THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • OCTOBER 2009

### cover story: Blessings of the Temple, p. 46

The Member-Missionary Effect, p. 16 The New Church History Library, p. 38



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The Widow's Mite, by Liz Lemon Swindle "And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: "For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she

of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living" (Mark 12:42-44).

"And [Jesus] called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow

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### DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

How does your knowledge of modern revelation make a difference in your life? How have the words of prophets and apostles affected you or changed your course of action? Have you ever been able to bear testimony of prophets to a friend of another faith? The *Ensign* invites you to share your experiences. Please label your submission "Prophets" and send it by November 20.

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."

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### **USING THIS ISSUE**

Prepare for and participate in temple worship. This issue is replete with articles about the power of the temple in members' lives (see pages 12, 46, 51, and 52). What key principles and doctrines can you identify in these articles? You might consider making these doctrines part of your personal study to enhance your temple preparation or worship.

Minister and administer. Two articles in this issue talk about the importance of ministering to each other's needs (see pages 30 and 34). In what ways have you been ministered to? In what ways can you be a shepherd to other people? Use gospel art. The Gospel Art Book, newly available from Distribution Services (www .ldscatalog.com), can enhance your teaching in the home and Church. (See page 28 for ideas.) You can find the same art online at gospelart.lds.org.



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### Ensign

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

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## Finding Strength through Obedience

### BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

n our world today, the accent is on youth. Everyone wants to look young, feel young, and be young. Indeed, vast sums of money are expended each year for products that people hope will restore the youthful look. Well might we ask ourselves, "Is the search for youth new to our day, to our generation?" We need but to thumb the pages of history to find our answer.

Centuries ago, in the great age of exploration, expeditions were outfitted and ships containing confident and adventurous crews set sail on uncharted seas in search of a literal fountain of youth. The legend of the day promised that somewhere in the "great out there" was a magical fountain containing the purest of water, and all one had to do to regain the vibrancy of youth and to perpetuate this vigor was to drink deeply of the flowing water from this fountain.

Ponce de León, who sailed with Columbus, made subsequent voyages of exploration, searching in the Bahamas and other Caribbean areas in full trust of the legend that this elixir of youth could be found. His efforts, like those of many others, yielded no such discovery, for in the divine

plan of our God, we enter mortal existence to taste of youth but once.

### The Fountain of Truth

Although there is no fountain of youth that we may wisely seek, there is another fountain containing more precious water, even the waters of eternal life. This is the fountain of truth.

The poet captured the real significance of the search for truth when he wrote these immortal lines:

- Yes, say, what is truth? 'Tis the brightest prize
- To which mortals or Gods can aspire. Go search in the depths where it glittering lies,

Or ascend in pursuit to the loftiest skies: 'Tis an aim for the noblest desire....

Then say, what is truth? 'Tis the last and the first, For the limits of time it steps o'er. Tho the heavens depart and the earth's fountains burst, Truth, the sum of existence, will weather the worst. *Eternal, unchanged, evermore.*<sup>1</sup>



There is no need to sail uncharted seas in search of the fountain of truth. For a loving Heavenly Father has plotted our course and provided an unfailing map—obedience!



In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith at Kirtland, Ohio, in May of 1833, the Lord declared:

"Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come; . . .

"The Spirit of truth is of God. . . . He [Jesus] received a fulness of truth . . . ;

"And no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments.

"He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things."<sup>2</sup>

There is no need for you or me in this enlightened age, when the fulness of the gospel has been restored, to sail uncharted seas or travel unmarked roads in search of the fountain of truth. For a loving Heavenly Father has plotted our course and provided an unfailing map—*obedience!* 

His revealed word vividly describes the blessings that obedience brings and the inevitable heartache and despair that accompany the traveler who detours along the forbidden pathways of sin and error. To a generation steeped in the tradition of animal sacrifice, Samuel boldly declared,

"To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."  $^{\!\!3}$ 

The prophets, ancient and modern, have known the strength that comes through obedience. Think of Nephi: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded."<sup>4</sup> Or Mormon's beautiful description of the strength possessed by the sons of Mosiah:

"They had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.

"But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God."<sup>5</sup>

### Keep the Commandments

President David O. McKay (1873–1970), in one of his opening messages to the membership of the Church at a general conference, gave us direction for our time very simply and yet very powerfully: "Keep the commandments of God."<sup>6</sup>

Such was the burden of our Savior's message when He declared, "For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and

the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world."<sup>7</sup>

The Master's very actions give credence to His words. He demonstrated genuine love of God by living the perfect life, by honoring the sacred mission that was His. Never was He haughty. Never was He puffed up with pride. Never was He disloyal. Ever was He humble. Ever was He sincere. Ever was He true.

Though He was tempted by that master of deceit, even the devil; though He was physically weakened from fasting 40 days and 40 nights and "was afterward an hungred"; yet when the evil one proffered Jesus the most alluring and tempting proposals, He gave to us a divine example of

obedience by refusing to deviate from what He knew was right.<sup>8</sup>

When He was faced with the agony of Gethsemane, where He endured such pain that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground, He exemplified the obedient Son by saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."<sup>9</sup>

To Peter at Galilee, Jesus said, "Follow me." To Philip came the same instruction, "Follow me." And to the publican Levi, who was sitting at receipt of customs, came the beckoning call, "Follow me." Even to one who came running after him, one who had great possessions, came the words, "Follow me."<sup>10</sup> And to you and to me that same voice, this same Jesus, says, "Follow me." Are we willing to obey?

To Peter at Galilee, Jesus said, "Follow me." To Philip came the same instruction, "Follow me." And to you and to me that same voice, this same Jesus, says, "Follow me." Are we willing to obey? Obedience is a hallmark of prophets, but it should be realized that this source of strength is available to us today.

### A Modern Example

One who had learned well the lesson of obedience, who had found the fountain of truth, was a kind and sincere man of humble means and circumstances. He had joined the Church in Europe and, by diligently saving and sacrificing, had immigrated to North America-to a new land, a strange language, different customs, but the same Church under the leadership of the same Lord, whom he trusted and obeyed. He became the branch president of a little flock of struggling Saints in a somewhat unfriendly city. He followed the program of the Church, although members were few and tasks were many. He set an example for his branch membership that was truly Christlike, and they responded with a love rarely seen.

He earned a living with his hands as a tradesman. His means were limited, but he always paid a full tithing and donated more. He started a missionary fund in his little branch, and for months at a time, he was the only contributor. When there were missionaries in his city, he fed them, and they never left his house without some tangible donation to their work and welfare. Church members from far away who passed through his city and visited his branch always received his hospitality and the warmth of his spirit and went on their way knowing they had met an unusual man, one of the Lord's obedient servants.

Those who presided over him received his profound respect and his extra-special care. To him they were emissaries of the Lord; he ministered to their physical comforts and was especially solicitous in his prayers—which were frequent—for their welfare. One Sabbath day some leaders visiting his branch participated with him in no fewer than a dozen prayers in various meetings and in visits to members. The leaders left him at the day's end with a feeling of exhilaration and spiritual uplift which kept them joyous throughout a four-hour drive in wintry weather and which now, after many years, warms the spirit and quickens the heart as that day is remembered.

Men of learning, men of experience sought out this humble, unlettered man of God and counted themselves fortunate if they could spend an hour with him. His appearance was ordinary; his English was halting and somewhat difficult to understand; his home was unpretentious. He didn't own a car or a television. He wrote no books and preached no polished sermons and did none of the things to which the world usually pays attention. Yet the faithful beat a path to his door. Why? Because they wished to drink at his fountain of truth. They appreciated not so much what he said as what he did, not the substance of the sermons he preached but the strength of the life he led.

To know that a poor man consistently and cheerfully gave at least twice a tenth to the Lord gave one a clearer insight into the true meaning of tithing. To see him minister to the hungered and take in the stranger made one know that he did it as he would do to the Master. To pray

### 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. Consider bringing a container of water to use as a visual aid. Share the story of Ponce de León, and explain that "there is another fountain containing more precious water, even the waters of eternal life. This is the fountain of truth." Discuss with the family where and how to find truth and what President Monson says we need to do to reach the "fountain of truth." Share your testimony of how being obedient has blessed your life.

2. Read from the section "Keep the Commandments," and discuss President Monson's question "Are we willing to obey?" Share the story at the end of the article of the humble man. How did his obedience and willingness to follow the Savior bless others? Invite the family to ponder and do those things that show they are willing to serve the Lord.

with him and partake of his confidence of divine intercession was to experience a new medium of communication.

Well could it be said that he kept the first and great commandment and the second which is like unto it,<sup>11</sup> that his bowels were full of charity toward all men, that virtue garnished his thoughts unceasingly and, consequently, his confidence waxed strong in the presence of God.<sup>12</sup>

This man had the glow of goodness and the radiance of righteousness. His strength came from obedience.

The strength which we earnestly seek today to meet the challenges of a complex and changing world can be ours when, with fortitude and resolute courage, we stand and declare with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."<sup>13</sup> ■

### NOTES

1. John Jaques, "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" Hymns, no. 272.

- 3.1 Samuel 15:22.
- 4. 1 Nephi 3:7.
- 5. Alma 17:2–3.
- 6. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Apr. 1957, 8; or *Improvement Era*, June 1957, 391.

- 8. See Matthew 4:1–11.
- 9. Luke 22:42.
- 10. Matthew 4:19; 9:9; John 1:43; see also Matthew 19:16–22; Mark 2:14; Luke 18:18–22.
- 11. See Matthew 22:37-40.
- 12. See D&C 121:45.
- 13. Joshua 24:15.

<sup>2.</sup> D&C 93:24, 26-28.

<sup>7.</sup> D&C 132:5.

MESSAGES FROM THE



DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

### Guided by Nodern 2100

### BY ELDER LARRY W. GIBBONS

Of the Seventy

n March 2006 my wife and I sat in the office of President Thomas S. Monson. He kindly told us the Brethren felt inspired to call us to serve in Moscow, Russia. Sensing some possible apprehension, he assured us that he knew the area well and told us that if we had any problems we could always call him. Sister Gibbons quickly responded, "What's your phone number?"

In reality the prevailing feeling in his office that day was not one of apprehension but one of quiet calm. We knew the Lord's inspiration was present and that wherever we were called by the Lord's servants would be the Lord's will. Such assurance made it easy to say, "Yes, we will go." Matters such as geography, climate, food, separation from children and grandchildren, and concern about our ability to measure up became much less daunting.

In matters large and small, the divine guidance that comes to modern-day apostles and prophets is a magnificent blessing. Revelation moves the Church in accordance with God's will. Moreover, each individual may enjoy the privilege of having the Holy Ghost testify that this guidance comes from heaven and not from man.

A wonderful example of this occurred in 1978. Francis Gibbons, a relative of mine, was serving as secretary to the First Presidency. At a family gathering he related that he was present the day President Spencer W. Kimball (1895-1985) announced to his counselors that he had received a revelation that the priesthood was to be given to all worthy males in the Church (see Official Declaration 2). Francis described how clearly and powerfully the Holy Ghost bore witness to him of the truth of the revelation. When President Kimball told the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the revelation, Francis said, the Holy Ghost again bore the same clear witness to him that the revelation was from God. Then, when President Kimball told all of the General Authorities, the powerful witness came a third time.

In May 1978, before this revelation was announced to the Church, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles met in



The Lord's blessings come in abundance when we listen to and follow the counsel of modernday apostles and prophets.

the Salt Lake Temple. At the conclusion of the meeting, Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) asked if he might say a few words. He told the Brethren that during the meeting he had seen a personage sitting in an armchair above the organ. He said the personage was President Wilford Woodruff (1807-1898) and suggested that perhaps he had seen President Woodruff because he was the only one who would recognize him.<sup>1</sup> Elder Richards, who was six years old when he saw President Woodruff dedicate the Salt Lake Temple, was the only one in the room who had seen him alive.

Isn't it interesting that this former prophet. who himself had announced a significant revelation related to Church policy, appeared as a witness of the truth and importance of this new revelation about to be announced?

### **Uninterrupted Communication**

Of course, revelation is not reserved for high-profile issues or matters of Church policy or doctrine. On a continuous basis the Lord speaks through His apostles and prophets to help us in our families and with our day-to-day lives. In 1977 President Kimball said in general conference:

"Expecting the spectacular, one may not be fully alerted to the constant flow of revealed communication. I say, in the deepest of humility, but also by the power and force of a burning testimony in my soul, that from the prophet of the Restoration to the prophet of our own year, the communication line is unbroken, the authority is continuous, and light, brilliant and penetrating, continues to shine. The sound of the voice of the Lord is a continuous melody





President Thomas S. President Henry B. Eyring



President Dieter F. Uchtdorf





Packer







Elder Russell M. Nelson

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

and a thunderous appeal. For nearly a century and a half there has been no interruption."2

Recently, a blessing came to our family through obedience to counsel given by the prophet. My sister and her husband have a son who had been estranged from them for several years. When President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910-2008) counseled Church members to read the Book of Mormon in 2005,3 this son followed that counsel. As a result his heart was softened, and he sought out his parents. Differences were mended, and the family became whole and united again.

This experience shows that we too may receive revelation to guide our individual actions. In fact, we have both the opportunity and the responsibility to do so. (See D&C 14:8; 41:5; 42:61; and 76:5-10.)

### Follow the Prophet

We can gauge our willingness to receive modern revelation by asking ourselves the following questions:

1. Do I read and study the conference addresses of the apostles and prophets and make them my guide for the next six months?

2. When I raise my hand to sustain the General Authorities, do I think about what I am doing and silently pledge to pray for them and uphold them in every way?

3. Am I willing to follow the counsel of the prophet even when doing so might be difficult?

4. Do I value the words of the living prophets just as I value the words of the scriptures?

5. Do I seek a confirming witness from the Holy Ghost when the prophet speaks?

On January 14, 1847, at Winter Quarters,



n your own

Zion, is your

journey to

under the direction

of the apostles and

life organized

prophets?



the Lord gave President Brigham Young (1801–1877) the following instructions: "Let all the people of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints . . . be organized . . . under the direction of the Twelve Apostles" (D&C 136:2-3).

In your own journey to Zion, is your life organized under the direction of the apostles and prophets?

All of us are acutely aware that we live in perilous times. The forces of evil are attacking our homes, our communities, and our standards. How can we withstand the attack? The Lord has said:

"Wherefore, . . . thou shalt give heed unto all [the prophet's] words and commandments....



Ballard



Scott

Elder Robert D. Hales



Holland

Elder Jeffrey R.



Apostle (1982), 291-92.

True," Ensign, Aug. 2005, 6.

Elder David A. Bednar

NOTES



Cook

"For his word ye shall receive, as if from

"For by doing these things the gates of hell

mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.

shall not prevail against you" (D&C 21:4-6).

for our homes and families. I know that the

Lord's blessings have come in abundance

in my life when I have listened to and fol-

to speak for Him. May we all listen more

intently and follow counsel more fully.

1. See Lucile C. Tate, LeGrand Richards: Beloved

2. Spencer W. Kimball, "Revelation: The Word of the Lord to His Prophets," Ensign, May 1977, 78.

3. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Testimony Vibrant and

lowed the counsel of those called in our day

What a wonderful promise of protection



Elder D. Todd Christofferson

evelation is not reserved for high-profile issues or matters of Church policy or doctrine. On a continual basis the Lord speaks through His apostles and prophets to help us in our families and with our dayto-day lives.



Elder Neil L. Andersen

### A Temple-Going People

**BY RYAN CARR** Church Magazines

ary and Jennifer Tucker had a dream. They both wanted an eternal family. But Jennifer had almost lost hope. The path to achieving that dream leads through the temple, something for which Gary wasn't ready.

Then their bishop was inspired with an idea that would help the Tuckers—as well as many others in the Three Forks Ward, Bozeman Montana Stake—achieve the dream of an eternal family. A few years ago Bishop Aaron Baczuk was in a meeting for

bishops and new converts in the stake. The Area Seventy who was presiding asked a new member, "Have you been to the temple to perform baptisms for the dead?" He had.

Bishop Baczuk had never considered taking unendowed adults to the temple. The following week he made an appointment with the Billings Montana Temple for adults in his ward to perform baptisms for the dead. The visit to the temple was a success, and in the months that followed, elders and high priests in the ward accompanied more unendowed adults to the temple. "It proved to be a very



Family history, fellowshipping, and baptisms for the dead inspire adult members to receive their temple endowments.

spiritual experience for them, compounding their desire and commitment to receive their endowments," says Bishop Baczuk.

### Preparing

To prepare, adult members work with the bishop to become worthy to attend the temple. Then they take the templepreparation class. Their interest in the class really peaks after they perform baptisms for the dead. They find that talking about the temple in class is one thing, but actually

feeling the Lord's Spirit *in* the temple is another.

"Having the option to take someone to the temple who may not be prepared for additional covenants but can still have an experience participating in ordinances is huge," says Bishop Baczuk. "I think it fits with the sentiment the Church is trying to convey in its temple-preparation booklet: 'Come to the temple!""

Three Forks Ward elders quorum president David Boyd says attending the temple to perform baptisms makes a goal tangible: "They begin to see the possibility that they can receive their own endowments. Many of them have



not even stepped foot on temple grounds before, so these adult baptism trips give members that opportunity."

Many recently activated members in the ward perform baptisms for the dead before receiving their own endowments. "It was never a question of worthiness," says Bishop Baczuk. "It was a question of preparedness. Some were worthy and prepared to do baptisms but were not prepared mentally or spiritually to take on the covenants of the endowment." For the men, it's also a time to prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Family history also propels the temple work. Ward members, such as Larry and Carolyn Isom, work in the ward's family history center to provide hundreds of family names. These three efforts—the temple-preparation class, family history, and worshipping in the temple—work together. Those doing family history get excited to provide names for those going to the temple. Members going to the temple are excited to do temple work for their own ancestors and for those of their fellow ward members. And being in the temple motivates the members to prepare to return to the temple.

In the past few years, 22 members of the Three Forks Ward have taken the templepreparation class, and 14 of them began attending the temple regularly to perform baptisms for the dead. Then, upon finishing the class, 13 of those 14 received their own endowments. Some of them were single or widowed, but others, like Gary and Jennifer Tucker, were sealed as a family. Happy to be at the Billings Montana Temple on the day of their sealing are Gary, Jennifer, Cody, and Garrett Tucker.

### Fellowshipping

Gary joined the Church in 1992, a couple of months before he and Jennifer were married. She was already a member. But working long hours and associating with the wrong friends made it hard for Gary to stay active in the Church, even with his wife's support. He says he spent many years "chewin' and cussin.'"

When their daughter, Cody, was born, Sister Tucker tried to raise her in the gospel by taking her to church, even though Brother Tucker didn't want any Church materials at home. Although he encouraged his family to attend church, he didn't attend. When Cody turned eight, she was baptized by a missionary, not by her father. Brother Tucker says, "I'm very happy I was there, but that's a huge regret—watching instead of participating in it."

In the following years, fellowshipping helped Gary return to Church activity. Jennifer would invite ward members or the missionaries over for dinner, knowing that would give them a chance to talk with Gary. He is grateful to those members and missionaries for being a good influence on him.

Dale Price, for example, home taught Jennifer's mother and got to know Gary and Jennifer that way. When Brother Price visited with Brother Tucker, they didn't talk about the gospel at first. They talked about a common interest: hunting. The Prices also sat with the Tuckers at ward activities, brought them food from their food storage when Brother Tucker was out of work, and gave them honey produced by their own honeybees. Honey is the Tuckers' favorite topping on toast. That little gift, as Brother Price describes it, was "to sweeten the relationship."

### **Doing Small and Simple Things**

Counsel from their stake president also helped the Tuckers. President David Heap asked stake members to do "seven small and simple things": (1) Read the scriptures personally every day; (2) read the scriptures at least

Members of the Three Forks Ward regularly drive two-and-a-half hours to serve in the Billings Montana Temple. Several who attend are adults who perform baptisms for the dead as they and their spouses prepare to receive their endowments and be sealed.





five days a week as a family; (3) have personal prayer every morning and night; (4) have family prayer every morning and night; (5) attend church every Sunday as a family; (6) hold family home evening every Monday night; and (7) attend the temple every month.

Gary could see that these things would help his family be closer something he very much desired so the Tuckers began having family prayer, scripture study, and home evening. These efforts helped prepare Gary to be receptive to his bishop's invitation to prepare to go to the temple.

In January 2006 the Tuckers were attending a fireside at the bishop's home. Bishop Baczuk pulled Gary aside and talked to him about the temple. Right there, Gary gave the

bishop his can of chewing tobacco so it wouldn't continue to be a temptation to him. He had many questions for the bishop then and in subsequent interviews. The bishop emphasized living the covenants that Gary had made at baptism so he could be worthy of the Spirit.

The Tuckers began taking the temple-preparation class, and Jennifer began attending the temple with her ward each month to perform baptisms for the dead. Gary was working on becoming worthy to go. Their daughter, Cody, who was 11 then, was excited to be able to go to the temple soon to perform baptisms. By the time she turned 12, Gary was able to go to the temple with her. It was the first time either of them had been in the temple.

Cody says, "It was wonderful. It's very peaceful there. My dad went, so that was even a bigger deal." Gary says he felt "unbelievable peace and joy that first time."

The next Sunday in the temple-preparation class, Gary was a different person. "A light had gone on," says Sister Elna Scoffield, who has taught the class for several years.



### WE WILL BE A BETTER PEOPLE

"I hope that everyone gets to the temple on a regular basis. I hope your children over 12 years of age have the opportunity of going to the temple to be baptized for the dead. If we are a temple-going people, we will be a better people, we will be better fathers and husbands, we will be better wives and mothers. I know your lives are busy. I know that you have much to do. But I make you a promise that if you will go to the house of the Lord, you will be blessed, life will be better for you."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, July 1997, 73.

Gary stayed after class to ask questions. He had felt the Spirit at the temple and wanted to return—not just to perform baptisms but to receive his endowment and to have his family sealed to him.

The next month the Tuckers again attended the temple with the bishop and other ward members.

### **Overcoming Trials**

In the weeks before Brother and Sister Tucker received their endowments and were sealed, they felt the adversary's opposition. Gary was making progress, but he still had doubts about his worthiness to be in the temple. Their dream of an eternal family was close, but it felt just out of reach. The Tuckers knew they had to pray together more often, asking for

strength. "We always received it in the form of calming peace and reassurance that all things are in the Lord's hands," says Sister Tucker. "Even up to the time we walked inside the temple, His calming Spirit was with our whole family."

After Gary and Jennifer received their endowments, they knelt in the sealing room with their children, Cody and Garrett, dressed in white. When six-year-old Garrett saw his mom crying, he reached up to wipe the tears from her cheeks. Gary and Cody were crying for joy too. Even the sealer was emotional.

The Tuckers say their family now enjoys stronger relationships and better communication. Gary says, "We are happier. My wife and I are closer, and our children see that." Gary feels like he's a better example to his family members who are not members of the Church, and he hopes that other families in his ward will want the same blessings that the Lord has given the Tuckers through the temple. ■

### NOTE

1. See Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple (booklet, 2002), 1.

### THE MEMBER-MISSIONARY

BY DON L. SEARLE Church Magazines

Church growth has accelerated in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas as members have discovered the joy of sharing the gospel.

> embers in some South Texas stakes are learning two important things about missionary work: it is much easier than they thought, and they enjoy it.

Raquel Taylor, for example, was surprised at how quickly her stake president's promise about missionary work came true. Sister Taylor was the sign lan-

> guage interpreter for a conference of the McAllen Texas Stake in February 2008 when the then-stake president, Marco Araya, made members a promise that focused their attention instantly on their missionary responsibility: if they would properly prepare themselves to share the gospel, "people will come to *you* to ask you to teach them." After the meeting ended, Sister Taylor

# Effect

went to greet a group of friends who are deaf or hearing impaired. A young man visiting with them asked if missionaries could teach him—beginning immediately.

The McAllen Texas Stake was divided in September 2008, at least partly because of member involvement in missionary work. Baptisms have increased in the neighboring Harlingen Texas Stake as well. And Texas McAllen Mission president Gary F. Miller reports that efforts by

members to share the gospel have also been increasing in the Corpus Christi Texas Stake, about 150 miles northeast on the Gulf Coast.

### **Preparation and a Promise**

Sister Taylor interpreted for the missionaries as they began to teach Dario Gaytan, the young man who had



approached her. After a couple of lessons, Elder Wayne Fletcher, who is fluent in sign language, was transferred into the area and began to help with teaching Dario, but Sister Taylor remained involved in the fellowshipping. Dario was not the only person touched by the missionary lessons. He had been living with the family of a friend who was a member but not active in the Church. That family was activated as Dario was being taught, and Dario's friend baptized him.

Jenny Chamberlain (left) introduces friends to the gospel with a gift—the Book of Mormon. Above: Leaders in the Mission Second Ward plan missionary efforts. Bishop L. Brice Chandler, right, was later called as president of the new McAllen Texas West Stake. Top: Tropical flowers cultivated in the Rio Grande Valley.



Elder Fletcher helped activate other members who are deaf or hearing impaired, and Sister Taylor began teaching classes in sign language.

Raquel Taylor learned that she had also been teaching by example. An old friend called her, asking for counsel about marriage. The friend wanted to know how to apply in her life the principles that Sister Taylor and her husband live by in their marriage. The friend also needed help

> teaching the children in her church, so she bought the full range of Primary materials from the LDS bookstore that Sister Taylor owns with her husband, Nephi.

> José and Esthela Rodriguez have also learned that how they live the gospel affects those around them. José, bishop of the

Spanish-speaking La Joya Ward, McAllen Texas West Stake, was baptized in 2000 after he had met Esthela and she had introduced him to the gospel. The Rodriguezes have lived next door to a young unmarried couple. That couple has watched how Bishop and Sister Rodriguez treat each other and treat their children, and the woman has inquired about the principles that guide the lives of the Rodriguez family. The man has begun to court his partner, hoping to persuade her to marry him.

Bishop Rodriguez, with his counselors, has developed a ward mission plan. It includes having husband and wife pairs go out with the missionaries. "Right now," he says, "the missionary work is a bit difficult in our area." But the examples of individual members and families continue to draw attention to the Church.

### The Member's Role

Robert Lyle does not wait for people to come to him to ask about the gospel. He seeks opportunities to share, tailoring his approach to what he knows of each individual. It may be an interest they have in common. On the Gulf Coast, for example, he has many opportunities to go fishing. His conversations with other fishermen often turn to conversations about families and the gospel. Over the past few years, about two dozen people have responded by accepting the gospel and being baptized.

Brother Lyle, formerly a counselor in the presidency of the Harlingen Texas Stake, now serves as the Young Men president in the McAllen stake. (His ward was moved with the stake division.) But regardless of where he serves, he has taught the same approach to missionary work. "The member's responsibility is to go out and identify those who are potentially interested in the gospel by giving them a chance to say yes or no. The main thing members can do that they're not doing now is open their mouths—not be afraid but ask anyone and everyone if they might have interest in some

Jeff and Michelle Merwin are dedicated member-missionaries. Brother Merwin has found Preach My Gospel valuable also in personal study. (See "Relying on Preach My Gospel," page 21.)



Missionaries in the Texas McAllen Mission have benefited from the efforts of local members in sharing the gospel.

principle of the gospel." Members need to know gospel principles well enough, he emphasizes, to pique people's interest and prepare them to meet the missionaries.

Jenny Chamberlain, a member of the McAllen stake's Weslaco Ward, takes this same kind of bold approach. A transplant from Southern Utah, she came to Texas as a teacher. Eventually, she developed a schedule

> for inviting some of the families she had met in the community to her home for dinner on Monday nights. A returned missionary, she introduces them to the gospel plan as explained in the Book of Mormon, pointing out that Moroni 10:5 teaches how they can know the truth of all things about God. "I try to present it as a gift-something I know and they can find out for themselves." She keeps stacks of the Book of Mormon in her home, in several languages, to share with her guests and others. So far, no one has turned down one of her dinner invitations, and several people have been baptized.

> > "Sharing the gospel is an incredibly powerful experience." She says that sometimes members are fearful, thinking, ""This is scary!' But it's so easy! The Lord blesses us."



Missionaries serving in the area say that many times people have approached them and asked to learn about the gospel. Sister Danielle Loftus recalls that on the street one day, a girl of about 10 ran up to her and her companion saying, "Hi. I know you." The sisters realized they must have knocked on the family's door about a week earlier. As a result of that conversation in the street, they were able to teach the girl, her grandmother, and her brother.

Sister Andrea Roberts says the spirit of missionary work seems to be strong among members because many are

converts who still remember what it was like to discover the gospel. "As they pray in the morning, 'Heavenly Father, please help me be a missionary,' He is going to help them recognize missionary opportunities they haven't seen before."

### The Field Is White

Some members in McAllen remember a visit by President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, a few years ago when he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. After his visit, missionaries shared with the members something Elder



Bishop José Rodriguez and his wife, Esthela, of the McAllen West stake's La Joya Ward learned that personal example helps others want to learn about the gospel.

Eyring had told them: he was impressed that many people he saw in the area were prepared to receive the gospel and eager to know its truths. Remembering his words, many local members have set personal goals; they want to find all those people who are ready to receive gospel truths.

President L. Brice Chandler of the new McAllen West stake says that in addition to planning and coordinating missionary work, leaders frequently retell member missionary success stories to help everyone feel they can be part of the work. "We're trying to make [missionary work] something members can get excited about." When members pray for the Lord to send people to them and those people are baptized, he explains, new converts will likely stay active because they already have a friend in the Church.

Presidents of both McAllen stakes say member retention

has improved. President Larry B. Wilson of the McAllen stake says, "I'm focusing on retention."

Federico and Francisca Beltrán of the McAllen stake's Edinburg Ward are among those members who have long enjoyed missionary work. Their ward has averaged about five baptisms per month, partly because of several families like the Beltráns who are active in fellowshipping and ready to work closely with the missionaries. Brother Beltrán was formerly ward mission leader. He says that each Sunday in the ward's missionary coordination meeting, there was instruc-

> tion from the Church's missionary guide, *Preach My Gospel*, as well as practice in role-playing and in giving new-member discussions.

> Why are the Beltráns so involved in missionary work? "We have five children," Sister Beltrán explains. "We want to set an example for them."

The Lord frequently leads missionaries to families prepared to hear the gospel—people like Erasmo Esparza and his wife and children.

Sister Esparza was a member but not active when the missionaries knocked on their door. Brother

Esparza explained to the missionaries that she was ill and that the house needed cleaning, so he could not let them in. They asked if they could return later. They did, and he is grateful now that the missionaries offered a blessing to his wife. She accepted, and the missionaries began teaching the family.

The Esparzas faced opposition from extended family members and friends who urged them not to abandon their religious tradition. But in the end, Brother Esparza says, he decided he had to do what the Holy Ghost told him was right. Jeffrey, the Esparzas' oldest son, also faced opposition from friends at school who argued about doctrine. "But I shrugged it off," he says. "I knew what was right." He quotes the words of Paul: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 1:16).

When Jeffrey and his father were baptized in 2007, Sister Esparza began going to church again. (The Esparzas' youngest son, Joseph, was not yet eight.) "Even after we were baptized, we were still hit with a lot of opposition," Brother Esparza recalls. But they persevered in the gospel and were sealed as a family in the San Antonio Texas Temple in July 2008. Brother Esparza points out that every Latter-day Saint is familiar with James 1:5, the scripture that motivated Joseph Smith to walk into the Sacred Grove and ask God about truth, but there is great comfort in the rest of that chapter of scripture, which teaches about patience and perseverance amid trials.



The Esparzas' faith carried them through opposition to their conversion and activity in the Church. They were sealed in the temple in July 2008.

Mexico. Brother Guerra was one of the organizers of BorderFest, an annual celebration that draws thousands of visitors to Hidalgo for entertainment, cultural events, and ethnic food from many nations. After he was baptized in 2007, he conceived the idea of a similar family festival in the ward meetinghouse.

Brother Guerra had made a promise to God as a boy that if he could be helped with a physical disability (difficulty in speaking), he would dedicate his life to his Father's service. He received the help he requested, and he set about to fulfill his promise. As an adult, he studied to qualify

for an important lay position in his church, but after completing his studies, he never sought the formal appointment; he could not feel the doctrine of his church was true. He had been acquainted with LDS missionaries for many years and had even received personal help from them. When he finally agreed to let them teach him, he found what he had

> always been looking for in religious faith. "They had answers to all my questions." He read, studied, and prayed to understand. Among other things, he learned this: "God speaks to us through the Book of Mormon."

In May 2008 the FamilyFest he had envisioned after his baptism was held in the Hidalgo Ward meetinghouse. More than 1,500 people attended, about half of them members of other faiths. Brother Guerra mingled with and greeted guests and personally gathered some 200 referrals for the missionaries. Aleida Rodriguez is another

> new member who felt compelled to share the joy of the gospel with those she loved. Because she shared, her mother and her brother are now members.

### Sharing the Joy

Many new members look immediately for ways to share the joy they have found in the gospel. Ramiro Guerra is one of those. He is well known in the city of Hidalgo, where travelers cross the international bridge into

Francisca and Federico Beltrán enjoy sharing the gospel with others and hope their family will learn to love missionary work as they do.

### RELYING ON PREACH MY GOSPEL

Two missionaries who worked extensively with local priesthood leadership in the Texas McAllen Mission report that member participation is a key to missionary success. Elder Jordan Driscoll said that wards where mem-



bers are excited about missionary work "are progressing in everything." Elder Richard Perry noted that when members are familiar with *Preach My Gospel* (Item no. 36617000), the missionary guide, missionaries and members work together much more effectively.

For them, Jeff Merwin would be a missionary's dream.

Jeff and Michelle Merwin of the McAllen Third Ward have been missionaries all of their adult lives. Both share the gospel freely, and both have been instrumental in bringing others to the gospel. But Jeff says that *Preach My Gospel* changed his life. When one missionary reviewed with him what is written about personal prayer in the missionary guide, Brother Merwin found himself reevaluating his own prayers. After pondering how to make them more effective, he changed his expressions of gratitude and his petitions so they come more fully and consistently from his heart.

He also made a commitment to go out with the missionaries once a week. He wrote his own personal missionary plan in his copy of *Preach My Gospel*, where he can review it regularly. He frequently uses *Preach My Gospel* as a scripture study guide, emphasizing how the scriptures prepare him better to share the gospel.

As a young missionary, he learned to love this opportunity to share. "I always made the statement that as a full-time missionary you don't appreciate what you've got until you don't have it anymore." But since he has focused on using *Preach My Gospel*, he reflects, "I have gotten it back.

"When we engage ourselves with others and help and assist them in coming unto Christ, we experience joy that is almost immeasurable—some of the greatest joy we can feel in this life." So too are her father, stepmother, and their children.

Sister Rodriguez had been planning to serve as a missionary for another church. In the course of her employment distributing items door to door, she felt impressed to knock on the door of the LDS missionaries. The name of Jesus Christ on their name tags seemed to draw her to hear what they said. She wanted to learn about Him and His teachings because her church did not focus on His mission. "I couldn't reject the missionaries because of what I felt."

She found spiritual reassurance in the fact that they did not teach of a reformation but of a restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ, and that this restored church was directed by a living prophet. She was impressed that missionaries and members were able to answer her doctrinal questions from the Bible, and when she read the Book of Mormon, she came to understand that both books are testaments of Jesus Christ and His work.

Aleida had long wanted to know Jesus Christ. Now, Sister Rodriguez is testifying of Him as a missionary in the Chile Concepción Mission. As the missionaries taught her, she found something that she and so many others have sought as they tried to understand the meaning of mortality; she learned about the possibility of celestial life. This has given new purpose to her own day-to-day living—a purpose that can be a lifelong guide. "Our goal," she says, "should be the celestial."



After her baptism, Sister Aleida Rodriguez shared the gospel first with those she loved most—her family. Now she is sharing the gospel as a missionary in Chile.

### Finding and Sharing the Gospel Online

BY MICHELLE STOCKING Church Magazines

Members who share the gospel through the Internet are realizing they can make a difference, one conversation at a time.

fter years of harboring bitterness and anger, Derick Fitch of Indiana felt as though he had hit a dead end. He decided he had enough and wanted to change. That decision led him to do something he had never done before: search for God.

So Derick did what he typically did when he wanted to find information: he went to the Internet. Not only would that give him quick, easy access to information, it would also allow him to conduct his search privately, without making any commitments. Derick decided to begin his Internet search by looking for information on "the Mormon Church" because of a television commercial he remembered from his teenage years.

"My search led me to an LDS-related site that had exactly what I was looking for—a message board where I could confidentially post questions about the Church," Derick says. He took a deep breath and registered with the site.

Using the site's message board, Derick received answers to his questions from Latter-day Saints and learned that he could read the Book of Mormon online by clicking on a link at www.mormon.org. "The words in 1 Nephi penetrated the cold, hard shell around my heart," he says. "I started to think about my life and my relationship with God."

Soon Derick obtained a printed copy of the Book of Mormon from the local missionaries and agreed to attend church services. Less than four months after Derick had decided to search online for information about religion, he was baptized and confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"I am so thankful that I was able to start reading the Book of Mormon online," he says. "I am thankful that I was able to find LDS Web sites, ask questions about the Church, and receive wonderful answers."

For Derick and many others who have questions about the Church, the natural place to turn is the Internet. There, Derick received answers to his questions from everyday Latter-day Saints—and those answers touched his heart.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has encouraged members to join in the ongoing conversation around the world about the Church.

"We cannot stand on the sidelines while others, including our critics, attempt to define what the Church teaches,"<sup>1</sup> Elder Ballard said in a 2007 commencement speech delivered at Brigham Young University–Hawaii. Just like the members who answered Derick's questions, many members across the world are entering the online discussion and realizing they can make a difference, one conversation at a time.

### Blogging about the Church in Everyday Life

One method of entering the conversation is through personal Web logs, or blogs. (For tips about blogging safely and courteously, please see "Better Blogging" on page 27.) Lisa Caress of California has always used her blog as a journal and family history record, but she has also begun using it as a method to join the conversation by talking about what the Church means in her day-to-day life. One night at a meeting at her children's school, she and several other women were assembling baskets for a school event when their conversation turned to Lisa's blog.

"One of the women mentioned how much she loved reading my blog because it gave her so many insights about our church," Lisa says. "Three other women chimed in and started practically quoting passages from my blog. They were all fascinated by my post about the April 2008 general

conference. I froze in my tracks as I quickly tried to recall what I had written. They asked me about how new prophets were chosen and what a Solemn Assembly was. They wanted to know about Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's talk<sup>2</sup> and continuing revelation and about Elder M. Russell Ballard's talk<sup>3</sup> and the Church's views on women."

Lisa was surprised by the effect of her small effort, but what surprised her even more, she says, is how respectful and gracious the t is common for people to search for things online. Why not religion? women were. "They acted like I was doing them a favor by answering their questions." From this experience, Lisa learned the effect that sharing her testimony and her day-today experiences as a member of the Church can have. This opened the door for her to answer further questions and share her testimony at the request of her friends. "You never know who is reading," Lisa says. "But truth and sincerity will win the day."

### Using Language Skills and Developing Computer Skills

After hearing Elder Ballard's BYU–Hawaii commencement speech, Neil Birch of Utah decided to create a blog where he could discuss gospel principles using the Book of Mormon. Although Neil had never blogged before, he did not let that stop him. With the help of a friend, he set up not just one but three blogs, each in one of the languages he speaks. Neil realized that doing so was easier than he thought. He says, "I'm 77, and I didn't grow up with computers. But you don't have to have been born in the computer era to learn how to use them. Anyone can do it!"

Neil is enthusiastic about the possibilities, and he loves contributing to the online conversation about the Church. "I have received a growing number of responses to my blogs, which have been read in 49 countries," he says. "I am



### **BE A BLOGGING MISSIONARY** By Delores Devictoria

With increasing interest in the Internet, opportunities for missionary work have also increased. Here are some suggestions that I have found helpful in being a blogging missionary:

• Remember that you're speaking as an individual sharing personal perspectives. Don't leave an impression that you are speaking officially for the Church. It's your own experiences that will be insightful and interesting.

• When you write a post, keep it relatively short. Most people who surf blogs are looking for posts that are easy to read. In addition, remember the old adage, "milk before meat." Don't delve into the mysteries. Rather, write about subjects that are basic such as faith, repentance, Jesus Christ, the Book of Mormon, and so forth.

• Tell how you feel about a gospel principle. People may be able to argue a

principle, but it's more difficult to argue how you feel about it.

• Check out other blogs and read what others have to say. When you find an interesting blog, comment and let the author know what you think. Usually when I have commented on someone's blog, they have come to check out my blog and have left a comment. This has helped me get acquainted with new people.

• When you read other blogs, read the comments too. Then check out the blogs of others who are leaving comments. This is a great way to find interesting information and make new Internet contacts.

• Know when to walk away. Elder Ballard reminds us that "every disciple of Christ will be most effective and do the most good by adopting a demeanor worthy of a follower of the Savior. Discussions focused on questioning, debating, and doubting gospel principles do little to build the kingdom of God.... There is no need to argue or contend with others regarding our beliefs. There is no need to become defensive or belligerent. Our position is solid; the Church is true," ("Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet," *Ensign*, July 2008, 63).

Because the Internet doesn't force the same commitment as meeting in person, it can be viewed as a safe haven for those who are questioning but aren't ready to invite the missionaries into their home. If they can find answers and have the Spirit touch their hearts, they may be more willing to accept the missionaries later.

We have entered a new age of technology, so we have new avenues of missionary work open to us. With a little creativity and boldness, we can help others to learn more about the gospel. Additional helps can be found online at http://newsroom.lds.org/onlineguidelines.



Ballard says, "We cannot stand on the sidelines while others ... attempt to define what the Church teaches."

determined to continue writing and posting."

### Creating Blogs about Full-time Missionaries

Like Neil, Kevin Miller and his son Richard have also created blogs. The Millers create blogs for the families of the full-time

missionaries serving from their stake in Las Vegas, Nevada, prior to the missionaries' departure. The families then maintain those blogs throughout the rest of their missionary's service. Some of these blogs include short videos of the missionary sharing his or her testimony recorded prior to entering the Missionary Training Center, photos, excerpts from the missionary's e-mails from the mission field, journal entries, and other things the family deems appropriate. (Of course, e-mails and other communication should comply with guidelines for missionaries.)

Kevin says these blogs "provide a great tool for families to share the blessings of serving a mission with their friends, neighbors, co-workers, and others. Missionary blogs maintained by families allow those who are not of our faith to gain a greater understanding of the love, sacrifice, and blessings that accompany full-time missionary service."

### **Using Other Online Forums**

Blogs are not the only way that members are sharing the gospel online. Sheryl McGlochlin of Utah created a Web site where she organizes outdoor adventures, enabling her to connect with people who share her love of the outdoors.

"I love the Internet!" Sheryl exclaims. "It has enabled me to reach hundreds of people from all parts of the world. It's been wonderful to connect and form relationships with others. I'm extremely grateful to the Lord that I can help and serve others in this way."

Sheryl makes safety a priority both in her online interaction and in her in-person group meetings. When she's corresponding with a group member, for instance, she makes sure that her tone is professional. She often asks her husband to review her e-mails for a second opinion to help prevent possible misunderstandings with those she corresponds with. When she's meeting people for an event, she makes a point of including a core of people she already knows, meeting in public places, and never being alone with just one other group participant. Practical, sensible safety precautions like these help keep Sheryl—and others she meets—safe so that they can focus on their common interests.

Sheryl has found that as she and her new friends engage in outdoor activities, she has opportunities to bear her testimony. "I've shared with them what I've learned in general conference, in Relief Society, and in sacrament meeting," she says. "As I spend time with them, I've been able to share my knowledge and feelings about the temple, food storage, forgiving others, the Book of Mormon, the importance of family, the power of prayer, the blessings of living the Word of Wisdom, missionary work, keeping the Sabbath Day holy, and much more."

### A Strong Medium for Sharing Testimony

Members of the Church like Lisa, Neil, Kevin, Richard, and Sheryl are discovering the power of the Internet in sharing testimony and answering questions other people have about the Church. And in doing so they're discovering that it's not as difficult as they might imagine to respond to Elder Ballard's challenge to "join the conversation by participating on the Internet to share the gospel and to explain in simple and clear terms the message of the Restoration."<sup>4</sup>

Of course, blogging is just one way to share the gospel; there are many others. Some may wonder how one Web site or one blog can make a difference, but as Elder Ballard reminds us, "While some conversations have audiences in

the thousands or even millions, most are much, much smaller. But all conversations have an impact on those who participate in them. Perceptions of the Church are established one conversation at a time."<sup>5</sup>

And just as it did for Derick Fitch, one conversation can make all the difference.  $\blacksquare$ 

### NOTES

- "Using 'New Media' to Support the Church," Brigham Young University–Hawaii commencement address, Dec. 15, 2007; see also M. Russell Ballard, "Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet," *Ensign*, July 2008, 61.
- 2. Jeffrey R. Holland, "My Words . . . Never Cease," Ensign, May 2008, 91.
- 3. M. Russell Ballard, "Daughters of God," Ensign, May 2008, 108.
- 4. Ballard, "Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet," 62.
- 5. Ballard, "Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet," 61.

Some may wonder "What can I do?" But many Latterday Saints are finding that simple conversations make a powerful difference.

### Better Blogging: TIPS FOR SAFETY AND COURTESY

Do you want to start a blog? You can keep in touch with friends and family or share the gospel by blogging. (Remember that you are speaking only for yourself and not the Church.)

### **BLOG SAFETY**

### **Avoid Specifics**

Chelsea Belton, who blogs to keep in touch with family and friends, never posts personal information online. She avoids mentioning addresses, birth dates, anniversaries, and other details that would make it easy to locate her family. Some bloggers also use partial or fictional names or general phrases like "my son" or "our friend" when referring to individuals in blog posts.

### **Moderate Comments**

David Habben, who maintains both personal and business blogs, says that reviewing comments is an important part of safe blogging. While an author's original post may be harmless, comments from readers may be less innocent. Some entities also use blog commenting to advertise or disseminate unwanted information. David uses a security feature that informs him by e-mail when someone wants to make a comment. He can then review each comment and delete those that are inappropriate or unwanted before they appear online.

### **Selectively Post Pictures**



"Once I posted [a photo of] a birthday party invitation I had made [for my son]," says Rachel Davis, creator of a group blog for LDS women. "I used

photo editing software to blur out the location of the party because I just didn't want [to take a] chance. It was a small thing to do, but it made me feel safe." Be aware of information you may be giving inadvertently in the photos you display on your blog. Wisely screening photos will allow you to share ideas while protecting yourself and your family.

### **BLOG COURTESY**

### Think before You Post

Search engines are the "conscience" of the Internet. They can call up almost any Web site from any period of time. So assume that what you post on your blog is permanent. The pictures of your children doing silly things as little kids may be funny or cute right now, but imagine those same pictures appearing when your children are 12 or 45. Carefully consider the pictures you post and the things you write.

### Be Positive



"I have been surprised when . . . ward members or even old friends from high school read my blog," says Kacy Faulconer, who

writes personal and group blogs. Blogs should not be a "forum to complain or criticize people behind their backs," she says. Instead, keep your comments positive. You never know who may be reading.

### **Respect Others' Work**



Sue Anderson, who began a blog because she loved reading her daughter-in-law's, says it's important to respect other bloggers' work.

Instead of copying and pasting something from a blog you like, "send friends a link to the blog itself." She also recommends that "if you want to use something on your blog from someone else's, [including photos], ask them first." This protects others' work and keeps you honest.

### The New Gospel Art Book

One affordable spiral-bound book now gives Latter-day Saints access to 137 color pictures for use in gospel learning and teaching.

### **BY MICHAEL G. MADSEN** Church Curriculum Development

n the office of President Thomas S. Monson hangs a

painting of the Savior by artist Heinrich Hofmann. The prophet says that this painting reminds him to do what the Savior would have him do. Pictures can have a powerful influence on each of us, just as this painting does on President Monson.



Out of a desire to provide affordable pictures for members to use in Church classes and in our homes, the Church has made available the *Gospel Art Book* with 137 paintings and photographs. These pictures can complement lessons taught anywhere from Gospel Doctrine to Primary sharing time. They can also be used in family home evening, personal scripture study, missionary work, and home or visiting teaching.

Each illustration in this book invites a teaching moment—the opportunity to tell a scripture story and teach a principle. To aid us, the *Gospel Art Book* includes a list linking pictures to their accounts in the scriptures. Searching these scriptures will deepen our understanding of the events and gospel principles depicted in each picture.

Following are three ways the *Gospel Art Book* might be used in teaching a lesson:

**1** Consider inviting individuals to search the scriptures linked to a particular picture. Ask them to read the scripture aloud or to summarize it as you discuss the picture together.



2<sup>Consider asking indi-</sup> viduals to describe what they see in a picture. What gospel principles does the picture teach? How can we apply those principles in our lives today?

After teaching a particular gospel principle, invite others to search the *Gospel Art Book*, looking for pictures illustrating that principle. Ask individuals how they feel when they look at the picture now that they have discussed its meaning.

In all our learning and teaching of the gospel, let us prayerfully seek inspiration (see D&C 42:14–17). As we do, the Holy Ghost will bring other ideas into our minds tailored to meet the needs of those we are teaching. The new *Gospel Art Book* is an important tool that can help us help one another come unto Christ and receive the blessings of eternal life. ■



### **POWER IN VISUAL AIDS**

"Teachers who desire to increase learners' ability to understand and learn will also use visuals. Most people will learn better and remember longer when you present ideas by using pictures, maps, word groupings, or other visuals rather than merely speaking." Teaching, No Greater Call (1999), 182.



### HOW CAN I ACCESS THE GOSPEL ART BOOK?

1. You can find an online version at gospelart.lds.org.

2. You can purchase the *Gospel Art Book* (item no. 06048) at your distribution center.

3. In the United States and Canada, you can order the book at Idscatalog.com/gospelartbook or by calling 1-800-537-5971.



# Me?

### **BY ELDER DANIEL L. JOHNSON** Of the Seventy

ne of the practices that distinguishes The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that of having lay shepherds. We have no paid clergy in the wards, branches, stakes, and districts of the Church; rather, the members themselves minister to each other.

Every member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a calling to be a shepherd in Israel. Member-shepherds serve in bishoprics and branch presidencies, as priesthood and auxiliary leaders, as clerks and secretaries, as teachers of every kind—including home and visiting teachers—and in countless other capacities.

Lay shepherds have several things in common. Each has sheep to nourish, encourage, and serve. Each is called by the Lord through His appointed servants. Each is accountable to the Lord for his or her stewardship as a shepherd.

### Seeking the Lost Sheep

Joseph Serge Merilus left his native Haiti at the age of 19 and moved to the Dominican Republic in 1980 in search of work. Eighteen months later he went back to Haiti, fell in love, and returned to the Dominican Republic with his new bride, Marie Reymonde Esterlin.

### A Shepherd in Israel?

As they began their married life together in their newly adopted country, Joseph experienced a spiritual hunger. He and Marie visited several churches seeking to satisfy that hunger, but as Haitian Creole speakers in a Spanish-speaking country, they had difficulty understanding and being understood. Eventually they ran into two Latter-day Saint missionaries, who invited them to church. After Joseph and Marie had attended several meetings, the missionaries patiently taught them the discussions in Spanish, and they were baptized in September 1997.

Joseph was called to serve in the Sunday School presidency, then as a counselor in the branch presidency, and later as branch president. But because of a series of misunderstandings and hurt feelings, much of it resulting from miscommunication, Joseph,



Marie, and their five children fell into inactivity and were largely forgotten by local Church members.

During the next seven years, the couple had four more children and welcomed a nephew and a niece from Haiti into their home. Through much effort Joseph became fluent in Spanish and English and began teaching English and Haitian Creole for a local company.

In August 2007 two priesthood leaders, in the process of seeking out the Lord's lost sheep, appeared on the family's doorstep. They discovered that Joseph and Marie still had testimonies of the gospel, even though they had not attended meetings for seven years. The leaders invited the family to return to church, which they did the very next day—all 13 of them. They have been attending ever since.

Today Joseph is a branch mission leader in Barahona, located in the southwestern part of the Dominican Republic. His two eldest sons also serve in branch leadership, and his nephew, a newly ordained elder, is the Young Men president. Recently the family traveled to the temple, where they were sealed as an eternal family.

Just think of it, 13 lost sheep are now found because two member-shepherds were willing to search for, nourish, and bring this family back to the Lord's fold. They were led to this home just as you and I will be led as we seek out the lost sheep who are our responsibility.

I have been a witness of and a participant in thousands of shepherding visits. I testify to the marvelous outpouring of the Spirit that accompanies them. I have seen many lost sheep return and have felt the joy that



I have been a witness of and a participant in thousands of shepherding visits. I testify to the marvelous outpouring of the Spirit that accompanies them.





comes as they are welcomed back into the fold. I have seen hearts touched, blessings pronounced, tears shed, testimonies borne, prayers offered and answered, and love expressed. I have seen lives changed.

### **Feeding the Flocks**

Sometime between 592 and 570 B.C., God spoke to His prophet Ezekiel regarding negligent shepherds. Because of their negligence, the flock had been scattered. Of those shepherds, the Lord said:

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds[:] . . . should not the shepherds feed the flocks? . . .

"The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost....

"... Yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

"Thus saith the Lord God; . . . I will require my flock at their hand" (Ezekiel 34:2, 4, 6, 10).

In many respects, we have become a chapel-based church. We go to great effort to provide spiritual and emotional nourishment for those who come to church, but what of those who have lost their way to the chapel?

If I have received a calling to serve in the Church, then I have sheep to whom I have a divine obligation to minister and to serve. For example, as a teacher I am a shepherd not only to those who show up for my class but also to those who do not attend. I have the responsibility to find them, become acquainted with them, be their friend, minister to their needs, and bring them back to the fold.

### Leading Them Back

As member-shepherds we would do well to remember and ponder the teachings in Luke 15. In that chapter the Lord taught the parables of the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, and the prodigal son. All three relate to "that which was lost" and then found again. In the parable of the lost sheep, the Lord asks:

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

"And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.



"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:4–7).

In the parable, only one sheep strayed and was lost, but such is seldom the case in our wards and branches. The parable's application remains the same, however, regardless of the number of sheep who have strayed from the fold.

The parable does not indicate how long the recovery process took. In our shepherding efforts, some sheep will return after a single visit, while others will require years of constant and gentle encouragement.

During the process of recovering our brothers and sisters, let us not forget that the sheep we are "bringing . . . back to the fold" are "dear to the heart of the Shepherd."<sup>1</sup> He knows each one of them individually. He loves each one of them with a perfect love. Because they are His, He will guide us, direct us, and inspire us in what to say if we will ask and then listen to the voice of the Spirit. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, many will respond positively as we sincerely and humbly reach out.

May we remember our responsibilities as shepherds so that we can give a good accounting to the Lord regarding our stewardship over the sheep He has assigned to each of us. ■

### NOTE

1. "Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd," Hymns, no. 221.



### WATCHING OVER THE SHEEP

"We are shepherds watching over Israel. The hungry sheep look up, ready to be fed the bread of life.... Our task is to reach out to those who, for whatever reason, are in need of our help."

President Thomas S. Monson, "True to Our Priesthood Trust," Liahona and Ensign, Nov. 2006, 57–58.

### The Blessings of Ministering

Members of the Church bless lives and strengthen testimonies as they emulate the Savior's example of ministering to others.

he exemplary ministry of President Thomas S. Monson is well-known among members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For more than six decades he has reached out to those in need, giving comfort and peace to countless individuals and personally ministering to the sick and afflicted.<sup>1</sup>

"Today there are hearts to gladden, there are deeds to be done—even precious souls to save," President Monson has declared. "The sick, the weary, the hungry, the cold, the injured, the lonely, the aged, the wanderer, all cry out for our help."<sup>2</sup>

In his personal ministry, President Monson has shown the difference between *administering* and *ministering*. Church members *administer* programs and ordinances, but they *minister* to individuals, loving them and coming to their relief. In reaching out to others, President Monson has emulated the Savior, who "came not


to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark 10:45).

As the following four accounts illustrate, Latter-day Saints who "go, and do . . . likewise" (Luke 10:37) bless others, the Church, and themselves.

#### Samaritan with Pancake Batter

My recovery following minor surgery was not as easy as I had been led to expect. But as ward Relief Society president, I felt that I should be giving help to others, not asking for it. On Monday morning, three days after my surgery, I had to get seven children up and ready for school. I wondered if I would have to keep my oldest daughter home to help with the baby.

As these thoughts went through

my head, the doorbell rang. Vickie Woodard, my first counselor and a good friend, had come to help. She announced that she was there to make pancakes. She had a bowl of batter in her arms and asked where she could find a frying pan. The children were delighted.

After breakfast, Vickie got the children off to school, cleaned up, and took the baby home until his noon nap time. Later, when I asked who was caring for her own young children, she told me that her husband had taken a couple of hours off work so she could help me.

Vickie's and her husband's service that day allowed me to gather my strength and contributed to my recovery.

Beverly Ashcroft, Arizona, USA

#### Unto the Least of These

One day when I was home alone with my youngest son, I slipped on a step and fell. Resulting abdominal pain persisted for several days, so I went to see a doctor.

I was pregnant at the time, and tests indicated that my placenta had become detached. This condition required complete rest, or I could lose the baby.

I was worried because we had three little children and could not afford to pay for help. The sisters in my branch, however, found out about my condition and, without being asked, came to my aid. They organized themselves into three groups that helped me in the morning, afternoon, and evening.

They came to wash, iron, cook, clean, and help my children with their



homework. A sister named Rute, who was baptized into the Church while I was confined to bed, became well-known in our home. Rute, a nurse, helped at night and administered necessary injections.

I didn't need to ask for anything; these sisters anticipated my needs and took care of everything. When they had more help than they needed, one sister would sit and visit with me. They did this for three months.

These sisters gave me strength, love, and dedication. They gave of their time and talents. They made sacrifices to be there. They never asked for anything in return. They loved and they served, following the example of the Lord, who taught us, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

Enilze do Rocio Ferreira da Silva, Paraná, Brazil

#### Just Bring Their Clothes

While my husband, Brandon, was in Orlando, Florida, on business, he woke up one night with a high fever and difficulty breathing. He called for an ambulance to take him to the hospital, where he learned that he had a serious case of pneumonia.

Because Brandon and I have toddler-age sons, I couldn't immediately travel from our home in Pennsylvania to Florida. I called Brandon daily, hoping for his improvement so that he could return to us.

However, Brandon's condition worsened. When a nurse at the hospital urged me to come to the hospital as soon as possible, I started thinking about who might be able to take care of our boys.

My mother agreed to take time off from work and said she would come as soon as she could, but the flight I needed to take left before she would arrive. I called a few friends to see if they could watch the boys until my mother arrived. A friend from Relief Society, Jackie Olds, said she'd be happy to watch them.

"Just bring their clothes and diapers," she said, "and I'll keep them for however many days you need to be gone." I started to refuse because this sister, with three children of her own, had a busy life, but she insisted. When I dropped our boys off a short while later, she comforted me by saying, "Don't worry about them. Worry about getting Brandon better and getting him home. I've taken care of toddlers before."

I knew then that the boys would be safe, happy, and well taken care of, which they were. I was able to be with my husband, who was seriously ill by the time I arrived at the hospital. But after a few days, he was well enough to return home.

I am grateful for a good friend who responded—far beyond what I would have asked of her—and ministered to us in a time of need. *Kelly Parks, Pennsylvania, USA* 

#### Service at a Bedside

Brother Anderson, the dynamic 35-year-old ward Young Men president, was the kind of youth leader everyone admired: returned missionary, father of five, business owner, young at heart. But now he had leukemia. After receiving this news from the bishop, Ryan Hill, the priests quorum first assistant, swung into action, calling each active and less-active priest in his quorum.

"We're going to the hospital to see Brother Anderson. We need everyone. Can you come?" he repeated during each call.

"I'm not sure I can make it," one priest said. "I may need to work."

"Then we will wait until you get off work," Ryan responded. "This is something we must do together."

"OK," the quorum member said. "I will see if I can switch shifts with someone else."

All 11 priests went to the hospital. Those who were less active and those who never missed a Sunday meeting were there. Together, they laughed and cried and prayed and made future plans. In the ensuing months, they scheduled times to rub Brother Anderson's feet when his circulation was difficult, took turns donating blood platelets during two-hour sessions so he would get only their blood, and even drove 20 miles (32 km) on prom night with their dates (including two young women who were not members of the Church) to his hospital bedside so he could share in their high school experiences.

In his final days, Brother Anderson asked them to serve missions, marry in the temple, and keep track of each other. More than a dozen years later, home from their missions, married in the temple, and starting families of their own, they still recall these watershed spiritual experiences of service together with their beloved leader. ■ *Norman Hill, Texas, USA* 

#### NOTES

- 1. See Quentin L. Cook, "Give Heed unto the Prophets' Words," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2008, 49–50.
- Thomas S. Monson, "Your Jericho Road," *Tambuli*, Sept. 1989, 6; *Ensign*, Feb. 1989, 5.

## GIVING THE PAST THE NEW CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY

**BY MEAGAN D. LAKE** Church Magazines *The new Church History Library allows patrons to connect with their past by providing* 

updated facilities and advanced resources. people can be no greater than its stories," said Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy, Church Historian and Recorder. The Church now has a brand-new resource to help tell its story better than ever before. The Church History Library, dedicated in June, is a significant upgrade from the previous Church History Library, which was located in the east wing of the Church Office Building in downtown Salt Lake City.

"Our previous facility wasn't designed as an archival storage space," said Brent Thompson, director of records preservation for the Church History Department. "It didn't have fire protection; it didn't have seismic protection; and it didn't have adequate temperature, humidity, and air quality control. We had outgrown the space, both from a staff perspective and, more importantly, from a records perspective. This new building provides solutions to these problems."

# **A FUTURE**

BRARY



The Church History Library preserves many precious artifacts. Shown here is President Wilford Woodruff's diary, which he personalized with hand-drawn art and by recording the baptisms of his family members.





Above: Every item in the library was given a bar code and scanned as it was transported to the new building. This process will help with maintenance and facilitates research. Right: A page from Martha Spence Heywood's Autograph book with autographs and paintings of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.



With almost 230,000 square feet of operating space, the library houses expanded research facilities, temperature- and humidity-controlled storage spaces, and state-ofthe-art preservation systems. It is also home to nearly 25 miles of shelves containing books, journals, documents, photographs, microfilm, and other preserved media.

Ample space inside the library also allows its 125 employees and nearly 200 full-time and Church-service missionaries to work effectively. These staff members provide valuable research, preservation, development, and administrative services in managing the library's collections and assisting patrons who visit the facility.

The building provides more than just extra space and updated preservation technology. "Our new library is designed to provide an open and welcoming atmosphere for all to interact with Church history," said Patrick Dunshee, manager of marketing and communications for the Church History Department. "Our desire is to help patrons increase their faith as they connect to their past."



Above: More than 3.5 million patriarchal blessings are preserved in the library's vaults. Right: A banknote from the Kirtland Safety Society, signed by Joseph Smith.







Under the right conditions, including low temperatures and humidity controls, artifacts can be preserved safely for many, many years. Some records are stored at 55 degrees F (13 degrees C). The most sensitive materials (shown at left) are stored in a vault at -4 degrees F (-20 degrees C), cooled by the equipment shown above.



The building was designed to visually complement the Conference Center, which is across the street to the west. Together the two buildings present a reminder of the great strength of the members of the Church; while hundreds of thousands fill the Conference Center each year to participate in general conference and other events, the Church History Library houses the records of great faith and service from Saints all over the world.

The library is a short walk from the Church's other historical and research facilities on Temple Square. Its

close proximity to the Family History Library and Church History Museum allows patrons convenient access to many of the Church's historical treasures.

Elder Jensen said, "The primary purpose of Church history is to help Church members build faith in Jesus Christ and keep their sacred covenants." The new Church History Library, with updated resources and advanced facilities, will help collect, record, and preserve the stories of the Church and its members better than ever before, protecting sacred resources for many generations to come.

Opposite page: President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) as a young man; the library's lobby. Top: The building's inner reading room. Above: In the early 1900s, Emmeline B. Wells, fifth general president of the Relief Society, is assisted by her counselors, followed by the general board.





Left: Daguerreotype of early Church Historian George A. Smith, about 1850. Above: A carved Maori ceremonial house with members and missionaries, about 1886. At the time, the LDS population of New Zealand was 90 percent Maori.



#### COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY

1. How can I access the information in the library? Patrons can walk in or fax, phone, or e-mail service requests to the library. Contact information and an "Ask a Librarian" feature can be found at www.churchhistorylibrary.org.

2. Is there open access to all records? Patrons will have access to thousands of titles, including books, periodicals, manuscripts, photographs, audiovisual materials, and diaries and journals. As in all library and collecting institutions, access to records that contain private or confidential information is limited. The library also adheres to all copyright laws.

**3. What are the hours of operation?** The Church History Library will be open Monday–Wednesday and Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. MDT.

4. What technology is available for patrons?

Patrons can search library catalogs and indexes on our library computer terminals. Terminals also offer access to more than 2,000 photographic images housed in the library, as well as information from the Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel Database. Patrons will be able to access library materials wirelessly as well.

**5. How do volunteers help?** Volunteers help patrons in various ways, including training, orientation, general guidance, and service requests.

6. Where are patrons allowed to work? Patrons have access to the lobby, main library area, and reading room.





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**Opposite page: Patrons** have access to a wide selection of books in the open stacks. Bottom left and above right: Employees in the Conservation Lab expend great effort to repair damaged documents. Tape—one of the more destructive home remedies for repair—must be removed to ensure longevity. Center: Wilford Woodruff's copy of the Book of Commandments. Left: LDS University, 1908. The Relief Society Building and the Church Office Building and plaza now occupy the same location.





The temple is a sacred edifice, a holy place where essential saving ceremonies and ordinances are performed to prepare us for exaltation. **BY ELDER ROBERT D. HALES** Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

he temple endowment blessings are as essential for each of us as was our baptism. For this reason we are

to prepare ourselves that we may be clean to enter the temple of God.

The opportunity to enter the temple and to take upon ourselves the sacred covenants therein is one of the greatest blessings available to us in mortality. Then, after we take upon us those covenants, our obedience in living them daily stands as a demonstration of our faith, love, devotion, and spiritual commitment to honor our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Our obedience also prepares us to live with Them in the eternities. The temple's saving ordinances are essential to—and even the central focus of the eternal plan of happiness.

#### The Temple Doctrine

The temple is truly a place where you are "in the world and not of the world." When you are troubled and have crucial decisions that weigh heavily on your mind and soul, you can take your cares to the temple and receive spiritual guidance.



We need to acquire a testimony and a reverent feeling of the temple being the house of the Lord. To preserve the sanctity of the temple and to invite the Spirit to bless those who enter the holy

temple for their ordinances and covenants, we are taught that no unclean thing should enter the temple. Reverence in the temple is a vital element in inviting the Spirit to reside within it every hour of every day.

When I was a boy, my father brought me from Long Island, New York, to walk on the Salt Lake Temple grounds, to touch the temple, and to discuss the importance of the temple in my life. It was on that occasion that I made up my mind that someday I would return to receive the ordinances of the temple.

Throughout history, in every dispensation, the Lord has commanded prophets that temples should be built so that His people could receive temple ordinances. Moses and the Israelites were blessed with a portable temple, the tabernacle, where the sacred ordinance work under the law of Moses was performed—and where, on occasion, the Lord came to converse with Moses. King Solomon completed a beautiful temple in Jerusalem, which was later destroyed. Then, during Christ's ministry, another temple in Jerusalem was being built.

We learn from the Book of Mormon that Nephi built a temple "after the manner of the temple of Solomon" (2 Nephi 5:16). Other Nephite prophets, including Jacob and King Benjamin, taught the people at the temple (see Jacob 1:17; Mosiah 1:18).

Significantly, when the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ appeared to the Nephites in A.D. 34, He came to the temple (see 3 Nephi 11:1–11).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "The Church is not fully organized, in its proper order, and cannot be, until the Temple is completed, where places will be provided for the administration of the ordinances of the Priesthood."<sup>1</sup>

The Kirtland Temple was the first temple in these latter days, and it played an important role in the restoration of priesthood keys. Joseph Smith, as a result of a prayer, was visited by Jesus in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836 (see D&C 110). The Savior appeared in glory and accepted the Kirtland Temple as His house. On that occasion Moses, Elias, and Elijah also appeared in order to commit the priesthood keys they held. Elijah restored the keys of the sealing power, as promised by Malachi, so that we could enjoy the fulness of the blessings of the temple in our lives.

Our pioneer ancestors completed the Nauvoo Temple and performed sacred ordinances therein. The Nauvoo Temple was the first temple in which endowments and sealings were performed, which proved a great strength to the pioneers as they endured the hardships crossing the plains to Zion in the Salt Lake Valley. They had been endowed with power



in the holy temple. Husband and wife were sealed to each other. Children were sealed to their parents. Many of them lost family members to death along the way, but they knew that wasn't the end for them. They had been sealed in the temple for all eternity. Later, through revelation received by President Brigham Young, the Saints built more temples in the West.

Today there are 130 functioning temples, allowing faithful members of the Church around the earth to go to the house of the Lord to receive their temple ordinances and make covenants with Him.

#### **The Temple Ordinances**

The primary purpose of the temple is to provide the ordinances necessary for our exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Temple ordinances guide us to our Savior and give us the blessings that come to us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Temples are the greatest university of learning known to man, giving us knowledge and wisdom about the Creation of the world. Endowment instructions give guidance as to how we should conduct our lives here in mortality. The meaning of the word *endowment* is "gift." The ordinance consists of a series of instructions on how we should live and covenants we make to live righteously by following our Savior.

Another important ordinance is being sealed for eternity in celestial marriage. This covenant of marriage allows children to be sealed to their parents and children born in the covenant to become part of an eternal family.

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches us: "Whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens" (D&C 132:46).

When a couple is kneeling at the altar, as a sealer I am aware of my role as a representative of the Lord. I know that what is sealed on earth is literally sealed in heaven—never to be broken if those being sealed remain faithful and endure to the end.

oses and the Israelites were blessed with a portable temple, the tabernacle, where the sacred ordinance work under the law of Moses was performed and where, on occasion, the Lord came to converse with Moses. I have observed over the years many couples who have been able to maintain strong and vital marriages as they remain true to the covenants they take upon themselves in the temple. These successful couples have several things in common.

**First,** these couples know individually who they are—sons and daughters of God. They set eternal goals to once again live with our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. They strive to leave the ways of the natural man behind (see Mosiah 3:19).

**Second,** they know the doctrine and the importance of the saving temple ordinances and temple covenants and their necessity in achieving eternal goals.

**Third**, they choose to obtain the eternal blessings of the kingdom of God rather than the temporary possessions of the world.

**Fourth,** these couples realize that when they are sealed for time and all eternity, they have chosen an eternal companion—their days for courting others are over! There is no need to look any further!

Fifth, these couples think of one another before themselves. Selfishness suffocates spiritual senses. Communicating with the Lord in prayer, they grow together and not apart. They converse with each other, thereby never letting little things become big things. They talk early about the "little hurts" with little fear of offending. In this way, when the pressure in the kettle builds and the whistle goes off, there is no explosion of bitter feelings. It is so much better to let off a little steam before the top blows off the pressure cooker. They are willing to apologize and ask forgiveness if they have hurt the one they love. They express their love for each other and become closer. They lift and strengthen one another.



#### The Temple Blessings

The temple is a sacred edifice, a holy place, where essential saving ceremonies and ordinances are performed to prepare us for exaltation. It is important that we gain a sure knowledge that our preparation to enter the holy house and that our participation in these ceremonies and covenants are some of the most significant events we will experience in our mortal lives.

We voluntarily came from the presence of God the Father to this mortal probation with agency, knowing we would have "opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11). Our objective is to take upon us the whole armor of God and withstand "the fiery darts of the wicked" with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit (see D&C 27:15–18), to endure to the end, and to be worthy to stand and live in the presence of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, for all eternity—to achieve what is called eternal life. ■

From a Brigham Young University devotional address given on November 15, 2005. For the full text of the address in English, see http://speeches.byu.edu.

**NOTE** 1. *History of the Church*, 4:603.





María José de Araújo, who volunteers daily in the Recife Brazil Temple, "is a good example of serving others," says temple recorder Cleto P. Oliveira, pictured at right with María.



## My Privilege to Serve

#### BY MICHAEL R. MORRIS Church Magazines

Before the doors of the Recife Brazil Temple open for another day of administering saving ordinances, 70-year-old María José de Araújo arises to prepare for another day of selfless service.

To get to the temple, María must travel an hour and a half on four separate buses from her home in Cabo de Santo Agostinho, south of Recife, on Brazil's northeast coast. But before she can leave, she prepares food and other necessities for a blind cousin she cares for in her home.

"María is a good example of serving others," says Cleto P. Oliveira, temple recorder. "Since the temple was dedicated in December 2000, she has volunteered to serve here every day the temple has been open. She even comes on holidays."

From 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. every Tuesday through Saturday, María works in the temple cafeteria, washing dishes and making salads. She would work longer, she says, but with a long bus ride home, she must leave early enough to return before dark.

Brother Oliveira tells María she doesn't need to come to the temple every day, but

he admits that he would need two people to replace her. "She just smiles and says she has dedicated her life to the Lord," he says.

For María, serving in the temple daily is a great privilege.

"My Father in Heaven has blessed me with good



"People who don't come to the temple are missing out on a great opportunity and blessing," says María José de Araújo.

health, and my goal is to continue to come every day as long as my health permits," she says. "I have made a covenant to dedicate all of my talents and abilities to serve

> the Lord. When I arrive home after serving in the temple, I don't feel tired. The Lord has blessed me in that way."

Previously, while serving for six years in her ward's family history center, María researched her family line. Then, on numerous Saturday mornings before going to work in the temple cafeteria, she completed vicarious temple work for four generations of her female ancestors. She also had the work completed for four generations of male ancestors.

When she began researching her family history, María felt that the task was impossible—especially when she was unable to determine the names of two great-grandparents. But one night their complete names were revealed to her in a dream. At first she wondered whether the names could be correct, but as she searched among her mother's records, she found the names and was able to make family connections that had eluded

her. She believes the dream came as a blessing for her efforts to serve the Lord and His children.

"The temple is my life," María says. "People who don't come to the temple are missing out on a great opportunity and blessing. By serving in the temple, we come to understand the real meaning and power of the temple." TEMPLE WORSHIP

One Kentucky ward's efforts have inspired everyone from the high priests to the Primary to focus on temple work.

"A GONTAGOUS

#### **BY JOSHUA J. PERKEY** Church Magazines

Ward members arrived at the Louisville Kentucky Temple in August 2008, Steve and Julia Park were already there. Not even the hourlong drive through torrential Kentucky rains kept these new converts from arriving on time. In fact, the Parks, a retired couple who had been sealed only a year before, had arrived well before the rest of the ward members so they could perform work for some ancestors.

That night, the Parks were joined by priesthood leaders, youth, youth leaders, family history consultants, young single adults, and others with recommends. More than 40 members, including four new converts attending for the first time, had set aside half a day to attend. They had caught the vision of a unified and devoted effort of worshipping



Above: Elizabethtown Ward members at the Louisville Kentucky Temple. Above right: The Louisville Kentucky Temple. Left: Family history consultant Gaye Hill and family history center director Leslie Bower helped members catch the vision of family history work.



the Lord through temple service, and by the end of the evening it showed in their countenances.

#### **Creating a Ward Vision**

Although the ward is energized now, it hasn't always been successful in encouraging family history work and temple work on a broad scale. Several years ago, Elizabethtown Ward leaders, under the direction of Bishop Kirk Chadwick, recognized that the ward could do more. The family history center, which later would play an important part in helping ward members prepare their family names for temple work, frequently lacked patrons. And though converts were being strengthened by attending the temple, the ward as a whole still needed a functioning plan.

The ward council began to capture that vision more fully when Leslie Bower, director of the family history center, brought several ideas to a ward council meeting. The plan was simple: ward leaders, assisted by the high priest group leader, would help members by teaching and reminding them frequently about temple covenants, the sacred nature of saving ordinances, and saving their kindred dead.

Leslie helped explain the potential impact of the plan by expanding on the symbolism of a family tree. As ward members would work to find and prepare family names for temple work and then participate in the



For Gary and Becky Giewald (above), the temple is a place of strength and refuge. Center image: Ward members place their names on the leaves and acorns of this tree as they complete their family history and temple goals. It has inspired and united them.

ordinances—either directly themselves or indirectly by asking others to perform the ordinances for them—they could grow together. Although many worked individually, ward members would assist each other to do the research and preparation for the ordinance work. The ward could represent the family tree as the trunk, with every family being a branch, and individuals and their family names being the leaves. The whole enterprise would be rooted in gospel teachings about salvation. Members would feel connected to their families and to each other through the great effort of temple work.

As Leslie finished her presentation, ward council members excitedly discussed ideas about how they could implement this plan with their respective groups—such as youth trips to the local cemetery for family research and name preservation, temple trips, and convert retention.

Bishop Chadwick relates that "the Spirit bore witness that this is what we needed to do. So we talked about the youth and the genealogy merit badge for Scouts, temple preparation classes, and folks going to the temple for the first time. We immediately sustained the plan and moved forward. It really had a great impact."

#### **Implementing the Vision**

Leslie credits Gaye Hill, one of the family history consultants, with being at the heart of many of the successes. For example, when the Church building was undergoing renovation, Gaye suggested they improve the family history center by removing unneeded partitions and adding a whiteboard. The changes fit within the building budget, and the bishop approved them. As finances permitted, they also added computers. All of this contributed to a friendlier, more functional environment for patrons.

Under the direction of the bishop and the high priests group leader, the plan has nearly everyone from the priesthood to the Primary talking about family history. As Leslie

#### FOUR NEW CONVERTS ATTEND THE TEMPLE

Four young single adult converts, accompanied by their Young Single Adult (YSA) representative and other friends, attended the temple for the first time on August 13, 2008, to perform baptisms for the dead. Three of them, Bridjette MacDonald,



Alan Howard, and Shanice Drumgold, had been members of the Church for about four months. Another new member, Justin Perez, had been a member for two years.

For Shanice, age 20, this temple trip made a huge impact on her life. "Going to the temple was the greatest experience that I could have had." It strengthened her faith—something she was grateful for because her family members were not supportive of her decision to be baptized. "I'm glad I went when I did," she says.

Bridjette, age 21, felt humbled by the experience. "Later that evening I realized it was amazing to think that we were doing God's work and that I am worthy to do that. It made me feel so good."

Each of these new converts felt inspired by the beauty and Spirit in the Lord's house. "When you walk in it's just an overwhelming feeling," explains Alan, age 24. "People off the street can't just walk in there. It is a temple of the Lord."

Noting how important it is to pay attention in the temple, Justin, age 23, says, "I didn't feel the Spirit overwhelming me at first. But when I focused and closed my eyes, it was there."

One thing that particularly touched these new converts was the experience of performing vicarious work for others. Alan relates: "I had this overwhelming feeling of happiness—not for myself but for the people I was being baptized for. It's just a great feeling to know that someone was pleased." says, the plan "has resulted in new members going to the temple more quickly than they ever did before. It has had this snowball effect through the ward where we are seeing more and more activity in temple and family history work."

> The ward saw many other results. For example, most of the youth in the ward participated in a trip to an unregistered cemetery to record names for the National Registry of Cemeteries. The Scouts began working on

the genealogy merit badge. The ward saw a sharp increase in volunteers willing to index U.S. census records at www.familysearch.org. Primary leaders engaged the children in family history activities. There was wide participation in family home evenings, where the focus was family history group records. Also, many of the members began helping others do their family history work.

As Leslie's husband, Dave, the high priests group leader, puts it, "Basically, we

implemented family history in every aspect of the ward." Family history, yes, but at its heart the ward focused on service that led to the temple itself.

Soon the family history center was busy. "We used to be this broom closet at the end of the hall," Leslie says. "And now it's a packed house of members who want to get their family to the temple."

#### **Built on a Foundation of Love**

In many ways, implementing the plan was easy for members in the Elizabethtown Ward, for they have long had a sense of unity and fellowship that moves them to reach out to each other. For example, Gary and Becky Giewald felt a warmth and tenderness from the time they started investigating the Church in 2004. After the Giewalds were baptized, several couples in the ward provided sincere, supportive friendships that encouraged participation in faith-promoting activities. In addition, ward leaders followed counsel from the stake president, Lyle Stucki, to have new converts engage in family history and attend the temple to do baptisms for the dead within 90 days of their own baptism.

"My first calling was in the family history center," says Gary. "I began work-

#### YOUTH CEMETERY TRIP

n July 2008 the Elizabethtown Ward youth went to an old local cemetery to collect names for data preservation. They tried the traditional method of rubbing charcoal across paper placed against the stones, but weathering had made the stones unreadable. Then Sister Leslie Bower felt inspired to rub a light dirt film on the stones, and suddenly the names and dates of most stones appeared. Afterward, youth cleaned the dirt off the stones. They were as excited as everyone, and the activity was a great success.



ing on my family history almost immediately." Three months after being baptized, the Giewalds were ready to attend the temple to perform baptisms for their ancestors. Gary smiles fondly as he recalls that "the first time we went to the temple I took

> my family file cards. I basically got my four generations finished." As exciting

as doing their family research was, being in the temple itself touched the Giewalds even more. "When we did the baptisms," Becky recalls, "I was overwhelmed with the spirit of the people I was being baptized for-my grandmothers, my aunts. Every time I heard their names read I felt like they wanted us to do this, that they were glad we finally did it. And when we each received our own endowment about a year later, I was overwhelmed. I know we



As Scouts earned the genealogy merit badge, Rob Brown helped them focus on the temple.

were doing what we were supposed to be doing."

When Steve and Julia Park were baptized in 2006, the Giewalds invited them over for socializing at home and took them on temple trips, repeating this pattern of caring. Soon the Parks were attending the temple at least

quarterly on the youth temple trips, and sometimes as often as twice a month. As they have attended, their knowledge, faith, and testimonies have grown. Ward members continue the pattern of caring and shepherding with each new convert who joins the Church in their ward.

#### **A Contagious Fire**

"We try to plan our activities around that focus and keep the temple at the center of what we're

striving for and everything we do," says Rob Brown, the Young Men president. "It's a contagious movement through the ward to make it to the temple and do family history work. It's just a contagious fire."

The adult leaders have certainly felt that fire, and so have the youth. Megan Robinson, age 13, attended the temple for the second time and participated in ordinances for five family names. "I loved it. I felt something inside me—the Spirit." Because of her example, her brother, Braxton, age 10, can't wait until his turn comes to perform baptisms and confirmations.

Other youth had similar experiences. One young

man, Ethan Westover, age 18, commented that he hadn't attended the temple on a youth trip before moving to the ward a year earlier. Now he attends every youth trip the ward takes because he feels so excited to go.

Chris Coleman, age 14, says, "I love the Church. I love going to the temple." Chris feels particularly grateful that he can receive answers to prayers in the temple.

As Rob explains, much of the success comes from activities planned to teach principles that strengthen testimonies and at the same time provide an enjoyable experience. As a result, when the ward plans temple trips, the youth don't see them as onerous—they want to go, and so they make the sacrifice. "They make the temple a priority," he says.

Activities and instruction follow this same principle at all levels, from the Primary children to the youth to



#### HAVENS OF PEACE

"Temples will bless all who attend them and who sacrifice for their completion. The

light of Christ will shine on all even those who have gone beyond." President Thomas S. Monson, "For I Was Blind, But Now I See," Ensign, May 1999, 56. new converts. Ward efforts culminate in quarterly temple trips that include the youth, adults, and new adult converts. As they participate together, ward members develop strength, faith, and unity both individually and collectively.

Consider Will Chadwick. Having grown up in a family that honored the temple and having been a part of the ward as the plan to energize temple attendance developed, he gained a love for the temple

and a greater perspective of his eternal significance. As he was preparing to enter his freshman year at Brigham Young University in Provo in the fall of 2008, he explained that in the temple "I feel peaceful, I feel loved. My part in the plan of salvation is better known to me."

Through their combined efforts, members of the Elizabethtown Ward have dramatically increased family history work and temple worship. As they have done so they have increased their faith and found the joy that comes through dedicating one's life to the service of the Lord.



Above: The author's Web site, which retraces the life history of his father. Inset: Robert Otterson's British World War II medals. Left to right: Muhlberg, Germany; sign pointing the direction to a German war cemetery and Stalag IV B; the author with his daughter in Germany in 2006; map showing location of Stalag IV B; the river Mulde, which Robert Otterson and his friend crossed as they escaped from Germany to the American front lines.

In Search of My Dad-

#### **BY MICHAEL OTTERSON**

As our family prepared to retrace my father's World War II escape from a prisoner-of-war camp, we were amazed by what we found online to help us.

ONLINE

never knew much about my father except that he had been a soldier in the British Army in World War II, and he had been a prisoner of war for several years.

In the autumn of 2006, I posted the following on the Internet about my father: "Robert Otterson was buried in the summer of 1949. Rifle shots were fired over the grave and a Union Jack draped the coffin. Later, his older brother would say of the funeral wake that it was a particularly silent affair. The usual attempt to cheer up the mourners with stories and even a little humor were absent."

Such was the stunned reaction to the death of a man who,

at 37 as a professional soldier, had spent more years away from home and family than he had ever wished. Three of those years had seen him incarcerated as a prisoner of war, first in North Africa, then in Italy, and finally in Germany.

After the war, as he walked up the narrow street of a village in Surrey, England, in the late spring of 1945 to be reunited with his family again, he described his feelings as "on top of the world."

Only four years later he was dead not the glorious battlefield death of a soldier, but a common road accident that threw him from his motorbike on to a Welsh country road.

For me, his son, it meant growing up without a father. I was nine months old when he died, and I have no memory of him. I felt no particular deprivation during my boyhood, due, no doubt, to a devoted mother and two caring older sisters. But as I grew older, I began to sense the loss. I missed the experience of talking to a father. I missed the things I imagined he would have taught me. I missed his wisdom.

Soon these feelings of loss became the stimulus for me to learn all I could about my father's life. Over the years, I have re-created, from interviews, letters, and journals, the things I could not learn firsthand. I share it now with his children, 10 grandchildren, and 23 great-grandchildren, with the hope that they will come to know and appreciate this remarkable man.

#### ALL DONE?

Some say, "My family history is all done." Others say, "Uncle Fred is doing it all." That's a bit like saying, "I don't go to Church, but that's okay because Uncle Fred goes for me."

The fact is that we need to be personally engaged in family history so our hearts will be turned to our fathers. Then we will forge that welding link between our ancestors and us that is so important to the Lord.

Think about it. We each have four grandparents and that doubles each generation. In 10 generations we have 512 "grandparents" not counting the thousands of other family members they bore. In 16 generations, we have nearly 33,000 direct ancestors. Our family history hasn't all been done—I guarantee it.

#### **Retracing Steps in Germany**

I never knew whether there was any trace of the German prison camp where my father spent the last months of World War II. During the summer of 2006, however, my wife and I, with a daughter and son-in-law, found the huge flat field where the camp used to stand in what used to be East Germany, near Muhlberg on the Elbe River.

The camp was eventually liberated by the Russians, but Russian military authorities still wouldn't let the Allied soldiers leave. So my father and a friend slipped out of camp, trekking across fields and streams toward the American lines 25 miles (40 kilometers) to the west.

Using my dad's prison camp journal, we learned that my dad and his friend had spent that night in a barn with German refugees to avoid the Russian patrols. Finally they reached the bridge over the Mulde river. The American front lines were on the other side. My father described his feelings as he walked over that bridge and shook hands with the American soldiers. He wrote that for the first time in years, he felt "really free."

We traced the route he took as closely as we could, and I walked across that same bridge over the Mulde, trying to imagine how he felt in 1945. I sent our American son-in-law

ahead so I could shake hands with an American on the other side as my father had done. Then I stood on the bank of the river with the bridge in the background and read from my father's journal as my daughter recorded it on a digital video recorder. That is now posted on our family Web site in the hope that it will help turn the hearts of my children and grandchildren to their fathers.

#### Finding More Online

What if I hadn't been able to travel to Germany? I would still have had the power of the Internet available to me.

From the Web site for the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands, I found a picture of the gates to the camp known as Stalag IV B—the German prison camp where my father finished out the war.

Personal items of Robert Otterson from World War II. The top two items are the telegram (and its envelope) from 1945 saying that Robert is coming home; the center two items are Robert's POW tags lying on his journal, which is open to a page telling of his arrival back home; and the bottom two items are photographs of Robert as a professional soldier.

OFFICE STAPP

From an Italian naval Web site, I found a picture of the *Ugo Foscolo*—the prison ship that carried my father across the Mediterranean from North Africa to Italy for three miserable days. Many of the men had dysentery. There was no proper sanitation. They slept below decks on metal floors—wretched, hungry souls who didn't know if they would survive. My father described his place on the ship, below the aft hatch. When I found a site online for model shipbuilding that had a model of the *Ugo Foscolo*, I could clearly see in the picture of the model the hatch my dad described.

When the prisoners finally disembarked, they faced a threemile (five-kilometer) march—an eternity it seemed to some of them—to their new camp near Bari on the Adriatic coast.

My father wrote of their arrival: "As we passed through the city, the doors and windows of every house were filled with curious spectators. There were giggling girls, mocking youths, grave-faced men, and an old lady, who watched while tears ran down her furrowed cheeks. Truly, our appearance was more to be pitied than laughed at, but ragged, unkempt, dirty, and half-starved as we were, we held our heads erect, got into step, and gazed defiantly back at the mocking faces, while the war songs of 25 years ago burst from our lips and echoed through the streets."

#### Why Should Our Hearts Turn to Our Fathers?

So why is this important? Because when we stand in the baptismal font of a temple, as I did in New Zealand in 1970 for my father, the experience is immeasurably richer. This is also true as I complete any temple work for someone whose life I have studied. And even if all I can find on the Internet is a description of the time and place in which an ancestor lived—and that is the case for most of them—it still helps me make a connection. Family history for me now is not just names and dates, but flesh and blood experiences to be passed on—stories to bind and strengthen families. Could the Lord also have had this in mind when he said the hearts of the children would be turned to their fathers?

May your hearts truly turn to those whose sacrifices have helped you become who you are. May you feel the reality of the Spirit of Elijah. May you use your natural gifts, talents and experience to help capture the stories that make your families special, and that will help bind your children and your children's children through those common experiences.

All text, including sidebars, is from a BYU–Idaho Devotional, presented by the author on November 28, 2006.

#### WHAT YOUNG ADULTS CAN DO

doubt there are many young adults who aren't familiar with how to use a computer. The same isn't true for many of their parents or grandparents. So I want to encourage you as young adults to do three things next time you are in their home.

**1. Download.** If your parents or grandparents have a computer with an Internet connection but don't have an electronic family history program on their hard drive, go to www.familysearch.org and download a free copy of Personal Ancestral File (PAF) or other family history software for them. It will take you only a few minutes.

**2. Tutor.** If they have never done any family history work, sit down with them and get them to enter their own names into the software. Enter husband, wife, and

children—no more for the moment and just add the names, birth dates and places, marriage dates and places, and death dates and places. That will take about 20 minutes.

FAMILY STARCH

Then encourage and help your parents or grandparents to gather up any written family history information from shoeboxes, scraps of paper, and pedigree charts and

to begin entering it into the computer. In the weeks to come, help them with this goal. Once information is in an electronic format, you will be able to access the power of the Internet and amazing things can begin to happen as you search for your family history. If you do not know how to access this information from the Internet, a Church family history specialist should be able to help you.

**3. Interview.** If you can, use a digital recorder or digital video camera and ask your parents about their early lives and what they remember of their parents and grandparents. Do this in multiple sittings, but get it while you still have the blessing of living parents and grandparents. If you don't have that opportunity, then try to gather this information from aunts and uncles or anyone of the previous generations. If you don't do it, those memories will pass out of existence.

Becoming involved in family history as young adults will turn your hearts toward your ancestors, enrich your temple experiences, and help to unite your family together forever.

#### BY JENNIFER NUCKOLS

Satan regularly lies to us about the nature of God and of ourselves. But we don't have to listen.

Some of the greatest battles in my life haven't been literal battles but struggles in my own heart and mind against feelings of self-doubt, hopelessness, and fear. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught that this would be the case in the latter days: "Satan is increasingly striving to overcome the Saints with despair, discouragement, despondency, and depression."<sup>1</sup>

RUPES

One way that Satan attempts to overcome us with such feelings is by telling us lies about our worth and about God's feelings toward us. These lies may originate as simple thoughts that, repeated many times in our minds, can develop into entrenched habits of belief. These falsehoods are then reinforced by the media, things other people say, or even by misinterpretation of the scriptures. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has warned that "Satan might even misuse words from the scriptures that emphasize the justice of God, in order to imply that there is no mercy."<sup>2</sup> Whatever their source, Satan's lies can take root in our minds and develop into feelings of depression, low self-worth, and inadequacy.

To combat such false beliefs that have negatively affected my attitudes and actions, I have tried to consciously identify my own damaging thoughts and replace them with gospel truths. In so doing, I have developed an increased ability to fight off Satan's tools of "despair, discouragement, despondency, and depression." What follows are examples of the lies that I have When we feel weighed down by feelings of inadequacy, truths from modern-day prophets and apostles can help us discard the burdensome—and sometimes inaccurate—messages we tell ourselves.

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found myself entertaining, and the truths taught by prophets, apostles, and other Church leaders that have helped me correct my thinking.

SELF IMAGE

LIE: Because of my weaknesses and failings, God is continually disappointed in, frustrated with, and even angry with me.

TEMENT

#### TRUTH: God loves me and rejoices in me because I am His child.

During a difficult time while serving as a missionary, I started to believe that despite my obedience to mission rules and hard work, I was a constant disappointment to God because of my weaknesses. In dark moments when I was viewing God as a harsh judge, I would think about my earthly father and how deeply he loves me. I knew that I could always turn to him for love and comfort. But then I realized that it is impossible for my mortal father to love me more than my Heavenly Father does. As Nephi learned when he saw the vision of the tree of life, the love of God is "the most desirable above all things . . . and the most joyous to the soul" (1 Nephi 11:22–23). God's love can be more joyous to my soul than anyone else's

love because He has the capacity to love me more than anyone else possibly could. In my case, the person who helped me gain this realization was my father, but anyone from whom we feel abundant love—a friend, teacher, sibling, or spouse—can teach us about the magnitude of God's love. Understanding the magnitude of that love means I have someone I can turn to for love when I feel weak, not hide from in shame.

LIE: I'm not as righteous, spiritual, attractive, or kind as that other person; therefore, God must love that person more than He loves me.

TRUTH: God knows my individual potential and progress intimately. He does not compare or rank me with His other children.

The world often assesses people according to how their performance compares to someone else's performance. Popular TV shows host competitions to rank people according to their talent and skill. However, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches that God does not work that way:

"He does not mercilessly measure [His children] against their neighbors. He doesn't even compare them with each other. His gestures of compassion toward one do not require a withdrawal or denial of love for the other. . . . I testify that no one of us is less treasured or cherished of God than another. I testify that He loves each of us—insecurities, anxieties, self-image, and all. He doesn't measure our talents or our looks; He doesn't measure our professions or our possessions."<sup>3</sup>

These truths can help us resist Satan's whisperings that we will never be as good as someone else. A full acceptance of this truth will allow us to find greater joy even in the midst of our current "insecurities, anxieties, [and] self-image. This knowledge will also increase our ability to rejoice in the blessings and successes of others."

#### LIE: I need to prove that I'm worth loving by being perfect. Only when I'm perfect will I be able to experience love from God and from others.

## TRUTH: Even though I'm not perfect now, I can have constant access to divine love.

While I was growing up, I felt an intense drive to do everything perfectly—from grades at school to supposed spiritual checklists. I had already bought into the lie that

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#### HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

flawless performance would increase my worth and make me more lovable. But such an attitude of perfectionism prevented me from consistently rejoicing in the Lord's love for me because every time I failed to do something perfectly, I felt unlovable. Sister Bonnie D. Parkin, former Relief Society general president, asked, "Do we frequently reject the Lord's love that He pours out upon us in much more abundance than we Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that we should "write down in a secure place the important things you learn from the Spirit" ("To Acquire Knowledge and the Strength to Use It Wisely," *Ensign*, June 2002, 32). After reading this article with your family, discuss the difference between the lies the world teaches, as stated in the article, and the truths taught by prophets, apostles, and other Church leaders. Invite your family to record these truths in their journals.

are willing to receive? Do we think we have to be perfect in order to deserve His love? When we allow ourselves to feel 'encircled about eternally in the arms of his love' (2 Nephi 1:15), we feel safe, and we realize that we don't need to be immediately perfect."<sup>4</sup> Sister Parkin describes God's love as something we can choose to either reject or allow ourselves to feel. Although we can make choices that enable us to experience a heightened or a lesser degree of God's love,<sup>5</sup> we can and should be partaking of God's love now, even—and especially—in our imperfect state. We are worth loving because Christ thought that we were of enough worth to atone for us individually.

#### LIE: I'm a terrible failure. I'll never be good enough because I keep making the same mistakes over and over again.

## TRUTH: I'm not perfect, but the desires of my heart are good. I can feel inspired to progress.

While guilt or "godly sorrow" (2 Corinthians 7:10) can be a gift from God that inspires us to change and improve, Satan can also use guilt to demoralize us. Some people may not easily give in to large temptations, but if Satan can depress and immobilize those Saints through a false perception of their own unworthiness or inadequacies, then they become neutralized in the fight against evil. Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve (1926– 2004) offered this comfort to those plagued by feelings of failure and excessive guilt: "May I speak, not to the slackers in the Kingdom, but to those who carry their own load and more; not to those lulled into false security, but to those buffeted by false insecurity, who, though laboring devotedly in the Kingdom, have recurring feelings of falling forever short. . . . There is a difference . . . between being 'anxiously engaged' and being overanxious and thus underengaged.

... We can distinguish more clearly between divine discontent and the

devil's dissonance, between dissatisfaction with self and disdain for self. We need the first and must shun the second, remembering that when conscience calls to us from the next ridge, it is not solely to scold but also to beckon."<sup>6</sup>

As we honestly discern where we stand with God, we can eliminate the thoughts that would plague and depress us. Instead, we can replace those with thoughts that beckon and encourage us onward.

## LIE: I have too many issues, hang-ups, and past mistakes to be blessed and happy.

TRUTH: No mistake, no personal challenge, no past circumstance is outside of the healing and redemptive power of the Atonement.

The anti-Christs in the Book of Mormon tried to convince people to renounce their faith in Christ. Even though we may profess belief in Christ, when we tell ourselves that we are outside the redemptive power of the Atonement, we are falling prey to a common deception of the greatest anti-Christ, Satan. In contrast, President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve teaches that "save for those few who defect to perdition after having known a fulness, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness. . . . Restoring what you cannot restore, healing the wound you cannot heal, fixing that which you broke and you cannot fix is the very purpose of the atonement of Christ."<sup>7</sup>

#### Discerning the Truth about Ourselves

Sometimes these truths about ourselves and about God seem so wonderful that they can be difficult to accept. If we do not "resist the spirit of truth" (Alma 30:46) but instead allow the truths about ourselves and about our relationship with God to fill our souls, we will experience an increase of joy.

When a stray thought enters our mind, we can use the Spirit to help us discern whether it is a true thought from God or possibly a lie planted there by Satan because "the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be" (Jacob 4:13). We can tell a true thought because it will carry with it the sweet fruits of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22). When we feel ourselves slipping into the "despair, discouragement, despondency, and depression" that President Benson described, we can ask ourselves if we may be holding onto a lie about ourselves or about God. We can seek out the truth in the words of the scriptures and the living prophets. We can pray for the ability to discern between truth and error. Empowered by the truth, we will find the strength to keep Satan at bay and experience the joy of having "the truth of all things" abide in us (Moses 6:61).

#### NOTES

- 1. Ezra Taft Benson, "Do Not Despair," *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 65.
- 2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Point of Safe Return," *Ensign*, May 2007, 99.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Other Prodigal," *Ensign*, May 2002, 63–64.
- Bonnie D. Parkin, "Eternally Encircled in His Love," Ensign, Nov. 2006, 108.
- 5. See Russell M. Nelson, "Divine Love," *Ensign*, Feb. 2003, 20–25.
- Neal A. Maxwell, "Notwithstanding My Weakness," Ensign, Nov. 1976, 12–14.
- Boyd K. Packer, "The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 19–20.

Empowered by truth, we can discard inaccurate messages with thoughts that beckon and encourage us onward.

PERCE



#### **BY TONJA-MAREE DAVIS**

Giving money and time was much easier than the offering I was now required to make—a humble, grateful heart.

s I unloaded the food from the car, I realized I had not had breakfast, and my stomach was now telling me so. Once the bags were on my table, I began to open them. The sight of the fresh grapes was so inviting. I took them to the sink and rinsed them and put several in my mouth. They tasted so good!

As I emptied the contents of the other sacks from the bishop's storehouse, I was so grateful to have fresh fruit and vegetables in our home again. Because of the expense, we had not had a lot of fresh produce in our home in recent months. I grabbed an apple and took a bite. It tasted wonderful. Tears of gratitude began to stream down my face. A few months earlier my heart had not been as humble.

It was late spring. My husband had only worked for five weeks since the first of the year. The lumber industry is unpredictable. Although he had been with the same company for 12 years, the sawmill shut down and Darin was without work. At that time, none of our extended family were in a position to help us. Our friends were gracious and offered odd jobs that needed completing a fence to be repaired, a house to be painted, etc. Darin worked hard and received money for his efforts. But the money coming in no longer covered our bills and obligations. We had always tried to live within our means and had paid our tithes and offerings faithfully, but we soon found ourselves falling behind. As we began pulling food from our storage, the shelves of excess canned goods and other items we had purchased when they were on sale began to look empty. My first realization that we may need assistance came when we were making spaghetti one evening. I went to grab a can of tomato sauce and there was none. We always had extra cans of tomato sauce! We borrowed one from our neighbor. Then I went to put spaghetti noodles in the boiling water and there were no noodles. I couldn't believe it. I always planned our menus and shopped from a list and we ate pretty nourishing meals. Now, we bought less and less from the store. Our money wasn't going as far.

One night my husband came home and suggested that we request food from the bishop's storehouse. "No," was my reply. "We will get by. We really don't need it." A few weeks later, I realized we had no choice. We had two young children to feed. We reluctantly went to the bishop.

When the Relief Society president came to visit and to evaluate our needs, it was difficult for me to tell her because I was quite emotional. It was not easy for me to admit we needed Church assistance. She was kind and tactful and definitely not judgmental. But my voice was quavering, and I tried to hide my tears. We had always been self-reliant. This new situation was hard for me to accept.

We received two food orders, and I was grateful that my children were being fed a little better, but I still resisted the assistance. My husband went back to work, and we felt our troubles were over. However, he only worked three weeks and the mill shut down again. With no other job prospects in sight, we knew we would continue to need help from the Church.

#### **Reassurance in the Temple**

Needing to ponder our circumstances, we found a babysitter for the children and went to the temple. It was so peaceful to be in the house of the Lord. As I was sitting there considering the weight of our concerns, I felt the impression that I would be called as the next Primary president. The impression came so clearly that I looked around to see if someone was talking to me. My inward response was, "My husband is out of work and we have no money. How can I be Primary president?" The truth is, I had felt that because we needed assistance, we had somehow become of less value in the kingdom. The impression came again forcefully. "You will be called as the next Primary president."

When we got home from the temple, I kept these things to myself. But my heart began to soften. I became teachable. My husband's lack of work did not define us. That experience in the temple taught me that our service in the kingdom of God was of value. I needed to go forward in faith. I looked at my strengths and weaknesses and made a resolve to improve.

Two months later my husband and I were invited to meet with the bishopric. The bishop called me to be the Primary president, and I accepted. I was asked to take a few days and decide who my counselors should be. I smiled and asked if he wanted the names right now. The bishopric looked a little puzzled, so I shared my experience in the temple. They smiled and extended the other calls that day. It strengthened my testimony to know that Heavenly Father does love us, and even when we are frustrated with life's daily endeavors, He reaches out and talks with us and lets us know He cares.

#### **Declaration of Dependence**

ast offering

When Darin finally went back to work the first of June, we thought our financial problems were all behind us. But even after paying bills with our first full paycheck since Christmas, there were still several bills left unpaid. What more could we do? My husband (who had recently been called into the bishopric) simply said we were doing the best we could and we needed to be patient. He called the bishop, and the bishop agreed that it would be best for the Church to supply commodities so we could apply our money to our bills.

and Other Off

When I came home that June day with more food from the bishop's storehouse, my heart was full of gratitude to a Heavenly Father who had provided a way for our needs to be met. Before, we had always been on the giving end, paying fast offerings and serving in the bishop's storehouse when asked. But we cannot always expect life to be as we want it. We found ourselves on the receiving end, blessed by the sacrifices and offerings of others.

Now we are back on our feet and self-reliant again, but with a difference. We recognize more than ever before how dependent we are on the Lord and on one another. We have a greater appreciation for the Lord's welfare system. Our experience has made us want to be more generous with our own offerings and to give service cheerfully and often. We see the wisdom in Jacob's counsel to "think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance" (Jacob 2:17). And we've learned that a grateful and humble heart is also an acceptable offering. ■

#### VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

## Nurture the Rising Generation



Teach these scriptures and quotations or, if needed, another principle that will bless

the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you visit to share what they have felt and learned.

**D&C 123:11:** "It is an imperative duty that we owe to all the rising generation."

## What Is My Responsibility to the Rising Generation?

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926– 2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Reserved by the Lord for this time, [the rising generation] must now be preserved . . . and prepared for their special moment in human history! They have been held back to come forth at this time, but now they need to be pushed forward to meet their rendezvous. . . .

"Youth are not unlike prospective converts. There are those critical moments when their souls begin to tilt—toward the Lord or away from Him. These moments of decision cannot always be created, but when they occur, they must not be wasted. More often than not, these moments will occur in quiet and reverent conversation with parents, grandparents, a bishop, an adult leader, or a righteous peer" ("Unto the Rising Generation," Ensign, Apr. 1985, 8, 10).

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Presidency of the Seventy: "Our rising generation is worthy of our best efforts to support and strengthen them in their journey to adulthood. . . . In every action we take, in every place we go, with every Latter-day Saint young person we meet, we need to have an increased awareness of the need for strengthening, nurturing, and being an influence for good in their lives" ("Our Rising Generation," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 47).

#### How Can I Nurture the Rising Generation?

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910-2008): "Never forget that these little ones are the sons and daughters of God and that yours is a custodial relationship to them, that He was a parent before you were parents and that He has not relinquished His parental rights or interest in these His little ones.... Rear your children in love, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Take care of your little ones. Welcome them into your homes, and nurture and love them with all of your hearts. They may do, in the years that come, some things you would not want them to do, but be patient, be patient. You have not failed as long as you have tried" ("Words of the Living Prophet," Liahona, May 1998, 26-27; "Excerpts from Recent Addresses

of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, July 1997, 73).

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president: "To nurture means to cultivate, care for, and make grow. ... Nurturing requires organization, patience, love, and work. Helping growth occur through nurturing is truly a powerful and influential role bestowed



on women" ("Mothers Who Know," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 76, 77).

Barbara Thompson, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: "As Relief Society sisters we can help one another to strengthen families. We are given opportunities to serve in many capacities. We constantly come in contact with children and youth who may need just what we can offer. You older sisters have much good advice and experience to share with younger mothers. Sometimes a Young Women leader or a Primary teacher says or does just the thing that is needed to reinforce what a parent is trying to teach. And obviously we don't need any particular calling to reach out to a friend or neighbor" ("I Will Strengthen Thee; I Will Help Thee," Liahona and Ensign, Nov. 2007, 117).

### ADEQUATE NUTRITION DURING AN EMERGENCY

f you have a three-day emergency supplies kit, does it contain nutrient-dense foods? During perilous times, your body would especially need adequate nutrition. As a registered dietitian with a master's degree in nutrition, I have developed a simple, healthy emergency meal plan for our family. The items should be rotated regularly for best results.

My minimum calorie goal for the three daily meals is 1,200 to 1,500, with 60 to 72 grams of protein and approximately 40 grams of fat, a combination that enhances satiety. The ingredients for each meal plan are simple:

Meal replacements and supplements. Include shelf-stable protein drinks, instant powdered breakfast drinks, powdered milk, and energy bars. You may want to use more than one type. Each should provide 250 calories or more. Look carefully at the labels; snack or cereal bars are not as high in calories and protein.

**Dried fruit.** Raisins and other dried fruits are good.

**Peanut butter.** This is a great shelfstable source of protein. If you have peanut allergies, you could substitute it with another nut butter or small bag of nuts. Or find other shelf-stable protein foods.

**Crackers.** Include soda crackers or other crackers, preferably whole grain. You could also include granola if you won't be using peanut butter to spread on crackers.

> **Drinking Water.** Ideally you should

have about two quarts or almost two liters of water for each person to consume each day. Store what you can comfortably carry in your emergency bag, and add a portable water purifier so you can use available water sources.

**Utensils.** Include one cup with a lid (to be used as a shaker for mixing powdered meal replacements) and a butter knife.

A sample meal plan for one person for three days would include nine meal replacements plus 1½ cups or a 12-ounce bag of dried fruit, peanut butter to provide at least six twotablespoon servings, and about 40 saltine crackers or another cracker equivalent.

Calculate the food amounts needed for your family and round to the nearest convenient product size that is commercially available, taking care not to round down too much.

These emergency kits are easy to assemble with readily available items. The meal replacements are nutrient dense and fortified with vitamins and minerals so you can reach or approach nutritional adequacy and meet special dietary needs. They don't need to be heated, and
#### FAMILY HOME EVENING HELPS

you can easily store everything in a moderate-size duffle bag or backpack. Best of all is the peace of mind in knowing you've prepared for your nutritional needs should an emergency evacuation ever occur. *Miriam Blackham Een, Nevada, USA* 

# PILLOW PACKETS

illow packets have helped me emphasize the love I have for my grandchildren when they come to visit. I have made the packets using legal-size paper envelopes fastened to the pillows on their guest beds. Inside, I tucked small messages and gifts that conveyed my love for them individually. Soon I discovered that sharing carefully chosen quotes from conference was a perfect addition to the packets. Not only do these mini-messages uplift my grandchildren, but they also bless me when I review each conference talk with them in mind. For me, the Church leaders' words of encouragement for our youth, in particular, give me greater hope for our world and future. Judy M. DalPonte, Utah, USA

## COME TO MY BAPTISM

Family and friends in the Church will likely come to witness the special occasion. Why not invite nonmember friends as well?

Where Do We Keep the . . .? fter having an almostempty house for a few years, my parents welcomed the return of their children who had completed missions or college semesters. During the first busy days with a full house again, my mother spent a lot of time answering the question: "Where do you keep the . . . ?" Extra toiletries, cleaning supplies, and the like all seemed to be in new places since we'd lived at home.

Finally, my mother decided to answer everyone at once—with a tour of our home. At family home evening, she showed my brothers and sisters

Our four children each invited nonmember friends and their parents, as well as school teachers and other important people in their lives, to their baptisms. In all, we extended 50 invitations, handwritten with directions to the meetinghouse.

Nobody seemed to be offended by our invitation. In fact, we saw many positive results. Our son's school teacher accepted a copy of the Book of Mormon, and another family agreed to join us for a family home evening. Two mothers commented on how touched they

where she kept things in the closets, storage areas, and the garage. To make sure everyone had paid attention, she ended the tour with a written quiz-and some prizes! Now it was her turn to ask, "Where are the flashlights?" "Where do we keep the laundry supplies and towels?" The quiz was thorough, and everyone had fun reacquainting themselves with Mom's housekeeping routine.

With my own young family, we have modified this activity as a scavenger hunt. Our small children love trying to remember where we keep things, especially infrequently used items. I feel safer knowing that they can find important items such as our phone lists and emergency kits. We take care to store medications and other potentially harmful supplies safely out of their reach. But we do encourage our children to achieve as much independence at home as they can. And for them, this is a fun game. Angela Smith, Maryland, USA



were by the baptismal service, and several children asked their parents about going to church. One little girl, after seeing our daughter's baptism, said she'd like to do the same. And another mother defended the Church in a conversation with a teacher at the local high school.

To our knowledge, none of our nonmember baptism guests have chosen to join the Church. But we know they appreciate our friendship and our desire to share a beautiful, spiritual experience with them.

Peter and Susan Vousden, England

#### LATTER-DAY SAINT VOICES

# Grabbing the Strong Roots

hen I was a schoolgirl in Russia, I read a scary story about two boys who encountered a bear in a forest. Years later, after I had become a teacher, some friends asked me to join them on a trip to collect mushrooms. The forest still scared me, but I agreed to go with them.

Entering the forest, I grabbed a wooden stick so I could defend myself in case I ran into a bear. My friends soon found the brown mushrooms they were looking for. I, on the other hand, was looking for mushrooms with bright red tops, so I started off in a different direction. Before I knew it, I was alone.

While I was searching, I slipped and fell. My mushroom basket flew into the air, but I held tight to my stick. When I tried to get up, I noticed that the ground was muddy and sticky. To my horror, I realized that I had wandered into a swamp! My rubber boots quickly filled with water, and I began to sink. I tried to move my legs, but instead of freeing myself, I was pulled deeper. When the mud reached my waist, deep fear engulfed me.

I cried out to my friends, but the only answer I heard came from buzzing dragonflies and croaking frogs. As I began to weep, I suddenly remembered my mother. Whenever she was in a bad situation, she prayed. She often invited me to pray, but I always refused, hen the mud reached my waist, deep fear engulfed me. I cried out to my friends, but the only answer I heard came from buzzing dragonflies and croaking frogs.

answering, "There is no God."

But in my watery soon-to-be grave, there was nothing else I could do but pray and call upon God for help. "If You live, please help me!" I cried.

Almost immediately I heard a kind voice tell me, "Believe and be not afraid. Grab the strong tree root."

As I looked around, I saw a big tree root behind me. Using my stick, I was able to latch onto it. Something then gave me the power to pull myself out of the swamp. Covered with mud, I fell to the ground and thanked God for answering my prayer. I now believed that He lived. I had felt His presence and heard His voice, and He had given me power to pull myself free.

A short time later, when the fulltime missionaries taught me that the Prophet Joseph Smith had received an answer to his prayer in the Sacred Grove, I believed them. After all, God had answered my prayer in a forest. I latched onto the strong roots of the gospel, was baptized soon thereafter, and serve today in the Gyumri Branch in Armenia.

I know Heavenly Father loves all of His children, and I'm grateful to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I'm also grateful for the many other blessings I have received from Heavenly Father, especially for His answer to an atheist's prayer in the forest many years ago. *Melsida Hakobyan, Armenia* 

# We're Here to See the Temple

ne autumn day during my shift as a worker in the Salt Lake Temple, a young man and his friends, clearly not dressed for temple worship, arrived.

"We're here to see the temple," the young man said.

"Do you have a recommend?" I asked.

The young man thought for a moment. Then he said, "Yes. My mother has a Mormon friend in Minnesota. She recommended that we come see the temple."

I felt impressed to pull the young people aside and talk to them. The young man's name was Lars. I explained to him that not only *could* he come to the temple but also that Heavenly Father *wanted* him to come. I told Lars that he first had to prepare, and I explained how. At the time, I had been active in the Church only a short while. I had served a mission but later left the Church after getting caught up in the entertainment industry and using drugs and alcohol. I thought my family would be impressed with my career and wealth, but my mother didn't care about any of that. Instead, she always put my name on the temple prayer roll, which angered me.

The woman I married had also left the Church. By the time our eightyear-old daughter, Tori, began asking questions about Jesus Christ, we had bottomed out spiritually. Despite my missionary service, I couldn't remember anything about the Savior.

"There are people who are qualified to teach you about Jesus," I told Tori. "Why don't you talk to them?" A few days later, two sister missionaries knocked on our door. Tori invited them in and began taking the discussions. Eavesdropping from another room, I heard the sisters teaching doctrines that I recognized to be true.

"Would you like to be baptized?" one of the sisters asked Tori after the third discussion.

"Yes," she replied.

"Will your dad baptize you?"

I had not been to church for 20 years, but I knew my life was about to change. I sat in on the last few discussions, we started attending church, and my wife and I met with the bishop. As I repented, I decided that I must do everything possible to compensate for the years I had



lost. I changed careers, magnified my Church callings, was sealed to my wife and daughter, and became a temple worker. That's how I knew that a curious group of young people could become temple worthy.

The following spring, Lars wrote me a letter, thanking me for explaining the real meaning of a temple recommend. "I *did* learn more about a temple recommend," he wrote. "Actually, I was baptized and received a recommend of my own last January!" My eyes filled with tears as I looked at the photograph he had enclosed of himself in his white baptismal clothes and of the missionaries who had taught him.

My journey back to the temple was remarkable, and learning of Lars's journey was a wonderful blessing that reminded me how we can all touch lives for good. ■ *Rees Bandley, Utah, USA* 

# Grandma's Baptism

n June 30, 2001, I was making a birthday cake for my daughter when the phone rang. It was my sister in Brazil, informing me that our grandmother had passed away.

The news was sad, but I was not sad. After all, my dear grandmother had lived to be nearly 102. I was happy that she was free of her aged, mortal body and had gone to the spirit world.

Then I started thinking about the coincidence of her death occurring on my daughter's birthday, and I wondered if there was some significance in the timing. As the days passed, I discovered what it was: it would be easy for me to remember to be baptized for my grandmother a year after her passing. I assumed this responsibility, knowing that I had to wait just until my daughter's next birthday.

The year passed quickly. I did not have the opportunity to go to the temple on the exact anniversary of my grandmother's death, however, because I lived in Portugal and attended the Madrid Spain Temple. But hardly a day went by that I did not think about my responsibility to be baptized for Grandma Josefina.

It was not until October 2002 that we were able to go to the temple. My husband and I went along with our son, Mathew, who was going to receive his endowment in preparation for his mission. I was happy to be going to the temple, and I thought I might feel something special when I was baptized in behalf of my grandmother.

My husband performed the baptism, but I didn't feel anything. My son performed the confirmation, but again, nothing. My anxiety over not feeling anything passed, and I was just glad that the ordinances had been performed for my grandmother.

After the endowment, we went to the sealing room to have Grandma sealed to her parents. When we knelt across the altar to perform the ordinance and the sealer began to speak, I felt as if a shock had started at my head and passed through my body. It is difficult to describe, but at that burning moment, I was certain that Grandma Josefina rejoiced in being sealed to her parents. ■ Marilena Kretly Pretel Busto, São Paulo, Brazil

decided that helping at a mission would be better than sitting at home feeling lonely and bitter. A few days later I found myself placing hot mashed potatoes on the plates of hungry people.

# Lifting Others and Myself

t was Thanksgiving of 1990. I had just gone through a difficult divorce, and I was a first-year law student in an unfamiliar city. My children were going to be at their father's house for the holiday, and for the first time in my life, I would be alone on Thanksgiving.

At first I wanted to feel sorry for myself and have a good cry. But then I began to count my blessings. I had two beautiful children, a nice house, an opportunity to gain knowledge, and the gospel of Jesus Christ to guide my life. I truly had been blessed with many things.

As Thanksgiving approached, I discovered that a group of law students had planned to go to a local mission to help serve an early Thanksgiving dinner to the homeless. I decided that helping at the mission would be better than sitting at home feeling lonely and bitter, so I joined my fellow students.

A few days later I found myself placing hot mashed potatoes on the plates of hungry, grateful, life-tossed people. The tears that welled up in my eyes were not for the sadness I felt for myself; rather, they were tears of love for all of God's children, no matter their circumstances.

Thanksgiving wouldn't have been Thanksgiving without a turkey in the oven. But a 14-pound (6-kg) turkey would be too much for me, so I invited several students who were from other countries and faraway states to join me. I wanted to share a traditional American Thanksgiving dinner, but I invited them to contribute. I asked each to bring a favorite dish from home. Our Thanksgiving dinner turned out to be a delightful and memorable meal—egg rolls and all.

King Benjamin declared, "Behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

I learned wisdom that Thanksgiving Day. By offering service when it was easier to sit around and mope, I found joy. Service is the key to happiness not only during the holidays, when it is easy to get caught up in what is missing from our lives, but also during any season. No matter what our situation, we can always find someone to help. By lifting our brothers and sisters, we also lift ourselves. ■ *Cathy Whitaker Marshall, Washington, USA* 

## ${f NEWS}$ of the church

# *Preach My Gospel* Continues to Help Members and Missionaries Alike

By Kimberly Bowen, Church Magazines

Five years and nearly two million copies after it was first published, *Preach My Gospel: A Guide* to Missionary Service continues helping missionaries and members in their missionary efforts.

While it was written as a full-time missionary reference tool, from the beginning Church leaders have encouraged members to become familiar with the manual as they learn to serve as member missionaries and as they prepare others to learn about the gospel.<sup>1</sup>

"Our own study of *Preach My Gospel* will not only help us to develop a greater understanding and appreciation for our missionaries, but it will help us in our own day-today life,"<sup>2</sup> said Elder Erich W. Kopischke of the Seventy.

#### A Missionary's Resource

The manual, which the Church announced on October 15, 2004, in a mission presidents' training meeting, teaches basic gospel doctrine as well as the principles of missionary service. The First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, other General Authorities, and a team from the Missionary Department oversaw the creation of the manual.

As a missionary resource, *Preach My Gospel* has "revolutionized missionary work,"<sup>3</sup> said Elder Kopischke.

"Missionaries throughout the world now get into their minds and hearts the message of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the plan of salvation, essential commandments, and the laws and ordinances of the gospel," said Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "These lessons are then given in their own words as guided by the Spirit. This focus has dramatically improved the effectiveness of missionaries that use it."4

The president of the Japan Kobe Mission, William A. McIntyre Jr., said that as the missionaries in his mission have focused on *Preach My Gospel*, it has helped them to



Preach My Gospel has sold nearly two million copies since it was introduced five years ago.

be happier and to be more effective, motivated missionaries because they learned how to be missionaries as well as how to do missionary work.

#### How the Manual Can Help You

However, unlike previous missionary resources, *Preach My Gospel* was intended for broad distribution to the general Church membership. "Missionaries are not alone in benefiting from *Preach My Gospel*" said Elder Scott.

Elder Scott invited

members to find out how the manual could help them as "a parent preparing a child for a mission, a Church leader helping a new convert, a member sharing the gospel, or an individual getting ready to serve."<sup>5</sup>

"I feel the manual was intended to help all members of the Church, regardless of their understanding of gospel principles," said Timothy L. Fry, president of the Ukraine Donetsk Mission. "It makes a wonderful and inspiring study guide. It helps [members of the Church] improve their knowledge and testimony of our Savior."

Within the 13 chapters of the manual are essential gospel principles, such as how to better recognize and understand the Spirit, the role of the Book of Mormon in conversion, scripture study techniques, how to overcome addictive behavior, and how to find opportunities to share the gospel. The manual also has study pages and application ideas.

The manual states: "Study the chapters. . . . Apply what you learn. Evaluate your work. Missionaries who strive to prepare themselves daily and seek to improve regularly will receive direction from the

#### HOW TO GET PREACH MY GOSPEL

Preach My Gospel is available free online in 43 languages at PreachMyGospel.lds. org in PDF and MP3 file formats. It is also available at Church distribution centers for U.S. \$6.00 for an individual copy and U.S. \$88.00 for a case of 22.

Holy Ghost and see blessings in their lives."<sup>6</sup>

#### Uniting Members and Missionaries

Elder Kopischke taught that *Preach My Gospel* has the potential to unify members and missionaries in moving missionary work forward.

"As the missionaries become immersed in *Preach My Gospel*, they learn and apply important doctrines and principles which make them more capable in their important service," he said. "Despite this, they still need all of our help and support. . . . *Preach My Gospel* is full of powerful ideas and insights. We learn how we can help the missionaries find people to teach and how we as members can work hand in hand with the missionaries."<sup>7</sup>

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "The Church has over 50,000 full-time missionaries serving around the world. Preach My Gospel has helped make them the best teachers of the gospel of Iesus Christ we have ever had in the history of the Church. ... If you and I did more of the finding for the full-time missionaries and freed them up to spend more time teaching the people we find, great things would begin to happen."8

*Editor's Note:* For examples of members using Preach My Gospel, see "The Member-Missionary Effect" on page 16 of this issue and at ensign.lds.org.

#### NOTES

- 1. See Richard G. Scott, "The Power of *Preach My Gospel*," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 29.
- Erich W. Kopischke, "Preach My Gospel—the Unifying Tool between Members and Missionaries," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 33.
- 3. Erich W. Kopischke, "Preach My Gospel," 33.
- 4. Richard G. Scott, "The Power," 29.
- 5. See Richard G. Scott, "The Power," 29.
- Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service (2004), vii.
  Erich W. Kopischke, "Preach
- /. Erich W. Kopischke, Preach My Gospel," 33.
  8. L. Tom Perry, "Bring Souls
- unto Me, "*Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 109.



Beginning in 2010, Liahona readers will notice a lot of changes meant to make the magazine more useful for members of all ages and backgrounds.

# The 2010 *Liahona:* New Approach, Same Goal

By Heather Whittle, Church Magazines

n January 2010, readers will say *tot ziens* (Dutch), *au revoir* (French), and *tofa* (Samoan)—good-bye—to the old *Liahona* and welcome to the new.

While readers in 51 languages will continue to receive inspired counsel from Church leaders and inspiring stories about members of the Church from around the world, a host of changes are intended to make the magazine more useful for members of all ages and all levels of gospel experience.

#### Changed from Time to Time

Nephi explained that the writing on the original Liahona, a ball or compass found by his father, Lehi, gave them "understanding concerning the ways of the Lord," but that it "changed from time to time" (1 Nephi 16:29).

One of the goals of the *Liahona* magazine has always been to help provide readers with an understanding concerning the ways of the Lord, according to Val Johnson, managing editor of the *Liahona*. He says that won't change with the new *Liahona* in 2010.

However, a number of other changes are planned.

The first thing readers will likely notice is the new look and the improved organization of the magazine, intended to make the content easier to find and easier to use.

Sections of the magazine will be written and designed specifically for certain key audiences, including young adults, youth, and children. Each section will be color-coded to make it easy to identify.

The children's section will

be integrated into the magazine with other content for specific age groups, and the News of the Church section will now appear in color at the back of the magazine.

In many areas and countries, a section written specifically by local members for local members will appear in each issue. This section may contain messages from Area Presidencies; news and events from the area; testimonies, faith-promoting experiences, and other inspiring contributions from local members; and other important information.

#### The Lord Prepared It

While teaching his son about the original Liahona, Alma stated that "the Lord prepared it" (Alma 37:38). Members of the team that helped build the new magazine wanted to be able to say the same thing.

"Coming up with the innovations and new design has been a revelatory process," said Jenifer Greenwood, assistant managing editor of the *Liahona*. "We have seen the Lord's hand in it all along the way."

The project began in July 2008 after Elder Jay E. Jensen, then Executive Director of the Curriculum Department and editor of Church magazines, approved the creation of a team to create a prototype for a new *Liahona* that would better meet the needs of its diverse readership.

Six months of brainstorming, writing, designing, and testing produced a proposal that was approved by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in January 2009.

With the *Liahona* normally planned one year in advance, the newly approved changes were implemented immediately in order to unveil the changes with the January 2010 issue.

"We can testify of those moments when we had a 'stupor of thought' (D&C 9:9) and then those flashes of insight that definitely didn't come from us," Brother Johnson said. "The Lord really helped us."

#### The Words of Christ

Nephi said the writing on the Liahona "was plain to be read" and gave them "understanding concerning the ways of the Lord" (1 Nephi 16:29). Alma explained that just as following the Liahona led Nephi's family to the promised land, "the words of Christ, if we follow their course, [shall] carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better land of promise" (Alma 37:45).

Beginning with the First Presidency Message—the words of Christ as given through His servants—and ending with a new department, Words of Christ, on the inside of the back cover, the intent of the *Liahona* is to help lead its readers to Christ.

"There's a lot about the *Liahona* that has changed,"

said Brother Johnson, "but the goal is still the same. We hope to bring people to Christ."

"The *Liahona* will continue to amplify the prophetic voice of the Brethren to the Saints around the world," said Elder Spencer J. Condie, editor of the Church magazines. "We hope that the *Liahona* will be found in every Latter-day Saint home throughout the earth." ■



The Orchestra at Temple Square, shown here performing with the Tabernacle Choir, celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2009.

## **Orchestra Celebrates 10 Years on Temple Square**

he nationally recognized Orchestra at Temple Square, officially organized on October 16, 1999, marked its 10th anniversary year in late March with two spring concerts.

The orchestra, originally envisioned by President

Gordon B. Hinckley (1910– 2008), comprises more than 100 musicians of diverse ages and backgrounds. Church leaders created the orchestra to enhance the musical organizations within the Church.

Mac Christensen, president of the Tabernacle Choir, said:

"I call it President Hinckley's orchestra. He had the vision; he brought it together; he knew what it could be....I think it is the finest volunteer orchestra in the world."

While some orchestra members make their living with music outside of the orchestra, other volunteers are employed as university faculty, engineers, dentists, attorneys, physicians, and in many other professions. There are also "lots of moms," explained Kathy Anderson, violist, who plays in the orchestra with her cardiologist husband, Jeff.

The orchestra performs

frequently in both concerts and recordings with the Tabernacle Choir, including during the weekly television and radio broadcasts of *Music and the Spoken Word*. It also accompanies the Temple Square Chorale and performs on its own as a concert orchestra.

On November 12, 2003, the orchestra and the Tabernacle Choir received the National Medal of Arts from President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush. The orchestra and choir were also nominated for Grammy Awards in 2008. ■

## **Church Sends Aid After Typhoons in Asia**

o members or missionaries were harmed during August 2009 when a pair of typhoons swept across eastern Asia.

Typhoon Morakot dumped a record 80 inches (2 meters) of rain on Taiwan in a single weekend. Confirmed dead number at least 136, with nearly 400 missing and feared to be buried beneath massive mudslides.

Church leaders mobilized to assist in cleanup efforts and to

help supply food, water, and other necessary items.

Morakot claimed another 22 lives in the Philippines. Local priesthood leaders assisted 30 members who lost their homes.

Typhoon Etau killed at least 13 in Japan. Two earthquakes also shook the island. The first was a magnitude 7.1 earthquake, and the second was a magnitude 6.5 earthquake that triggered a small tsunami.

## President Monson, U.S. President Meet

n July, President Thomas S. Monson met with United States President Barack Obama, presenting him with five large leather-bound volumes of his family history covering hundreds of years.

President Monson was accompanied by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, who is also a member of the Church.

"President Obama's

heritage is rich with examples of leadership, sacrifice, and service," President Monson said at the event. "We were very pleased to research his family history and are honored to present it to him today."

President Obama and Elder Oaks, a former justice of the Utah Supreme Court, also had an opportunity to discuss their shared passion for the law.

President Obama said he enjoyed the meeting. "I'm grateful for the genealogical records that they brought with



President Barack Obama (second from right) meets with (from left) Senator Harry Reid; Joshua DuBois, director of the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships; President Thomas S. Monson; and Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the Oval Office.

them and am looking forward to reading through the materials with my daughters," he said. "It's something our family will treasure for years to come." The Church has also presented family histories to other U.S. presidents, including Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton. ■

#### WORLD BRIEFS

#### Church Participates in Kazakhstan Congress

In July 2009, Elder Paul B. Pieper of the Seventy, then President of the Europe East Area, represented the Church at the Third Congress of Traditional and World Religions held in Astana, Kazakhstan. About 75 delegations from different religion attended to find ways to bless mankind.

#### Temple Square a Popular Destination

Temple Square was recently recognized by *Forbes* magazine as the 16th most-visited attraction in America, ahead of Universal Studios Hollywood in California. The area draws visitors from all over the world to its renowned research libraries, cultural activities, and historic buildings.

#### Conference Promotes Technology Use

In July 2009, participants in Brigham Young University's 41st annual Conference on Family History and Genealogy were encouraged to embrace changes in technology. The conference featured more than 100 classes and the latest computer programs and products for genealogical researchers.

## Comment

#### Hopeful

The article "Hope: The Misunderstood Sister" by Larry Hiller (June 2009, 8) deeply affected me. This is a topic I have struggled with for some time. I have faith, and I'm working on charity, but I struggle with hope. The way Brother Hiller personified hope made the concept very accessible. Thank you for the beautiful article, poem, and illustrations.

Anna L. Mortimer Utah, USA

#### Just Browsing?

I can't tell you how much your recent article, "Just a Game?" (August 2009, 46) has helped me. Although not addicted to gaming I did have an addiction to surfing the Internet. Somehow the problem seemed indecipherable to me. I thought perhaps I was struggling with laziness, a lack of motivation, or an attention problem. This article helped me understand that Satan was using distraction to involve me in wasting my time and resources in things that led me away from improving my life and developing my talents. My faith in

the power of the Atonement, priesthood blessings, and prayer is being strengthened as I work toward restoring balance to my life. I wanted to thank you for this. *Craig Estep Utah. USA* 

#### The Game's Up

The article "Just a Game?" hit close to home for me. A few years ago my spouse and I began playing a popular online game. Over the next year it came to consume more and more of our time. After about a year we realized that we had skipped Church meetings, wasted weekends, and distanced ourselves from our family—all to play the game. After discussing it together, we decided to cancel our accounts. We now see that we had become addicted to this game. Luckily, we were able to walk away before too much harm was done.

Anonymous

#### Fortified

While traveling I showed my five young children the illustrations from the article "Just a Game?" The way technology was depicted made a positive impact in our family. One example: when deciding what to play, our six-year-old was overheard advising a younger sibling, "Let's go play out in the fort so the TV won't suck us in!" Thank you for helping us fortify our homes and fulfill our divine roles as parents.

LeOni Winegar Idaho, USA

#### **Picture Perfect**

While reading the May 2009 general conference issue I was struck once again by the beauty of the photographs that are interspersed with the text of the conference talks. The photos capture such striking views of Latter-day Saints attending conference and seem to help me place myself more intimately in the milieu of these gatherings. I appreciate also the recent addition of shots from various locations around the world that remind us of the many members who cannot be on Temple Square but participate nonetheless. Steven D. Kohlert

Utah, USA

#### Correction

A caption on page 76 of the September 2009 *Ensign* incorrectly identifies President Dieter F. Uchtdorf as the First Counselor in the First Presidency. He is the Second Counselor. ■



"Verify thus saith the Lord: Let the work of my temple, and all the works which I have appointed unto you, be continued on and not cease; and let your diligence,

and your perseverance, and patience, and your works be redoubled, and you shall in nowise lose your reward, saith the Lord of Hosts" (D&C 127:4).



"The opportunity to enter the temple and to take upon ourselves the sacred covenants therein is one of the greatest blessings available to us in mortality," writes Elder Robert D. Hales. "Then, after we take upon us those covenants, our obedience in living them daily stands as a demonstration of our faith, love, devotion, and spiritual commitment to honor our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ." See "Blessings of the Temple," p. 46.



