovering my mistake, I found a yardstick and measured from the ceiling to the desired height on the wall, marked the measurement in several places, and then connected the marks by drawing a straight line with the yardstick and a pencil. I repeated the process on all four walls.

As I worked, it occurred to me that living the gospel of Jesus Christ is similar to painting a room. Sometimes we

use our "tools" to keep us on the strait and narrow, while at other times we go through our days "eyeballing" our spirituality. We have the tools we need to stay on a straight course—scriptures, church, daily prayer, family home evening, counsel from Church leaders—but we don't always use them. We often think that we are faster and better off doing the task on our own.

Painting my daughter's room, however, showed me that I wasted time by not using the proper tools in the first place. Instead of making an even line on my first attempt and finishing the job faster, I had to fix the mistake and then finish the other three walls correctly.

We can also be the tools to help others. As home and visiting teachers, we have the responsibility to help both those who are struggling and those who seem to be fine. As teachers, we can prepare our lessons prayerfully and in advance, allowing the Lord to work through us. We can serve our families and others by being an example of one who strives to live the gospel.

As a Latter-day Saint in these troubling times, I have learned that I can't get by with just eyeballing my spirituality. I need to use all the resources and tools I've been given to constantly check my bearings and remain on, or return to, the straight path that leads back to Heavenly Father. ■



Finding

BY MICHAEL R. MORRIS

Church Magazines

For those who hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, the gospel resonates with answers to life's greatest questions—answers that offer hope to the bereft and peace to the troubled.

In Washington, D.C., people from all walks of life are embracing the gospel, learning for themselves, as President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) declared, that “this work, more than any other, will answer life’s perplexing problems and lead the people to walk in paths of safety and happiness.”¹

Following are three stories of those who heard the Savior’s voice and found their way to the Church.

A Joyous Day

As a high-ranking official with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Stephanie Smith attained a degree of professional success she had never dreamed possible. But her worldly achievements came at a cost.

“Once in a while, when I was not in too much of a hurry getting to my next

“In that first meeting with the sister missionaries, I was entirely captivated by them and their message. And from that simple, modest, quiet beginning, a voice inside me said, ‘Be still and listen, Stephanie.’ ”

STEPHANIE SMITH

Was Missing

Through the gospel of Jesus Christ, those drawn to the Church in the Washington, D.C., area are finding answers, fellowship, and strength.

goal, I would take a good, hard look at myself. I would see that I was not leading a life built on righteous values,” she says, even though she attended a church. “I didn’t have a living, vibrant faith guiding my life. But I did not know how to make room for God in my daily life or how to end the cycle of sin that entrapped me.”

Stephanie says she rationalized that she would repent and become a better person “when my job became less busy and when the pressure and demands on me became easier.” She felt an urgency to change, however, when two of her colleagues fell into “deep personal crises” in the spring of 2006. “Their crises led me to a deep introspection about my own private fall from grace, and about how fleeting the things of this world—like accomplishment, recognition, and fame—could be.”

Thanks to the example of a third colleague, a Latter-day Saint, Stephanie’s first halting steps toward spiritual recovery found direction. When she confided in him that she wanted to change her life, his response was so remarkable to her that she wrote it down.

“He said, ‘God knows you by your name, Stephanie. He has a plan for you, and it is a plan for your success in this life and in the life to come—but perhaps

not success as you’ve defined it.’ He also told me that our Heavenly Father wanted me to be at peace. His gentle words made me want to know more.”

A few weeks after Stephanie visited the visitors’ center at the Washington D.C. Temple, “two young missionaries named Sister Clark and Sister McDonald came to my home,” she recalls. “I was surprised by how young they were, and I wondered, ‘How on earth will they ever understand someone as troubled and headstrong as me? They have experienced nothing of the worldly temptations or pressures that I have. How can they relate to me?’ ”

She quickly found out. “In that first meeting, I was entirely captivated by them and their message. And from that simple, modest, quiet beginning, a voice inside me said, ‘Be still and listen, Stephanie.’ ”

The missionaries taught her to pray and helped her along “the hard journey of repentance.” They taught her the eternal nature of the family—a doctrine she found compelling. They also taught her about the Book of Mormon. Initially, Stephanie struggled with its words and the role the Prophet Joseph Smith played in bringing it forth. But as she read, she found “simple beauty” and “profound truth.” She also found answers to her questions and struggles.

“I loved it,” she says. “I took it everywhere with me.” Stephanie especially related to Alma’s call of repentance to



“When you see people throwing stones at the mango tree, you know they are doing so because the tree is bearing good fruit. So I said to myself, ‘Since people are criticizing the Church, it must have something special, something good.’”

NORMAN KAMOSI

those who “are puffed up in the vain things of the world” (Alma 5:37). “In the process of living a life focused on worldly achievement,” she says, “I committed sins of pride, arrogance, ego, envy, greed, and great vanity.”

Stephanie began attending church in northern Virginia, where she received both encouragement and fellowship. A trained observer, she couldn’t help but notice “the joyfulness” in the lives of Latter-day Saints—something she longed for in her own life.

Her husband, Bill, supported her as she investigated the Church. “He knew I was going through professional and personal turmoil,” she says. As Stephanie contemplated baptism, she was concerned how her parents would react to her decision to leave her family’s faith. “But they told me, ‘When you find something that brings you peace, you run to it,’” she says.

“None of my worst fears were realized.”

Stephanie was baptized on January 20, 2007. “My baptism was a joyous day for me,” she says. “I felt the warm waters of the baptismal font welcome me and wash me clean. The next day, when I was confirmed a member of the Church and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, was also joyous.”

Stephanie knows that her baptism was a first step, not a final destination. But she hopes friends and colleagues see her in a new light. “What I hope people see in me is that I uphold a higher standard now and that I build rather than degrade.”

The Good Fruit

“Welcome to the true Church!” Norman Kamosi belts out in his baritone voice as Latter-day Saints in Washington, D.C.’s inner

city arrive for sacrament meeting. In extending his greeting, Norman is returning the warm welcome he and his family received when they joined the Church in 2000.

That welcome contrasts starkly with the adieu he received in 1997 when escaping from his French-speaking homeland, now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the time, he was a member of that nation's Congress and a successful executive with the national airline. But following a regime change, Brother Kamosi's life was suddenly in jeopardy. He fled with his family to Zambia, and they eventually made their way to the United States, settling in the nation's capital in 1999.

"I lost everything overnight—homes, cows, cars, a swimming pool, money in the bank," he says. "We took nothing."

Ten years earlier, when Norman and his wife, Julekha ("Jenke"), had visited a niece in the U.S. capital, they were impressed with the beauty of the Washington D.C. Temple. They knew little of the Church at the time, and Norman's niece discouraged them from learning more.

But soon after they arrived from Zambia with their three children—Erica, Jason, and Kimberly—Erica ordered a copy of the Church movie *The Lamb of God*, which she heard about on television. When the full-time missionaries came to deliver the movie, Jenke did not want to talk to them and tried to ignore their persistent knocking.

"Finally, I said to myself, 'That could be our son behind that door,'" Jenke recalls. She suggested that the family listen to the missionaries for a few minutes and then send them on their way.

Norman and Jenke had been baptized into Christian churches, but both were searching for what they felt was missing from their lives and from the teachings of the churches they had attended. "When the missionaries started

to teach, the Spirit was so strong that we wanted to hear more of it," Jenke says. "It was like they were opening up a new way. They were giving us information that was missing from our lives, and now we were getting it, so we listened."

"The missionaries became part of our family," Jenke says of Elders Kyle Houghton and Jared Banner. It wasn't long, however, before Norman and Jenke began hearing negative things about the Church.

"In Africa we have an expression," Norman says. "When you see people throwing stones at the mango tree, you know they are doing so because the tree is bearing good fruit. So I said to myself, 'Since people are criticizing the Church, it must have something special, something good.' I said, 'We have to investigate the Church. Something good is in there.'"

Like the fruit of the mango tree, the fruit of the teachings of the restored gospel tasted good to the Kamosis. In particular, the plan of salvation and the eternal nature and importance of the family enlightened their understanding and became "delicious to [them]" (Alma 32:28). They were also touched by the love they felt from Church members, who welcomed them and helped them during difficult financial times.

As they considered baptism, both Norman and Jenke received confirming witnesses from the Spirit that they should join the Church.

Jenke's answer came through the fulfillment of a dream. Norman's answer came while pondering, praying, and walking the grounds of the Washington D.C. Temple with his family and the missionaries.

"A voice came to me, telling me, 'This is the true Church of Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God,'" he says. "I turned to the missionaries and said, 'I'm ready for baptism!'"

Because of their knowledge of the plan of salvation,



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND © IRI

Norman Kamosi (above) translates a talk into his native tongue of Lingala during a recent general conference in Salt Lake City. Opposite page: Brother and Sister Kamosi with their daughter Kimberly.

Norman and Jenke feel more prepared to cope with life's challenges.

"When I joined the Church, I said, 'Oh, I see now.' I lost the fear I once had about death because of what I was taught about the plan of salvation, being sealed together, and meeting again with my family," Jenke says. "That's what was missing. The gospel has opened up life to me. I'm really happy to be in the Church. It's given me all the answers I was searching for."

For Norman, what he found is more valuable than what he lost.

"I found love, and I found service," he says. "Through service, you can feel the spirit of love gathering you, just as Jesus taught. After my baptism, I forgot about my misery. I forgot that I had lost all my belongings and all my wealth. I found something more valuable—the Church."

"Are You LDS?"

When the aircraft hit a violent storm while flying to Washington, D.C., from Boston, many on board thought the flight might be their last.

"The plane was being buffeted around violently, lights were flickering on and off, people were screaming, crying, and praying," Najib ("Jim") Kabbani recalls.

Every time the plane jolted, the woman sitting in the seat next to Jim grabbed his jacket. In attempting to calm her down, he says, "I tried to put things into perspective, telling her, 'We may be living at this moment in our lives, but we came from somewhere else before. And just as we were somewhere else before, we will go somewhere else after this life. However long we spend in between is part of God's plan, and there's a purpose for it.'"

The woman calmed down, looked at him, and asked, "Are you LDS?" Sensing his confusion, she added, "Latter-day Saint."

"I thought she was complimenting me," Jim says, "so

I said, 'Shucks, Ma'am, I'm no Saint.'"

She explained her meaning, adding that her husband was a bishop in the Church. She then wrote her family's name and phone number on a piece of paper and handed it to Jim.

"When we get back to Washington, you should give us a call," she said. "You sound like you would really feel at home with some of the things we believe."

Jim, a management consultant, put the paper in his pocket but lost it when he took his suit to the cleaners. It wasn't long, however, before he met more Latter-day Saints. He would share his philosophy on life in the midst



Brother Kabbani calls the bishops' storehouse and cannery, where he works as a volunteer coordinator in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, "a living testimony of how we care for each other."

of a difficult circumstance, and once again someone would ask if he was LDS and then invite him to church. Finally, he accepted an invitation.

Jim, whose family is from Lebanon, became interested in religion while in college. Fluent in four languages, he had read the Torah, the Koran in Arabic, Buddhist and Hindu religious books, and the Old and New Testaments. "I found things that resonated in me in all of those books, and yet there was always the feeling that each of them was missing something," he says.

His impressions of Christianity were largely positive, but he had concerns about doctrines that he later learned came from the Apostasy. As Jim initially listened to the missionaries, his interest in the restored gospel grew. But because of discouragement from his fiancée and negative stereotypes of the Church, "I left it on the back burner," he says.

It wasn't until later, after his marriage had failed and another relationship had ended, that Jim was ready to accept the gospel. When a former girlfriend, with whom he had been occasionally attending a different church, suggested that he find another church to attend after they had stopped dating, Jim knew where to go. A short time later, while returning home from work in May 2006, he saw two full-time



missionaries on bicycles. To their surprise, he honked, pulled over, and gave them his name, phone number, and address.

“This time I was determined to go through the process,” Jim says. It became clear to him that the restored Church had been organized the way the Savior intended it to be. Only one thing held him back: “I really felt that I had to become an expert on the Church before I could truthfully step forward and say, ‘OK, I’m ready to be baptized.’ ”

After receiving the missionary discussions and sincerely praying about his decision, Jim received a strong impression. “The impression was of someone holding in his hand a piece of paper from a university. A voice said to me, ‘Is he holding a diploma, or is he holding a letter of admission?’ That’s when I realized that I had been thinking of baptism as a diploma, whereas, in fact, it was quite the opposite—it was a letter of admission. Once I got that, I thought, ‘OK. Now I can join with a clear conscience. This is my opportunity to continue

learning.’ It was the beginning of a journey of learning rather than the conclusion of it.”

He called the missionaries and scheduled his baptism, which he describes as “a wonderful experience.”

Jim is grateful for the gentle, quiet, and consistent confirmations that have followed his baptism, and he is grateful for opportunities to serve. Service, he says, allows the Church to be an ongoing part of his life and provides him with an expanded family. He is also grateful for personal improvements made possible by the Spirit.

“I’ve tried to show what it means to be a member of the Church by example,” he says.

To investigators who may be hesitating, Jim says, “They really need to join the Church in order to understand what it will mean to them to be a member. They just have to take a leap of faith and do it. My testimony is that they will be very glad they did. Their only regret will be that they didn’t do it sooner.” ■

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 243.

“The impression was of someone holding in his hand a piece of paper from a university. A voice said to me, ‘Is he holding a diploma, or is he holding a letter of admission?’ I realized that I had been thinking of baptism as a diploma, whereas, in fact, it was quite the opposite—it was a letter of admission.”

JIM KABBANI

Why Did the Lord Call Me?

I learned that the Lord enables imperfect people to work beyond their natural abilities.

BY KIMBERLEE B. GARRETT

A friend in my ward once shared part of a letter from her missionary son, who was serving in Japan. His letter expressed feelings of inadequacy in doing the work to which he was called. However, the letter reported the missionary was confident he would be victorious in the end because “the Lord can draw a straight line with even the most crooked of sticks.” I have since spent much time reflecting on this insight.

I learned a similar lesson on my own mission. I was called to serve in São Paulo, Brazil, at a time when it was very difficult to obtain a visa. After 10 weeks in the MTC, I learned that my visa was on hold and I was being temporarily reassigned to the Washington D.C. South Mission. With a suitcase full of clothing inadequate for the cold Virginia winter, I left to report to my new mission. My first assignment was nearly ideal.

I had a wonderful companion, and we were assigned to open a new area for sister missionaries. We found someone to teach the very night we arrived. We met a part-member family on our first Sunday; we had the opportunity to teach the father, who chose to be baptized a few weeks later. Teaching the gospel came easy to me, and I felt somewhat proud of the progress I was making as a missionary.

After two months in Washington, D.C., I received a call informing me I would be leaving for Brazil the next day. I was shocked but excited as well. I assumed that this new assignment would go as smoothly as my first one.

I went from one of the coldest winters on record in the United States to the middle of a Brazilian summer. The sun beat down on me and burned my face, arms, and neck. My feet were covered in blisters that bled and caused me great discomfort with every step. My companion was a native Brazilian, and despite our best efforts, we could not communicate well. My weakness and shortcomings were painfully apparent as my every endeavor seemed to fail. I felt like Peter in the 14th chapter of Matthew. Peter had walked on water. I had been enjoying success, yet now I found myself sinking and crying out to the Lord.

Just as Jesus came to Peter's rescue when Peter was floundering in the boisterous waves, He came to mine as well. The language began to come as I tried to study and be obedient. I found myself especially able to communicate when I was teaching and testifying of Christ. The sunburn and blisters healed more rapidly than I expected, and I was soon able to walk the many miles a day that our work required. I found myself performing

missionary labors in a manner beyond my own abilities. This time, instead of feeling somewhat proud of my labor as I had in the United States, I felt humbled that the Lord would bless me and enable me to do His work.

This same enabling power (see 1 Timothy 1:12) has blessed me many times throughout my life. When I receive callings that seem beyond my abilities, I try to remember those times on my mission when I was blessed to do a work greater than I was personally capable of doing.

I have come to love a scripture in the last chapter of Moroni, which explains that this enabling power is the grace of Christ: "Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love

God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ" (Moroni 10:32).

I know that I can never be perfected through my efforts alone, and there are still times when I feel as if I am sinking like Peter. However, I am strengthened when I remember that Christ's commandment is not for me to become perfect and *then* come to Him. Instead, He invites me—and each one of us—to come unto Him and to be *perfected in Him*. This power has helped me be a better parent and a better teacher than I could ever be on my own. When I focus on Christ, do my best, and recognize my dependence on Him, I am strengthened. Crooked though my stick may be, the Lord is somehow able to draw a straight line, and I become an instrument in His hand. ■

The Lord can draw a straight line with even the most crooked of sticks.



AN ENABLING POWER

"The enabling and strengthening aspect of the Atonement helps us to see and to do and to become good in ways that we could never recognize or accomplish with our limited mortal capacity."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "In the Strength of the Lord," *Ensign and Liahona*, Nov. 2004, 77.

SCATTER SUNSHINE

*Members share ways they have served
or seen others serve in their communities.*

Are you looking for service opportunities but don't know what to do or where to begin? These members share how they and others have served in their communities.



children's sporting activities; not only do they spend time with their children, but they also support the community.

You don't have to do something

big for service to count. After all, it's "by small and simple things [that] great things [are] brought to pass" (Alma 37:6).

Karen Kevan, Oregon

Serving in Quiet and Simple Ways

Sometimes service can be done in quiet and simple ways. My friend purchases unstained baby blankets at yard sales, washes them, and donates them to charity. Another friend gives the extra items from her buy-one-get-one-free coupons to the sisters on her visiting teaching route or to families with children. Another sister has gorgeous rose bushes and shares a vase of them with the sisters in the ward during the summer. A young woman in high school started a knitting club with some of her friends. They made leprosy bandages to send to third-world countries. Some dads coach their

Searching for Service?

When I became a teacher in an elementary school, I told the principal if we ever had volunteers wanting to serve us, I would be happy to find a place for them. I would meet with them and match their availability and interests with our school's needs. We've had volunteers play games with the children at recess, tutor in math or reading, help with fitness testing in physical education, help in the library, file papers for the nurse or the office manager,



PHOTOGRAPHS OF MEMBERS SERVING IN THE COMMUNITY BY JERRY GARNIS

make copies and compile booklets, play chess, and work on art projects. This service is beneficial to both the students and the volunteers: the students perform better in school, and the volunteers receive the satisfaction of knowing that they helped bring about those improvements. It truly is a win-win situation.

Rojean Garnica, Washington

Bringing Warmth to a Hospital

I had wanted to get involved in some sort of volunteer work for a long time, but as a young mother with preschool children, I



*"By small
and simple
things are great
things brought
to pass."*



*"Helping others
Doesn't have to
be expensive or
time consuming
to be meaningful
or ease a burden."*

found it hard to find the right type of service.

Through our stake I had learned to knit for a humanitarian aid project, so I decided to put that skill to use in our community. I called a local hospital that had a neonatal intensive care unit and inquired about whether they would accept knit hats and fleece blankets for the infants. They were delighted with the prospect, so now I make hats and blankets, and I can do it at home during my spare time.

Tricia Whitney, Wisconsin

Overcoming Circumstances

I have always wanted to volunteer with literacy programs but have been restricted by severe hearing loss. However, with the approval of a local librarian, I wrote short reviews of library books I enjoyed reading. The library staff then forwarded the reviews to the local newspaper for publication. I



HELPING OTHERS ALONG THE WAY

"Along your pathway of life you will observe that you are not the only traveler. There are others who need your help. There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save."

President Thomas S. Monson, "How Firm a Foundation," *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 68.

selected books from many genres in order to offer people a wide variety from which to choose. Although I hope these reviews helped others choose reading material, this service probably helped me more than anyone else; it increased my comprehension and writing skills and

broadened my interest in new areas of reading.
June Barrus, Utah

Getting to Know My Neighbors

As a young mum with three small children I found it very difficult to serve in the community. But getting to know my neighbors has opened opportunities for me. Once they know me, they feel comfortable asking me for help in a variety of situations. They have also been of service to our family in times of need. Sometimes we look too far for service opportunities, especially when they are right on our back step.

Kylie Barnes, South Australia, Australia



Doing Small and Simple Things

While completing my community health rotation as a student nurse for the local health district, I visited new moms in their homes. Many of the mothers have low incomes and few resources. Most of them are teen mothers, some as young as 14. Seeing these mothers struggle helped me realize that little things can mean so much. In some cases, families might be



able to donate items their children no longer use. In other instances, someone might share a meal or even something less tangible. A crib can provide a safe sleeping alternative. A car seat can mean the difference between a safe or dangerous ride. A little bit of food can feed a small family. A listening ear can provide understanding in a difficult situation. Words of encouragement can provide hope and courage to carry on.

Helping others doesn't have to be expensive or time consuming to be meaningful or ease a burden. Try starting small. Little things can make a big difference, especially to someone who has no one to rely on.

Nancy Andruk Olson, Nevada

Praying for Opportunities

As a teenager I began my community service by donating blood through my local hospital. It became harder to donate after I got married and had children. However, I found I could still fit in three donations a year. It just took some planning and sacrifice.

After my children were grown, I was unable to donate blood due to a new medication I was taking. I lost that satisfying feeling of serving my community and sensed that something important was missing in my life. I began to pray for a way to serve again.

One day as I read the newspaper, I noticed a small article about the American Red Cross needing volunteers. I was so excited! I called the





HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Share examples of service from the article. Have family members each write down an act of service they could perform. Put the papers in a dish and have each person draw one out and read it. Discuss the joy that can come to the giver and the receiver. Conclude by reading Mosiah 2:17 and then making a goal to do an act of service during the week.

2. To promote service within your family, have family members write down their name and a needed service that can be done during family home evening. Exchange papers and give everyone 15 minutes to perform the service. Invite family members to share their feelings.

"I thank my Heavenly Father for the answer to my prayer and for the blessing of community service."

number and was greeted enthusiastically. I turned in the necessary paperwork, and then a few weeks later received on-the-job training—all of which was done at my convenience. When it came time for me to schedule my shift each week, the Red Cross staff and I juggled days and times until we found three hours that fit perfectly in our schedules.

I helped by greeting blood donors, putting out cookies, pouring juice, and cleaning up. I also thanked the donors for the wonderful service they provided the people in their community. And I thank my Heavenly Father for the answer to my prayer and for the blessing of community service.

Debbie Pettey, Washington

Influencing Others

My wife and I go to the Utah State Prison twice weekly to help with a literacy program sponsored by a local school district. We work with students and tutors from among the inmates. Many inmates are happy they can more accurately write job applications. Because the program emphasizes giving positive feedback when the participants show good effort and progress, some have felt more self-worth and hope for the future. One participant who was recently released from prison excitedly told me that he hoped to find a job like mine, where he too could be edified through helping others.

Stephen T. Case, Utah

Blessing Others through Our Baby

My husband and I learned about a volunteer program at a nursing home in our neighborhood. Now I enjoy visiting with the ladies there weekly. Our toddler brings great delight to them. They love to see her growth and progress from week to week and enjoy cuddles and chats with her. When my husband comes, he plays the harp for them. We stay for only an hour or so, but that small amount of time with these women is so rewarding!

Kerryn Hugo, Queensland, Australia ■





The
Lord
Can
Ease

OUR BURDENS



We need to trust the Lord. The Lord's view is much broader than ours, and He has promised that He will not try us beyond our ability to withstand.

BY ELDER MAURY W. SCHOOFF

Area Seventy
North America Central Area

Yes, President, I will accept the calling.” As I left the stake president’s office that evening and slowly drove home, I began to wonder how I could handle the burden of a young family, a new military career, and now a calling as a counselor in a bishopric. My military leaders had counseled my associates and me to do nothing for the next two years but focus on successful completion of the intensive graduate program we were starting. While I accepted their counsel for the most part, I knew I could still make time for family and some Church service. But serving in a bishopric?

Others have felt similar concerns about burdens that seemed too great to bear. For example, in chapters 23 and 24 of Mosiah we read about Alma and his people, who believed the words of the prophet Abinadi. They had known the oppression of a wicked king, so they fled into the wilderness and established the land of Helam. As they followed Alma's teachings, they began to "multiply and prosper exceedingly" (Mosiah 23:20).

The Lord kept His promise, strengthening the people so "that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord."



After some time had passed, the people saw that an army of Lamanites was in the borders of Helam. The people were alarmed, but Alma "exhorted them that they should not be frightened, but that they should remember the Lord their God and he would deliver them" (Mosiah 23:27). They heeded Alma's words and cried unto the Lord that the hearts of the Lamanites would be softened.


The Lamanites had been lost in the wilderness, and they agreed that if Alma would show them the way back to their land, they would give his people their lives and their liberty. Alma fulfilled his part of the agreement, but the Lamanites did not keep their promise and put guards around Helam. The Lamanite king gave authority to Amulon to be the king and ruler over these people. Remember that Amulon was one of King Noah's wicked priests who put Abinadi to death and who took captive some Lamanite daughters for their wives. So those who followed Alma had reason to be afraid of Amulon.

As Amulon ruled, he began to persecute Alma and his brethren and "cause that his children should persecute their children" (Mosiah 24:8). He put guards over them and decreed "that whosoever should be found calling upon God should be put to death.

"And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts.

"And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage.

"And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot



feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions” (Mosiah 24:11–14).

The Lord kept His promise, strengthening the people so “that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” (Mosiah 24:15).

When they were released from their bondage, “they poured out their thanks to God because he had been merciful unto them. . . . And they gave thanks to God, . . . [lifting] their voices in the praises of their God” (Mosiah 24:21–22).

Several lessons can be learned from this story. Among them are the following:

The Lord tests the faith and patience of His people. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said this about trials: “[The Lord] gives you experiences that stimulate growth, understanding, and compassion which polish you for your everlasting benefit. To get you from where you are to where He wants you to be requires a lot of stretching, and that generally entails discomfort and pain.”¹

We need to trust the Lord. The Lord’s view is much broader than ours, and He has promised that He will not try us beyond our ability to withstand (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). Elder Scott said, “To exercise faith is to trust that the Lord knows what He is doing with you and that He can accomplish it for your eternal good even though you cannot understand how He can possibly do it.”²

We should not murmur. Alma’s people did not complain about their afflictions. How easy it is for us to murmur when things do not go our way! Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “Murmuring can . . . be noisy enough that it drowns out the various spiritual signals to us, signals which tell us in some cases to quit soaking ourselves indulgently in the hot tubs of self-pity! Murmuring over the weight of our crosses not only takes energy otherwise needed to carry them but might cause another to put down his cross altogether.” Elder Maxwell offered this alternative to murmuring: “Being of good cheer is what is needed, and being of good [cheer] is

equally contagious. We have clear obligations to so strengthen each other by doing things ‘with cheerful hearts and countenances’ (D&C 59:15; see also 81:5).”³


We can look to our leaders for comfort and encouragement.

The people of Helam listened to and heeded their leader, and he quieted their fears. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) also quieted the fears of many when he spoke in general conference following the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. Some of his calming words were: “I am optimistic. I do not believe the time is here when an all-consuming calamity will overtake us. I earnestly pray that it may not. There is so much of the Lord’s work yet to be done. We, and our children after us, must do it.”⁴

Looking back on my graduate school experience, I know the Lord lifted my burden. The stake president promised that things would work out, that the Lord would strengthen me, and that I would receive blessings for serving in this calling. These promises were fulfilled. With planning, and with the Lord’s help, I had adequate time for family activities that our family still remembers fondly to this day. When I had meetings to attend or other calling-related requirements that could have affected my study time, I was blessed to be able to study more efficiently, with fewer outside distractions. The concepts I concentrated on most during my study time turned out to be the concepts that appeared on exams. My memory was quickened, my understanding of patience was enlarged, and my fears were hushed. The Lord truly lightened my burden.

As you face challenges such as a daunting calling, too much to do, family problems, the loss of a loved one, a career reversal, or uncertainty, remember that the Lord will sustain you. Recognize that these experiences can polish you as you place your faith and trust in the Lord, actively practice patience, and listen to the counsel of Church leaders. The Lord has said, “Therefore, let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God” (D&C 101:16). ■

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “Trust in the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 16–17.
 2. Richard G. Scott, “Trust in the Lord,” 17.
 3. Neal A. Maxwell, “Murmur Not,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 85, 84.
 4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Times in Which We Live,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 74.
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Life is precious! No one can cuddle an innocent infant, look into those beautiful eyes, feel the little fingers, and kiss that baby's cheek without a deepening reverence for life and for our Creator.

Abortion: An Assault on the Defenseless

BY ELDER RUSSELL M. NELSON
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

As I begin, let me apologize to readers for the use of terms that are not pleasant. The nature of the war to which I'm referring requires such clarity of communication.

As sons and daughters of God, we cherish life as a gift from Him. His eternal plan provides opportunities for His children to obtain physical bodies, to gain earthly experiences, and to realize their divine destinies as heirs of eternal life.¹

Death Rates from Wars

With that understanding and reverence for life, we deplore the loss of life associated with warfare. The data are appalling. In World War I, more than 8 million military fatalities occurred. In World War II, more than 22 million servicemen and women died.² Together, these two wars, covering portions of 14 years, cost the lives of at least 30 million soldiers worldwide. That figure does not include the millions of civilian casualties.

These data, however, are dwarfed by the toll of another war that claims more casualties annually than did World War I

and World War II combined. Worldwide reports indicate that more than 40 million abortions are performed per year.³

This war called abortion is a war on the defenseless and the voiceless. It is a war on the unborn. This war is being waged globally. Ironically, civilized societies that have generally placed safeguards on human life have now passed laws that sanction this practice.

Divine Doctrine

This matters greatly to us because the Lord has repeatedly declared this divine imperative: "Thou shalt not kill."⁴ Then He added, "Nor do anything



like unto it.”⁵ Even before the fulness of the gospel was restored, enlightened individuals understood the sanctity of human life. John Calvin, a sixteenth-century reformer, wrote, “If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, . . . it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a foetus in the womb before it has come to light.”⁶

Man-made rules have now legalized that which has been forbidden by God from the dawn of time! Human reasoning has twisted and transformed absolute truth into sound-bite slogans that promote a practice that is consummately wrong.

Special Concerns

Concern for the health of the mother is a vital one. But circumstances in which the termination of pregnancy is necessary to save the life of the mother are very rare, particularly where modern medical care is available. Another concern applies to pregnancies resulting from rape or incest. This tragedy is compounded because an innocent woman’s freedom of choice was denied. In these circumstances, abortion is sometimes considered advisable to preserve the physical and mental health of the mother. Abortions for these reasons are also rare.

Some argue for abortion because of fear that a child may have a congenital malformation. Surely the harmful effects of certain infectious or toxic agents in the first trimester of pregnancy are real, but caution is needed in considering the termination of a pregnancy. Life has great value for all, including those born with disabilities. Furthermore, the outcome may not be as serious as postulated.

I remember well a couple who endured such an experience. The woman was only 21 years old at the time—a beautiful and devoted wife. In her first trimester, she contracted German measles. Abortion was advised because the developing baby would almost surely be damaged. Some members of her family, out of loving concern, applied

additional pressure for an abortion. Devotedly, the couple consulted their bishop. He referred them to their stake president, who, after listening to their concern, counseled them not to terminate the life of this baby, even though the child would likely have a problem. He quoted this scripture:

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”⁷

They chose to follow that counsel and allowed their child to be born—a beautiful little girl, normal in every respect, except for total hearing loss.

After their daughter’s evaluation at a school for the deaf, the parents were advised that this child had the intellect of a genius. She attended a major university on a scholarship. Now some 40 years later, she enjoys a wonderful life.

To deny life to an individual because of a possible handicap is a very serious matter. Policy consistent with that logic would dictate that those already living with such deficiencies should likewise be terminated. One more step in that tragic train of thought would lead to the conclusion that those who are either infirm or inconvenient should also be eliminated. Such irreverence for life would be totally unthinkable!

Abortion on Demand

Relatively few abortions are performed for the special circumstances to which I have referred.⁸ Most abortions are performed on demand to deal with unwanted pregnancies. These abortions are simply a form of birth control.

Elective abortion has been legalized in many countries on the premise that a woman is free to choose what she does with her own body. To an extent this is true for each of us, male or female. We are free to think. We are free to plan. And we are free to do. But once an action has been taken, we are never free from its consequences.

To understand this concept more clearly, we can learn from the astronaut. Anytime during selection or



preparation, he or she is free to withdraw from the program. But once the spacecraft has lifted off, the astronaut is bound to the consequences of the previous choice to make the journey.

So it is with people who choose to embark on a journey that leads to parenthood. They have freedom of choice—to begin or not to begin that course. When conception does occur, that choice has already been made.

Yes, a woman is free to choose what she will do with her body. Whether her choice leads to an astronaut's mission or to a baby, her choice to begin the journey binds her to the consequences of that choice. She cannot “unchoose.”

When the controversies about abortion are debated, “individual right of choice” is invoked as though it were the one supreme virtue. That could only be true if but one person were involved. The rights of any one individual do not allow the rights of another individual to be abused. In or out of marriage, abortion is not solely an individual matter. Terminating the life of a developing baby involves two individuals with separate bodies, brains, and hearts. A woman's choice for her own body does not include the right to deprive her baby of life—and a lifetime of choices that her child would make.

As Latter-day Saints, we should stand up for choice—the right choice—not simply for choice as a method.⁹

Nearly all legislation pertaining to abortion considers the duration of gestation. The human mind has presumed to determine when “meaningful life” begins. In the course of my studies as a medical doctor, I learned that a

Anytime during selection or preparation, an astronaut is free to withdraw from the space program. But once the spacecraft has lifted off, the astronaut is bound to the consequences of the previous choice to make the journey. So it is with people who choose to embark on a journey that leads to parenthood.



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new life begins when two special cells unite to become one cell, bringing together 23 chromosomes from the father and 23 from the mother. These chromosomes contain thousands of genes. In a marvelous process involving a combination of genetic coding by which all the basic human characteristics of the unborn person are established, a new DNA complex is formed. A continuum of growth results in a new human being. Approximately 22 days after the two cells have united, a little heart begins to beat. At 26 days the circulation of blood begins.¹⁰ To legislate when a developing life is considered “meaningful” is presumptive and quite arbitrary, in my opinion.

Abortion has been legalized by governing entities without regard for God and His commandments. Scriptures state repeatedly that people will prosper only if they obey the

commandments of God.¹¹ Individuals will prosper only when they walk in faith and obedience to God, who said:

“I, the Lord, . . . built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

“And it is my purpose to provide. . . .

“But it must needs be done in mine own way. . . .

“For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare.”¹²

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has consistently opposed the practice of abortion. More than a century ago, the First Presidency wrote, “We again take this opportunity of warning the Latter-day Saints against those . . . practices of foeticide and infanticide.”¹³

Early in his presidency President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said: “We have repeatedly affirmed the position of the Church in unalterably opposing all abortions, except in two rare instances: When conception is the result of forcible rape and when competent medical counsel indicates that a mother’s health would otherwise be seriously jeopardized.”¹⁴ Current policy now includes two other exceptions—incest and if the baby cannot survive beyond

birth, as determined by competent medical counsel. Even these exceptions do not justify abortion automatically. It “should be considered only after the persons responsible have consulted with their bishops and received divine confirmation through prayer.”¹⁵

Adoption

Why destroy a life that could bring great joy to others? There are better ways of dealing with an unwanted pregnancy. When a life is created by sinful behavior, the best way to begin personal repentance is to preserve the life of that child. To add another serious sin to a serious sin already committed only compounds the grief. Adoption is a wonderful alternative to abortion. Both the baby and the adoptive parents can be greatly blessed by the adoption of that baby into a home where the child will be lovingly nurtured and where the blessings of the gospel will be available.

Repentance Is Possible

Is there any hope for the person who has participated in the act of abortion? Is there any hope for those who have so sinned and who now suffer heartbreak? The answer is yes! “As far as has been revealed, a person may repent and be forgiven for the sin of abortion.”¹⁶ We know the Lord will help all who are truly repentant.¹⁷

Life is precious! No one can cuddle an innocent infant, look into those beautiful eyes, feel the little fingers, and kiss that baby’s cheek without a deepening reverence for life and for our Creator. Life comes from life. It is no accident. It



ADOPTION—A LOVING DECISION THAT BLESSES THE CHILD

“We . . . express our support of unwed parents who place their children for adoption in stable homes with a mother and a father. We also express our support of the married mothers and fathers who adopt these children.

“Children are entitled to the blessing of being reared in a stable family environment where father and mother honor marital vows. Having a secure, nurturing, and consistent relationship with both a father and a mother is essential to a child’s well-being. When choosing adoption, unwed parents grant their children this most important blessing. Adoption is an unselfish, loving decision that blesses the child, birth parents, and adoptive parents in this life and throughout the eternities. We commend all those who strengthen children and families by promoting adoption.”

First Presidency statement, Oct. 4, 2006.

is a gift from God. Innocent life is not sent by Him to be destroyed. It is given by Him and is naturally to be taken by Him alone.¹⁸ I testify that life is eternal as He is eternal. ■

NOTES

1. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
2. See *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed. (1998), “World Wars, The.”
3. See Maria Cheng, “Abortion Just as Common in Nations Where It’s Illegal,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, Oct. 12, 2007, p. A7. In the United States the number of live births per year is in the range of three to four million. The number of abortions during that same period of time exceeds one million. Thus, in that country, one of every three to four pregnancies ends in abortion.
4. See Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17; Matthew 5:21; Romans 13:9; Mosiah 13:21; 3 Nephi 12:21; D&C 42:18–19.
5. D&C 59:6.
6. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony*, trans. Charles William Bingham, 22 vols. (1979), 3:42.
7. Proverbs 3:5–6.
8. See statement of Dr. Irvin M. Cushner, speaking to the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Constitutional Amendments Relating to Abortion*, S.J. 17–19, 110, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 1981, 158.
9. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Weightier Matters,” *Liabona*, Mar. 2000, 17–19; *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 13–15.
10. See J. Willis Hurst and others, eds., *The Heart*, 4th ed. (1978), 7.
11. See Leviticus 26:3–13; Joshua 1:7–8; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 18:5–7; 2 Chronicles 24:20; 26:5; 31:21; Job 36:11–12; 1 Nephi 2:20–21; 4:14; 2 Nephi 1:9, 20, 31; 4:4; 5:10–11; Jarom 1:9; Omni 1:6; Mosiah 1:7; 2:22, 31; Alma 9:13; 36:1, 30; 37:13; 38:1; 45:6–8; 48:15, 25; 50:20; Helaman 3:20; 3 Nephi 5:22; D&C 9:13.
12. D&C 104:14–17.
13. John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, “Epistle of the First Presidency,” Apr. 4, 1885; in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1965–75), 3:11.
14. Spencer W. Kimball, “A Report and a Challenge,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 6; see also “The Time to Labor Is Now,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 6.
15. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics* (2006), 185.
16. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, 185.
17. See Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17; D&C 58:42.
18. See Deuteronomy 30:20; Acts 17:28; D&C 88:13; Moses 6:32.

BY JOHN HILTON III

The advice of family and friends is helpful, but we can turn to an even better source.

Some time ago, one of my institute students approached me and asked if I would give him some advice. He wanted to go to graduate school and was trying to decide which university he should attend. As we talked, I thought of a phrase from 1 Nephi. Nephi's older brothers didn't understand what their father had taught them concerning the gathering of Israel (see 1 Nephi 10:14). When they came to Nephi to ask for an explanation, he asked, "Have ye inquired of the Lord?" (1 Nephi 15:8).

Often when we have problems, we turn to friends or family members and seek their advice. This isn't necessarily bad; in fact, often it is part of the process of studying things out. But do

Have Ye Inquired of the Lord?



we sometimes forget to inquire of the Lord? Similarly, when others approach us for counsel, we may be tempted to draw on our reservoirs of knowledge and forget to point them to the One who knows all things. I realized that the best advice I could give this student was to invite him to inquire of the Lord.

The phrase “inquire of the Lord” appears several times in the scriptures, and with only one exception, after the people inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered their questions.¹ Consider the following examples:

King Mosiah had a question about his family. He needed to know whether to allow his sons to go on a mission to the Lamanites. He “went and inquired of the Lord . . . and the Lord said unto Mosiah: Let them go up” (Mosiah 28:6–7).

The Lord also answered inquiries pertaining to temporal concerns. On several occasions King David pleaded with the Lord for the wisdom to know how to handle military conflicts. “And David enquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the Lord said unto David, Go up” (2 Samuel 5:19). A short time later, David again had trouble with the Philistines. “And when David enquired of the Lord, he said, Thou shalt not go up” (2 Samuel 5:23). Although the Lord’s specific advice was different the second time David inquired, the pattern was the same—inquire of the Lord and receive an answer.

Inquiring of the Lord is not limited to situations of familial or physical necessity. When Alma was faced with a difficult ecclesiastical dilemma “he went and inquired of the Lord what he should do concerning this matter. . . . And it came to pass that after he had poured out his whole soul to God, the voice of the Lord came to him” (Mosiah 26:13–14).

The process of inquiring of the Lord also leads to understanding doctrine. When Mormon heard some were preaching the doctrine of baptizing infants he “immediately . . . inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. And the



LET HIM ASK OF GOD

“Searching and inquiring are a means of coming to a knowledge of all truth, whether

that truth be spiritual, scientific, or moral. The restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ and all that means to us came about because of the inquiring after truth of the 14-year-old Joseph Smith, guided by the passage, ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him’ (James 1:5).”

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), “The Truth Shall Make You Free,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1998, 4.

word of the Lord came to [Mormon],” explaining that this practice was incorrect (Moroni 8:7).

Inquiring of the Lord is not a practice exclusive to ancient times. Joseph Smith wrote, “My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join” (Joseph Smith—History 1:18). As we know, the Lord answered this request. In fact, many sections in the Doctrine and Covenants were given because Joseph “inquired of the Lord.”²

The question “have ye inquired of the Lord?” can be extremely beneficial for Church leaders. For example, if

a Relief Society president were to be approached by a ward sister with a difficult dilemma, that president would have a powerful opportunity to teach that sister about receiving revelation. By doing this, the president not only helps the sister with the current crisis but also teaches her how to handle future challenges.

When I started studying the scriptural pattern of “inquiring of the Lord,” I saw immediate application for my institute students. They frequently face important life decisions such as where to go to school, where to live, whether or not to serve a mission, and whom to marry.

As pertinent as this principle is to them, I’ve learned that it applies to everyone. Toward the end of one semester, several weeks after I taught this principle, I invited my students to evaluate the class. One student responded to the question “What can I do to be a better teacher?” by writing “Have ye inquired of the Lord?”

That student taught me an important lesson. I learned that in addition to seeking feedback from my students, I could receive divine guidance in how to improve my teaching. The need to inquire of the Lord is an important spiritual key for us all. ■

NOTES

1. See 1 Samuel 28:6. Note that at this time Saul had turned from the Lord.
2. See the section headings for Doctrine and Covenants 6, 12, 17, and 23 for examples.

Pray Always

Luke 21:36

Once we “learn the true relationship in which we stand toward God (namely, God is our Father, and we are his children), then at once prayer becomes natural and instinctive on our part. . . .

“The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that are made conditional on our asking for them.”¹

Stories or scriptures concerning prayer are featured in the following artwork.



Left: Detail from *Teach Me to Walk in the Light*, by Godofredo Orig, Philippines
Watercolor, acrylic, and oil on paper

“Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and children may be blessed” (3 Nephi 18:21).



**Left: Prayer at Lowtide,
by J. Kirk Richards**

Oil on canvas

"We pray in Christ's name when our mind is the mind of Christ, and our wishes the wishes of Christ—when his words abide in us."²

**Right: I'll Never Forsake,
by Julie Rogers**

Pastel on board

After a mob killed her husband and 10-year-old son and wounded her 7-year-old son on October 30, 1838, at Haun's Mill, Missouri, Amanda Smith prayed aloud in a cornfield. She said, "It was as the temple of the Lord to me at that moment. I prayed aloud and most fervently.

"When I emerged from the corn a voice spoke to me. It was a voice as plain as I ever heard one. It was no silent, strong impression of the spirit, but a voice, repeating a verse of the Saints' hymn: ' . . . That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake!'"

"From that moment I had no more fear. I felt that nothing could hurt me."³

**Left: Righteous Defiance,
by Caren Olson Garlock**

*Hand-colored woodcut
print on paper*

After the massacre at Haun's Mill, mobbers threatened to kill the Latter-day Saint women if they continued to pray. Amanda Smith's prayer in the cornfield was an act of righteous defiance.





Above: That Their Prayers May Be Answered, by Beth Vance
Quilt

The angel said to Alma the Younger and the four sons of Mosiah: "The Lord hath heard the prayers . . . of his servant, Alma, who is thy father; . . . Go thy way, and seek to destroy the church no more" (Mosiah 27: 14, 16).

Right: God's Constant Prayer, by Sheri Lynn Boyer
Colored pencil on paper

"Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing" (D&C 19:38).



Left: Final Preparations at Rocky Ridge, by Stephen Mark Bartholomew

Oil on canvas

“One cold, dreary afternoon, my feet having been frosted, I felt that I could go no further, and withdrew from the little company, and sat down to await the end, being somewhat in a stupor. After a time, I was aroused by a voice, which seemed as audible as anything could be, which spoke to my very soul of the promises and blessings I had received, and which should surely be fulfilled, and that I had a mission to perform in Zion.

“I received strength, and was filled with the Spirit of the Lord, and arose and traveled on with a light heart” (Susannah Stone, age 25, Willie handcart company).⁴

Left: Prayer Interrupted, by Shauna Cook Clinger

Oil on canvas

Jane Ann Stewart became lost during the handcart trek. She slept one night on the bluffs of an open prairie, and “she was followed by some wolves, one of which came within two yards of her. It seemed inclined to be rather too familiar, which she instantly checked by a steady gaze, accompanied by an authoritative shake or wave of her right hand.”⁵



Left: The Prayer, by James Seward

Oil on canvas

“But behold, I say unto you that ye must pray always, and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul” (2 Nephi 32:9).



In Favor with God, by Simon Dewey

Acrylic
 “He that is righteous is favored of God” (1 Nephi 17:35).



Sister Manwaring and Daughters at Prayer, by George Edward Anderson

Photographic print
 “And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord” (D&C 68:28).

NOTES

1. Bible Dictionary, 752–53.
2. Bible Dictionary, 753.
3. In *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 204.
4. In Lynne S. Turner, *Emigrating Journals of the Willie and Martin Handcart Companies and the Hunt and Hodgett Wagon Trains* (1996), 224.
5. In Turner, *Emigrating Journals*, 36.



Harold B. Lee



Harold B. Lee was born on March 28, 1899, in Clifton, Idaho. As a stake president during the Great Depression, he initiated a welfare plan that became the forerunner of the Church's welfare system. On April 10, 1941, he was ordained an Apostle. He was set apart as President of the Church on July 7, 1972. He died a year and half later at age 74, on December 26, 1973, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The following general conference address, delivered in April 1973, was published in the Ensign in July 1973. Punctuation and capitalization have been standardized; subheads and note added.

You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is. You cannot light a fire in another soul unless it is burning in your own soul.

BY PRESIDENT HAROLD B. LEE
(1899–1973)
Eleventh President of the Church

Sitting where we do as the First Presidency, we have been aware these last six months that there has been such a feeling of need to have questions answered, to have spoken from this pulpit at this conference things that are needed by so many in this mixed-up world, to help them to set guidelines for their own lives. . . .

As I have listened to the Brethren, and feeling the concern that has been so frequently referred to, I have remembered the instruction that was given by the prophet Alma as a group of those who had been converted waited on the banks for baptism; and as he explained to them the nature of the covenant in which they were to enter as baptized members, he said:

“As ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light;

“Yea, and are willing to mourn with those

Stand



ALMA BAPTIZING IN THE WATERS OF MORMON, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in. . . .

“Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a



Ye in Holy Places

witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?" (Mosiah 18:8–10).

I call your attention to one of these requirements, particularly that which has

T*he greatest miracles I see today*

are not necessarily the healing of sick bodies, but the greatest miracles I see are the healing of sick souls.

been stressed by direct and indirect words in this conference: “are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light.” If I were to ask you what is the heaviest burden one may have to bear in this life, what would you answer? The heaviest burden that one has to bear in this life is the burden of sin.



KING BENJAMIN PREACHES TO THE NEPHITES, BY GARY L. KAPP

“After they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience” (Mosiah 4:2–3).

How do you help one to bear that great burden of sin in order that it might be light?

Some years ago President Romney and I were sitting in my office. The door opened and a fine young man came in with a troubled look on his face, and he said, “Brethren, I am going to the temple for the first time tomorrow. I have made some mistakes in the past, and I have gone to my bishop and my stake president, and I have made a clean disclosure of it all; and after a period of repentance and assurance that I have not returned again to those mistakes, they have now adjudged me ready to go to the temple. But, brethren, that is not enough. I want to know, and how can I know, that the Lord has forgiven me also.”

What would you answer one who would come to you asking that question? As we pondered for a moment, we remembered King Benjamin’s address contained in the book of Mosiah. Here was a group of people who now were asking for baptism, and they said they viewed themselves in their carnal state:

“And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified. . . .

“After they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience” (Mosiah 4:2–3).

There was the answer.

If the time comes when you have done all that you can to repent of your sins, whoever you are, wherever you are, and have made amends and restitution to the best of your ability; if it be something that will affect your standing in the Church and you have gone to the proper authorities, then you will want that confirming answer as to whether

or not the Lord has accepted of you. In your soul-searching, if you seek for and you find that peace of conscience, by that token you may know that the Lord has accepted of your repentance. Satan would have you think otherwise and sometimes persuade you that now having made one mistake, you might go on and on with no turning back. That is one of the great falsehoods. The miracle of forgiveness is available to all of those who turn from their evil doings and return no more, because the Lord has said in a revelation to us in our day: “Go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth [meaning again]

shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God” (D&C 82:7). Have that in mind, all of you who may be troubled with a burden of sin.

And to you who are teachers, may you help to lift that great burden from those who are carrying it and who have their conscience so seared that they are kept from activity, and they don’t know where to go to find the answers. You help them to that day of repentance and restitution in order that they too may have that peace of conscience, the confirming of the Spirit of the Lord that He has accepted of their repentance.

Healing Sick Souls

The great call has come now in the sermons of the Brethren to aid those who are in need of aid, not just temporal aid but spiritual aid. The greatest miracles I see today are not necessarily the healing of sick bodies, but the greatest miracles I see are the healing of sick souls, those who are sick in soul and spirit and are downhearted and distraught, on the verge of nervous breakdowns. We

are reaching out to all such because they are precious in the sight of the Lord and we want no one to feel that they are forgotten.

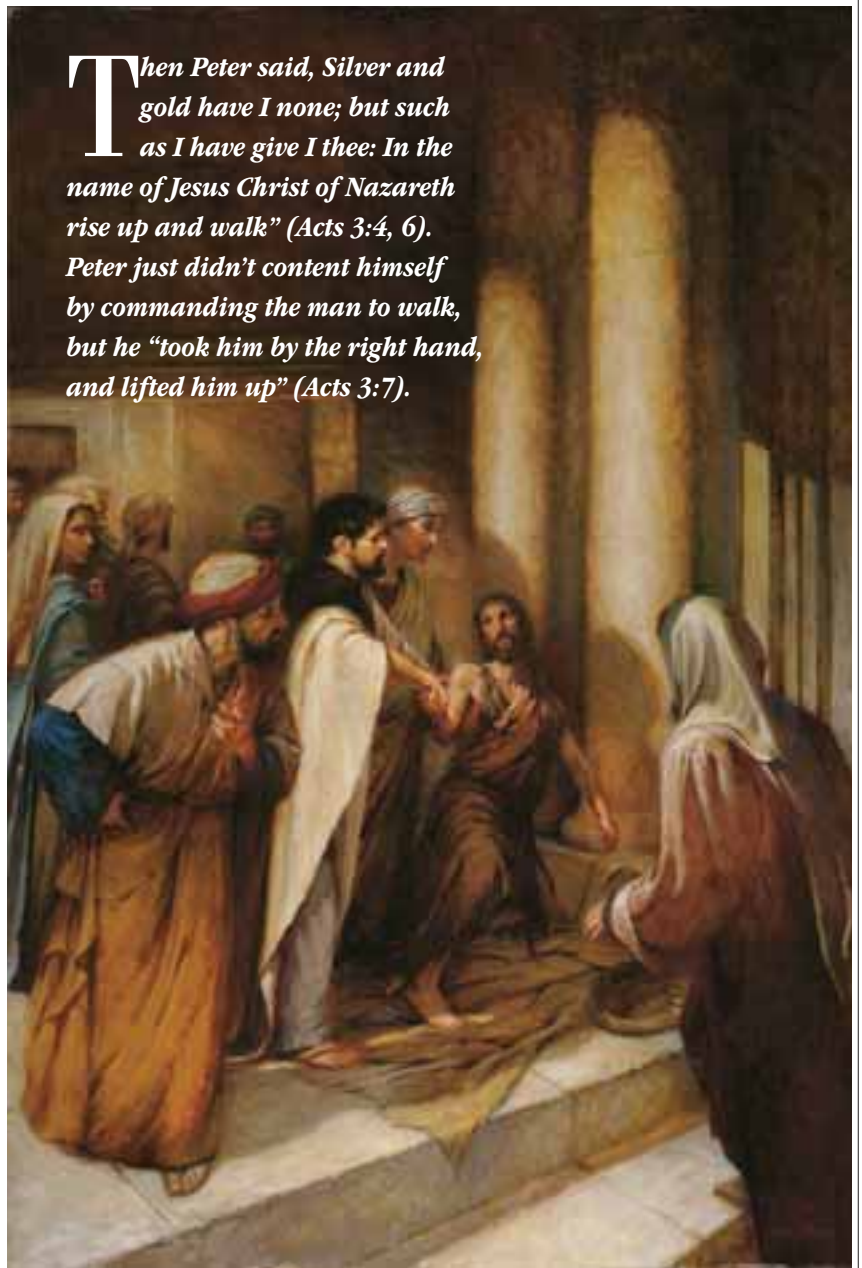
I read again and again the experience of Peter and John as they went through the gate beautiful on the way to the temple. Here was one who had never walked, impotent from his birth, begging alms of all who approached the gate. And as Peter and John approached, he held out his hand expectantly, asking for alms. Peter, speaking for this pair of missionaries—Church authorities—said, “Look on us.” And, of course, that heightened his expectation. “Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3:4, 6).

Now in my mind’s eye I can picture this man, what was in his mind: “Doesn’t this man know that I have never walked? He commands me to walk.” But the biblical record doesn’t end there. Peter just didn’t content himself by commanding the man to walk, but he “took him by the right hand, and lifted him up” (Acts 3:7).

Will you see that picture now of that noble soul, that chiefest of the Apostles, perhaps with his arms around the shoulders of this man, . . . saying, “Now, my good man, have courage; I will take a few steps with you. Let’s walk together, and I assure you that you can walk because you have received a blessing by the power and authority that God has given us as men, His servants.” Then the man leaped with joy.

You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is. You must be sure, if you would rescue the man, that you yourself are setting the example of what you would have him be. You cannot light a fire in another soul unless it is burning in your own soul. You teachers, the testimony that you bear, the spirit with which you teach and with which you lead, is one of the

Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3:4, 6). Peter just didn’t content himself by commanding the man to walk, but he “took him by the right hand, and lifted him up” (Acts 3:7).

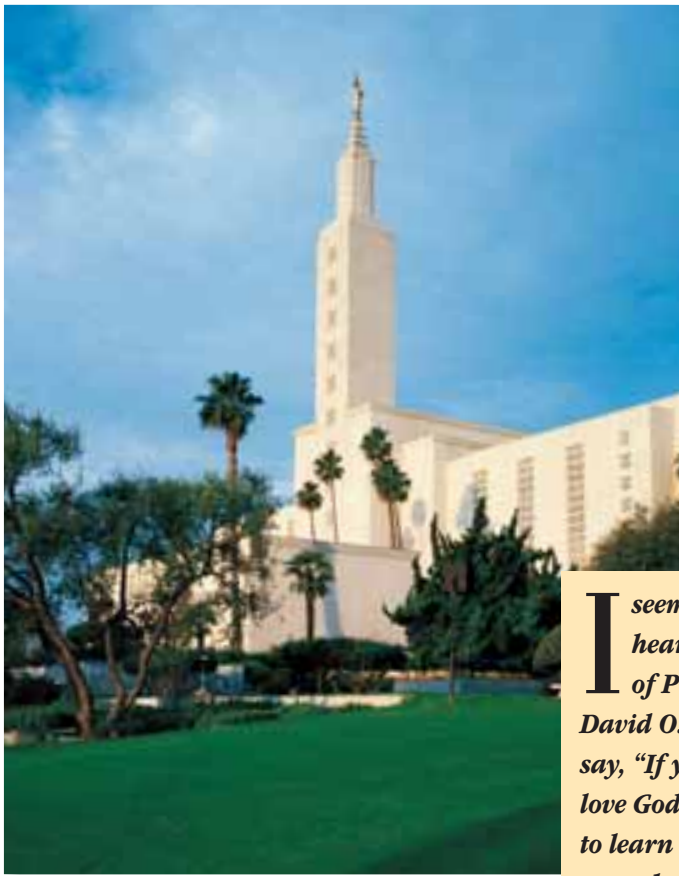


SUCH AS I HAVE I GIVE THEE, BY WALTER BRANE

most important assets that you can have as you help to strengthen those who need so much, wherein you have so much to give. Who of us, in whatever station we may have been in, have not needed strengthening?

May I impose upon you for a moment to express appreciation for something that happened to me some time ago, years ago. I was suffering from an ulcer condition that was becoming worse and worse. We had been touring a mission; my wife, Joan, and I were impressed the next morning that we should get home as quickly as possible, although we had planned to stay for some other meetings.

On the way across the country, we were sitting in the forward section of the airplane. Some of our Church



PHOTOGRAPH BY WEIDEN C. ANDERSEN

I seemed to have heard the voice of President David O. McKay say, “If you want to love God, you have to learn to love and serve the people. That is the way you show your love for God.”

members were in the next section. As we approached a certain point en route, someone laid his hand upon my head. I looked up; I could see no one. That happened again before we arrived home, again with the same experience. Who it was, by what means or what medium, I may never know, except I knew that I was receiving a blessing that I came a few hours later to know I needed most desperately.

As soon as we arrived home, my wife very anxiously called the doctor. It was now about 11 o'clock at night. He called me to come to the telephone, and he asked me how I was, and I said, “Well, I am very tired. I think I will be all right.” But shortly thereafter, there came massive hemorrhages which, had they occurred while we were in flight, I wouldn't be here today talking about it.

I know that there are powers divine that reach out when all other help is not available. . . . Yes, I know that there are such powers.

Guided by the Spirit

As I came to realize the overwhelming magnitude of the responsibility that now has been given to me, if I were to

have sat down and tried to think of the burden, I would have been devastated and wholly incapable of carrying it. But when I was guided by the Spirit to name two noble men, whose powerful words of teaching and testimony you have heard today, President N. Eldon Tanner [1898–1982] and President Marion G. Romney [1897–1988], I realized that mine was not the responsibility to carry these responsibilities alone. And then as we meet week by week

in the temple and look across the room and see 12 stalwart men, men chosen from out [of] the world and given the power of the holy apostleship, I am aware that no greater men walk the earth than these men.

The other day we met in the seminar for regional representatives of the Twelve. These are men who are fanning out over the whole earth now, to every corner of the earth. Newly baptized members who know little about the gospel and much less about the disciplines of the Church must be taught if the Church is to be safely led. These men

who have been chosen from out of the strongest men we have in the Church now are going out now under the direction of the Council of the Twelve. And there are also the mission representatives of the Twelve and the First Council of the Seventy associated with them. They are going out to the humblest everywhere and teaching them these fundamental principles, teaching them, as the Prophet Joseph answered when asked, “How do you govern your people?” His answer was, “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”¹

They are not going out to do the work themselves. As we have said to them, they are standing as “coaches” rather than as “quarterbacks” on the football team, teaching the quarterbacks how to direct, teaching them correct principles. They are men of faith. And how grateful we are for all these auxiliary workers who have gone out, likewise at great expense, great travel, and sacrifice on the part of their businesses and their families.

To you great leaders, stake presidencies, mission



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Collect a sack and several large rocks.

Read the story of President Marion G. Romney and the repentant young man. Have each family member write a common sin on a rock and then place it in the sack. Take turns carrying the sack and compare the physical weight to the burden of sin. Then remove each stone while you read the paragraph following “There was the answer.” Bear testimony of the blessing of repentance.

2. Have your family role-play the experience of Peter and John healing the lame man (see Acts 3:4, 6). Read President Lee’s statement on the first page of the article and ask what is meant by, “You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is. You cannot light a fire in another soul unless it is burning in your own soul.” Discuss ways to lift each other.

found in the writings of Joseph Smith in the Pearl of Great Price, where the Lord told His disciples to stand in holy places and be not moved, for He comes quickly, but no man knows the hour nor the day. That is the preparation.

Go home now to your people, I pray you, and say as did Joshua of old: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). Teach your families in your family home evening, teach them to keep the commandments of God, for therein is our only safety in these days. If they will do that, the powers of the

presidencies, bishoprics, priesthood quorum leaders, all of you, the faithful Saints everywhere, you who pray for us, I want you to know that we pray earnestly at the altars of the temple for all of you faithful who pray for us. How grateful we are for you!

As I come to you at the closing moments of this conference, I would like to take you back now to just one incident, and I am sorry that I can tell you only a part of it because of the limitations of some things contained therein.

It was just before the dedication of the Los Angeles Temple.

We were all preparing for that great occasion. It was something new in my life, when along about three or four o’clock in the morning, I enjoyed an experience that I think was not a dream, but it must have been a vision. It seemed that I was witnessing a great spiritual gathering, where men and women were standing up, two or three at a time, and speaking in tongues. The spirit was so unusual. I seemed to have heard the voice of President David O. McKay [1873–1970] say, “If you want to love God, you have to learn to love and serve the people. That is the way you show your love for God.” And there were other things then that I saw and heard.

And so I come to you today, with no shadow of doubting in my mind that I know the reality of the person who is presiding over this church, our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. I know that He is. I know that He is closer to us than many times we have any idea. They are not an absentee Father and Lord. They are concerned about us, helping to prepare us for the advent of the Savior, whose coming certainly isn’t too far away because of the signs that are becoming apparent.

All you need to do is to read the scriptures, particularly the inspired translation of Matthew, the 24th chapter,

Almighty will descend upon them as the dews from heaven, and the Holy Ghost will be theirs. That can be our guide, and that kind of Spirit shall guide us and direct us to His holy home.

And so as it is my privilege to do, I give you faithful members of the Church everywhere my blessing. God bless you, take care of you, preserve you as you travel home, that there may be no accident or no untoward experience. Take to your people out in the far reaches the feeling of love that we have for all of them; and indeed, as the missionaries go out, that love extends not only to those of our Father’s children who are already members of the Church but also to those who are our Father’s children to whom He would have us bring the gospel of truth; make them also to enjoy all the blessings that we now have.

May the Lord help us so to understand and do, and fill our stations, and not be found wanting in the Day of Judgment that we have not done all we know how to do to advance His work in righteousness, I humbly pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTE

1. In John Taylor, “The Organization of the Church,” *Millennial Star*, Nov. 15, 1851, 339.

Protecting Our Families



BY ELDER RICHARD J. MAYNES
Of the Seventy

Throughout the ages prophets of God have accurately predicted the conditions of the world in the last days.

While some of these conditions—social, political, and environmental—seem perplexing to many, the earnest disciple of Christ has read about them and is prepared for tumultuous and confusing times.

In the eighth chapter of Mormon, the ancient prophet Moroni foretold that the record of his people would come forth in a day of wickedness and apostasy. He prophesied that the Book of Mormon would come forth in a day when:

- “It shall be said that miracles are done away” (v. 26).
- “The blood of saints shall cry unto the Lord, because of secret combinations and the works of darkness” (v. 27).
- “The power of God shall be denied, and churches become defiled and be lifted up in the pride of their hearts” (v. 28).
- “There shall be heard of fires, and tempests, and vapors of smoke in foreign lands” (v. 29).
- “There shall also be heard of wars, rumors of wars, and earthquakes in divers places” (v. 30).
- “There shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth; there shall be murders, and robbing, and lying, and deceivings, and whoredoms, and all manner of abominations” (v. 31).

Conditions of Our Day

Sixteen hundred years ago, Moroni accurately prophesied the conditions to be found in the latter days—our days—in which the Book of Mormon would come forth. Without access to the prophecies of the Lord’s chosen leaders, we would have difficulty imagining the dramatic changes that are rapidly taking place within the social fabric of the world’s nations.

Certainly the rapid changes in technology, medical advances, and global economic opportunities, as well as a spreading desire for basic freedoms, have the potential to do great good and provide many blessings. At the same time, worldwide political upheaval, economic exploitation, and fanaticism can greatly restrict the potential for good and the wise use of moral agency.

One thing is certain: it isn’t simple or easy to raise a family in the new millennium. The so-called ease of modern living can actually become an impediment to gospel living. We all realize that in today’s society, the family is under assault throughout the entire world, and young people are particularly vulnerable.

In light of modern-day wickedness and social conditions so accurately predicted by Moroni, how can we rear faithful children and establish Zion in our homes? We start by realizing that it will require great effort and diligence to follow the admonition of the Lord and His prophets.

We have been taught the importance of daily personal and family prayer.

It isn’t simple or easy to raise a family in the new millennium. The family is under assault throughout the entire world, and young people are particularly vulnerable.

LESSONS FROM THE
BOOK OF MORMON

in the Last Days



We need to connect our celestial goals with everyday life in our homes. Gospel basics will ultimately confound Satan and protect our families.

We have been taught the importance of daily personal and family scripture study.

We have been taught the importance of weekly family home evening.

Church leaders continually bring these basic gospel principles to our attention. Why? Because the Lord understands that the basic gospel principles that we strive to live each day will ultimately save our children and help establish Zion in our homes.

Practicing the Principles

When our children were growing up, Sister Maynes and I tried to regularly hold family prayer and scripture study every morning before school. We also held family home evening on Monday nights.

We hoped that our children, during a moment of temptation or difficulty later in the day, would remember that we had prayed, even though they might not remember the words of our family prayer. We hoped that they would remember that we had read the scriptures, even though they might not remember the words of the scriptures. We hoped that they would remember the spirit they had felt during family home evening, even though they might not remember the lesson during that sacred family time. We firmly believed that when temptation presented itself to our children, they would be protected by the gospel traditions of our home.

Three hours of meetings on Sunday clearly isn't sufficient time to prepare our families to withstand the difficulties Moroni saw. We need to connect our celestial goals with everyday life in our homes. Remember that gospel basics—those seemingly “small and simple things” (Alma 37:6) we strive to practice in following the Lord—will



The only true plan of safety, security, and happiness in these latter days is to follow the counsel of the Lord and His prophets.



ultimately confound Satan and protect our families.

The Lord has stated, “For if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you” (D&C 78:7).

Finding Hope

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we need not be surprised or discouraged by the rapid decline of moral values in our day. Rather, we can take hope by remembering that ancient prophets accurately predicted today's social conditions and that modern

prophets continue to warn us about those conditions. The only true plan of safety, security, and happiness in these latter days is to follow the counsel of the Lord and His prophets.

President Thomas S. Monson counsels us regarding life in these, the last days: “We cannot afford to be complacent. We live in perilous times; the signs are all around us. We are acutely aware of the negative influences in our society that stalk traditional families. . . .

“We, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, must stand up to the dangers which surround us and our families.”¹

I hope and pray that we might do those things required by the gospel of Jesus Christ, though they may seem “small and simple,” to protect and bless our families and ourselves in this world as we prepare for the next. ■

NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 19.



LIVING PROPHETS SPOKE TO ME

NAME WITHHELD

Several years ago I eagerly signed a request sheet in my ward as soon as it was announced that a few tickets for general conference were available. Later that day as a counselor in our ward bishopric pressed a ticket into my hand, he smiled warmly and said, “We wanted you to go.” I didn’t try to ponder all he meant by that but nevertheless felt warmed by his comment.

Now, here I was, sitting on the first row of the balcony taking in the overwhelming grandeur that is general conference, listening to the Tabernacle Choir. When it was time for the congregation to sing, I sang with enthusiasm. As we sang “How Firm a Foundation,” I was filled to overflowing by the Spirit, though the meeting had scarcely begun.

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, began by saying, “My dear brothers and sisters and friends, my message this morning is one of hope and solace to heartbroken parents who have done their best to rear their children in righteousness with love and devotion, but have despaired because their child has rebelled or been led astray to follow the path of evil and destruction.” The words pierced my heart—I knew this message was for me. He continued, “I am reminded of the words of Jeremiah: ‘A voice was heard in Ramah, . . . Rahel weeping for her children’” (Jeremiah 31:15). Had my own prayers and tears been heard? I had spent 35 years of anguish over just such a child.

President Faust continued, “To this the Lord gave this welcome reassurance, ‘Refrain thy voice from weeping, . . . for thy work shall be rewarded . . . ; they shall come again from the land of the enemy’ [Jeremiah 31:16]. . . . The love of a parent

for a child is continuous and transcends heartbreak and disappointment.”¹ I realized that President Faust understood my problem, and he was speaking to me. My tears flowed freely.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said that topics are often not assigned to the Brethren for general conference. Yet all the speakers that morning seemed to have been inspired to give insights and comfort to those who needed counseling. I was lifted in spirit and felt renewed and reinvigorated.

I returned home and listened to the afternoon session of the conference, pondering the talks I heard about eternal marriage and happy families. These are difficult topics for me, since my marriage ended long ago and my adult daughter’s mental illness, use of drugs and alcohol, and habits of deception continue to wreak havoc with her life and mine too. Yet I felt comforted and blessed.

Now, a year after that beautiful conference, I have read through those talks again and again. I was greatly blessed that day and given strength to go forward with my life. I considered that perhaps it was time to quit punishing myself for the way my child turned out.

Although the prophet may not have assigned the topics for those general conference talks, I believe that Heavenly Father, through the promptings of the Spirit, did. I thank the Brethren for speaking directly to me and to others who needed such comfort. ■

NOTE

1. “Dear Are the Sheep That Have Wandered,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 61.

*“ . . . my message
this morning
is one of hope
and solace to
heartbroken
parents who
have done
their best . . . ”*

Preparing Yourself for Marriage

BY ELDER ERIC B. SHUMWAY

President of the Nuku'alofa Tonga Temple; served as an Area Seventy in the North America West Area from 2004 to 2007



Regardless of your present dating prospects, you can develop qualities that will prepare you for marriage.

One of the alarming phenomena in our society today is the continuing decline of the traditional family—that is, a father and mother married with children. This is seen in the increase of divorce, the number of children being raised by one parent, the eagerness of many people to redefine

marriage to fit diverse lifestyles, and the hesitancy for a variety of reasons of many young people to enter into formal marriage. Each of these is an impediment and adversary to the family. They create confusion, heartbreak, and sorrow in ever-widening circles.

I would like to address the last of these

issues, the increasing number of young people who are of marriageable age but who may lack the faith or have not developed the personal qualities necessary for a wholesome, congenial marriage.

MARRIAGE IS ORDAINED OF GOD

I begin with the doctrinal foundation of marriage and family, which should go into our hearts like fire—even for those who are married but whose relationships have become cold or blasé and need more sparkle and romance.

First, from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World”: “Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and . . . the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.”¹ Ponder this statement. This single truth—that the cosmic purpose of this earth and the universe has as its central feature marriage and the family, with husband and wife at the core—should inspire our souls and our imaginations. Marriage and family are not human inventions or social constructs evolving from human necessity. They are part of a heavenly order that leads to eternal life and eternal happiness.

Consider the following comments from Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Marriage brings greater possibilities for happiness than does any other human relationship. . . . [It] is the foundry for social order, the fountain of virtue, and the foundation for eternal exaltation. . . . [It] is sanctified when it is cherished and honored in holiness. . . . Marriage is both a commandment and an exalting principle of the gospel.”²

I would like to add that marriage and family offer the greatest opportunities for the growth of the character and soul of the individual. It is a vortex of learning how to become like Heavenly Father in all of His sacred roles.

NOW IS THE TIME TO PREPARE

Even when they know these things about marriage and family, many seem to slip through adolescence, teen years, and early adulthood naive and clueless about what a successful marriage entails. They are mature physically



PHOTOGRAPH BY LANA LEISHMAN

Read out of the best books, beginning with the scriptures. Reading will open the world to you and make your mind a repository you can draw from later.

to be sure, full of the chemistry of desire, but often are not prepared psychologically, emotionally, or spiritually for the realities of marriage and family life. You can’t do a crash course in marriage in a few weeks or months before you kneel at the altar and expect to establish a warm, lasting, nurturing relationship.

Regardless of your present dating prospects, you can spend this precious time of preparation developing qualities that will prepare you for marriage. This is a plea to sincerely prepare, to seek to acquire the personal attributes that will sustain a happy marriage.

Love the Lord

First, love God with all your heart, might, mind, and strength (see D&C 4:2). The more you can love God and Jesus Christ, the more you will be able to love your future spouse and children. Follow Christ and keep an eternal perspective; in other words, keep your eye and your heart on what is important eternally and lasts eternally. Even with all its joys and pleasure, our mortal existence is temporary and minuscule compared to heaven and the life beyond. As the Apostle Paul said: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Engage proactively in Church and community service and in social activities.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW REIER

Become Productive

In looking forward to marriage, do not assume a wait-and-see posture. This is not just a period for marking time or treading water. Seek to become a happy, productive person in your own right. If you have been unsuccessful in love or hurt or betrayed or ignored, break away from complaining and self-pity. Fill your life with all the things that will improve the head, the heart, and the hand.

Read out of the best books, beginning with the scriptures. Get to know the great and noble human spirits in history and literature. Reading will open the world to you and make your mind a repository of things you can draw from later. Enjoy the beauties of the earth, of nature, and of the arts. Engage proactively in Church and community service and in social activities. Exercise to improve physical and mental health. Fill your life with journal writing, acquiring new job skills, creating through hobbies, composing music or

poetry, missionary work, and family history. I promise you that every gift you develop now will be a valuable asset when you have a family.

Be Happy

Cultivate a cheerful attitude and the ability to laugh, even at yourself. A sour face and grumpy disposition are truly a gruesome burden to impose on roommates and others. Get a handle on your moods. Learn how to act better than you feel. Some might ask, "Isn't that hypocritical?" Certainly not. You might not be able to choose how you feel, but you can choose how you act.

To those who have not seen a lot of happiness in marriage around them, who perhaps come from dysfunctional situations, don't despair. You can be a cycle breaker, the pioneer who, through faith in Jesus Christ and covenant keeping, cuts a new path of goodness and stability. You can create a legacy of righteousness for your posterity.

Develop Friendship

Learning to be a true friend is a perfect preface to a happy marriage. Become expert in friendship: respectful, loyal, and fun. Be quick to lift others and to forgive offenses.

Create Order

As you prepare for marriage, develop a sense, even a passion, for order in your life. Regardless of what else is going well or how patient your future spouse might be, a careless attitude toward order will weigh heavily on your relationship. For example, making your bed each morning is the beginning for order and peace in your universe. Taking



Go back to the temple regularly. I cannot think of anything that will better prepare a person for a happy marriage.

Exercise to improve physical and mental health.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF COMSTOCK PHOTOS

a mere 35 to 45 seconds to do this can help produce a whole day of tranquil benefit.

The temple in scripture is called a house of prayer, fasting, faith, learning, glory, order, and God (see D&C 88:119). The same should be said of our own homes.



*Enjoy the
beauties
of the earth,
of nature,
and of the arts.*

Serve

Practicing consistent acts of service and kindness toward your roommates and others is excellent preparation for marriage and family. Many of us serve, but are we willing when it is inconvenient? Serving in our families is seldom convenient.

Maintain Moral Purity

A most critical preparation for marriage is striving for moral purity, reserving sexual intimacy only for a

covenanted loved one in the sacred bonds of marriage. The law of chastity, I testify, is a law of happiness. It is a law that protects the sacred powers of procreation and magnifies the lyrical joys of romantic intimacy in a way that God created, ordained, and blessed.

However long you wait and prepare for marriage, be faithful to your future spouse. Know that “wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). While complete repentance can bring about a total forgiveness and restoration of chastity, unyielding obedience to the law of chastity from youth can be a source of tremendous gratitude and joy in marriage.

There is an added dimension of romance and excitement in a chaste person who waits for marriage for the full expression of his or her love. Total fidelity after marriage also ensures the quality and trust that magnifies the romance in marriage.

Attend the Temple

The temple ordinances focus on the rescue and the salvation of families. Live worthy of the temple’s promises. Go back to the temple regularly. I cannot think of anything that will better prepare a person for the wonderful adventures and prospects of a happy marriage than regular temple attendance.

Those of you who are endowed, the temple should be your haven, almost like a school of the prophets in which the Holy Ghost is the instructor. Those of you who are not yet endowed, let the temple be the focal point in your longing and preparation.

I pray that Heavenly Father will bless us all to be faithful and to cultivate sincerely the Christlike attributes that will bless and perpetuate a marriage and family into eternity. ■

Adapted from a devotional address given at BYU–Hawaii on September 7, 2006.

NOTES

1. *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
2. Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, May 2006, 36–37.

Gospel Doctrines: Anchors to Our Souls

BY ELDER MARLIN K. JENSEN

Of the Seventy

Adapted from an address delivered at the 1998 Brigham Young University Women's Conference.

My formal training was not in the behavioral sciences, but I have spent much time trying to understand and change my own behavior and assist those around me to change theirs. From the scriptures I have learned that gospel teachings, sometimes called doctrines, are powerful shapers of human behavior.

President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has stated the principle beautifully: “True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior.”¹

A good example of this truth is found in the Old Testament story of Joseph, one of Jacob’s 12 sons, who resisted the temptation of Potiphar’s wife (see Genesis 39:7–12).



The best measurement of how well we understand the doctrines of the gospel is how clearly and simply we teach them and live them.

Joseph's classic response to her enticement provides a model for all who encounter similar temptations. The record simply says, "He refused" (v. 8).

Joseph then explains his refusal:

"Behold, [Potiphar knoweth] not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

"There is none greater in this house than I, neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (vv. 8–9).

Joseph's rhetorical question not only speaks volumes about his sterling character but also helps explain why he had such character. Can there be any doubt that Joseph had been taught the doctrine that God is our Father, that we are His children, and that He has created a plan for our lives? In this telling moment, as Joseph wisely exercised his agency, he obviously wasn't worried about the possibility of disease, unwanted pregnancy, or even disappointing his earthly father. His thoughts and motives were much more noble—what would his Heavenly Father think? How could he possibly offend Him? The influence of doctrine on our behavior can be great and eternally beneficial.

Learning the Doctrine

Perhaps that is why early in this dispensation the Lord said to the Saints, "And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" (D&C 88:77). Because we can't teach what we haven't learned, an important implication of this commandment is that we must acquire a basic knowledge of gospel doctrine in our heads and hearts.

We can draw on this knowledge in moments of personal need and when we want to teach the doctrines of the kingdom to others. Our knowledge will help save us, but each of us must pay the price to obtain it. To do so we may need to get up a little earlier, stay up a little later, or consistently sneak a few precious moments for study during the day. Whatever price we have to pay, it will be worth it. A determined effort to study gospel doctrine will also have the benefit of immersing us in a prime source of that doctrine—the scriptures.

Applying the Doctrine

Learning and teaching doctrine to our families is the greatest service we could ever render to them or anyone else because thereby faith in Christ increases and this is the surest anchor to our souls. When we begin to internalize the doctrines of the gospel—in Jeremiah's words, to put them in our "inward parts, and write [them] in [our] hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33)—it will not be long before we and those around us begin to notice changes in our behavior.

A controlling parent who comes to understand the doctrine of agency will cease that control.

A selfish and self-centered spouse who is touched by the power of the doctrine of charity will no longer seek his or her own interests (see Moroni 7:45).

An honest investigator who comes to fully understand the doctrine and blessings of baptism as taught by the missionaries will not only accept their invitation to be baptized but will also eagerly make all necessary preparations for the performance of the ordinance.

All of us who truly come to comprehend the matchless doctrine of the Atonement will appreciate the enormity of our debt to the Savior and will seek diligently to repay that debt with offerings of repentance, obedience to the commandments, and Christian service.

As we study and apply gospel doctrines in our lives, we will come to understand them in their relationship and necessary balance to each other. We will learn, for instance, that justice cannot be respected without a knowledge of the limitations of mercy; that agency operates best in a climate of kindness and unfeigned love; and that "repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment" (Alma 42:16).

The Power of Doctrine

Perhaps the best measurement of how well we understand the doctrines of the gospel is how clearly and simply we teach them and live them. And live and teach them we must! (see Matthew 5:19; D&C 68:25). Is there a better way to tangibly express love to our families than to teach them the saving doctrines of the gospel?

The teaching of doctrine is accompanied by a special spirit and a power that are not usually present when the more mundane aspects of life are discussed. At the April 1990 general conference, Elder Carlos E. Asay (1926–99) of the Seventy gave a talk about the Prophet Joseph Smith.² His talk tugged at my heartstrings in an unusual and forceful way. When I encountered Elder Asay a few days after conference and expressed my feelings about the power his words had seemed to carry, he taught me a valuable lesson. “Haven’t you learned that there are certain gospel topics about which one can never give a poor talk?” he asked. “You can never give a poor talk about Joseph Smith and his divine calling.”

I have come to know that what Elder Asay taught me about Joseph Smith is true of every doctrine of the gospel. When we teach doctrine, an accompanying power and spirit will carry our teachings deep into the hearts of those we teach and will bring those teachings to their remembrance at appropriate and critical times (see Alma 31:5).

Examples of this truth in scripture are numerous. I cite my favorite, which is young Alma’s recounting the details of his conversion. He gives us a vivid description of the depth of his torment related to past transgressions and then says, “While I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world” (Alma 36:17).

Whenever I read this passage and realize that in his moment of extreme need, young Alma remembered his father’s teachings concerning the Atonement, I quietly wonder what, if anything, our children will ever remember of the doctrines my wife, Kathy, and I have attempted to teach them. Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing to be remembered and quoted in this way by our children and grandchildren?

The truly noteworthy element in Alma’s story, however, isn’t that he remembered his father’s doctrinal teachings; rather, it is the change in his behavior that followed.

“And from that time [when he remembered his father’s teachings on the Atonement] even until now, I have labored

without ceasing, that I might bring souls unto repentance; that I might bring them to taste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste; that they might also be born of God, and be filled with the Holy Ghost” (Alma 36:24).

Alma’s experience also illustrates the important fact that so much of the behavior we hope for in our own lives and in the lives of others is related to personal conviction and understanding of Christ’s Atonement.

A Home Teaching Experience

Several years ago I had a confirming experience of my own concerning the transforming power of doctrine. It involved a less-active family to which I was assigned as a home teacher. I had been going to their home quite regularly for many years and usually shared a brief message but never really systematically taught them the doctrines of the kingdom. All the while this good couple was working on the challenges of a second marriage for each of them and the resulting financial and family stresses such arrangements can bring. They were good, honest people with little background in the gospel.

When Kathy and I returned home from a two-year mission in Rochester, New York, I asked this family if my young companion and I could teach them the doctrines of the gospel in an organized way. The wife’s reply still haunts me: “We always hoped you would do that.”

I’ll never forget the first night we really began to teach them gospel doctrines. We had a brief prayer and then I began. “You should know,” I said, “that God is our Father, that we are His children, that He loves us, and that because of that love He has created a plan for our lives.”

For the first time, as I taught that eager couple the doctrines of the kingdom, a spirit and power came into their home that in all my years of trying I had never been able to create.

To make a heartwarming story short, it wasn’t long before this couple began coming to church. Doctrine *does* change behavior! At church they were directed to a gospel essentials class and exposed in sacrament meeting

to gospel sermons. Two sister missionaries were invited to teach them more doctrine. A perceptive bishop extended a call to them to become our ward food storage coordinators. They accepted the call and became so enamored with our local cannery and the good people there that they agreed to serve a one-year welfare services mission, giving about 20 hours of service each week.

They are now attempting by precept and example to teach their children and grandchildren the doctrines of the kingdom. The husband even became one of our family's home teachers! I learned in a powerful way that an understanding of gospel doctrine changes behavior.

I share my witness that we must learn doctrine and

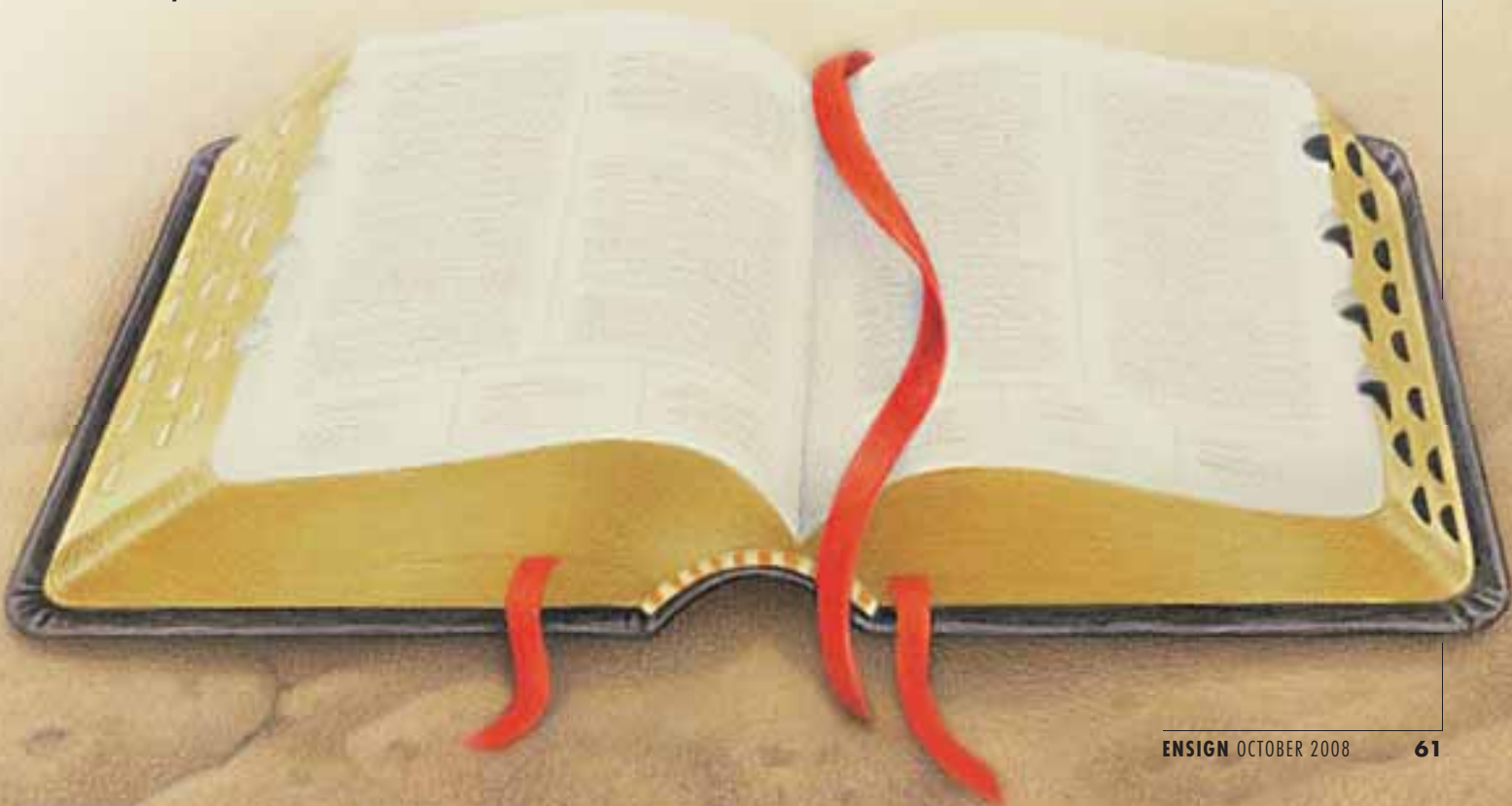
teach it. If we do so we will increasingly be found in our homes and elsewhere, as Nephi observed, "talk[ing] of Christ, . . . preach[ing] of Christ, prophesy[ing] of Christ, and . . . writ[ing] according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins" (2 Nephi 25:26).

Learning and teaching doctrine to our families is the greatest service we could ever render to them or anyone else because thereby faith in Christ increases and this is the surest anchor to our souls. ■

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, "Do Not Fear," *Ensign*, May 2004, 79.
2. See Carlos E. Asay, "One Small Step for a Man; One Giant Leap for Mankind," *Ensign*, May 1990, 62–65.

A determined effort to study gospel doctrine will also have the benefit of immersing us in a prime source of that doctrine—the scriptures.





I couldn't believe my eyes. The check had been issued for exactly the amount I needed.

I HAD FAITH BUT NO MONEY

By Teódulo Troconiz

At the end of 1988 I was enjoying my calling as second counselor in the bishopric in Ciudad Ojeda, Venezuela, but I had a pressing concern. I had been a member of the Church for over a year, but I had not yet received my temple blessings.

One day a friend from the nearby city of Maracaibo came to visit. Before long we had struck up a conversation about spiritual matters.

Suddenly my friend was prompted to say, "Brother Troconiz, I believe that Heavenly Father wants you to go to the temple and receive the eternal blessings He has promised His children."

"I cannot go," I replied. "There is no temple here in Venezuela, and a trip out of the country is very expensive. I don't have the money."

He thought this over for a moment and then said, "If you really want to go to the temple, Heavenly Father will provide a way for you to go."

I replied, "If Heavenly Father will provide that kind of help, I will go!"

From that moment on I was filled with faith and hope that I would be able to go to the temple. The next day I called the stake leaders and was told that a trip had been scheduled to the Lima Peru Temple, the closest temple at the time, in January. The trip would cost 16,500 bolivares and

would cover the plane ticket, food, and lodging.

The days went by, and the deadline for turning in the money was fast approaching. I tried to earn the money, but I was no closer to having what I needed. My faith never faltered, however. I was sure that Heavenly Father would provide a way.

Not long before the deadline, I received a telephone call from a former employer. The person calling addressed me by name and said, "You were employed by this petroleum company five years ago. When you left, your benefits were not calculated correctly. Please come in and pick up the check we have issued in your name."

I went to get the check the next day. When I looked at the amount, I couldn't believe my eyes. The check had been issued for exactly 16,500 bolivares!

On January 17, 1989, I entered the Lima Peru Temple and received my temple endowment. My friend was right. Heavenly Father had provided a way for me to go to the temple. As Nephi declared, "The Lord is able to do all things . . . for the children of men, if it so be that they exercise faith in him" (1 Nephi 7:12). ■

EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE

By Kandyce Coston

My eyes filled with tears as I drove to the hospital for more testing. I had been diagnosed with cancer after the birth of my daughter two years earlier. I

had undergone surgery and received treatment, and I was about to find out if the treatments had worked. “Heavenly Father, I have learned a lot from this experience. Please

take this trial from me. I want to raise my daughter and one day serve a mission with my husband. Please heal me.”

The tears rolled down my face. Suddenly my prayer changed to the words of the song “A Child’s Prayer.”¹ Something compelled me to speak out loud.



As I drove to the hospital, I told Heavenly Father that I wanted to raise my daughter and serve a mission with my husband. I prayed that He would heal me.

*Pray, he is there;
Speak, he is list'ning.
You are his child;
His love now surrounds you.
He bears your prayer.*

An overwhelming feeling of love came over me. I felt that Heavenly Father knew me and was concerned about me and was listening to me. I felt that everything would be OK.

I received the results the next day. The tests showed no signs of cancer. I felt a huge burden lifted from me. The following day, however, my doctor called and explained that although the earlier results were clean, the blood test showed I still had significant cancer activity. “How could that be?” I questioned. If this was really what was going on, why had I felt that Heavenly Father had answered my prayer?

I tried to put my doubts aside as I returned for more testing. These results showed not only that I still had cancer but also that the cancer had spread. I couldn't help but wonder about my experience in the car. I couldn't deny what I had felt, yet I started to doubt my interpretation.

The new information was overwhelming and caused serious reflection. I felt that I still needed to learn something from this trial. As I pondered, I realized that I had been going through all the motions of an active Latter-day Saint, yet I often did things out of habit rather than sincerity. I was not at the spiritual level where I wanted to be. I needed to return to

the basics, so I began focusing on areas that would bring me closer to Jesus Christ. I needed His strength to make it through my trials.

As I put more effort into spiritual matters, my faith in Jesus Christ and His plan for me increased. I realized that my experience while driving to the hospital really was an answer to prayer. As I acknowledge and accept that answer (that everything will be fine), I recognize that Heavenly Father does not always specify when everything will be taken care of. I may never be completely healed

physically, but I am learning to accept His will. My life is truly in His hands.

Seven years have passed since I was diagnosed with cancer. I have had numerous surgeries and treatments, yet I still have cancer. Life, however, goes on, and I'm grateful for that. With my trials have come blessings, including a second daughter. Most important, the Lord's answer that “everything will be fine” still comforts me. ■

Update: Sister Coston's latest checkup, at eight years since diagnosis, showed no signs of cancer.

NOTE

1. *Children's Songbook*, 12–13.

MY REMARKABLE DREAM

By Jeffery S. Rowe

In a highway accident many years ago, I sustained multiple injuries, the worst of which left me in a coma for three months. Priesthood blessings, along with the support of my family, enabled me to have what one of my doctors called “a remarkable recovery.”

But my head injuries weakened my short-term memory, and I can no longer remember my dreams. Often I awake and think, “Oh, I was dreaming,” but at that moment, the dream slips from my mind forever.

Seventeen years after that accident, I was called to be the bishop of my ward. During a subsequent ward council meeting, the Primary president proposed calling a particular

couple to teach the CTR class. My counselors and I quickly traded surprised glances.

The sister attended church, though inconsistently, but her husband hadn't attended for years. Nevertheless, we all felt they should have the opportunity to consider the calling.

The night before I spoke with the couple, I had a vivid dream. I awoke the next morning and remembered it completely. It was all about what to say at the interview so they would accept the call to serve. I felt shocked at remembering my first dream in 17 years, but more than that, the dream's content thrilled and energized me.

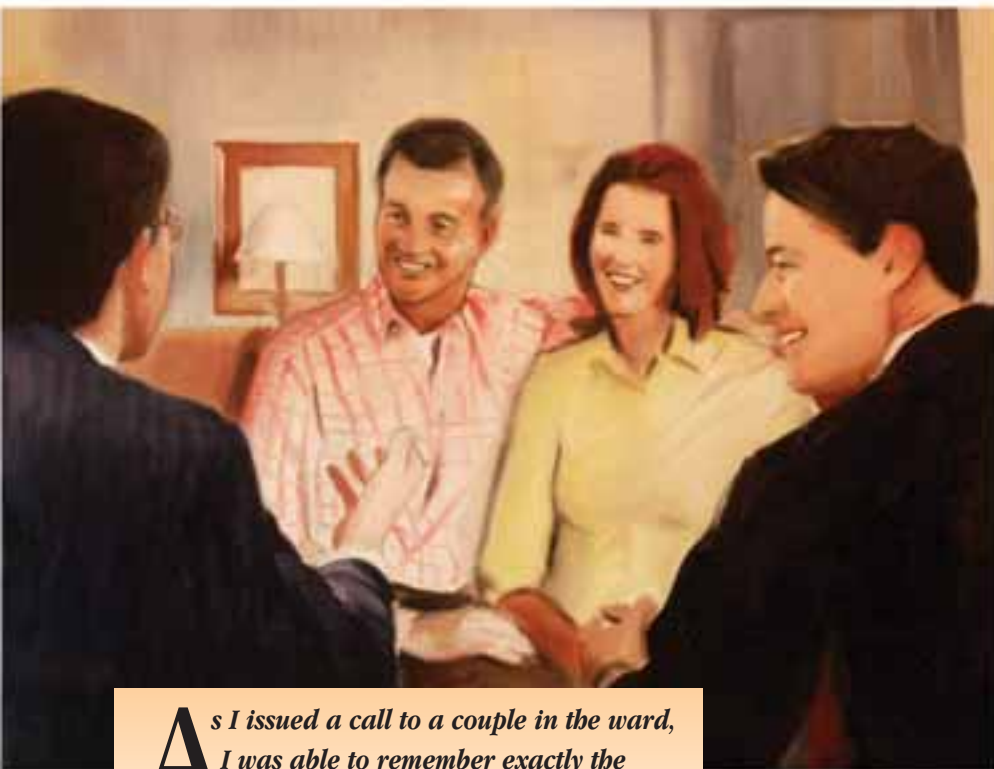
That evening my counselor picked me up. As we drove to the

appointment, he said, “Bishop, I’m going to let you do all the talking.” I remember smiling confidently because I felt the Lord had outlined my presentation for me.

During the interview I repeated

dedication, and they both became active in the ward. A couple of years later they were sealed in the temple.

To this day, that particular dream is the only one I have remembered



As I issued a call to a couple in the ward, I was able to remember exactly the words of my dream the night before.

the dream exactly, and the couple accepted the call. As we headed home for the night, my counselor said, “I feel like I’ve just been schooled by the master.” I smiled again because I knew it was true—both of us had been schooled by the Master.

The husband and wife carried out their Primary duties with

for the past 28 years.

I feel certain that

Heavenly Father knew

the time was perfect for this couple. Consequently, He inspired the Primary president and, for one night, blessed my partly out-of-order memory to function perfectly. Once again, I realize that the Lord stands at the head of this Church and that “the eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on, until all his promises shall be fulfilled” (Mormon 8:22). ■

FAITH TO STOP A FLOOD

By Pirkko Kassinen

It was a spring day in Helsinki, Finland. The sun was shining brightly, and the snow was melting fast. For hours I had been working with my boys, Juha, eight, and Hannu, six, to keep melting snow from flooding our cellar. The nearby drain that should have handled the pooling water was still frozen solid.

As my husband left for work that morning, he told us to make sure we kept the water out of the cellar. We worked hard until the afternoon, when it was time to leave for Primary. (At that time Primary was held on a weekday.) I told my boys, however, that they would have to miss Primary in order to help stop the water from getting into the cellar. Besides, my husband wasn’t a member of the Church, and he would not understand how important Primary was to our sons.

In unison, Juha and Hannu assured me that if we went to Primary, Heavenly Father would see to it that the water wouldn’t reach the cellar. I looked back and forth from the pooling water to the faith-filled faces of my sons. Part of me said, “You cannot go because no power can stop the water from flooding the cellar.” I appealed to Heavenly Father with a prayer in



my heart. Then I made a difficult decision.

“We are going to Primary now!” I declared as I threw down the buckets. No matter what happened, I was not going to injure my children’s faith.

The boys had a wonderful time at Primary. But as we drove home afterward, the closer we got to our house, the more my fears grew. Reaching the yard, the boys ran quickly to the cellar door. Looking down, they cried out, “Mother, what did we tell you?” I hurried over. I will never forget the sight that greeted my eyes. The area was completely dry, as if it had been mopped. There were no signs of water anywhere. Even now, 40 years later, it is hard for me to believe what I saw.

The glow in my boys’ eyes reflected joy and trust in Heavenly Father. Joy—and gratitude—filled my heart too!

No power in the world can beat childlike faith. The scriptures say that if we believe and doubt not, we can move a mountain (see Matthew 17:20). That day the power of my children’s faith stopped a flood. ■

I thought to myself that no power could keep the water out of our cellar. The faith of my sons told them otherwise.

GENDER IS AN ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTIC OF ETERNAL IDENTITY AND PURPOSE



Teach the scriptures and statements that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you teach to share what they have felt and learned.

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

Why Is Gender Essential?

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “[Gender] in large measure defines who we are, why we are here upon the earth, and what we are to do and become. For divine purposes, male and female spirits are different, distinctive, and complementary. . . . The unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females were needed to implement the plan of

happiness” (“Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” *Liabona*, June 2006, 51; *Ensign*, June 2006, 83).



Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president: “As spirit daughters of God, women ‘received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth’ (D&C 138:56) on the earth. They were among the ‘noble and great ones’ (D&C 138:55) who ‘shouted for joy’ (Job 38:7) at the creation of the earth because they would be given a physical body with the opportunity to be proven in a mortal sphere (see Abraham 3:25). They wished to work side by side with righteous men to accomplish eternal goals that neither can attain independently. Female roles did not begin on earth, and they do not end here. A woman who treasures motherhood on earth will treasure motherhood

in the world to come” (“A ‘Mother Heart,’” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 76).

What Can I Do Because of My Role in Heavenly Father’s Plan?

Margaret D. Nadauld, former Young Women general president: “Women of God can never be like women of the world. The world has enough women who are tough; we need women who are tender. There are enough women who are coarse; we need women who are kind. . . . We have enough women of fame and fortune; we need more women of faith” (“The Joy of Womanhood,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2001, 18; *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 15).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “The premortal and mortal natures of men and women were specified by God Himself. . . . [Sometimes women] ask: ‘Is a woman’s value dependent exclusively upon her role as a wife and mother?’ The answer is simple and obvious: No. . . . Every righteous man and woman has a significant role to play in the onward march of the kingdom of God. . . .

“. . . My dear sisters, we believe in you. We believe in and are counting on your goodness and your strength. . . . And we believe that God’s plan is for you to become queens and to receive the highest blessings any woman can receive in time or eternity” (“Women of Righteousness,” *Liabona*, Dec. 2002, 36–37; *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 66–69). ■

Feeding His Sheep

through Visiting Teaching

The Lord has blessed women with divine attributes of love, compassion, kindness, and charity,” says Silvia H. Allred, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, in speaking about visiting teaching. “We can provide temporal and spiritual nourishment. We can and should offer understanding and be able to teach doctrine. We can relieve spiritual hunger and feed the sheep. Feeding the sheep might mean strengthening and nourishing the new members, the less active, or even the fully active members.”

“Our service should be selfless, quiet, and be done willingly, with our hearts full of the love of God and His children,” she continues. “There must be genuine concern to shepherd the flock, to invite them unto Christ.”¹

The following stories testify of the temporal and spiritual nourishment received through the divinely instituted program of visiting teaching.

Remembering Lisa

“These flowers will never die.”

The comment touched me so deeply that I began to cry. Lisa had been my mother’s visiting teacher for more than a year, coming faithfully every month. She was now moving to Virginia, far from our home in Georgia.

I cannot say that my mother looked forward to Lisa’s visits, because my mother has Alzheimer’s disease and lives only in the present. Lisa would bring her three children to visit Mom and the rest of the people Mom spent time with in her adult daycare facility. Lisa would engage Mom in conversation, read

to her, sing with her, and try in every way to reach into Mom’s reality to touch her life. Lisa would share the visiting teaching message too, telling me afterward, “I don’t know how much she remembers of what I say, but maybe it stores in her mind in a way that we don’t know.”

Lisa often told me that Mom was a gracious hostess during their visits, that Mom was concerned about Lisa and her children. In Mom’s prime, this was one of her best virtues. Hearing Lisa’s experiences touched my heart because the disease had taken away so much of the mother I knew.

At the end of each visit, Lisa would give Mom something tangible to remind her of their visit. At first, Lisa brought word-search puzzles. Lately, she had brought flowers.

When I would come to pick up Mom each night, I knew if I saw a beautiful bunch of flowers or a potted plant sitting on the table, Lisa had been there. One night in particular I remember thinking that Mom looked like a beauty pageant queen. She had her flowers cradled in one arm and was waving good-bye to everyone as we walked down the hall and to our car. Yes, Lisa had made a difference. She had touched the life of my mother, if only for a moment.

As she was getting ready to move to Virginia, Lisa was giving Mom one last gift, a silk topiary. As Lisa and I embraced, I thought, “How appropriate.” Her parting gift was “flowers that would never die,” just like the memories of Lisa’s service.

Some people might have said, “Why should I bother? Gloria won’t remember the visit a few minutes after I have left.” But the lessons Lisa taught to her children, to the people at the care facility who could still remember her sweet



*Lisa had touched
my mother's life, if
only for a moment.*

message, to the nursing aides who would later tell me about the visits—they all knew. And all, including Mom, were touched at the time of Lisa's visit.

When I see the silk topiary, I think of Lisa and am grateful for her dedicated service. I will always cherish her friendship and service. I can't help but think that when my mother is made whole on the other side of the veil, she will remember Lisa too.

Susan Mathews Hardy, Georgia

Serving as She Needed to Be Served

It was as a freshman at Ricks College (now BYU-Idaho) that I first became a visiting teacher. I genuinely enjoyed spending time with other sisters my age and making new friends. I faithfully went every month and gave the lesson. I thought I was doing all I needed to do to be a good visiting teacher.

Then, toward the end of the year, tragedy struck. The brother of one of the girls we taught committed suicide. This formerly optimistic, gregarious girl who loved everyone (and whom everyone loved) completely changed.

She became reclusive and depressed. I wanted to do something for her as a friend and as a visiting teacher, but I wondered what I could possibly offer.



I learned that more than anything else, visiting teaching is a way for us to help each other feel the Savior's love.

The answer came clearly one evening when a friend and I decided to visit our dear sister. We held her and let her cry. We cried too.

That was all she needed that night. She didn't need a lesson. She didn't need words we didn't have. She needed love.

That moment was a turning point for me. I learned that regardless of personal circumstances, we all need to know that we are loved and that someone cares. I realized that visiting teaching is not just a lesson or a phone call. It is concerned, deep interest in the lives of others. It is about giving what the other person needs, not necessarily what we want to give. I learned that more than anything else, visiting teaching is a way for us to help each other feel the Savior's love in our lives.

Name Withheld

Taking Visiting Teaching Seriously

I have heard people say that visiting teaching is a pointless inconvenience, that life is just too busy and that there are more important things to do. I used to think that way too, until Heavenly Father showed me otherwise.

When I was newly married and had a one-year-old child, two wonderful women, Marlo and Heather, were my visiting teachers. Marlo was a great example to me of being a patient, kind, and loving mother. Heather was a little bit more of a mystery. She had been married for a few years. She and her husband had lost their son some time before. When she shared with me her experience of losing a child, I remember

looking at my own son and praying that heartache like that would never touch my life.

A year later we moved to a different city, and I lost touch with my visiting teachers. Seven years after that, life seemed perfect. My husband and I had three beautiful children and were expecting a fourth. We were anxious to welcome another son to our family.

When it came time to go to the hospital, my husband and I smiled and laughed the whole way. The day was bright and sunny and seemed to reflect our own happiness.

That continued even at the hospital, where we could see the angel Moroni atop the Mount Timpanogos temple through the window. A nurse came in to do some routine checks. She put the heart monitor around my stomach and then turned pale. My doctor quickly arrived, did an ultrasound, and then looked up and quietly told us that our baby had died.

My husband and I were shocked—and devastated. With tears streaming down my face, I delivered our beautiful son. It's impossible to describe the feelings you have when the doctor gently places your baby in your arms and you know that this is the last time you will hold him. I had never felt such an aching pain. I could barely breathe, my heart was shattered so completely.

The Relief Society president from my ward arrived at the hospital a short time later, but I sent her away. As kind and good as she was, at that time I did not know her. I'm a very private person and couldn't let a virtual stranger inside my grief and pain.

And then there was a quiet knock at the door. We looked up to see my former visiting teacher, Heather, walk into the room. I think we were both surprised to see each other. She explained that she worked at the hospital as a grief counselor, helping people who lose loved ones.

She helped my husband and me bathe our son and dress him. She took pictures of him so that we would never forget his beautiful face. My favorite one is of our hands holding his. She cast molds of his hands and feet. Those molds are treasures to me.

I am grateful for Heather's Christlike service at a time when I needed somebody so much. Even more important, I am

Heavenly Father brought me someone whom I felt I could let in, someone who could help me shoulder my pain for just a little while.

grateful to Heavenly Father for bringing me someone whom I felt I could let in, someone who could help me shoulder my pain for just a little while.

I wonder what would have happened if Heather and Marlo hadn't done their visiting teaching, if they had been too busy or had chosen to do other things instead. I'm so grateful they took their calling seriously. Because they did, I was able to make it through the most painful hours of my life with a comforting shoulder to lean on.

Shannon F. Guymon, Utah

Receiving Spiritual Nourishment

A few years ago I was at an all-time low. I had been raised in the Church and taught from infancy that I am a daughter of God. But now, a few years after marriage, I found myself in a difficult situation. My husband had turned away from the teachings of the gospel, and we were having financial difficulties. Our four-year-old child had a blood disorder that was feared to be leukemia. I had an infant and a first grader to care for as well, and we lived far from any extended family.

My husband blamed me for many of these problems, and my feeling of self-worth had diminished. I felt too tired to read the scriptures and too worthless to have meaningful prayer. I went through the motions of family life day after day but felt increasingly alone.

One day, my visiting teachers called to ask to come to my home to visit. I was a little embarrassed to have them over, but I had no good reason not to, so they came. They shared with me a lesson on reading the scriptures. I remember telling them I was familiar with the stories and doctrine, but it just seemed that my days slipped away from me and that I didn't have time to read anymore. After hearing my list of excuses, Sister Crowley challenged me to read every day, even if it was only a little. She and her companion left with words of encouragement and a prayer in my behalf.

I decided I could commit to read something, even if it was only one verse. As I did so, it was as though a light



had finally been turned on in the mist of darkness, and I could see. Through reading the Lord's words, I began to let Him into my life to heal me. He didn't take away my problems, but He did give me the strength to handle them. Slowly I began to understand that I still had a purpose in this life and that He had a plan for me.

Those sisters' simple act of service changed my life and lifted me out of the darkness. They helped me deal with my pain, feel the love of Jesus Christ, and eventually share that love with my family and others. I am grateful to them for helping me come to a place where I could really understand that His Atonement not only covers my sins but my heartaches as well. His infinite love heals everything—sin, weakness, anger, grief, and pain. He offers us living water and makes us whole again.

Name Withheld ■

NOTE

1. "Feed My Sheep," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 113, 115.

DYSLEXIA AND GOSPEL LEARNING

As someone with dyslexia, I learn a little bit differently than many of my peers do. When I was a child, dedicated parents and teachers discovered that a multisensory teaching approach helped me to better understand and retain information. In other words, if I could see and touch or see and hear what I was being taught, I was more likely to remember it.

Now as a young adult, I still use this method. One tool that has helped me tremendously in my gospel study is listening to the audio files available under “Media Formats” in the Gospel Library at LDS.org. Audio

publications here include the scriptures, scripture study materials, general conference addresses, Church magazines, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church* manuals, music, and more. As I listen to these (generally on a personal MP3 player so I’m not distracted by external sounds) and follow along with the text either in a hard-copy publication or online, I am better able to understand the words of the prophets and apostles.

Occasionally the materials I want to study aren’t available in MP3 format. In these cases, I have used the video or ASL (American Sign Language) video options and turned up the sound on my computer. I am grateful

that the words of the Brethren are accessible in formats that allow all of us—no matter how we learn—to understand them.

Amanda Merrill, Texas

CONFERENCE COMES FIRST

If you are able to watch conference from home, you may be tempted to sleep in, nap, or become distracted as the speakers deliver their talks. As a couple, we try to remember that conference weekend is a time for active worship—through prayers, music, and testimonies.

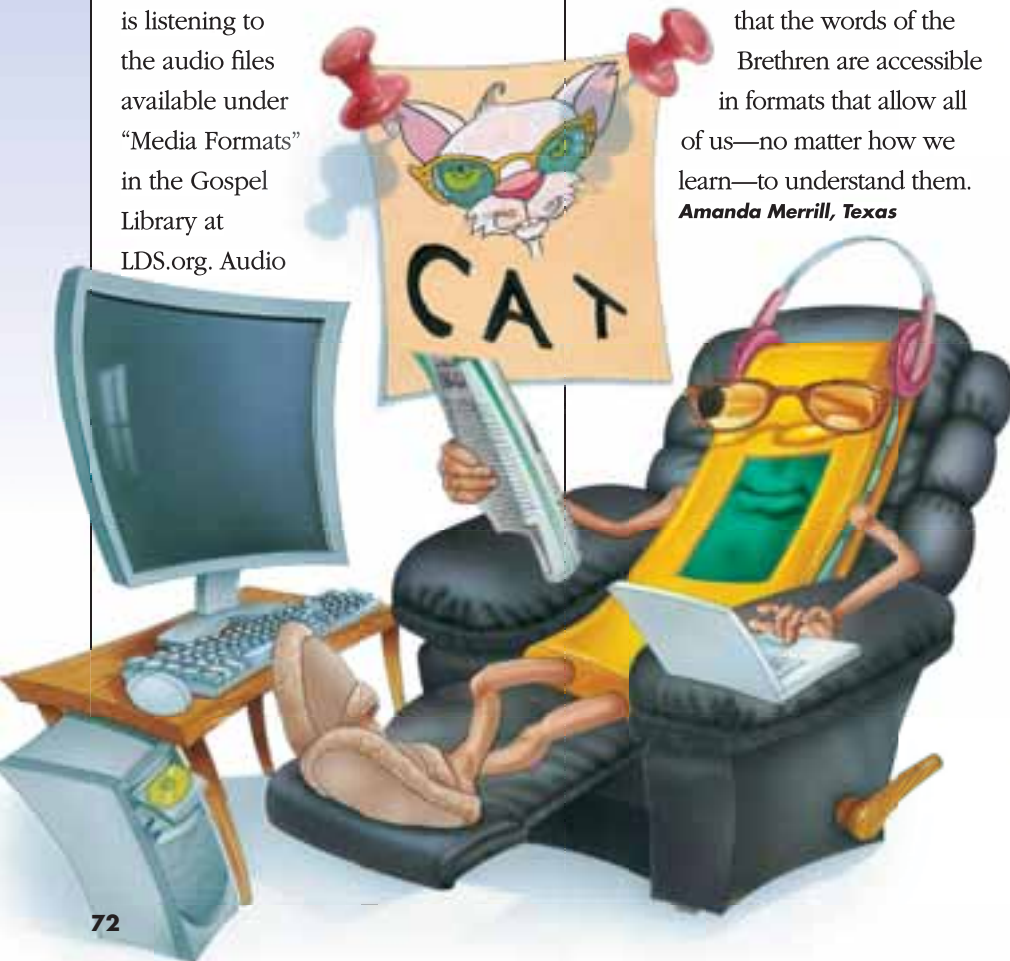
As a family we have asked ourselves, “Do we come to conference with too casual an attitude to receive the deeper blessings that may be available to us?” We might look at it this way. In the United States and Canada, Thanksgiving is approaching, and we look forward to the feast. The same can be true for conference. We should be eager to partake, ready to feast on the spoken words of Church leaders, and prepared to receive promptings of the Spirit.

I have heard some say, “Oh, they just teach the same basic doctrines each time.” And I would say, “Would you skip your Thanksgiving feast this year—just because you are served the same traditional foods?” The same teachings, shared in a variety of ways, nourish us every time if we but partake.

Here are some suggestions to make conference more meaningful.

Do housework, yardwork, and meal preparations ahead of time.

Keep things around the home simple so you can focus on conference.





Supplementing Family Home Evening

You know about the *Family Home Evening Resource Book*, but did you realize there are two video supplements as well?

Created from general conference addresses, satellite broadcasts, and Church films and filmstrips, the videos have material for all ages. When most of our children were teenagers, they thought they had heard every lesson possible, so it was sometimes difficult to present lessons in a new light. The video supplements proved to be just the thing we needed. One effective lesson for us was the second one in the manual,

“The Commandments: Gifts from a Loving Father.” We watched a segment from the second video, titled “The Commandments Are for Our Protection.” It vividly shows a large youth group on a rafting trip. When one young man breaks the rules, a young woman almost drowns. That visual image, showing the consequences of disobedience, has had a lasting impact on our family.

Each segment is listed on the video cover, indicating the corresponding lesson in the manual. The length of each segment is also indicated to

further help with lesson preparation.

Sharlene T. Barber, Tennessee

Ordering information: *Family Home Evening Resource Book* (item no. 31106000; U.S. \$6.00); video supplements (53276000 and 53277000; U.S. \$6.00). In addition to English, the first video is also available in French, Spanish, and American Sign Language (ASL). The second video is available in English and ASL.

Note: All curriculum materials mentioned in Random Sampler are available at LDS distribution centers or online at www.ldscatalog.com. U.S. and Canadian residents may also call the Salt Lake Distribution Center at 1-800-537-5971.



Make a list of your concerns. Identify any areas where you feel weak. Listen to the talks for answers and notice any impressions you receive.

Tune in the whole time. You might miss something if you tune in late or tune out too early. Maybe the prayers will touch you. Maybe a choir number or congregational hymn will bear witness of truths you seek.

Take notes. Jot down key words or impressions, but don't become so busy writing everything down that you miss something really important.

Of course, some people have to work on weekends or cannot arrange their schedules to view or listen to the conference broadcast. Fortunately, we have Church magazines, audiovisual recordings, rebroadcasts on BYU television, and resources at LDS.org to help us. But they are not intended to be substitutes for participating in live conference broadcasts when we have the opportunity to do so.

May we all prepare for and appreciate the blessing it is to hear from representatives of the Savior, speaking His will to us.

Bonnie Vernon, Utah

FROM POSTERS TO FLASHCARDS

You can make simple flashcards for your children from posters available at Church distribution centers. The two posters Latter-day Prophets and Temples Worldwide each have more than a dozen images.

By simply cutting them apart, you can make pocket-size picture cards. Use them as flashcards to help your children become familiar with the names of the prophets and the order in which they served. Place temple cards on a world map to illustrate the Church's growth. Buy two posters, and make card sets that can be used to play match or “Go Fish” games. Cover the backs of the cards with paper so that those with copyright or UPC symbols printed there won't be obvious guesses. Or leave them as is and let younger children have

“freebie matches” early in the game.

In addition to home use, you can bring the cards into the classroom. Use them as part of the lesson or keep them on hand for an impromptu activity. In any setting, I have found that these cards can help teach the important role that temples and prophets have in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Florence E. G. Hawkinson, Utah

Note: The Latter-day Prophets poster is available in two sizes: 8½ x 11 inches (item no. 34739000; U.S. \$.50) and 11 x 17 inches (62575000; U.S. \$1.00). The Temples Worldwide poster measures 19 x 27 inches (67073000; U.S. \$1.50) and is available while supplies last.

True to the Faith: Simple Insights to Gospel Principles A to Z

By Karianne Salisbury, Church Magazines

When Robert Lund, a bishop in Kaysville, Utah, USA, encounters any gospel-related question or concern, he often turns to *True to the Faith*.

"If someone comes to me with a question, I'll say, 'Let's see what *True to the Faith* says,'" said Bishop Lund, speaking of the gospel reference guide released in 2004.

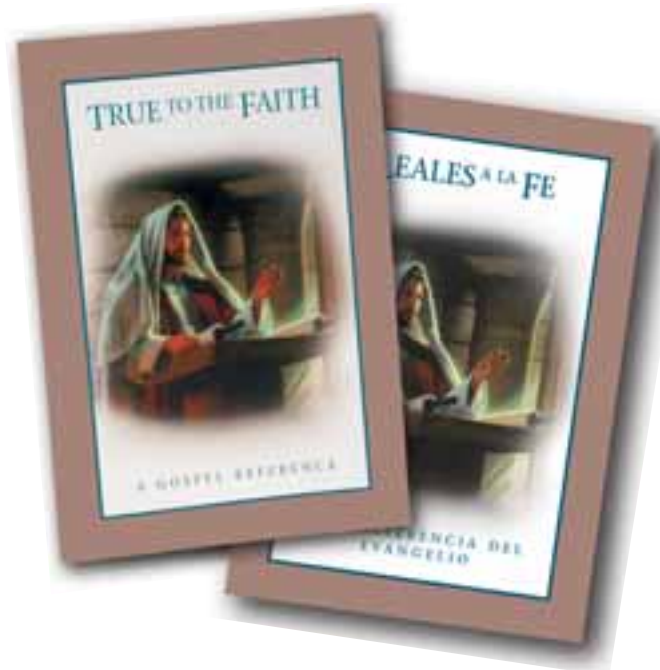
True to the Faith takes a topic-by-topic approach in its simple explanations of gospel subjects. While the reference was designed to be especially mindful of youth, young single adults, and new converts, its underlying purpose is to help all readers strengthen their efforts "to draw near to the Savior and follow His example," according to the First Presidency introduction.

Bishop Lund is not alone in his enthusiasm for the book. Members across the world are using *True to the Faith* to enhance their personal gospel study, build stronger foundations of gospel knowledge, apply gospel principles in their lives, and prepare to share or teach the gospel.

Enhancing Gospel Study

Donna Heßling, from the Münster Branch, Dortmund Germany Stake, uses *True to the Faith* to gain a broader understanding of the restored Church and its teachings.

"The entries are clear and



True to the Faith, a gospel reference guide published in 2004, helps provide a foundational understanding of the gospel.

intense, and each topic has enlarged and substantiated my testimony of the truthfulness of the Church," Sister Heßling said.

True to the Faith contains approximately 170 entries on topics listed alphabetically from Aaronic Priesthood to Zion. In addition to teaching gospel principles in a simple yet inspiring way, each entry also contains scriptural references for further study of any topic.

Mark Ellison and his family, from Saratoga Springs, Utah, USA, often use *True to the Faith* to focus on a topic while studying the gospel at home.

"Sometimes we pick a

topic and ask each member of our family to state one thing they know about that topic," Brother Ellison said. "Then we go to *True to the Faith* and see what we may have overlooked."

His children's ages span from 7 to 18, yet Brother Ellison said *True to the Faith* provides information that meets the interest and levels of gospel knowledge for each member of his family.

Building Foundations of Knowledge

Throughout 2007, 17-year-old Jake McKell in the Grandview 21st Ward, Provo Utah Grandview Stake (USA), along with his peers and

leaders, participated in a challenge issued by their bishop to read *True to the Faith* from cover to cover.

"It has been a wonderful blessing to read the doctrine taught in such a straightforward and easy-to-understand manner," said David Tueller, the ward Young Men president. "Throughout the ward there is a greater awareness of the power and use of that book for talks, personal scripture study, and helping to share the gospel with others."

In the Allentown Branch, Reading Pennsylvania Stake (USA), Tracy Norton, the Young Women president, and the young women in her ward used *True to the Faith* and the Articles of Faith to gain confidence to share the gospel by understanding the Church's beliefs better. Sister Norton also tries to use the book in her lessons.

"*True to the Faith* covers many topics relating to the struggles the youth face," Sister Norton said.

"Using *True to the Faith* helped increase my understanding of the gospel and helped me have a stronger testimony," said 14-year-old Genesis Felix, a member of the Allentown Branch. "I keep the book with my scriptures now and often use it to look up topics I don't completely understand."

Applying Gospel Principles

Reading, learning, and then living the gospel has become a familiar process for Daniel Jauslin of the Pratteln Ward, Bern Switzerland Stake, who said *True to the Faith* is

one of his favorite books.

“You read it, you gain or strengthen a testimony of what it says, and you get something out of it,” said Brother Jauslin. “This really is a guide on how to live the gospel.”

Brother Jauslin cites the section on the scriptures as an example. “I know reading the scriptures every day might be tough for a lot of members, but . . . *True to the Faith* tells us we need to do it daily, we need to make a plan, and we need to continue finding meaning in

what we read,” he said.

Legrand Laing, a seminary teacher in Springville, Utah, USA, said he has seen *True to the Faith* play a valuable role in helping his students apply the gospel in their lives.

“*True to the Faith* offers thoughts and encouragement on real-life application of the doctrines and principles being taught,” Brother Laing said. “Certainly this can be found in many other resources provided by the Church, but *True to the Faith* provides these things readily, easily, and clearly—all in one place.”



True to the Faith was designed as a companion to a study of the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets.

Preparing to Share

In 2004 *True to the Faith* became an official part of the missionary library, along with *Preach My Gospel*.

“During the development of *Preach My Gospel*, it was determined that the missionary library should be simplified and updated,” said Greg Droubay from the Church’s Missionary Department. “*True to the Faith* was chosen as a simple, short, easy-to-use reference that would assist a missionary in his or her gospel study.”

“On my mission I often used *True to the Faith* to study for talks or lessons,” said Paul Epperson from Woodbridge, Virginia, USA, who served in the Belgium Brussels/Netherlands mission.

True to the Faith has also found its place in student manuals used for institute and religion classes, according to Brian Garner, manager of college curriculum for the Church.

“Almost everyone has access to *True to the Faith*,” he said. “People can see the reference in the manual, turn to *True to the Faith*, and read the information. It’s accessible and it’s reliable.”

True to the Faith is published in 46 languages. Copies are available through Church distribution, at LDScatalog.com, or through local priesthood leaders. An English version is also available for download as a PDF or for handheld devices at LDS.org in the Gospel Library.

Remaining True to the Faith

As members use *True to the Faith* to enhance their

personal study and prepare to teach the gospel, they will find their knowledge of the gospel increasing and understand how to apply it in their lives.

In the introduction, the First Presidency states: “As you learn gospel truths, you will increase in your understanding of Heavenly Father’s eternal plan. With this understanding as a foundation for your life, you will be able to make wise choices, live in harmony with God’s will, and find joy in living. Your testimony will grow stronger. You will remain true to the faith.” ■

The March 2008 Issue: A Report

By Larry Hiller,
Church Magazines

Two years in planning and production. More than 2.3 million copies distributed in 51 languages.

Two additional printings needed to meet demand.

More than 340,000 visitors to the special Web site.

Respectable as they are, the numbers don’t tell the story. The significance of the March 2008 issue of the *Ensign* and *Liabona* magazines, “The Lord Jesus Christ,” only becomes apparent when one sees how lives have been affected.

On a Personal Level

Invited to share their feelings and experiences



Many members have been positively influenced by the March 2008 issue on Jesus Christ and have shared it with others.

with the March 2008 issue, many members wrote to tell simply how it affected their own lives. From the Philippines, Maria Felina Ferrer wrote: “For the first time in 29 years that I have lived speaking and writing about Him, I felt the palpable reality of the Savior in my life. He is not just a topic, not just a story. He is real. . . . It caused a mighty change in me. Everywhere I go and whatever I do now, I am conscious that the Lord Jesus Christ, in all His power, sees me and is standing by me. That fact makes me want to become a better person.”

Tom Kunz of Magnolia, Texas, USA, said: “I felt so good after I finished reading the magazine and I wanted to be better in every aspect of my life. . . . I felt the Savior’s

love for me and the magnificence of the Atonement in a very personal way.”

Sharing With Others

Linda Buysse-Vergauwen, who teaches elementary school in Belgium, was on a study trip with a colleague and gave her a copy of the March issue along with a special note and an invitation to come to hear her speak in church on Easter Sunday. The friend went and had a positive experience. “The special issue of the *Liabona* gave me the opportunity to put a little seed in the heart of a friend,” Sister Buysse-Vergauwen said.

In California, USA, Lori Larson had her March *Ensign* with her at the beauty salon and was enthralled with it. She kept thinking of how the articles would be great to share with someone of

another faith and how they would clear up misconceptions about the Church. Then her beautician asked about the magazine she was reading. By the time the appointment and the conversation were over, the beautician was asking for the missionaries to visit her.

Telma Chacón of Guatemala City, Guatemala, bought 12 extra copies of the *Liabona* and used the occasion of Easter to share the magazines and her testimony with her brothers and sisters. Patricia Hegedus of Cardston, Alberta, Canada, sent a copy to a German couple she and her husband had befriended some years earlier. They received it gratefully with a promise to read it. The Allan Harvey family of Krugersdorp, South Africa, bought 12 extra copies and distributed them to the families on their street.

Ward and Stake Efforts

Church units received allotments of free copies of the *Ensign* or *Liabona* to use in fellowshipping, activation, and missionary work. In England, the Chorley stake organized a special Easter concert to which friends, neighbors, less-active members, and VIP guests were invited. Each guest received a Book of Mormon and a copy of the March 2008 *Ensign*.

In Nigeria, Relief Society sisters in the Ile-Ife district, as part of the activities marking the Relief Society anniversary, visited the local prison and distributed copies of the March issue. The Newcastle-Under-Lyme stake in England

saw to it that every family in the stake had a copy and an invitation to attend a special sacrament service on Easter Sunday. One result was that a brother who had been less active since shortly after his baptism in the 1980s was touched and now enjoys the blessings of the gospel in his life again.

Yes, We Are Christians

Many wrote to tell how the issue on the Savior helped clear up misunderstandings about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Barbara Mayes of Flagstaff, Arizona, USA, reported a comment from the woman who comes in to clean her home: “I have noticed many things that point to the idea that you believe in Jesus. How can that be? You two are Mormons. Are you Christians?” Sister Mayes gave her a copy of the March *Ensign* and they began a conversation. “As she reads, she continues to ask significant questions, and a closed heart has been opened,” said Sister Mayes.

The Mike and Shaz Kramer family of Garwood, New Jersey, USA, held a party earlier this year to which several non-Latter-day Saint families were invited. One family arrived early so the husband could ask a question about the Church. A minister friend of his had indicated that Mormons don’t believe in Jesus Christ. Brother Kramer said, “I simply reached over and picked up the March *Ensign*, with Christ’s picture on the cover, and asked, ‘Does this look like a church

that doesn't believe in Jesus?" The man took the magazine with him and met with the missionaries later that week to ask more questions.

A Timeless Message

The March 2008 issue of the *Ensign* and *Liabona* is still available through Church distribution. Its timeless message

about the Savior makes it valuable for sharing not only during future Christmas and Easter seasons, but anytime members wish to provide comfort, to teach true doctrine, and to share with others a firm testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. The potential is there for many more lives to be touched. ■

LDS Charities Project Rescues Infants

By Eric Eames, Church Magazine

Thirty seconds after a heartfelt prayer was offered in the Latter-day Saint Charities office in Thailand, the phone rang with an answer.

Elder Robert Borden and his wife, Neva, had arrived in Thailand only a few weeks earlier in mid-April 2006 to serve as Latter-day Saint Charities country directors. Dr. Edward Kimball, a medical advisor for Humanitarian Services, had arrived in May on a short visit to help establish a Church-sponsored neonatal resuscitation training project.

However, with little time in the country and few contacts, the Bordens had not been able to find anyone with whom they could work to establish the program. Concerned about how soon Dr. Kimball would have to leave, the three knelt in prayer, asking for help to get in touch with the right people.

When the phone rang, Elder Borden answered, identifying himself as a humanitarian missionary for the

Church. The caller thought he had dialed the wrong number and began to hang up. But feeling this could be an answer to their prayer, Elder Borden pleaded for him to wait and placed the phone in Dr. Kimball's hands.

Dr. Kimball explained the Neonatal Resuscitation Training (NRT) that Latter-day Saint Charities was trying to set up in Thailand. Several minutes later, Dr. Kimball hung up the phone and with

his face aglow said, "We've got our champion."

The caller turned out to be Dr. Sarayut Supapannachart—Dr. Supa for short—secretary for the Neonatal Society of Thailand. With no equipment or budget, only a desire, Dr. Supa had prayed nearly every night for an opportunity to train doctors and nurses on neonatal resuscitation.

In September 2006, working with Dr. Supa, the Church sent volunteer medical specialists to train medical professionals, nurses, and even midwives in Thailand on the techniques of reviving infants who fail to establish adequate breathing immediately after birth. The program is self-sustaining, providing each health expert with the equipment to train others.

Because of Thailand's widespread population and sparse medical facilities in rural areas, the project has rescued thousands of infants. Teams for advanced-level training now exist in more

than 90 hospitals and medical centers. In the first two years, more than 3,000 specialists who attend births received training as the project focused on teaching those in the poorest and hardest-to-reach provinces of Thailand. As the project spreads and gains support, Dr. Supa's goal of training 8,000 medical specialists is well within reach.

When Dr. Supa found out that medical supplies for the project, which include infant resuscitation dolls, came from fast offerings made by members of the Church, he and his colleagues at the Neonatal Society of Thailand felt compelled to pay for the translation and publication of the training textbooks needed.

"I cannot find good enough words or sentences to thank all the members of the Church who have sacrificed something to save others," Dr. Supa wrote to Elder Wayne Facer, a humanitarian public affairs missionary in Thailand, on November 22, 2007. "Giving people money will not save their spirits, but saving their babies will ensure healthy and happy families for all and will give them the chance to have a good and fruitful life."

The neonatal program continues to move forward in Thailand. "Train the trainers" sessions for doctors in Bangkok and midwives in the northern parts of the country took place in June 2008, under the direction of Elder Robert and Sister Theone Snow from Australia, who replaced the Bordens.

"Neonatal resuscitation is



Debra Whipple, medical training team leader, gives neonatal resuscitation training to Thai physicians and birth attendants.

becoming the standard of care throughout all of Thailand thanks to dedicated Thai physicians who have been trained by LDS Charities volunteers who donate their time and expertise to share these life-saving skills with all those who attend deliveries," Elder Facer said. "These

are the heroes who are making this great program self-sustaining in the great land of Thailand."

In each of the last two years 24 countries participated in the neonatal training as an ongoing initiative of the Church's humanitarian efforts. ■

Humanitarian Rooms Provide Localized Help

For children undergoing cancer treatment at the University Medical Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, hugs and comfort become precious. That is why volunteers at the Deseret Industries Humanitarian Service Room (HSR) in Las Vegas sewed together 25 padded cushions that wrap around each child's shoulders and fasten in the front with glove-like hands.

"It wraps around them like a hug," explained Elder Henry Hoogland, who is serving with his wife, Nedra, as the supervising HSR missionaries in Las Vegas. "They use it when their parents can't be with them during the actual treatment."

This is just one example of the many local projects that have taken place within the service rooms located at 16 different Deseret Industries stores and at Welfare Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

In 2000, five HSRs were launched as secondary production facilities for the Humanitarian Center, primarily producing standard kits (hygiene, newborn, and school). In 2007 and 2008,

12 more rooms were added to existing stores, and future Deseret Industries stores will be designed with designated space for the rooms.

Christy Boyer, HSR coordinator, said that since 2007 the purpose of the rooms has become twofold: to produce humanitarian items and to provide a place where groups and individuals can serve their community.

"A lot of people don't know how or where to serve," said Sister Judy Chambers, who serves as a supervising missionary in the Logan, Utah, USA HSR with her husband, Blaine. "When they find out we are available, it gives them an opportunity to come in and do something."

In Logan volunteers made "whisper phones" out of PVC pipe for the local English as a second language center. The phones help children to improve their language skills and reading ability by amplifying the sounds that make up words. The Provo, Utah, USA HSR has teamed with a community program to provide needed items to youth at a detention facility.

The missionaries staff the rooms and are responsible for identifying community projects. The Humanitarian Center supplies the rooms with the items needed to make the standard kits and will also pay for the supplies for local projects that do not exceed \$500. Projects above that cost must be approved

by the Humanitarian Center.

Members and nonmembers are encouraged to participate by contacting their local Deseret Industries store. Volunteers should be at least 12 years old, and youth groups or groups with special needs should be accompanied by at least one adult per five volunteers. ■



Members in the United States may order basic food storage supplies through distribution centers online or by phone.

Food Storage Products Available through Distribution Services

The Church has had to increase production to keep up with the demand for items associated with the family home storage starter kit available through Distribution Services to members in the United States.

The family home storage starter kit, introduced in December 2007, contains six cans of longer-term food supply (wheat, rice, beans, and

oats) to help members start their home food storage. Each item has an expected shelf life of 30 years or more if stored in a cool (75° F/ 24°C or lower), dry place.

Beginning in March 2008, Church members in the U.S. could also purchase cases of wheat, white rice, pinto beans, and quick oats at the Salt Lake Distribution Center by phone (1-800-537-5971) or

online at LDSCatalog.com. Phone and online orders are sent directly to the customer's home.

In August 2007 Welfare Services published *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage* (item no. 04008), a new pamphlet on food storage in which the First Presidency encouraged

members worldwide to prepare against adversity. The pamphlet outlines a pattern for members to follow:

(1) build up a three-month supply of food most often eaten, (2) have a supply of drinking water, (3) establish a financial reserve, and (4) build a longer-term supply where permitted. Each of these steps

should be done gradually, according to individual or family circumstances and as local laws allow.

Additional magazine articles on home storage and family finances will appear regularly through 2009 as well as on the Church's Web sites at LDS.org and ProvidentLiving.org. ■

had allowed him "to renew hope."

"I see that the world is losing its values," he said, "and after I entered the temple my hopes increased that not all is lost."

There are 140 temples either in use or under construction throughout the world. The Panama temple is the 127th in operation. ■

TEMPLE NEWS



The first lady of Panama, Vivian Fernández de Torrijos, visited the new Panama City Panama Temple with Elder Don. R. Clarke, Central America Area President, and his wife, Mary Anne.

President Monson Dedicates Panama City Temple

Following the open house held from July 11 to July 26, 2008, and a cultural celebration held on August 9, President Thomas S. Monson dedicated the Panama City Panama

Temple on August 10, 2008.

The first lady of Panama, Vivian Fernández de Torrijos, attended the open house along with several government officials. She told her host that she was impressed

with the beauty and reverence of the temple.

Luis Farias, one of the more than 32,000 people who visited the new temple during the three-week open house, said that his experience

Mexico City Temple Prepares to Reopen

Following an open house scheduled from October 20 to November 8, 2008, the Mexico City Mexico Temple will be rededicated on November 16, 2008. The 25-year-old temple closed for renovation on March 31, 2007.

There are more than one million Latter-day Saints in Mexico. For a quarter of them, those who live in Mexico City and the states of Mexico, Guerrero, Guanajuato, Morelos, Baja California Sur, Michoacán, Hidalgo, Puebla, Queretaro, and San Luis Potosí, the Mexico City temple will be the nearest temple.

In conjunction with the temple rededication, a cultural celebration of music and dance will be held on November 15, 2008, in Mexico City. The Mexico City Mexico Temple, originally dedicated on December 2, 1983, was the first of 12 temples constructed in Mexico. ■

FAMILY HISTORY NOTES

**Church Members
Granted Free Access****to Partner Census Images**

Through FamilySearch.org, access to census images provided by partner organizations such as Ancestry.com and Findmypast.com will become available free to Church members in 2009, when FamilySearch will enable a member validation system for registered users on its Web site. In addition, any FamilySearch volunteer or indexer who meets basic contribution requirements each quarter will also have free access. All data indexed by FamilySearch volunteers will continue to be available free to the public.

**FamilySearch Pilot Site
Nears Half Billion
Searchable Names**

With more than 467 million names available, the Record Search pilot Web site is helping FamilySearch increase access to genealogical records. Recently 46.3 million names and 1.2 million images were added to the site at pilot.familysearch.org by updating the 1850 United States Census, adding 15 states from the 1870 U.S. Census, and updating the 1930 Mexico Census. The 1841 and 1861 England Censuses were also published with links to images at Findmypast.com.

**FamilySearch, Ancestry.com
Team Up on U.S. Census**

FamilySearch and Ancestry.com have exchanged resources to publish new online indexes and images of the U.S. Federal Census Collection (1790 to 1930). In July 2008, FamilySearch gave improved digital copies of the original censuses to Ancestry.com. In return, Ancestry.com gave FamilySearch copies of its existing census indexes. FamilySearch will merge its own indexes with those from Ancestry.com to create enhanced census indexes with several new fields of searchable data.

**FamilySearch, Partners
Increase Availability
of British Censuses**

FamilySearch partnered with three United Kingdom organizations in July 2008 to significantly increase Internet availability of English and Welsh census records. Findmypast.com, The Origins Network, and Intelligent Image Management joined with FamilySearch to publish online indexes to censuses for England and Wales from 1841 to 1901. Census records from 1841 and 1861 are currently accessible at FamilySearch.org and Findmypast.com, with other years to follow as the project moves forward. ■

Comments

Online Outreach

Regarding Elder Ballard's article, "Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet" (*Ensign*, April 2008, 58): I was a convert of about a year in 1994 when the Internet was only beginning to emerge. I found a number of postings about the Church, but to my surprise, most of them were hostile. I could not remain silent. I composed one of the first pages I ever posted to the Internet. It talked simply about how I had grown up in a secular family with Jewish roots and how the example of a colleague at work brought the Spirit in such a way that I began exploring the gospel myself. I told of how an experience with the Holy Ghost during a moment of deep trial left such a profound impression that my testimony became firmly rooted. I concluded by bearing my testimony.

Reactions were varied and came from all over the world. The most remarkable was from a writer in Utah who was prompted to explore the restored gospel and who was baptized and confirmed five years almost to the day after my own baptism.

Sander J. Rabinowitz
Tennessee, USA

Young Singles

I felt strongly that I needed to thank the writers and editors for following inspiration to create an *Ensign* issue (August 2008) that addresses so perfectly the needs, concerns, and feelings of young single adults in the Church.

The article "Single and Steadfast" (p. 20) was so in tune to what I am feeling right now as a 26-year-old woman; it was insightful, sensitive, and accurate. Thank you most sincerely.

Jean Marie Place
South Carolina, USA

Making of the Magazines

I just wanted to thank you for the great article on the production of Church magazines (July 2008 issue). I have always wondered about the process of getting the *Ensign* into our homes. I also loved learning about the production of the *Liabona* and the extensive translating efforts that go into making that publication. Great piece. Thanks!

Meagan Alder
Maryland, USA

Word to the Wise

Thank you so much for the article "Cancer, Nutrition, and the Word of Wisdom" (*Ensign*, July 2008, 42). I think it is a very important topic for the Church at this time, when so many health issues (many caused by poor diet) are becoming prevalent, in North America and Europe especially. Please continue to publish more Word of Wisdom-promoting articles. Our health and spirituality are interrelated.

Faith Goimarac
Arizona, USA

Update

In the September *Ensign*, a byline was inadvertently omitted. The Random Sampler article on page 67 titled "Helping Children Remember Him" was written by Amanda Noll of Washington. ■



Dedication of Russia, by Emin Zulfugarov

Latter-day Saint artist Emin Zulfugarov of St. Petersburg, Russia, has honored the events of August 1903, when Elder Francis M. Lyman (1840–1916), an Apostle and president of the European Mission, gathered with other Church leaders at the historic Summer Garden in St. Petersburg to dedicate Russia for the preaching of the gospel. Three days later Elder Lyman offered a similar dedicatory prayer in Moscow.



In a homeless shelter, a retirement center, or other facilities that offer care to individuals, opportunities to serve in the community are plentiful. Beginning on page 24, members share a variety of ideas for community service.

