

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • SEPTEMBER 2002

ENSIGN

A painting depicting a formal ballroom scene from the mid-19th century. In the foreground, a man in a dark suit and white cravat dances with a woman in a voluminous blue gown and a pearl necklace. Other couples in similar formal attire are visible in the background, dancing in a room with dark curtains and warm lighting from wall sconces.

Cultural Arts in
Nauvoo, p. 40

Loving a
Wayward Child, p. 8

The Prodigal Son, by Jeffrey Craven



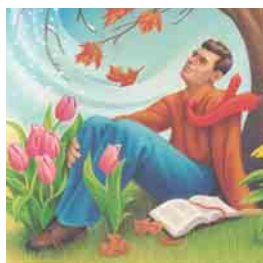
A modern prodigal heeds the call of the Savior's ancient parable: "And when he came to himself, he said, . . . I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. . . . And he arose, and came to his father" (Luke 15:17–18, 20).

ENSIGN

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TO SUBSCRIBE: Send \$10.00 U.S. check or money order for the *Ensign* (pronounced N'sign) to Church Magazines at address at right. Credit card orders (American Express, MasterCard, Visa, Discover Card) are accepted by phone

at 1-800-537-5971. The *Ensign Talking Book*, for individuals with visual impairment or physical disability, is available free of charge or through donations.

TO SUBMIT MANUSCRIPTS OR ART: Send submissions to the address above or via e-mail at cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org. For return delivery by mail, manuscripts and art must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

TO CHANGE ADDRESSES: Old address as well as new is needed. Call the subscription helpline at 1-800-537-5971, or send changes to the address below.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Salt Lake Distribution Center Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368 Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

CANADA POST INFORMATION
Publication Agreement #40017431

Patience, *a Heavenly Virtue*



BY PRESIDENT
THOMAS S. MONSON
First Counselor in the First Presidency

Several years ago I met an old friend I had not seen for some time. He greeted me with the salutation, “How is the world treating you?” I don’t recall the specifics of my reply, but his provocative question caused me to reflect on my many blessings and my gratitude for life itself and the privilege and opportunity to serve.

At times the response to this same question brings an unanticipated answer. Some years ago I attended a stake conference in Texas. I was met at the airport by the stake president, and while we were driving to the stake center, I said, “President, how is everything going for you?”

He responded: “I wish you had asked me that question a week earlier, for this week has been rather eventful. On Friday I was terminated from my employment, this morning my wife came down with bronchitis, and this afternoon the family dog was struck and killed by a passing car. Other than these things, I guess everything is all right.”

APPLY THE VIRTUE OF PATIENCE

Life is full of difficulties, some minor and others of a more serious nature. There seems to be an unending supply of challenges for one and all. Our problem is that we often expect instantaneous solutions to such challenges, forgetting that frequently the heavenly virtue of patience is required.

The counsel heard in our youth is still applicable today and should be heeded. “Hold your horses,”

“Keep your shirt on,” “Slow down,” “Don’t be in such a hurry,” “Follow the rules,” “Be careful” are more than trite expressions. They describe sincere counsel and speak the wisdom of experience.

The mindless and reckless speeding of a youth-filled car down a winding and hazardous canyon road can bring a sudden loss of control, the careening of the car with its precious cargo over the precipice, and the downward plunge that oftentimes brings permanent incapacity, perhaps premature death, and grieving hearts of loved ones. The glee-filled moment can turn in an instant to a lifetime of regret.

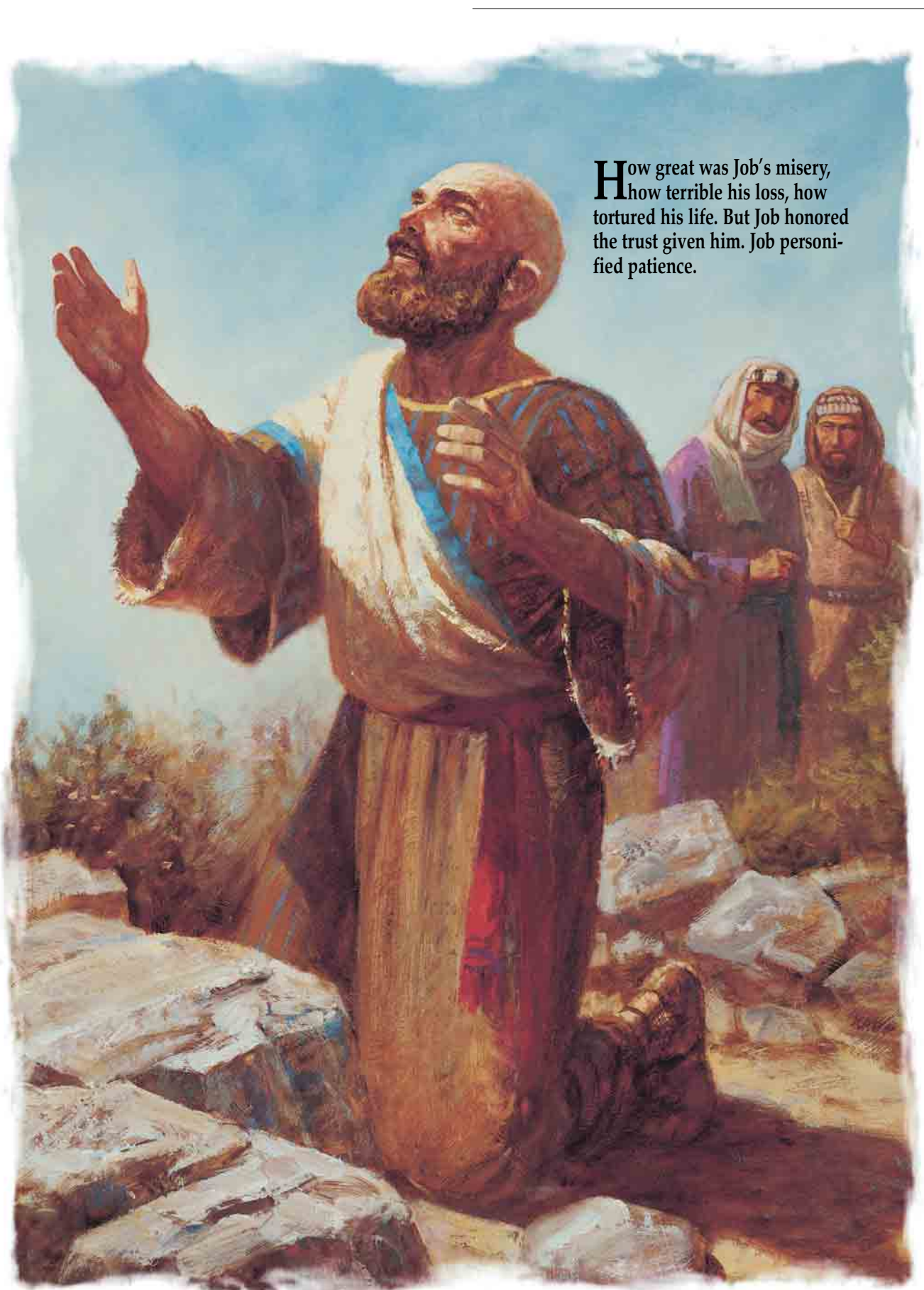
Oh, precious youth, please give life a chance. Apply the virtue of patience.

PATIENCE IN ADVERSITY

In sickness, with its attendant pain, patience is required. If the only perfect man who ever lived—even Jesus of Nazareth—was called upon to endure great suffering, how can we, who are less than perfect, expect to be free of such challenges?

Who can count the vast throngs of the lonely, the aged, the helpless—those who feel abandoned by the caravan of life as it moves relentlessly onward and then disappears beyond the sight of those who ponder, who wonder, and who sometimes question as they are left alone with their thoughts. Patience can be a helpful companion during such stressful times.

Occasionally I visit nursing homes, where long-suffering is found. While attending Sunday services at one facility, I noticed a young girl who was to play her violin for the comfort of those assembled. She told me she was nervous and hoped she could do her best. As she played, one called out, “Oh, you are so pretty, and



How great was Job's misery, how terrible his loss, how tortured his life. But Job honored the trust given him. Job personified patience.

you play so beautifully.” The strains of the moving bow across the taut strings and the elegant movement of the young girl’s fingers seemed inspired by the impromptu comment. She played magnificently.

Afterward, I congratulated her and her gifted accompanist. They responded, “We came to cheer the frail, the sick, and the elderly. Our fears vanished as we played. We forgot our own cares and concerns. We may have cheered them, but they truly did inspire us.”

Sometimes the tables are reversed. A dear and cherished young friend, Wendy Bennion of Salt Lake City, was such an example. Almost seven years ago, she quietly departed mortality and returned “to that God who gave [her] life.”¹ She had struggled for over five long years in her battle with cancer. Ever cheerful, always reaching out to help others, never losing faith, she attracted others to her as a magnet attracts metal shavings. While ill and in pain, a friend of hers, feeling downcast with her own situation, visited Wendy. Nancy, Wendy’s mother, knowing Wendy was in extreme pain, felt that perhaps the friend had stayed too long. She asked Wendy, after the friend had left, why she had allowed her to stay so long when she herself was in so much pain. Wendy’s response: “What I was doing for my friend was a lot more important than the pain I was having. If I can help her, then the pain is worth it.”

THE SAVIOR’S PATIENCE

Wendy’s attitude was reminiscent of Him who bore the sorrows of the world, who patiently suffered excruciating pain and disappointment, but who, with silent step of His sandaled feet, passed by a man who was blind from birth, restoring his sight. He approached the grieving widow of Nain and raised her son from the dead. He trudged up Calvary’s steep slope, carrying His own cruel cross, undistracted by the constant jeers and taunting that accompanied His every step. For He had an appointment with divine destiny. In a very real way He visits us, each one, with His teachings. He brings cheer and inspires goodness. He gave

His precious life that the grave would be deprived of its victory, that death would lose its sting, that life eternal would be our gift.

Taken from the cross, buried in a borrowed tomb, this man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, arose on the morning of the third day. His Resurrection was discovered by Mary and the other Mary when they approached the tomb. The great stone blocking the entrance had been rolled away. Came the query of two angels who stood by in shining garments: “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.”²

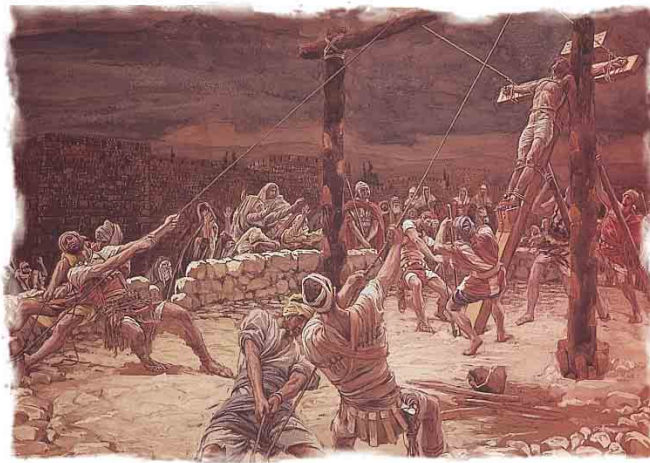
Paul declared to the Hebrews, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”³

OTHER EXAMPLES OF PATIENCE

Perhaps there has never occurred such a demonstration of patience as that exemplified by Job, who was described in the Holy Bible as being perfect and upright and one who feared God and eschewed evil.⁴ He was blessed with great wealth and riches in abundance. Satan obtained leave from the Lord to try to tempt Job. How great was

Job’s misery, how terrible his loss, how tortured his life. He was urged by his wife to curse God and die. His later reply bespoke his faith: “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”⁵ What faith, what courage, what trust. Job lost possessions—all of them. Job lost his health—all of it. Job honored the trust given him. Job personified patience.

Another who portrayed the virtue of patience was the Prophet Joseph Smith. After his supernal experience in the grove called Sacred, where the Father and the Son appeared to him, he was called upon to wait. At length, after Joseph suffered through over three years of derision for his beliefs, the angel Moroni appeared to him. And then more waiting and patience were required. Let us remember the counsel found in Isaiah: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,



Our Savior patiently bore the sorrows of the world and suffered excruciating pain and grief.



"WHY SEEK YE THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD," BY ROBERT BARRETT

saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."⁶

THE SAVIOR'S INVITATION

Today in our hurried and hectic lives, we could well go back to an earlier time for the lesson taught us regarding crossing dangerous streets. "Stop, look, and listen" were the watchwords. Could we not apply them now? Stop from a reckless road to ruin. Look upward for heavenly help. Listen for His invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."⁷

He will teach us the truth of the beautiful verse:

*Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.*⁸

We will learn that each of us is precious to our Elder Brother, even the Lord Jesus Christ. He truly loves us.

His life is the flawless example of one afflicted with sorrows and disappointments, who nonetheless provided the example of forgetting self and serving others. The remembered verse of childhood echoes afresh:

This man of sorrows arose on the morning of the third day. His Resurrection reminds us to "run with patience the race that is set before us."

*Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so!*⁹

And so does the Book of Mormon, so does the Doctrine and Covenants, and so does the Pearl of Great Price. Let the scriptures be your guide, and you will never find yourself traveling the road to nowhere.

Today, some are out of work, out of money, out of self-confidence. Hunger haunts their lives, and discouragement dogs their paths. But help is here—even food for the hungry, clothing for the naked, and shelter for the homeless.

Thousands of tons move outward from our Church storehouses weekly—even food, clothing, medical equipment and supplies to the far corners of the earth and to empty cupboards and needy people closer to home.

I am inspired by the devotion which prompts busy and talented dentists and doctors on a regular basis to leave their practices and donate their skills to



Many years ago in eastern Germany, patient waiting was required. Little by little, wards were formed and stakes created. Then miracle of miracles, a holy temple of God was dedicated.

those who need such help. They travel to faraway places to repair cleft palates, correct malformed bones, and restore crippled bodies—all for the love of God’s children. The afflicted who have patiently waited for corrective help are blessed by these “angels in disguise.”

PATIENCE IN GERMANY

In the words of a well-known song, I wish you could “come fly with me” to eastern Germany, where I have visited many times. Not long ago, as I traveled along the autobahns, I reflected on a time almost 35 years before when I saw on the same autobahns just trucks carrying armed soldiers and policemen. Barking dogs everywhere strained on their leashes, and informers walked the streets. Back then, the flame of freedom had flickered and burned low. A wall of shame sprang up, and a curtain of iron came down. Hope was all but snuffed out. Life, precious life, continued on in faith, nothing wavering. Patient waiting was required. An abiding trust in God marked the life of each Latter-day Saint.

When I made my initial visit beyond the wall, it was a time of fear on the part of our members as they

struggled in the performance of their duties. I found the dullness of despair on the faces of many passersby but a bright and beautiful expression of love emanating from our members. In Görlitz the building in which we met was shell-pocked from the war, but the interior reflected the tender care of our leaders in bringing brightness and cleanliness to an otherwise shabby and grimy structure. The Church had survived both a world war and the cold war which followed. The singing of the Saints brightened every soul. They sang the old Sunday School favorite:

*If the way be full of trial; Weary not!
If it's one of sore denial, Weary not!
If it now be one of weeping,
There will come a joyous greeting,
When the harvest we are reaping—Weary not!*

*Do not weary by the way,
Whatever be thy lot;
There awaits a brighter day
To all, to all who weary not!¹⁰*

I was touched by their sincerity. I was humbled by their poverty. They had so little. My heart filled with sorrow because they had no patriarch. They had no wards or stakes—just branches. They could not receive temple blessings—neither endowment nor sealing. No official visitor had come from Church headquarters in a long time. The members were forbidden to leave the country. Yet they

trusted in the Lord with all their hearts, and they leaned not to their own understanding. In all their ways they acknowledged Him, and He directed their paths.¹¹ I stood at the pulpit, and with tear-filled eyes and a voice choked with emotion, I made a promise to the people: "If you will remain true and faithful to the commandments of God, every blessing any member of the Church enjoys in any other country will be yours."

That night as I realized what I had promised, I dropped to my knees and prayed: "Heavenly Father, I'm on Thy errand; this is Thy Church. I have spoken words that came not from me, but from Thee and Thy Son. Wilt Thou, therefore, fulfill the promise in the lives of this noble people." There coursed through my mind the words from the psalm, "Be still, and know that I am God."¹² The heavenly virtue of patience was required.

Little by little the promise was fulfilled. First, patriarchs were ordained, then lesson manuals produced. Wards were formed and stakes created. Chapels and stake centers were begun, completed, and dedicated. Then, miracle of miracles, a holy temple of God was permitted, designed, constructed, and dedicated. Finally, after an absence of 50 years, approval was granted for full-time missionaries to enter the nation and for local youth to serve elsewhere in the world. Then, like the wall of Jericho, the Berlin Wall crumbled, and freedom, with its attendant responsibilities, returned.

All of the parts of the precious promise of almost 35 years earlier were fulfilled, save one. Tiny Görlitz, where the promise had been given, still had no chapel of its own. Now, even that dream became a reality. The building was approved and completed. Dedication day dawned. Sister Monson and I, along with Elder and Sister Dieter Uchtdorf, held a meeting of dedication in Görlitz. The same songs were sung as were rendered all those years earlier. The members knew the significance of the occasion, marking the total fulfillment of the promise. They wept as they sang. The song of the righteous was indeed a prayer unto the Lord and had been answered with a blessing upon their heads.¹³

At the conclusion of the meeting we were reluctant to leave. As we did so, seen were the waving hands of all, heard were the words, "*Auf Wiedersehen, auf Wiedersehen*; God be with you till we meet again."

Patience, that heavenly virtue, had brought to humble Saints its heaven-sent reward. The words of Rudyard Kipling's "Recessional" seemed so fitting:

*The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart.
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,*

*An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget.*¹⁴ □

NOTES

1. Alma 40:11.
2. Luke 24:5–6.
3. Heb. 12:1.
4. See Job 1:1.
5. Job 19:25–26.
6. Isa. 55:8–9.
7. Matt. 11:28.
8. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "A Psalm of Life," lines 5–8.
9. "Jesus Loves Me!" *Alexander's Gospel Songs*, comp. Charles M. Alexander (1908), 139.
10. "If the Way Be Full of Trial, Weary Not," *Deseret Sunday School Songs* (1909), no. 158.
11. See Prov. 3:5–6.
12. Ps. 46:10.
13. See D&C 25:12.
14. "God of Our Fathers, Known of Old," *Hymns*, no. 80.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

Preparation

Study Romans 5:1–5 and Mosiah 23:21–22 and consider ways that patience has been helpful in your life. As you study this message, prayerfully choose one or two statements of truth you feel will most benefit those you teach. For each statement choose a teaching method or activity that is appropriate for the ages and circumstances of the family members. A few examples of how this could be done are listed below.

Suggestions for Teaching

1. Ask a family member to perform a task that requires patience and asking for help, such as putting together a complex puzzle, solving a difficult math problem, or reading and explaining a difficult chapter in the scriptures. Why did the task seem difficult? How could patience have helped in completing the task? President Monson said, "Life is full of difficulties. . . . Our problem is that we often expect instantaneous solutions." What can a person do to develop more patience?

2. Ask family members to tell of times when the Savior showed patience. President Monson said, "[Jesus] patiently suffered excruciating pain and disappointment." Discuss ways Jesus' promise in Matthew 11:28 could help a person have greater patience.

3. Tell of a time when having patience helped you. Invite family members to share their experiences with patience. Then read or invite family members to take turns reading the story of the Latter-day Saints in Germany. President Monson said that patience brought to the humble Saints of eastern Germany "its heaven-sent reward." Testify of the importance of patience in your life.

LETTING GO

WITHOUT

GIVING UP

Our mentally ill son and his substance abuse changed our lives dramatically. Could we ever learn to deal with his destructive actions?

NAME WITHHELD

When he was a boy, our son's report cards were often disappointing even though he was intelligent. He sometimes became angry and aggressive. At other times he showed unusual anxiety. By high school he seemed increasingly unhappy and unable to fit in with friends. He began to skip school frequently. His bizarre haircuts and odd clothing became a source of friction.

A doctor told us these behaviors were normal teenage rebellion and he would grow out of them in a few years, but my instincts told me otherwise. Other actions made us more apprehensive. Our son spent long periods of time at the sink, washing his hands over and over again; he wouldn't touch things for fear of becoming contaminated. He isolated himself in his bedroom.

I became consumed with uncertainty and fear. My husband and I were trying to rear our two children in love and righteousness. We prayed together and taught our children the gospel. We read the scriptures together. We sang Primary songs and hymns at family home evening. We attended church together. Our son's Church teachers and peers often praised his gospel knowledge. Yet in spite of this, his life and his interest in the gospel were crumbling.

My husband and I felt something was seriously wrong. Our son's behavior did not seem normal, while our daughter was doing well. For years we searched for answers but found none that helped. Then, at last, a psychiatrist correctly diagnosed our son as having a serious mental illness. Though the

diagnosis sounded formidable and we left the doctor's office feeling numb and afraid, it was a relief to finally have an explanation for our son's erratic behavior.

LEARNING TO COPE

Though our teenage son's future looked bleak and forbidding, my husband and I prayed that through love and stricter discipline we could help him. But discipline was met with fierce denial and anger. Innocent comments were interpreted negatively. The tension in our home became almost tangible. Because I was doing most of the disciplining, our son directed most of his anger at me. It came to the point where he couldn't even stand next to me without becoming defensive and angry. It seemed that everything I did was wrong.

As my husband and I searched for answers, we went through a time of intense personal struggle and individual testing. As solid as I thought my faith in Jesus Christ was, I soon realized that my level of faith was inadequate for the trials I was facing. I needed faith to move mountains, yet I felt equipped with a shovel instead of dynamite and earthmovers. I began to pray more fervently, pleading many times each day for wisdom and strength. I attended the temple more frequently for solace, peace, and revelation. I received priesthood blessings that gave me hope and guidance. I began fasting weekly with my husband as we realized the need for greater spiritual strength.

Inspiration and insight began to come. Once I was sitting in church on Mother's Day, wondering if I was up to the challenges that my son presented. The children began singing, "Mother, I love you; mother, I do. Father in Heaven has sent me to you" (*Children's Songbook*, 207). The words stunned me and brought an important realization: Heavenly Father had sent our son to us. Whatever the reason, he was meant to be ours, and we were trusted to handle the difficult assignment of raising him.



LETTING GO

Our son moved out of the house shortly after graduating from high school and began living a lifestyle totally foreign to us. We worried that he was now using drugs regularly. Occasionally, he came home for Sunday dinner and attended church with us, but his behavior continued to deteriorate.

Of necessity, we began letting go of the hopes and dreams we once held for our son and gradually came to accept the full reality of his situation. His illness was the major cause of his substance abuse and greatly complicated any recovery attempts. Our lives became a roller coaster as our son took us on a wild ride of ups and downs. He initially chose not to take the medications his doctor prescribed, preferring to medicate himself with illegal drugs. Every day seemed to bring a new crisis, and every phone call seemed to bring unwelcome news: "I quit my job," "I'm in jail," "Someone stole my paycheck," "My car has broken down," "I have hepatitis." I often felt completely drained and wondered if our years of fasting and prayer were making any difference.

On one such day, I opened the Doctrine and Covenants and read: "Blessed art thou for what thou hast done; for thou hast inquired of me, and behold, as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time" (D&C 6:14). The Spirit whispered that our son was indeed being helped by our fasts.

At first I tried to override my son's agency with my prayers. Finally understanding that no amount of pleading could *make* our son come back, I began to pray that he would receive the experiences he needed to help him *want* to come back. I believe that even with his illness, our son has some ability to choose for himself. My husband and I came to realize that we needed to learn to control our own feelings, attitudes, and reactions to his choices.

While our son is often not open to gospel discussions, I have found other ways to bear my testimony to him. I have made our home a place of "silent sermons." On our walls hang cross-stitched scriptures and framed pictures of the Savior and temples. I once



Throughout this long ordeal, I have found comfort in the scriptures.

noticed my son studying one of these pictures. Whenever he comes home, he is reminded of our faith without our saying a word.

FINDING HOPE

Throughout this long ordeal, the scriptures have helped me to endure. I have often found comfort by reading that the sons of Mosiah were the "vilest of sinners" (Mosiah 28:4), yet through repentance were totally forgiven and became great missionaries. When I read about Jesus Christ calling forth those with *any manner* of afflictions to be healed (see 3 Ne. 17:7–9), I find comfort in the thought that He can heal today just as He healed then.

One day I was dusting a framed saying that I had purchased for my son when he was a child. It described the meaning of his name, accompanied by an appropriate scripture. Although I had read it many times before, the scripture

suddenly had new meaning. It said: "The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me. . . . The Lord shall deliver me . . . and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:17–18). The Lord is mindful of our son, from day to day, and when our son is ready, the Lord has the power to help him overcome his addictions. A warm feeling came over me as I realized that the Savior was indeed watching over him.

Living with our son's mental illness and substance abuse has not been easy, but through my experiences, I have come to know and love my Savior more deeply. I have found that the only way to find true peace and happiness is by putting my trust in Him. I have come to know that eventually—whether in this life or in the eternities—my son will find the same peace in the gospel that I have found. My testimony of the Savior and the power of His atoning sacrifice increases daily. The Savior suffered for my sins. He suffered for my son's sins. And I believe that one day, through His sacrifice and His love, our son will return to the teachings of his youth. □

More on this topic: See John K. Carmack, "When Our Children Go Astray," Ensign, Feb. 1997, 6; Jan Underwood Pinborough, "Mental Illness: In Search of Understanding and Hope," Ensign, Feb. 1989, 50; "When Children Rebel," Ensign, Mar. 1985, 30; Marvin K. Gardner, "Keeping the Door Open and the Stew Hot: Loving and Helping a Wayward Child," Ensign, Aug. 1982, 8.

HOPE FOR PARENTS OF WAYWARD CHILDREN



JOSEPH SMITH
(1805–44)

First President of the Church

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and he never taught a more comforting doctrine—that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to

them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father's heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God" (Orson F. Whitney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1929, 110).



BRIGHAM YOUNG
(1801–77)

Second President of the Church

Let the father and mother, who are members of this Church and Kingdom, take a righteous course, and strive with all their might never to do a wrong, but to

do good all their lives; if they have one child or one hundred children, if they conduct themselves towards them as they should, binding them to the Lord by their faith and prayers, I care not where those children go, they are bound up to their parents by an everlasting tie, and no power of earth or hell can separate them from their parents in eternity; they will return again to the fountain from whence they sprang" (quoted in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 2:90–91).



LORENZO SNOW
(1814–1901)

Fifth President of the Church

If you succeed in passing through these trials and afflictions and receive a resurrection, you will, by the power of the Priesthood, work and labor, as the Son of God has, until

you get all your sons and daughters in the path of exaltation and glory. This is just as sure as that the sun rose this morning over yonder mountains. Therefore, mourn not because all your sons and daughters do not follow in the path that you have marked out to them, or give heed to your counsels. Inasmuch as we succeed in securing eternal glory, and stand as saviors, and as kings and priests to our God, we will save our posterity" (in *Collected Discourses*, comp. Brian H. Stuy, 5 vols. [1987–92], 3:364).



BOYD K. PACKER

Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

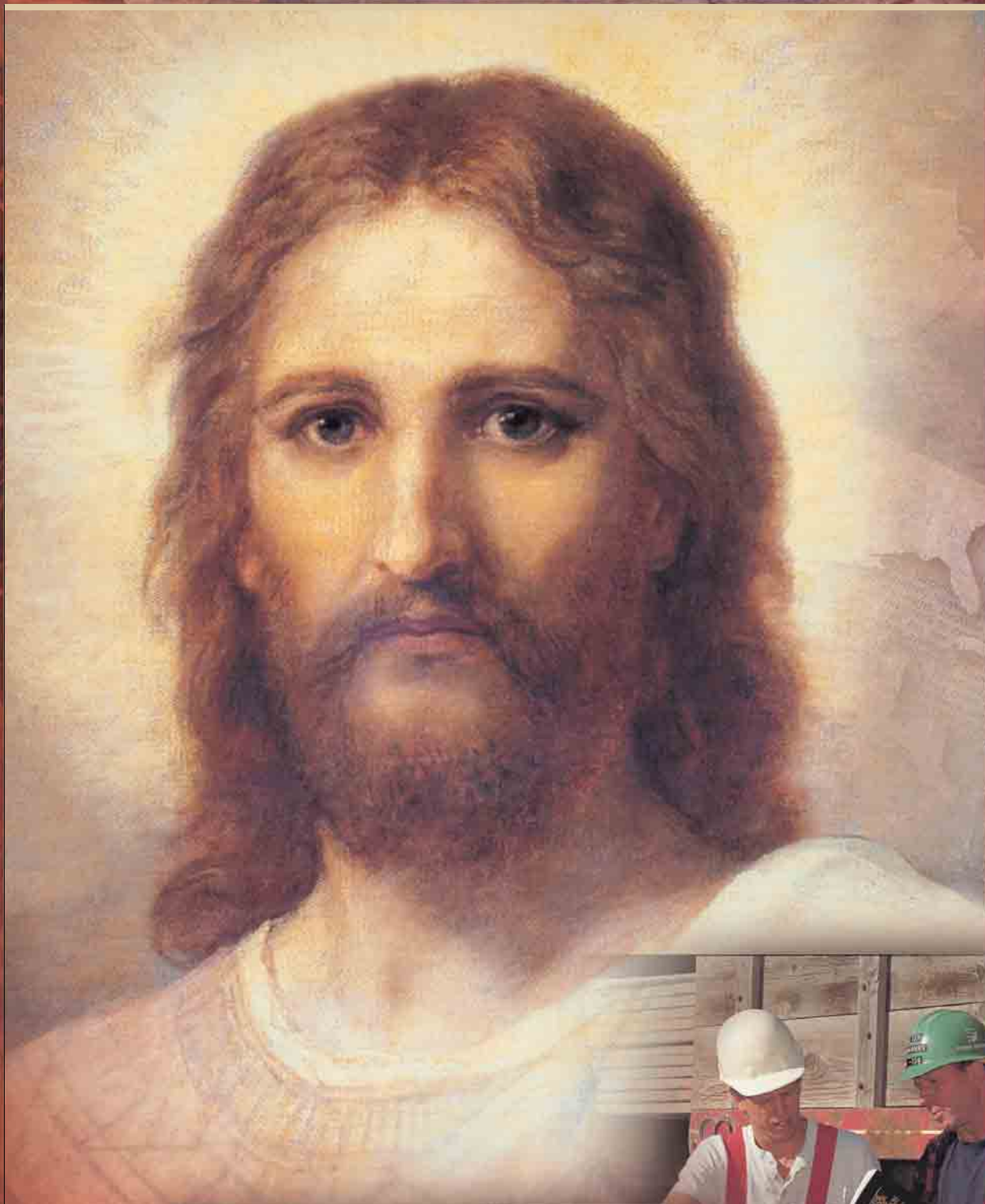
The measure of our success as parents . . . will not rest solely on how our children turn out. That judgment would be just only if we could raise our families

in a perfectly moral environment, and that now is not possible.

"It is not uncommon for responsible parents to lose one of their children, for a time, to influences over which they have no control. They agonize over rebellious sons or daughters. They are puzzled over why they are so helpless when they have tried so hard to do what they should.

"It is my conviction that those wicked influences one day will be overruled. . . .

"We cannot overemphasize the value of temple marriage, the binding ties of the sealing ordinance, and the standards of worthiness required of them. When parents keep the covenants they have made at the altar of the temple, their children will be forever bound to them" ("Our Moral Environment," *Ensign*, May 1992, 68). □



The BOOK of MORMON

The Heart of Missionary Proselyting

*Conversion to this inspired book
is conversion to the gospel of
Jesus Christ.*



BY ELDER JOSEPH B.
WIRTHLIN
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Fourteen years ago, President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) gave a landmark address in general conference titled “Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon.”

In this masterful discourse, he called the Church to repentance and gave us his prophetic vision of the role the Book of Mormon must play in our lives and in the Church. I wish to remind you of that vision. Also, I want to discuss how well we have followed his counsel these many years later. How are we doing in flooding the earth with the Book of Mormon? President Benson taught:

“The Book of Mormon is the instrument that God designed to ‘sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out [His] elect.’ (Moses 7:62.) This sacred volume of scripture needs to become more central in our preaching, our teaching, and our missionary work. . . .

“The time is long overdue for a massive flooding of the earth with the Book of Mormon for the many reasons which the Lord has given. In this age of electronic media and the mass distribution of the printed word, God will hold us accountable if we do not now move the Book of Mormon in a monumental way. . . .

“... We hardly fathom the power of the Book of Mormon, nor the divine role it must play, nor the extent to which it must be moved. . . .

“I challenge our mission leaders to show their missionaries how to challenge their contacts to read the

Book of Mormon and pray about it. Missionaries need to know how to use the Book of Mormon to arouse mankind’s interest in studying it, and they need to show how it answers the great questions of the soul. Missionaries need to read with those they teach various passages from the Book of Mormon on gospel subjects. . . .

“I challenge all of us to prayerfully consider steps that we can personally take to bring this new witness for Christ more fully into our own lives and into a world that so desperately needs it. . . .

“I have a vision of thousands of missionaries going into the mission field with [marvelous testimonies of this sacred book] so that they might feed the needs of a spiritually famished world.

“I have a vision of the whole Church getting nearer to God by abiding by the precepts of the Book of Mormon.

“Indeed, I have a vision of flooding the earth with the Book of Mormon” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 4–6).

We need to have that same vision if we are to be successful in fulfilling the Lord’s wishes. We may be doing fine in terms of quantity, but how about in terms of quality? I believe there is much room for improvement.

THE POWER OF THE BOOK

In 1839 the Prophet Joseph Smith and several other Church leaders had the opportunity to address a congregation of 3,000 people in Philadelphia who were not members of the Church. Sidney Rigdon spoke first. Attempting to establish common ground, he taught the gospel by referring to the Bible and its prophecies. When Joseph arose to speak, he was displeased. He said that if others did not have the courage to testify of him, then he would testify of himself and of the Book of Mormon. Because of his speech, many were touched by the Spirit and were

baptized into the Church (see Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* [1985], 260).

You may have many opportunities to teach and to bear witness of the gospel. May I suggest that you emulate the example of the Prophet and take every opportunity to bear witness of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and of the divine mission of Joseph Smith.

When President David O. McKay's father was serving a mission in Scotland, he encountered antagonism toward the Church. He decided to preach the doctrines of the gospel without mentioning the Restoration or the Book of Mormon. As the days passed, President McKay said, his father continued with this approach until his mind became so darkened and despondent that he felt he would have to leave his mission and go home.

As a last resort, he decided to go into a cave and pray for help. While he was praying, a voice came to him, "Testify that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of God." He consequently changed his approach and began to testify of the Book of Mormon and of the Prophet Joseph Smith. As a result, President McKay said, his father discovered that many were touched by the spirit of his words and believed and were baptized (see David O. McKay, *Cherished Experiences from the Writings of David O. McKay*, comp. Clare Middlemiss [1976], 11).

I hope we can learn from this experience. If you want to reach people, if you want to change hearts, if you want to be successful in your missionary work, testify of the divinity of the Book of Mormon.

Before we go any further, we must understand why this inspired book of scripture is the heart of missionary proselyting. Conversion to it is conversion to Christ, because this book contains the words of Christ. The very title page of the Book of Mormon proclaims its purpose: "To the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ."

Additionally, conversion to this inspired book is conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ, because it contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord told Joseph Smith in the Doctrine and Covenants, "And again, the elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel" (D&C 42:12).

Finally, conversion to the Book of Mormon is conversion to the divine, prophetic calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is the divine evidence of the truthfulness of Joseph Smith's calling. Either this is all true, or it is not. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained it best when he wrote:

"To consider that everything of saving significance in the Church stands or falls on the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and, by implication, the Prophet

Joseph Smith's account of how it came forth is as sobering as it is true. It is a 'sudden death' proposition. Either the Book of Mormon is what the Prophet Joseph said it is, or this Church and its founder are false, a deception from the first instance onward.

"Not everything in life is so black and white, but the authenticity of the Book of Mormon and its key-stone role in our religion seem to be exactly that. Either Joseph Smith was the prophet he said he was, a prophet who, after seeing the Father and the Son, later beheld the angel Moroni, repeatedly heard counsel from Moroni's lips, and eventually received at his hands a set of ancient gold plates that he then translated by the gift and power of God, or else he did not. And if he did not, he would not be entitled to the reputation of New England folk hero, or well-meaning young man or writer of remarkable fiction. No, nor would he be entitled to be considered a great teacher, a quintessential American religious leader, or the creator of great devotional literature. If he had lied about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, he would certainly be none of these.

"I am suggesting that one has to take something of a do-or-die stand regarding the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the divine origins of the Book of Mormon. Reason and righteousness require it. Joseph Smith must be accepted either as a prophet of God or else as a charlatan of the first order, but no one should tolerate any ludicrous, even laughable middle ground about the wonderful contours of a young boy's imagination or his remarkable facility for turning a literary phrase. That is an unacceptable position to take—morally, literarily, historically, or theologically" (*Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 345–46).

MISSIONARIES NEED TO BE PREPARED

To more effectively flood the earth with the Book of Mormon, we must begin by better preparing our missionaries. We need missionaries who come into the mission field with burning testimonies of it. Even more importantly, we need more missionaries—including member missionaries—who are truly converted and have had spiritual experiences with the Book of Mormon. A missionary will not be effective if he or she does not have a strong testimony of this sacred volume of scripture. Indeed, I believe a missionary's effectiveness and success is directly related to his or her own conversion to, testimony of, and love of the Book of Mormon.

I have great faith in our young people who are called to serve missions. I believe they are better prepared with greater testimonies of this book. Let me share the example of one young man, Brian Yoho.

When Brian was 14 years old, he decided it was time for him to read the Book of Mormon, since Joseph Smith was 14 when he received the First Vision. Brian read constantly, and he loved the book so much that he read it four times in one year.

One day Brian went to the Church distribution center with his mother. As they were leaving, Brian told his mother to go on ahead, as he wanted to purchase something alone. Normally that may be a red flag for a mother, but after all, what could he buy at the Church distribution center that would be harmful?

Brian's mother respected his wish and waited in the car for him to make his secret purchase. A few minutes later, Brian got into the car with a large box. His mother asked what was in the box. "Oh, nothing," he replied. When they got home, Brian then wrote on the box the address of his older brother, who was currently serving a mission, and asked his mother to ship it to his older brother. He still wouldn't tell his mother what was in the box. So she wrote her son in the mission field, asking what was in the box that Brian had sent to him. He wrote back, explaining that Brian had sent him a box of copies of the Book of Mormon to hand out to people in his mission. Brian had been so touched by his reading from the Book of Mormon that he had a great desire to share it. He bought the box with his

own hard-earned money and sent it to his missionary brother. Brian later served a full-time mission in Japan.

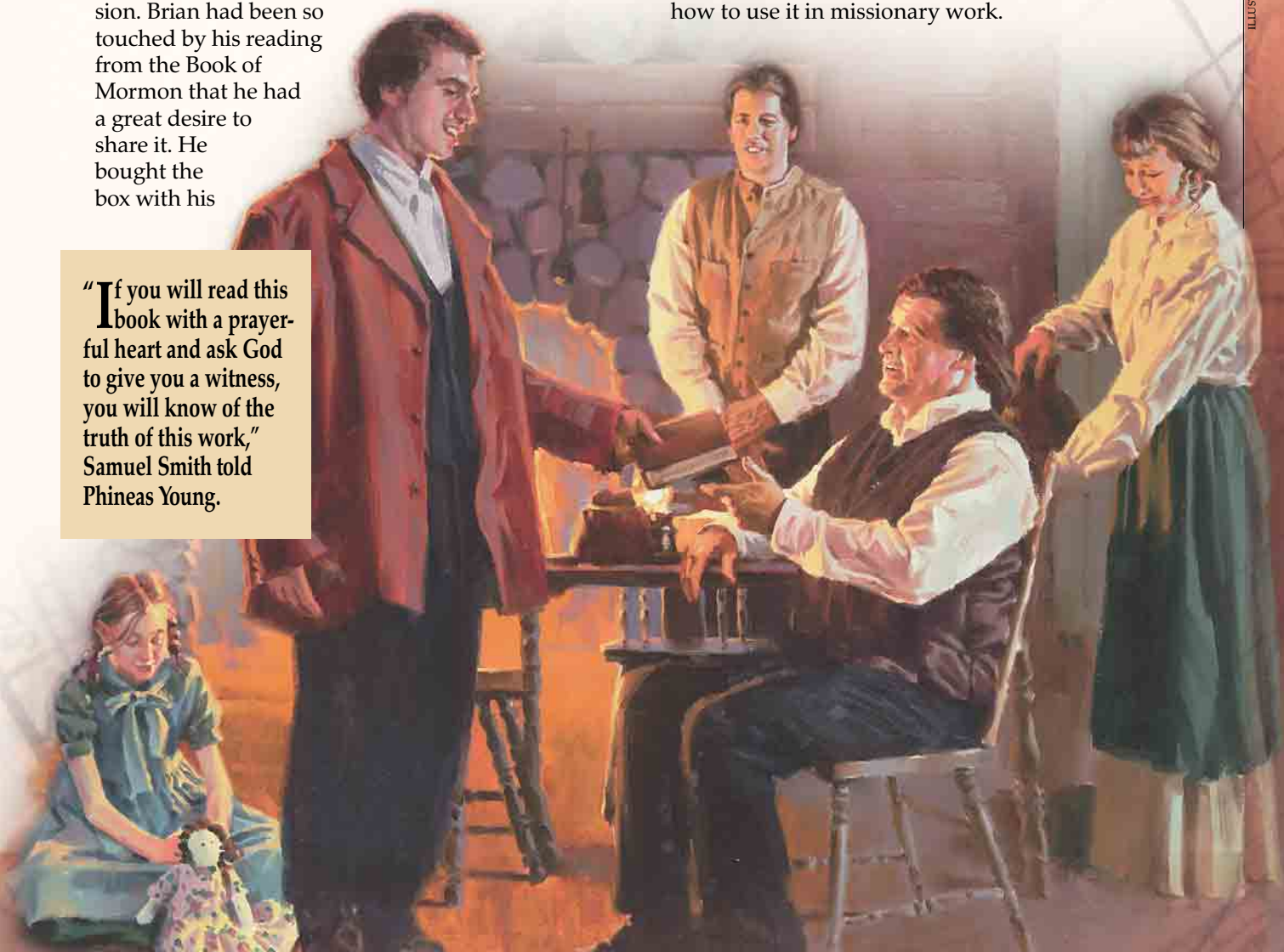
Is there any doubt that Brian caught President Benson's prophetic vision of the Book of Mormon? We need more missionaries and members prepared, like Brian, with a great love and understanding of the Book of Mormon.

The proper use of this scripture in proselyting consists of much more than just placing a Book of Mormon in a home. The goal is not simply to see how many copies of it we can give away. The immediate goal when placing the Book of Mormon should be to have the investigator read it and receive the missionary discussions. The ultimate goal is for the book to lead the person to come unto Christ and be converted to the true Church.

THE STORY OF SAMUEL SMITH

This sacred book has been the center of our missionary work in this dispensation from the beginning, as we know from the example of the first missionary, Samuel H. Smith (1808–44), brother to the Prophet Joseph. We learn many things from his story about how to use it in missionary work.

"If you will read this book with a prayerful heart and ask God to give you a witness, you will know of the truth of this work," Samuel Smith told Phineas Young.



His is a story of great faith and courage in the face of discouraging circumstances. He was not called as the first missionary by accident. After receiving a spiritual confirmation of the truthfulness of what his prophet-brother had been telling him, he became the third person baptized in this dispensation—following Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

He began his mission with a sure knowledge of the truthfulness of the sacred work being performed by Joseph Smith and also of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. As one of the Eight Witnesses, Samuel was privileged to be shown the plates by Joseph, and was able to hold the plates in his hands and examine the ancient writing thereon. He was also one of the six charter members of the Church when it was organized on 6 April 1830.

Shortly before he received his formal missionary call, Samuel sold a copy of the Book of Mormon to Phineas Young, a traveling preacher. In this initial encounter he held a book in his hand and offered it to Phineas.

"There is a book, sir, I wish you to read."

Phineas hesitated. "Pray, sir, what book have you?"

"The Book of Mormon, or, as it is called by some, the Golden Bible."

"Ah, sir, then it purports to be a revelation?"

"Yes. It is a revelation from God."

The young man showed Phineas the last two pages of the book and had him read the testimony of the witnesses. The young man continued, "If you will read this book with a prayerful heart and ask God to give you a witness you will know of the truth of this work."

His earnest demeanor and forthright manner impressed Phineas, who told the young man he would certainly read it. Phineas asked his name; he told him it was Samuel H. Smith.

"Ah, you are one of the witnesses."

"Yes, I know the book to be a revelation from God, translated by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, and that my brother, Joseph Smith, Jun., is a Prophet, Seer and Revelator" (quoted in S. Dilworth Young, *Brigham Young—His Life (First Half)*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [17 Mar. 1964], 3).

When Samuel left on his first mission, shortly following the organization of the Church, he was armed with a testimony of the truth and little else. But he needed little else. He had a testimony, and he had copies of the Book of Mormon—the missionary tool for conversion. He carried a knapsack with him that he filled with as many copies of this book as he could carry. He probably even carried one in his hand.

You have to remember that this had never been done before. He didn't have a companion to show him how to use the Book of Mormon. There was no missionary training center for this young man.

So Samuel left Palmyra to travel throughout the countryside, seeking converts and interested individuals who would purchase a copy of the Book of Mormon. He walked 25 miles that first day, and upon reaching an inn, he asked the innkeeper if he would buy one of the books. When the innkeeper learned more of his mission, Samuel was forced to leave and spent that first night under an apple tree.

The next day Samuel met a Methodist preacher named John P. Greene. Mr. Greene was not personally interested in reading the book, but he said he would keep it to see if anyone else wanted to buy it. Samuel did not give up. He called again on the Greene family and found that Mr. Greene's wife, Rhoda Young Greene—a sister of Phineas Young—had read the book. She later convinced her husband that he needed to read it as well. Samuel did not baptize one soul on that first mission, but those two copies of the Book of Mormon that were given to Phineas Young and John P. Greene eventually were the means of converting a whole neighborhood, including Brigham Young and his family and Heber C. Kimball and his family.

I love the story of Samuel Smith. He overcame great odds and used the Book of Mormon effectively. He bore testimony and invited the people to read from its pages. He then followed up with them as best he could under the circumstances to encourage them to read more. He never gave up. He had faith that God was in control and would use him as He needed. Lastly, he carried copies of the Book of Mormon with him. Like Samuel, we should see to it that we always have copies of this book ready to give away.

THE NEEDS OF PROSPECTIVE CONVERTS

Remember, prospective converts are like sprouting plants. They are all sprouting, but at different stages and degrees. Some are still seeds planted far beneath the ground, needing lots of sun, water, and time to grow. Such prospective converts may need years to sprout and blossom. Others are very close to the surface and only need a little sun, water, and patience to poke through the ground to the full rays of the sun. These prospective converts only need someone to love them. They only need to hear the truth as taught by the missionaries and gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon. They only need to make and keep the

commitments that will lead them to conversion and baptism. Others, of course, are sprouting and blossoming when missionaries contact them, and they are fully prepared for the message of the Restoration. The Doctrine and Covenants states that such people “are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it” (D&C 123:12).

By using the Book of Mormon effectively, we can accelerate that sprouting process. It contains the fulness of the gospel and the greatest witness of the Lord Jesus Christ and His divine mission. Teach of the Savior and His mission from its pages. We must teach of Christ more often. When we do, the Spirit will attend us more often, and true conversion will result.

This book of truth has many uses in missionary work: it helps people feel the Spirit, it helps answer concerns and questions, and it helps people make commitments. I know that as we use this sacred book effectively, our converts will be like those of Ammon’s converts who “were converted unto the Lord, [and] *never did fall away*” (Alma 23:6; emphasis added). No member of this Church is fully converted until he or she has a burning testimony of the Book of Mormon.

The world needs this great book of scripture more than ever. And people are hungering for it. This book is now translated and available in more than 100 languages. We will not rest until every man and woman can read this book in his or her tongue. Many people still do not have it in their own language. We are doing the best that we can in that regard.

Please do not take the Book of Mormon for granted. Pray for a vision of how you can use the Book of Mormon more effectively in your missionary work. I promise that as you do so, your mind will be enlightened with the direction that you should take. I pray that we may catch the vision of this great work, particularly of flooding the earth with this great book of scripture. □

From an address to new mission presidents, Provo Missionary Training Center, 23 June 1999.

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

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

1. Why should the Book of Mormon be central to our missionary efforts?
2. What can we do to strengthen our own testimonies of the Book of Mormon?
3. How can we more effectively use the Book of Mormon in our missionary work?



PHOTO BY JED CLARK

The world needs this great book of scripture more than ever. And people are hungering for it. We will not rest until every man and woman can read this book in his or her tongue.



BY RICHARD F. TAYLOR

In response to the energy crisis of the late 1970s, the Oakland California Temple turned many of its outside lights off. Almost immediately the San Francisco Port Authority requested they be relit. The temple is located on a hillside across from the Golden Gate Bridge, which enables its lights to serve as an important reference point for ships navigating into the harbor.

Like one of those ships, I am trying to navigate my way home to our Father in Heaven. My life's journey has taken me into uncharted waters, and like the ships entering the San Francisco harbor, I have needed a reference point that is constant and reliable. Guidance based simply on someone's opinion is not sufficient, for my objective is too important. I have needed direction that I can count on and that is specific to my needs—for each season of my life.

The Book of Mormon has provided that guidance. It has been a conduit for the Spirit of the Lord to help me navigate through troubled times by providing specific counsel. And while the content of this book has not changed over the years, the Holy Spirit has helped me find applications to fit my ever-changing circumstances.

As a child, I learned about the Book of Mormon from my mother. She read its stories to me, and they captured my imagination. I learned about Lehi leaving Jerusalem with his family to avoid destruction. As a younger brother in my family, I delighted in Nephi's example of leadership. Camping in the wilderness and using the Liahona sounded exciting. I also learned that obedience to the Lord's commandments is rewarded. I discovered things that interested me for that season of my life.

When I was a teenager, my parents succumbed to the temptations of the world. They encouraged my activity in the Church, but their examples had more impact than their words. My older brothers came to my rescue. One had just returned from a full-time mission, and the other was a newlywed. They recognized that certain pressures could easily lead me in the wrong direction. It was my returned-missionary brother who rekindled my interest in the Book of Mormon. He told me stories of battles for freedom, massive destruction, and hand-to-hand combat. As I read about these battles, the Spirit of the Lord

touched my heart. I also learned for myself that Moroni's promise is true. My life changed because of my brothers' love and efforts. They presented the message of the Book of Mormon in a way that appealed to me for that season of my life.

When I was a full-time missionary, the Book of Mormon enabled me to teach ideas with which I had little experience. Studying it enabled the Holy Ghost to help me overcome my inadequacies. I discovered that I could "liken all scriptures" to myself and profit from inspired direction (see 1 Ne. 19:23). It also helped me find patterns in human behavior. I witnessed in the lives of my investigators the truth taught in the Book of Mormon, that those who follow the Spirit are blessed, while those who follow the opinions of the world become subject to the natural consequences of their choices. The Book of Mormon helped me see these kinds of patterns so I could make successful choices and teach others during that season of my life.

When I became a parent, the Book of Mormon became a lesson manual on family life. I read about other parents rejoicing over the righteousness of a child (see Alma 38:2) and grieving when a child stumbles (see Alma 39:3). I was encouraged when I read about a father who by faith, prayer, and patience helped his wayward child (see Mosiah 27:14). Discourses on agency and accountability have comforted me as I have struggled with my own children over the answers to life's questions (see Hel. 14:30–31). The Book of Mormon has shown me how the experiences of others can help me avoid the consequences of wrong choices. It helped me find answers for that season of my life.

Throughout my life the Book of Mormon has been a gold mine, with rich veins of spiritual truth to bless me in direct proportion to my diligence in excavating them. From its pages I have gained confidence to conquer my trials. It has whispered to me "from the dust."

Like a ship entering the harbor, I need a point of reference that is constant and reliable. The Book of Mormon has provided that direction for each season of my life. I love the Book of Mormon! □

Richard F. Taylor is a member of the Clayton Valley First Ward, Walnut Creek California Stake.

For Each Season



of My Life

The Book of Mormon has always been there to help me—as a child, teenager, full-time missionary, and parent.

KNOWING

What You Believe,

BELIEVING

What You Know

*We need to ponder our spiritual experiences,
learn from them, and be strengthened by them.*



BY ELDER DENNIS B.
NEUENSCHWANDER
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

As we read in Alma 30, Korihor had made many untrue allegations about the Church and was brought before Alma, who listened but was not challenged by Korihor's claims. Alma recognized the allegations to be false—not only because he knew the doctrines of the Church and the history of his people but because he had unshakable confidence in his own personal experiences with the gospel.

It is a good thing for us to know what we believe. We should know and be familiar with the doctrines, ordinances, covenants, and teachings of the Church and its modern-day prophets. Equally important, however, to knowing what we believe is believing what we know. Believing what we know has to do with recognizing, trusting, and learning from our own spiritual experiences.

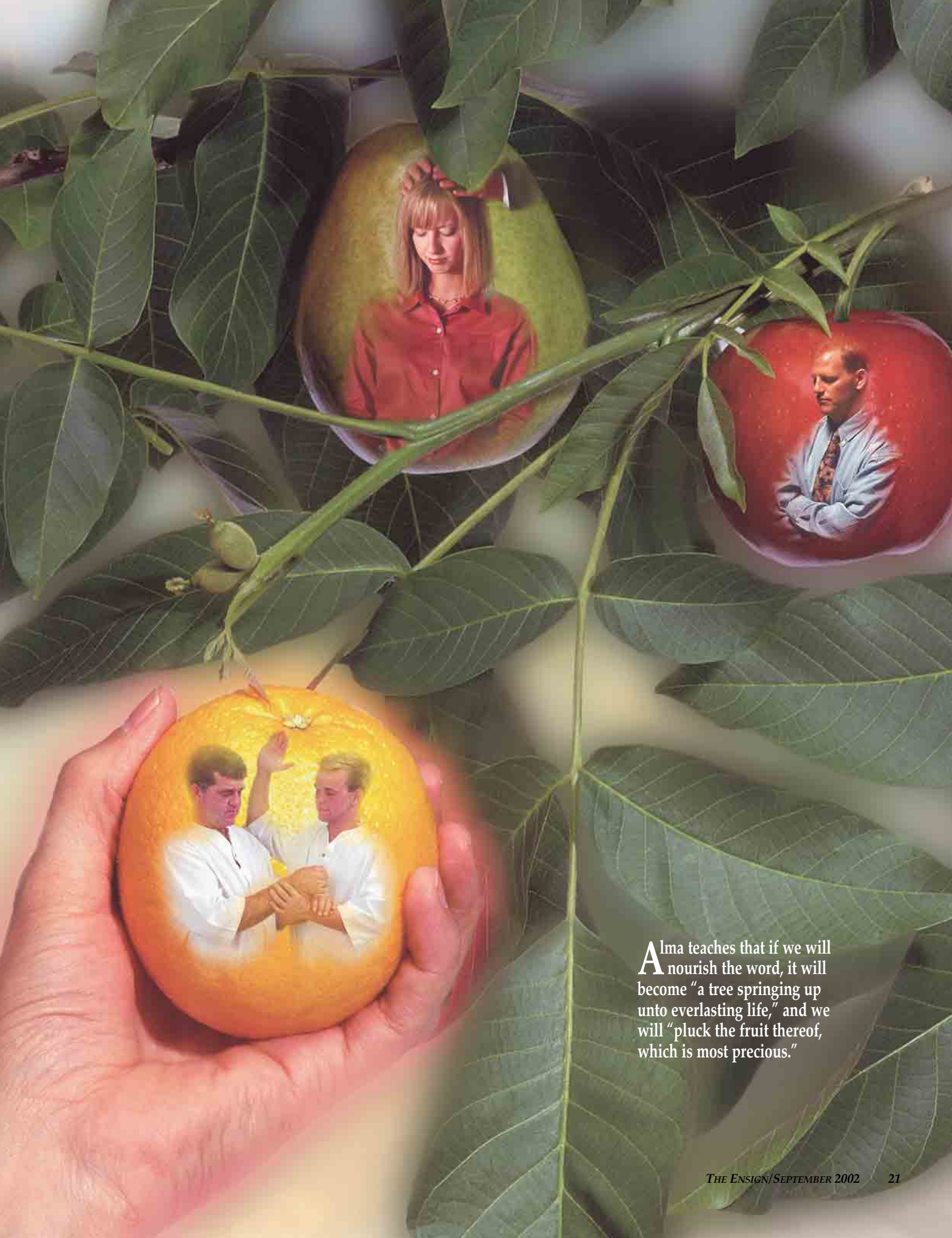
Deeply personal spiritual experiences are granted to us for our own edification and occupy an important place in our education. Such experiences will always be in harmony with the doctrines of the Church and the teachings of its living prophets.

I am passing through the same educational process you are. Along the way I have made a few observations about learning from the experiences the Lord has granted me. I would like to share a few of my observations with you.

1. We can know some things without knowing all things.

When Nephi desired a confirmation of his father's vision, the angel asked him, "Knowest thou the condescension of God?" Nephi's answer was, "I know that he loveth His children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things" (1 Ne. 11:16–17). Nephi seemed satisfied to permit his knowledge of some things to expand his faith and give him confidence in areas where his knowledge was not quite as complete. We would do well to nurture this understanding. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught that "faith is based on past experience. It is not blind obedience, even without total understanding, to follow a Father who has proved himself" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 59). For example, each time the Lord answers a prayer, my knowledge that He does answer prayer is strengthened. This knowledge expands my faith and confidence into those times when His answers do not come as quickly or when His timing is far different from my own.

In an academic setting we understand this principle of not knowing all things quite thoroughly. We are comfortable with the idea that we must take basic courses before we move on to more advanced work. The absence of complete knowledge in a discipline does not hinder us in knowing some



Alma teaches that if we will nourish the word, it will become "a tree springing up unto everlasting life," and we will "pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious."

things about that discipline. In fact, our pursuit of additional knowledge is driven by our understanding that we do not know all things.

Learning takes time. Though we understand this in our secular lives, we are often impatient in our spiritual development. We sometimes feel that the Lord ought to reveal more than He does in order to remove some of the discomfort we experience when we realize that we do not have a ready answer for every question. In Primary, however, we memorize the ninth article of faith, which teaches us that more is yet to come: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

Alma teaches that spiritual growth takes effort as well as time: "If ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life. "And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, . . .

by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, . . . and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst" (Alma 32:41–42).

The people of Alma's day did not immediately understand how to plant and nourish the word in their hearts. Alma answered by giving them three basic steps: pray in all circumstances, read and understand the scriptures, and believe in the Son of God (see Alma 33). In this progressive revelation of spiritual knowledge by virtue of our diligence, faith, and long-suffering, we can surely know some things without knowing all things.

2. Spiritual experiences are very personal and may not be understood by others.

The Lord cautions us to exercise great care in how, where, and with whom we share our spiritual experiences. We cannot expect a basically unbelieving world to understand experiences of a deeply personal and spiritual nature.

A most interesting example of this is found in the ninth chapter of John: "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth" (v. 1). Jesus spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and then told him to go wash. "He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing" (v. 7). What was the reaction among the people to this miracle? Did they accept it as a confirmation of their faith? First his neighbors didn't even recognize him. "And they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?" (v. 8). "Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he" (v. 9). They asked him, "How were thine eyes opened?" (v. 10). He answered their question very simply, surely anticipating that they would accept his response and take joy in his good fortune. "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight" (v. 11).

His was a simple explanation and testimony of a deeply personal spiritual experience. The neighbors, however, could or would not understand, so they brought him to the Pharisees, who also asked him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see" (v. 15). The reaction of the Pharisees is also insightful. As the miracle

The Lord cautions us to exercise great care in choosing when to share our spiritual experiences.

was performed on the Sabbath, some said, "This man," speaking of Jesus, "is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them" (v. 16).

Didn't the Pharisees completely miss the point? They pressed the blind man again, not to gain understanding of the miracle but to determine his opinion of him who had performed the miracle. "What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thy eyes?" Again, a simple answer: "He is a prophet" (v. 17).

"But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

"And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

"His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

"But by what means he now seeth, we know not" (vv. 18–21).

Even his parents failed to appreciate the miracle in their son's life. Because they feared the Jews, the parents simply said, "He is of age; ask him" (v. 23). Again they called the man who was blind and again pressed him about Jesus, saying, "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner" (v. 24).

I suppose by now, after several explanations, the man was growing increasingly impatient, which is felt in the terseness of his reply. "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (v. 25). No amount of explanation, however simple and straightforward, would help others to understand and accept what he himself had experienced. After all the explanation and testimony, they reviled the recipient of the miracle and said, "Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples" (v. 28). The man answered them again, "Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes" (v. 30). They answered him and said: "Thou was altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out" (v. 34). In the end, no one accepted the miracle, the doer of the miracle, or the recipient of the miracle. No one even seemed happy that the blind man could see.

The spiritual experiences the Lord grants to us are extremely personal. We should share them only selectively or not at all. If we do choose to share them, it should be only with those who can understand and

appreciate such things and will hold them as sacredly as we do, as a confirmation of their own faith.

This leads me to a third observation regarding spiritual experiences.

3. Spiritual experiences not understood by others will often be rejected, but their rejection does not change the experiences.

Joseph Smith writes in his history that he shared his experience of the First Vision among the professors of religion, which caused great persecution towards him. In his reflection, the Prophet compared himself to the Apostle Paul in his defense before King Agrippa. The Prophet writes that Paul "related the account

of the vision he had when he saw a light, and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad; and he was ridiculed and reviled. *But this did not destroy the reality of his vision*" (JS—H 1:24; emphasis added).

The Prophet continues: "So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why

persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it" (JS—H 1:25).

If others do not enjoy spiritual experiences, it does not mean that we do not. I am reminded of an experience in New York as a graduate student. I was serving as a seventies stake missionary. The bishop called one evening and told me that some members were involved in a discussion with a group of what we would now call born-again Christians. The members were challenged by the conversation and had called him for help. He asked me if I would be available to enter the discussion, which I did. Through that evening, it became clear that my new friends rejected the idea that Joseph Smith could have had a vision. My response was a question. "What is the highest and most sacred personal experience you could have?" Their answer was: "A revelation of Jesus." I answered, "Why then would you deny another that same blessing?"



Many doubted the Prophet Joseph Smith's First Vision, but that did not change the reality of his experience.

This leads to a closely related fourth observation regarding our spiritual experiences.

4. As others may reject our spiritual experiences, they will often try to dissuade us from believing them.

There will always be those who are not content to simply reject your spiritual experiences but will do all they can to convince you to deny what you yourself have experienced. One of the most interesting examples I could find in the scriptures relating to this principle is the reaction of the Nephites toward the signs given at the birth of the Savior. Samuel the Lamanite had come among them only a few years before the signs were to be given. He made clear predictions of the signs they would witness. These would not be simple things. The sun was to go down, but there would be no darkness through the whole night. "A new star" would appear, and there would be "many signs and wonders in heaven" (see Hel. 14:3–6). Such would be their amazement that they would all fall to the earth (see v. 7).

It seems to me that such occurrences would be hard to miss. Yet when all happened according to the prophecy, many people found them hard to believe. "And it came to pass," we read, "that from this time forth there began to be lyings sent forth among the people, by Satan, to harden their hearts, to the intent that they might not believe in those signs and wonders which they had seen" (3 Ne. 1:22).

Surely we have undergone spiritual experiences in our lives that have amazed us. We ponder them and wonder about them. Satan will always be there to whisper in our ears that they either did not happen as we remember them, or he will try to persuade us to deny them altogether.

Referring to pondering and reflection leads me to a fifth observation.

5. Sometimes only upon reflection, or when someone else points it out, do we recognize what we have experienced.

The experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus on the day of the Lord's Resurrection exemplifies this. He appeared to them and questioned their sadness as He spoke with them along the road. They rehearsed the events of the last few days. The Savior took the opportunity to teach them from the scriptures concerning the prophets and Himself. When they came into the village, they invited Him to stay with them. He ate with them, took bread and blessed it and broke it

and gave it to them, and at that point their eyes were opened and they knew Him, but He vanished out of their sight. Only upon reflection did the disciples understand what had occurred. "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).

This is a common experience for all of us. It seems to me that we often do not immediately recognize the importance of what is happening to us.



Moses' previous experience with God helped him withstand Satan's temptation.

Many of us have served full-time missions. Every successful missionary teaches the investigator to recognize the Spirit. At the height of a wonderful gospel discussion, a missionary will ask the question, "What do you feel right now?" It is a difficult feeling for the investigator to describe. Usually, phrases like "I feel warmth" or "I feel peace and comfort" are heard. What they feel is something they have never experienced in quite the same way. It is then that the missionary explains what is happening and what it means. So it is often with us. Only with good teachers may we sometimes begin to understand that which is occurring in our lives. Knowing this, the Lord has told us continually to ponder His

word in order that we may understand.

6. Trusting our spiritual experiences will help keep us from deception.

A most revealing experience regarding this principle is that which occurred to Moses (see Moses 1:1–13). "Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain" (v. 1), where he saw God face to face and talked with Him. The glory of God was upon Moses so that he could endure His presence. God showed Moses some of the workings of this earth. When this marvelous vision was complete, God withdrew from Moses, and Moses was left to himself. Satan now came, tempting and commanding Moses to worship him. Moses queried him, asking: "Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee?" (v. 13). Moses, because of his previous experience with God, understood the deception that was being offered to him. "For behold, I could not look upon God, except his glory should come upon me, and I were transfigured before him. But I can look upon thee in the natural man. Is it not so, surely?" (v. 14). Moses then commanded Satan to depart. Moses' knowledge and trust in his first experience most assuredly kept him from the deception of his second experience.

On 2 August 1913, the First Presidency published a statement, which bears the title "A Warning Voice." Their statement embodies a basic principle that, if followed, will keep us from deception: "In secular as well as spiritual affairs, Saints may receive Divine guidance and revelation affecting themselves, but this does not convey authority to direct others, and is not to be accepted when contrary to Church covenants, doctrine or discipline, or to known facts, demonstrated truths, or good common sense" (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [1965–75], 4:285–86). Those who fall away from the Church generally struggle with this principle. Recognizing and understanding our own spiritual experiences within the gospel framework keep us safe from deception.

7. Spiritual experiences confirm our testimonies and help us to endure moments of doubt and uncertainty.

President Kimball has said that "faith grows through spiritual experience" (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 76). When I was a mission president, I would ask missionaries leaving the mission field to write down for their final interview with me the major lessons they had learned through the course of their mission. What I heard most often was: "I learned the importance of prayer," "I learned that God answers prayer," "I learned the importance of regular scripture study," or "I learned to appreciate hard, disciplined work." Never did I hear anything that related to the goals of the mission, the number of baptisms, or number of hours worked. After reviewing what they had learned, I returned their written accounts to them with the counsel that they keep them in a safe place. I told them that a time would come in their lives when matters would not be so clear as they had been in the mission field. It was then that they were to retrieve and read what they had written about their own spiritual experiences.

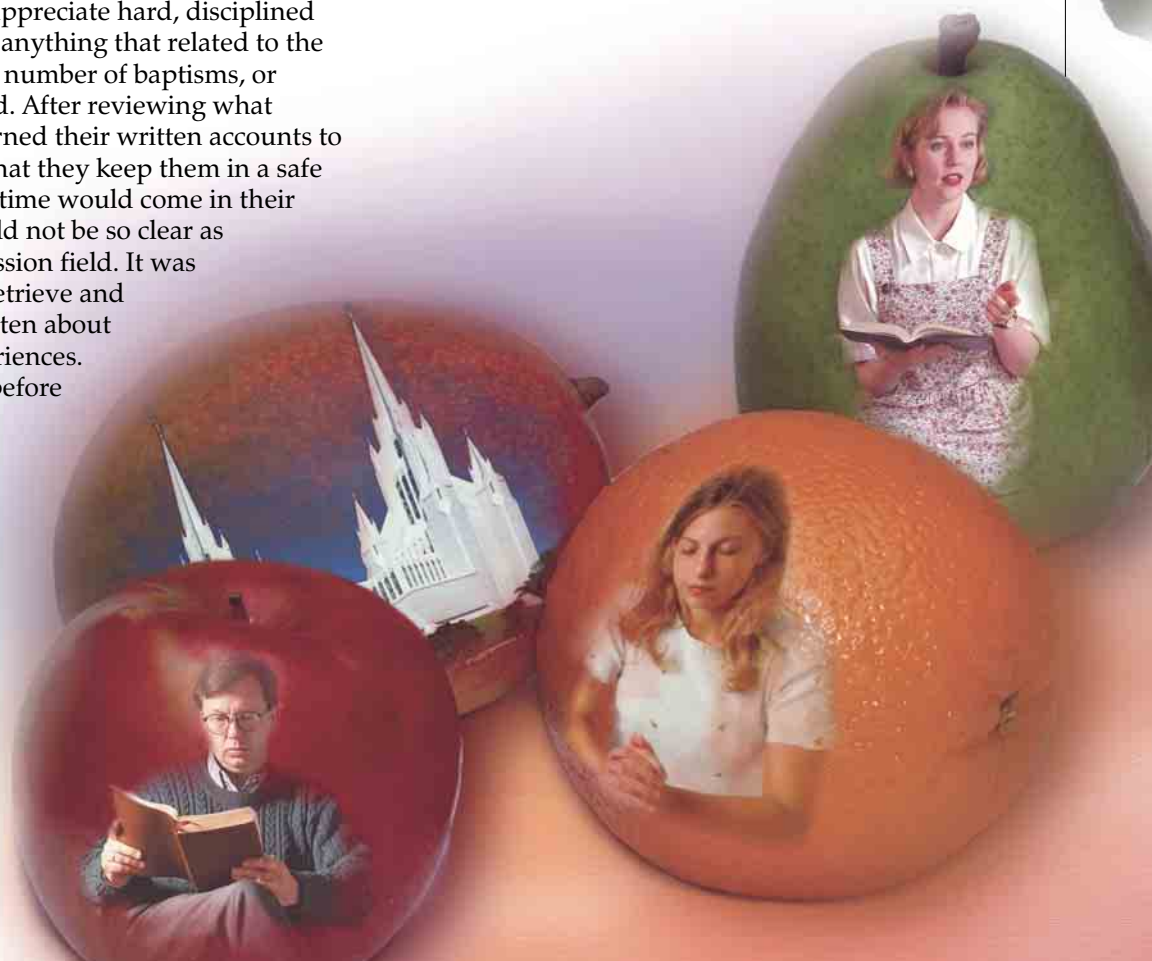
You may know that before one is considered for employment at BYU,

an interview with a General Authority is required. Not long ago I interviewed a brilliant individual for a position. His training was in a discipline that could possibly pose some challenge to his testimony. I asked him whether he had ever wavered in his faith or, in the course of his study, ever lost his testimony. He answered the question candidly and told me, yes, he had. His integrity was impressive. I asked him how he had overcome the challenge. The answer was simple. He said, "I went back to my missionary journals and read them in order to rediscover what I once knew to be true."

Spiritual experiences are granted to us by a loving Heavenly Father. They are meant to strengthen us and educate us in His ways. We need to ponder our lives that we may comprehend our spiritual experiences, learn from them, and be strengthened by them. □

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on 19 May 1998.

Spiritual experiences,
which are granted to us
by a loving Heavenly Father,
are intended to strengthen us
and educate us in His ways.



Jonah

AND THE SECOND CHANCE

The Prophet Jonah was displeased when the people of Nineveh repented. Are we ever guilty of not giving people a second chance at repenting?



BY ELDER JUAN UCEDA
Area Authority Seventy

It is comforting to know that we worship a God who is merciful and who allows His children many chances to learn His ways and be obedient to them. Who among us would be saved without a second chance—more than one opportunity to prove ourselves in the sight of God? The story of the people of the city of Nineveh and the prophet Jonah shows that the test of life is a multipart exam and reminds us to be more long-suffering with those who slip and fall.

NINEVEH

The people of the city of Nineveh (see Bible Map 9 [1999 ed.]) were distant relatives of the children of Israel. Their common ancestor was the prophet Noah who, about 1,200 years before the time of Jonah, had three sons. For centuries these peoples seem to have had little contact with each other. The Ninevites, also known as Assyrians (see Bible Dictionary, “Assyria,” 615–16), worshiped the false god Ashur, while the children of Israel worshiped Jehovah, or Jesus Christ.

About 780 B.C. the Lord spoke to the Israelite prophet Jonah, saying “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me”





After the fish released Jonah upon the dry land, the word of the Lord came unto him a second time. Jonah was now determined to put aside his fears and obey the Lord.

(Jonah 1:2). Although Jonah was a good man (see 2 Kgs. 14:25) and a likely associate of the prophet Amos, he was not happy with this assignment and “fled from the presence of the Lord” (Jonah 1:10). Why might Jonah have reacted this way? “Warfare was a science to the leaders of Assyria [and it was their] effectiveness in warfare that struck terror to the hearts of the Near Eastern world. They were savage and brutal as well.”¹ So Jonah’s refusal to go to Nineveh, a mortal weakness in response to fear, is somewhat understandable.

THREE DAYS TO RECONSIDER

Jonah quickly fled in the opposite direction from Nineveh, toward the seaport of Joppa, where he boarded a ship headed for what is probably present-day Spain (see Bible Dictionary, “Tarshish,” 780). But the Lord gave Jonah a second chance. He first sent a storm to halt the ship’s progress at sea (see Jonah 1:4). As the ship’s crew began to fear for their lives, the captain became convinced that God’s wrath toward someone on board was the cause of the storm. The crew and passengers cast lots (see Bible Dictionary, “Lots, Casting of,” 726), and when it became clear that Jonah was the guilty one, the crew asked Jonah, “What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us?” (Jonah 1:11). Jonah now realized that his efforts to hide from the Lord were futile and replied, “Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you” (v. 12). Resigned to his certain death, the men threw Jonah overboard. As Jonah sank into the water, the storm immediately ceased, and a “great fish” sent by the Lord suddenly appeared and swallowed Jonah, thus preserving his life (see v. 17). How merciful is the Lord to the children of men!

For three days and three nights Jonah was in the belly of the fish. He humbled himself and acknowledged his sin. Jonah knew that he deserved to die but was grateful God had shown him such extraordinary mercy. With strengthened faith in God he resolved: “I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9). Therefore, “the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land” (Jonah 2:10).

A SECOND CHANCE

“And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the *second time*” (Jonah 3:1; emphasis added). This time Jonah was determined to put aside his fears and obey the Lord. After all, he probably thought, if he fulfilled his duty in Nineveh, the Lord would destroy one of

Israel’s most brutal enemies! This would be a great blessing to his people. Jonah entered Nineveh and, according to the scriptures, prophesied, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (Jonah 3:4). As the 40 days came to a close, Jonah left the city and built himself a shelter from which he hoped to watch a grand show of destruction (see Jonah 4:5).

But to Jonah’s surprise and disappointment, no destruction came. The people believed and began to repent! When news of Jonah’s words reached the king of Nineveh, the king and his nobles turned to the Lord. They sent out a decree commanding that a period of fasting, humility, repentance, and prayer be observed throughout the city. Oh, how they wanted an opportunity to repent! And in a plea strikingly similar to Jonah’s prayer from the belly of the fish, the proclamation said, “Who can tell, if we will repent, and turn unto God, but he will turn away from us his fierce anger, that we perish not?” (JST, Jonah 3:9). The Lord was pleased with the Ninevites’ change of heart and spared them. How merciful is the Lord to the children of men!

When the anticipated calamity did not come to pass, Jonah complained to the Lord, saying that he knew the Lord was merciful and that He would never destroy those people. Jonah also claimed he had fled originally because he knew his preaching to these people would do no good. He then asked the Lord to take his life, for he felt it was not worth living anymore (see Jonah 4:2–3). How sad that Jonah could not rejoice in the success of his missionary labors!

The Lord, in His infinite mercy, then prepared another lesson for Jonah, giving him yet another chance to see the situation from the Lord’s point of view.

THE GOURD AND THE WORM

One morning as Jonah sat in his shelter, frustrated and confused, the Lord caused a gourd, or bean plant whose vines have large, broad leaves, to grow up over Jonah, giving him shade from the heat of the sun. This pleased Jonah and lifted his spirits. However, at dawn the next day the Lord sent a worm to chew upon the plant. As the sun rose in the sky, the Lord also sent a scorching east wind off of the desert, which caused the plant to wither and die. Soon the hot sun burned upon Jonah’s head, and he became angry again and wished to die. His distemper over the dead vine showed that, again in his mortal weakness, he was more concerned about his own comfort than the possible destruction of an entire city full of people.

The Lord chastised Jonah for his selfishness and asked him a question: “Should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand

[120,000] persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?" (Jonah 4:11).

GOD IS MERCIFUL

One Bible commentator has explained Jonah 4:11 by paraphrasing the Lord's response to Jonah as follows: "How much is the city better than the shrub? . . . And shall I destroy them, rather than thy shade should be withered or thy word apparently fail? And besides, these persons are young, and have not offended, (for they know not the difference between their right hand and their left,) and should not I feel more pity for those innocents than thou dost for the fine flowering plant?"²

Throughout the story of Jonah we can see the very personal manner in which the Lord mercifully relates to His children. "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (D&C 18:10). His influence in our lives also testifies of that same mercy. We must not, however, mistake His mercy for a license to endlessly repeat our sins. President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has said: "Many of

us backslide, many stumble, and I believe firmly in the gospel of the second chance. But the gospel of the second chance means that having once been found weak, . . . thereafter we become steadfast."³

In our family, Church, and community relationships, we should exercise patience and mercy by extending the same chance for loving forgiveness to others that the Lord gave to the prophet Jonah and to the people of Nineveh. □

NOTES

1. *Old Testament Student Manual, 1 Kings–Malachi* (1981), 113.
2. Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible . . . with a Commentary and Critical Notes*, 6 vols. (1973), 4:706.
3. "Stand Up and Be Counted," *Ensign*, Feb. 1982, 71.

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More on this topic: See Keith W. Perkins, "Thou Art Still Chosen," Ensign, Jan. 1993, 14–19; James M. Perry, with Robert J. Woolley, "Lord, Is It I?: What I Learned from Martin Harris and Jonah," Ensign, July 1989, 32–33; John A. Tvedtnes, "Jonah," Ensign, June 1974, 26–27.



In our family relationships, we should extend the same chances for loving forgiveness that the Lord gave to the prophet Jonah and the people of Nineveh.

Hezekiah's

TUNNEL VISION

What can we learn from King Hezekiah's failure to accept the will of the Lord?

BY CHARLES A. MULDOWNEY

Hezekiah became king of Judah at age 25. His teen years were filled with impressions from the lifestyle of his wicked and idolatrous father, King Ahaz (see 2 Kgs. 16:1–20). Yet Hezekiah rose above that influence to become a zealous religious and political reformer. “He trusted in the Lord God of Israel . . . [and] kept his commandments. . . . And the Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth” (2 Kgs. 18:5–7). Hezekiah reigned 29 years (about 726–697 B.C.), sustained by the inspired counsel of the great prophet Isaiah.

Hezekiah's life is a study in courage and faithfulness before the Lord in the face of extreme opposition. However, when his greatest test in life came, he faltered, leaving a tarnished legacy and laying the foundation for the eventual scattering and destruction of his people. His life provides an important lesson for anyone facing the inevitable event of mortal death.

RELIGIOUS REFORMER

Hezekiah's goal was to cleanse his kingdom of all idolatry. His first act as king was to order the repair and reopening of the temple at Jerusalem, which had been looted and defiled by his father. He told all the priests, “Sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place” (2 Chron. 29:5). He also took the bold step of having the brass

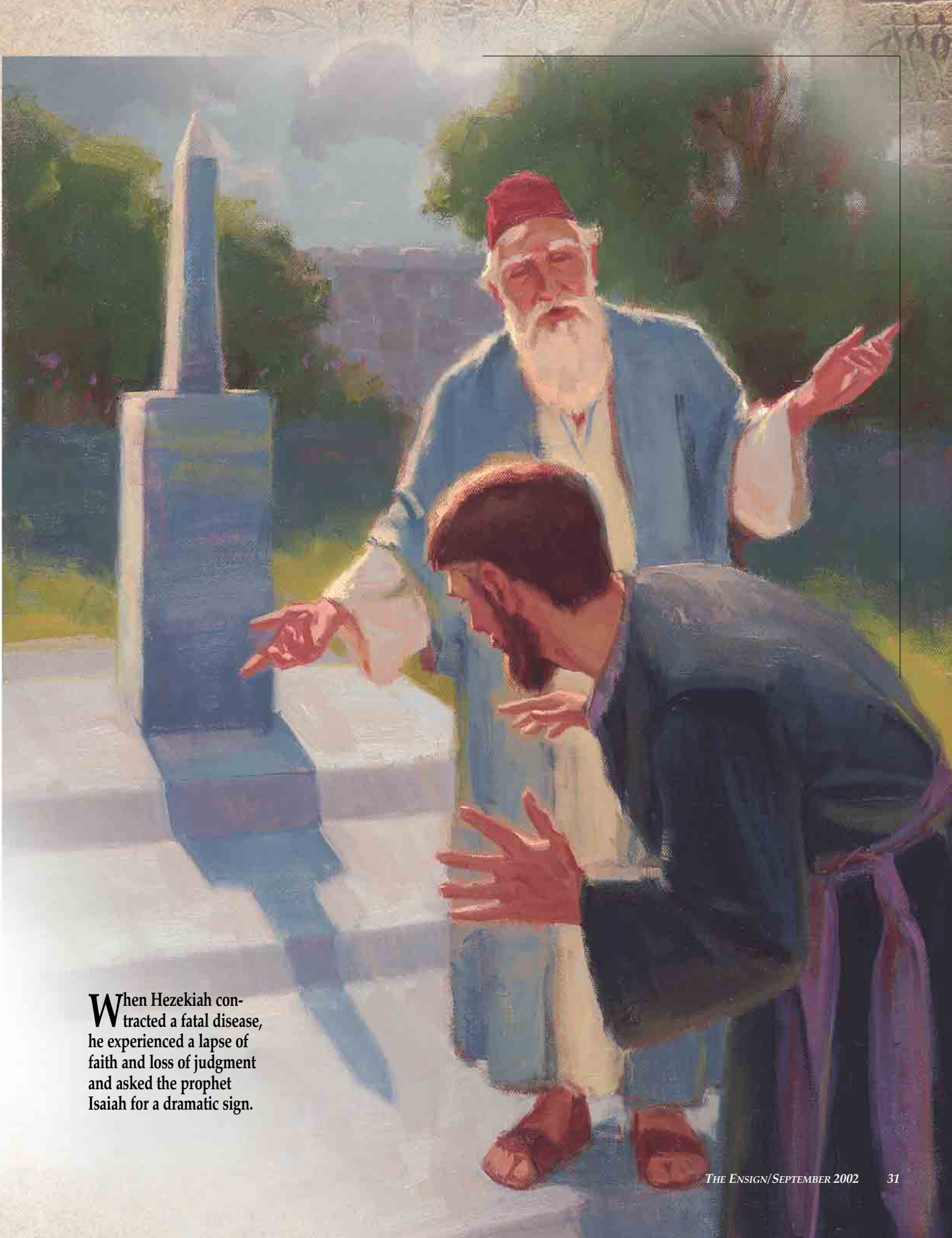
serpent of Moses destroyed (see Num. 21:9) because it had become an idolatrous object (see 2 Kgs. 18:4).

Hezekiah gathered the leaders of the people to rededicate the temple and invited all of Israel and Judah to come to the temple and celebrate the Passover. “So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem” (2 Chron. 30:26). Hezekiah's leadership in bringing about a spiritual renewal of his people was an unqualified success.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Hezekiah inherited from his father a problematic relationship with the king of Assyria. His father had bought an alliance with the Assyrians with “the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord” (2 Kgs. 16:8). Hezekiah, however, courageously rebelled against the Assyrian menace. When Assyria under Sargon II invaded Judah, a wise Hezekiah was ready for them. He had fortified the walls of Jerusalem, appointed military officers, ensured Jerusalem's adequate water supplies, and prepared the hearts of the people for battle (see 2 Chron. 32:1–8).

When Sargon was killed in Anatolia, Hezekiah defied the demands of Sargon's son Sennacherib and had a tunnel built to bring water into Jerusalem should they come under attack (see Bible Dictionary, “Hezekiah's Tunnel,” 702). In response to this rebellion, Sennacherib invaded Judah and devastated the land like a river that runs “over all his banks,” as had



When Hezekiah contracted a fatal disease, he experienced a lapse of faith and loss of judgment and asked the prophet Isaiah for a dramatic sign.

been prophesied by Isaiah (see Isa. 8:6–8). The Assyrians then laid siege to Jerusalem, causing much suffering and despair among the people. As conditions in the city worsened, Sennacherib sent three officials to the walls of Jerusalem with a message to frighten and demoralize the people. Speaking in Hebrew they mocked Hezekiah and spoke against the Lord, telling the people to not let Hezekiah persuade them to trust in the Lord. “Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?” the message asked. “How then could the Lord deliver Jerusalem from Assyria?” (see Isa. 36:15, 18, 20).

When Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth,¹ and went into the temple. He asked the prophet Isaiah what he should do. Isaiah assured him that the Lord would not let these insults go unpunished. Isaiah also prophesied specifically how the Assyrian siege would soon end (see Isa. 37:1–7).

Hezekiah went again to the temple and pled with the Lord for his people: “Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations. . . . Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou only” (Isa. 37:18, 20). As an answer to his petition, the Lord sent an angel that smote the army of Sennacherib, destroying 185,000 men. The Assyrians withdrew from Jerusalem and returned to Assyria (see Isa. 37:36–38).

FACED WITH DEATH

Shortly before the final defeat of Sennacherib, Hezekiah contracted a fatal disease and became “sick unto death” (Isa. 38:1). The Lord in His mercy directed Hezekiah to set his house in order and prepare to die, “for thou shalt die, and not live,” the prophet Isaiah testified. Hezekiah wept bitterly and prayed incessantly for the Lord to extend his life. He reasoned with the Lord, complaining that his life should be spared because (1) he was a good person and therefore didn’t deserve to die; (2) he was still in the prime of life, and death would rob him of his best years; and (3) he would greatly miss his family. Hezekiah also accused the Lord of unjustly taking his life, thus revealing that he had little understanding of or faith in the joy of the Lord in the spirit world (see

Isa. 38:2–3, 9–20). He developed spiritual tunnel vision, becoming so obsessed with his desire to live that he lost an eternal perspective.

The Lord heard Hezekiah’s complaints and sent Isaiah to tell him: “I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee. . . . And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria” (2 Kgs. 20:5–6). Hezekiah then asked Isaiah for a sign, that he might be more fully convinced of the Lord’s intentions (see 2 Kgs. 20:8).



The example of the Savior in the Garden of Gethsemane provides a striking contrast to those who resist God’s will.

This kind of request often demonstrates a lapse of faith and loss of judgment (see Alma 32:16). Isaiah asked Hezekiah whether a simple or a dramatic sign would please him. Hezekiah asked for the dramatic one. The Lord then moved the shadow on the sundial of Hezekiah’s father backward 10 degrees, a miracle that seems to have fully satisfied Hezekiah’s seemingly inappropriate desire (see 2 Kgs. 20:9–11).

ACCORDING TO THY WILL

Although this miracle might initially appear to be a great blessing, Hezekiah soon became lifted up in pride (see 2 Chron. 32:24–25). And though he humbled himself again, the people of Judah paid a price for his pride.

Not long after the successful defeat of the Assyrians, Hezekiah was visited by the son of the king of Babylon. Hezekiah showed him all the royal treasures and armaments (see Isa. 39:2). This was a serious mistake, for it initiated a Babylonian lust for Judah’s possessions. Isaiah condemned Hezekiah’s action and prophesied that all the treasures he had shown would be “carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left” and that Judah’s royal family would be forced into exile in Babylon (see Isa. 39:6–8).

During Hezekiah’s extra 15 years, his wife bore a son, Manasseh, the heir to the throne. Manasseh began to reign at age 12 and ruled for 55 horrible years. He had the prophet Isaiah murdered and reversed all of the religious reforms of his father. He erected altars to Baal, installed idols in the temple, and burned his sons to death on these altars. He appealed to wizards for spiritual direction and hid the scriptures. His evil influence was a principal cause of the eventual destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (see 2 Kgs. 24:3–4).

We do not know what would have happened to

Judah had Hezekiah died as prophesied by Isaiah. But Bishop John H. Vandenberg (1904–92) has said: “There have been some noble men who unwittingly sought to counsel the Lord. One such man was Hezekiah. . . . As one reviews [his life], one wonders, would it not have been better for Hezekiah to have submissively accepted the Lord’s first decree, ‘. . . Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die.’ ”²

The example of the Savior provides a striking contrast to those who resist God’s will or attempt to alter it to conform with what they think should happen. In the Garden of Gethsemane, facing His great test of suffering and imminent death, Jesus prayed to the Father, “If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). The Lord has said, “He that asketh in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God” (D&C 46:30).

In 1967 Ida Romney, wife of President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), experienced a stroke. She lay in the hospital for weeks. Her condition worsened despite prayers and priesthood blessings. President Romney realized the outcome of this condition could be death or a serious handicap. Yet he did not want to pray for her healing unless it was the Lord’s will. He prayed and searched the scriptures for direction. One evening as he prayed to discover the Lord’s will, he ended his prayer, “Thy will be done.” He seemed to feel or hear a voice which said, “It is not contrary to my will that Ida be healed.” It was almost 2:00 A.M. He rushed to the hospital and blessed her, promising that she would be healed, and she made a miraculous recovery. Elder F. Burton Howard of the Seventy wrote concerning this experience, “By refusing to ask a special favor without first ascertaining the will of the Lord, [President Romney] had unknowingly demonstrated the quality of his faith.”³

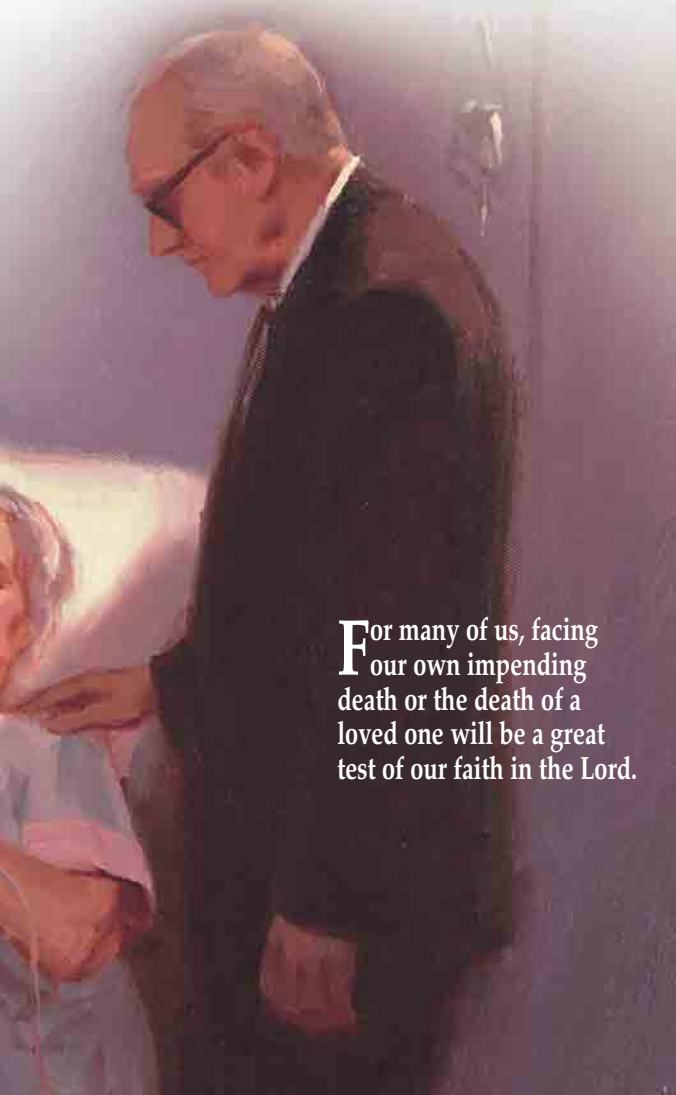
For many of us, facing our own impending death or the death of a loved one will be a great test of our faith in the Lord. The example of Hezekiah is a warning that we not ask at that moment for our will to be done. We are to put the question of life and death into the hands of the Lord and pray to know His will, trusting in His tender love for each of us. We must pray with the attitude of the Savior, who by example has said, “Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever” (Moses 4:2). □

NOTES

1. Sackcloth is a dark, coarse material made of goat’s hair. It was worn to signify the burden of heavy affliction and sincerity of heart.
2. “Follow Counsel,” *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1964, 1062.
3. *Marion G. Romney: His Life and Faith* (1988), 141.

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More on this topic: See Russell M. Nelson, “Doors of Death,” Ensign, May 1992, 72–74; Spencer W. Kimball, “He Did It with All His Heart, and Prospered,” Ensign, Mar. 1981, 2–5.



For many of us, facing our own impending death or the death of a loved one will be a great test of our faith in the Lord.

BY REBECCA M. TAYLOR
Assistant Editor

*I wept,
and nothing could console me.
My child, my long-awaited child,
My hoped-for, dreamed-for, prayed-for child,
At last had come. But she was not given a
Perfect body. She could not be what I
Hoped for, dreamed for, prayed for.
And the tears fell.
(Maria Elena Dahlquist, "My Journey" [1984])*

Kristiana Dahlquist Silver grew up in a quiet house. With four younger brothers and sisters, it wasn't because she lacked siblings. Sometimes, though, when her cousins would come to visit, she would watch as they would drag every toy out of the closet, shouting and laughing and tumbling over each other like a litter of puppies—and she would think, "I guess my family is different."

But most of the time, Kristiana didn't think much about that. Having four siblings who couldn't talk was something she was used to. All four had the same unnamed congenital birth defect, with its same manifestations: microcephaly (small head), tiny body, weakened immune system, intellectual impairments, inability to communicate with spoken words or to walk without assistance.

As newlyweds, Kristiana's parents, David and Maria Elena Dahlquist, had dreamed of a large family that enjoyed spending time together. David, who in 1975 became choir director at Payson High School in Payson, Utah, imagined teaching his children to sing; Maria Elena, an avid violinist, had visions of a family string quartet.

The children came quickly. Kristiana, the eldest, was born on 22 October 1974, a happy and healthy baby. A



IN A
QUIET



*Unable to speak or walk, the Dahlquists' disabled children
have taught lessons that don't require words.*

THE HOUSE

year later, Maria Elena and David learned they were expecting another child. When Rebekah was born on 23 May 1976, David noticed right away that her coloring was unusual: instead of a healthy pink, her skin was almost purple. But she recovered quickly from her birth, and the Dahlquists thought they had brought another healthy child into the world.

For the first part of her young life, Rebekah seemed to progress like any other baby. At 22 months, however, she still wasn't walking. Her head was smaller than normal, which meant her brain was not growing as it should, but the doctor assured the Dahlquists that she would continue to develop. Kristiana had also progressed slowly at first, and she was now an unusually bright little kindergartner, so her parents were not overly concerned.


Another baby, Jenny, joined the family on 4 February 1979. The following summer, three-year-old Rebekah was balancing herself against furniture, but she still wasn't walking or talking. Finally the Dahlquists decided

to have Rebekah examined by a specialist. While David was at work, Maria Elena took Rebekah to a neurologist with infant Jenny in tow.

The doctor became concerned as he examined Rebekah. He discovered that her retinas were speckled, a rare phenomenon. Then he noticed that her sister, five-month-old Jenny, seemed far too quiet. Maria Elena hadn't been worried about the baby. "She's just worn out from the summer heat," she thought.

Upon further examination, it appeared that Jenny had the same symptoms Rebekah had. The doctor soberly announced his conclusions to Maria Elena: Something was seriously wrong with both little girls, but he was not aware of any similar cases, did not know if the syndrome even had a name, and could not tell Maria Elena what to expect—beyond the fact that the abilities of the two girls would be severely impaired.

Stunned by these revelations, Maria Elena, carrying a child in each arm, managed to find her way to her car. She collapsed in the front seat, clutched her two children to her, and sobbed.



At girls' camp, Kristiana fed Rebekah her meals and carried her around the campsite.



Kristiana



Rebekah



Jenny



Ryan



Sean

I questioned

And could not find the answers.

Why me? Why did this happen to me?

Doubts assailed my soul—doubts of my worthiness,

Doubts of the goodness of God, doubts of my purpose.

What did I do to deserve this?

And no one answered.

("My Journey")

David and Maria Elena knew there was a possibility a fourth baby might inherit the same rare condition, but they could not deny the strong prompting they received that another child was to join their family. And after all, Kristiana was perfectly normal. So on 29 May 1981, their first son, Ryan, was born. "He did have a small head, but he was so alert," says Maria Elena. "He played with toys that Rebekah and Jenny couldn't play with." Ryan followed the developmental charts for the first 10 months—and then his progress slowed dramatically.

"When the children were really small, we functioned like a typical family," says Maria Elena. David agrees but adds, "You go through a grieving process with each revelation of illness, as if a child had died. Again, that's what happened when Ryan was diagnosed."

Ryan was 19 months old when the Dahlquists' last child, Sean, was born—a Christmas baby they again hoped would be without problems. But again, Sean followed the pattern set by Rebekah, Jenny, and Ryan. "By the time Sean came, we were far more accepting of their conditions," says David. "Still, we grieved."

It took several years for the severity of the children's conditions to become fully apparent. For the first few years the children seemed like most other toddlers. "I think I was in denial for a long time,"

Maria Elena says.

Life quickly settled into a routine of spoon-feeding four little mouths, bathing, dressing, changing diapers, and more feeding. For Kristiana, helping her parents care daily for her brothers and sisters was normal. "That's just the way it was," she says. "I knew there was a reason my family was that way and that someday I'd learn what the reason was. But it was OK to wait; I didn't have to know right away."

Kristiana genuinely enjoyed growing up with her little brothers and sisters. Often she would put one or two of them in her red wagon and take them around the neighborhood. On Halloween she insisted on taking all of them trick-or-treating. One of her parents would drive the car, and at each house Kristiana would lug a costumed brother or sister to the door, yell "Trick or treat!" and ask for five pieces of candy.

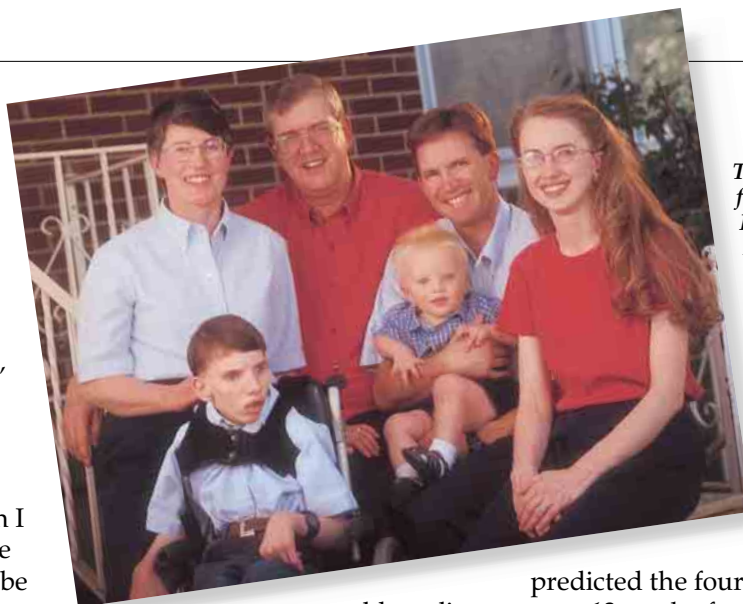
Rebekah followed Kristiana into the Young Women organization. When Rebekah was healthy enough, Kristiana determined that her little sister would attend camp with her. While at camp, she fed Rebekah her meals, slept with her in the same bunk, and carried her around the campsite. Kristiana was accustomed to taking care of Rebekah—so she was surprised at the camp testimony meeting when the other young women, one after another, expressed how touched they were by Kristiana's example. "Rebekah was my sister," Kristiana says simply. "We went lots of places together, so I hadn't given it much thought. That testimony meeting was the first time I was able to see the impact our family had on others."

When Kristiana moved away from home in 1992 to attend college, members of the ward began stepping in to help. They assisted with housework or sat with the family during sacrament meeting when needed. "We've learned it's OK to ask for help, even though it's hard," says Maria Elena.

*I prayed
And found sweet solace with the
Spirit.
I sought to know the reason, the
purpose,
To gain the strength to go on.
Line upon line, I learned to accept,
To have faith.
And my spirit grew.
("My Journey")*

"If someone had told me when I got married that I would have five children and four of them would be disabled, that I would have four in diapers for many years, I might have changed my mind about children and said, 'No, I can't do it,'" says Maria Elena. "But I didn't know and thus have struggled and learned how to do what has to be done. With the help of the Lord, it was made easier."

The Dahlquists and their physicians have yet to hear of others afflicted by the same unnamed syndrome the Dahlquist children have had. Doctors first



The Dahlquist family today: Ryan, front left; Maria Elena, back left; David; Bill Silver (Kristiana's husband) with son, Andrew; Kristiana.

predicted the four children would not live past age 13, so the family has considered each additional year a gift.

Each of the Dahlquist children has contributed to the family in his or her own unique way. Jenny, for example, loved to cuddle and be held. "My favorite time was early in the morning when I would get up to read my scriptures," David once wrote. "If Jenny was awake, I would take her with me to the love seat, where she would sit quietly by my side. She snuggled and I studied. We didn't say much, but I learned a great lesson from those experiences. How often do we take the time out of our busy lives to simply sit and commune,

David treasured the early mornings when Jenny sat by his side as he studied the scriptures.



particularly with those we love? Jenny gave me those opportunities on a daily basis."

In November 1995, at age 19, Rebekah passed away. Maria Elena, David, and Kristiana each turned to the gospel and the scriptures to help them cope with their loss. "After Rebekah died, a lot of the scriptures made even more sense," says Kristiana. She found the prophet Jacob's words to be especially comforting:

"For as death hath passed upon all men, to fulfil the merciful plan of the great Creator, there must needs be a power of resurrection. . . .

"... The spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls" (2 Ne. 9:6, 13).

"I think that all my years of scripture study in seminary finally came together," Kristiana says. "I began to really understand what the Resurrection and the plan of salvation were all about."

Two years after Rebekah died, 18-year-old Jenny had difficulty breathing and was rushed to the hospital. She lingered there for two days before passing away with her parents at her side. Then, in December of last year, Sean passed away at age 19—just two days after his Christmas birthday.

Though separated from three of their children through death, the Dahlquists feel their family bonds have only grown stronger. "There is no question that the spirit lives on after death," says David. "We may not understand a lot about the blessings of being born in the covenant and being sealed to our parents, but there is a definite claim family members have on each other. Death is nothing to be feared, even though you don't look forward to the separation."

The Dahlquists have drawn strength from the Atonement. At Rebekah's funeral, David quoted Alma 7:11–12:

"And [Christ] shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

"And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh,



THE LORD LOVES THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

"There are clearly special cases of individuals in

mortality who have special limitations in life, which conditions we mortals cannot now fully fathom.

. . . They are in the Lord's hands, and he loves them perfectly. Indeed, some of those who have required much waiting upon in this life may be waited upon again by the rest of us in the next world—but for the highest of reasons."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, "Meeting the Challenges of Today," in *1978 Devotional Speeches of the Year* (1979), 153.

that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities."

"The Lord knows what it's like to no longer be able to run," says David. "He knows the feeling of knees that bend only with pain, of a mind that no longer remembers, of a back that's not nearly as strong—and He knows how to succor if we will but ask."

The family understands that the days they have remaining with 21-year-old Ryan are few. His health has declined, and he is slowly losing some of his abilities. "We treasure every day we have with him," says David. "We don't look forward to saying good-bye, but we know it's going to happen." In the mean-

time, they cherish his sociable personality—the way he looks around in church for someone to notice and interact with him. And they savor their quiet moments at home with him and remember the memories they have shared as a family.

"We look at it as a blessing that they've been with us so long, even though it's been hard," says Kristiana, who is now married with a healthy child of her own. "My knowledge of the gospel has grown so much, and my acceptance of the Lord's will has also grown."

Maria Elena says her children have taught her to focus on what is truly important. Her four youngest might not have had the same kind of beauty other children have, she says, "but you love who they are. It doesn't make a difference what they look like or sound like or walk like. You value the eternal soul of every child."

I rejoiced

And saw purpose to my life and their lives.

I felt the greatness of their spirits.

I learned the joy of simple things,

Of little steps, of today.

I felt the love of others who accepted, who understood,

Who loved, who taught, who shared.

And I found great joy.

("My Journey") □

More on this topic: See Boyd K. Packer, "The Moving of the Water," Ensign, May 1991, 7–9; James E. Faust, "The Works of God," Ensign, Nov. 1984, 54–60; Pat Cowley, "Living with and Loving Our Handicapped Children," Ensign, Sept. 1984, 44–47.



Left: A banner honoring the Nauvoo Legion and its general—the Prophet Joseph Smith. Below: A rare old watercolor commemorates one of the last addresses given by the Prophet Joseph Smith to the Nauvoo Legion.



Right: Emma Smith, an excellent horsewoman, had several riding crops, including this one with her name engraved on the ivory handle. Background: Black lace belonging to Rachel Grant, mother of President Heber J. Grant; the shoulder epaulets are from the Nauvoo Legion uniform of Elder Charles C. Rich.



In Beauty and Holiness

The
CULTURAL
ARTS
in
NAUVOO

As early Latter-day Saints worked to build up the kingdom of God on earth, they also strove to improve themselves in education and the arts. For them, books and musical instruments were as necessary as shovels and plows.

BY CARMA DE JONG ANDERSON

On Saturday morning, 6 May 1843, at 9:30 A.M., eager citizens of Nauvoo gathered for a military parade featuring the Nauvoo Legion. The 37-year-old Prophet Joseph Smith, tall and strong astride his black horse, led the parade. The Prophet wore white breeches, a rich blue tailcoat trimmed with gold, and a black-plumed felt hat trimmed with silk braid. On her white horse, Emma Smith wore a black velvet riding habit with quantities of tiny military buttons and a large plumed bonnet with a black lace riding veil. She carried an ivory-handled riding crop. A dozen ladies on horseback, each adorned in a long riding dress, followed Emma. Brigham Young, legion chaplain and Apostle, wore white pants and a black coat with gold buttons.

Made up of local citizens willing to fill a well-demonstrated need for protection of the city, the Nauvoo Legion could rightly boast of more spirit and better training than other local and state militias. However, its soldiers were by no means all neatly dressed in standard issue. Their makeshift uniforms were blue, green, or red coats and

Though on the frontier, Nauvoo, with its brick homes and picket fences provided a high standard of living for its people.



Right: Phebe Ann Hawks, Margaret Cook, Sarah Kimball, Bathsheba Smith, and Sarah Cleveland visit in front of the red brick store on 17 March 1842—the day the Female Relief Society (now known simply as Relief Society) was organized. Background: Woodworking tools.





white wool pantaloons, varying in design and quality. Nevertheless, the legion, carrying their small arms, created a dramatic display.

After the parade had completed its long route around the city, the crowd gathered at the parade grounds below the Nauvoo Temple to hear an enthusiastic speech by General Joseph Smith, with music by the Nauvoo Brass Band. At 7:30 that evening, many Saints crowded into the large room over the Prophet's red brick store to attend an entertainment billed as "Mr. Vicker's Performance of Wire Dancing." Although it had been a long day, the entertainment continued until 11:30 P.M.

BUILDING THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

The Saints had arrived in Commerce, Illinois, on the banks of the Mississippi River in the summer of 1839. They had found a half dozen families living there and as many as 30 vacant log cabins abandoned by homesteaders. An unhealthy bog harbored "the ague," a malarial fever usually followed by pneumonia and often by death. But the homeless Latter-day Saints envisioned possibilities so resplendent that they renamed the spot *Nauvoo*, a Hebrew word meaning "beautiful."

The Saints bought four acres on a glorious rise of land for their temple—the focal point of their spiritual vision. They had already bought farming land—about 650 acres on "the flats" and thousands of acres across the river in Iowa—enough to provide food for a large city. As they

dug drainage ditches to divert water from the flats, the stagnant pools of malarial water began to disappear.

In the first year after the Saints began arriving in Nauvoo, 250 houses were built. By the next year 1,200 structures had been built. By 1845 Nauvoo had 11,000 citizens, rivaling the population of Chicago. And by 1846 it supported 85 shops and industries, including mills, lime kilns, a silk weaver, and a daguerreotype shop. A library was begun, and art was displayed. Some people referred to Nauvoo as "the great city in the wilderness."¹

"IN BEAUTY, AND IN HOLINESS"

With basic needs provided for, residents of Nauvoo could pursue higher levels of living. The Saints were mostly from the poor and middle classes of New England and the British Isles. Fewer than 10 percent had much wealth or education. Still, they responded readily to their leaders' counsel to develop the cultural arts for their spiritual and intellectual edification. This created strong support for a beginning library, artwork, music, dance, and theater.

A revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1832 had taught that Zion's virtue and beauty go hand in hand. "For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness" (D&C 82:14; emphasis added). And the thirteenth article of faith affirmed that the Saints seek after all things "virtuous [and] lovely." In the unique frontier society of Nauvoo, the Saints actively sought refinement.

MEETING IN THE RED BRICK STORE

The Prophet Joseph's general store, made of red brick, was more grand than the log stores of its time. It boasted beautiful counters, drawers, and pillars painted with graining to simulate more valuable materials—"a very respectable representation of oak, mahogany and marble for a backwoods establishment," wrote the Prophet in a letter.² The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo was organized in the upper room in March 1842, with Emma Hale Smith as president. Some early public school classes were held in this all-purpose room, as well as parties, lectures, and meetings of the city council, Church leaders, and Nauvoo Legion staff. It was used as a courtroom and was also the site of the city's first theatrical programs.

ATTENDING THE THEATER

The Prophet Joseph organized a dramatic company in Nauvoo and was "foremost in encouraging the production of classical plays."³ Believing that the theater could both teach and inspire, he attended plays himself, on occasion responding with tears to noble presentations.⁴ Most of the nine plays were historical, and they featured themes of heroism, friendship, love, and faith. They were entertainment, but they also taught principles of truth.

British immigrants had enjoyed the theaters of England and were especially eager to continue their drama in America.



A brass band always added energy and excitement to parades and special occasions.

Nauvoo Saints had resilient spirits, and the cultural arts played an important role in their frontier lives. Despite hardships, privation, and religious persecution, they not only worked to build up God's kingdom on earth, but to improve themselves through education and the higher arts.

ENCOURAGING EDUCATION

Taking to heart the teaching that "the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36), the Saints valued intellectual as well as spiritual achievements. Church leaders planned to build a University of the City of Nauvoo, which was to teach "Arts, Sciences, and Learned Professions."⁵

The Saints left Nauvoo before facilities could be built, but classes were held in homes for higher mathematics, philosophy, chemistry, Hebrew, German, Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, and English. To provide schools for the hosts of children not already in private schools, the city made four administrative divisions for public schools and began building substantial structures. There was even a low-cost school for the poorest families, who paid, as possible, in pennies.

FILLING THE AIR WITH MUSIC

The Prophet Joseph himself organized the first of several choral groups in Nauvoo and attended their singing schools. Emma Smith, who had a fine soprano voice, often sang obligato parts in choral groups and filled the Smith home with sweet music. Caroling awakened the Prophet's family at 1:00 A.M. Christmas morning 1843. In 1845 vocal

and instrumental musicians completed their own concert hall.

Professor Gustavus Hills conducted a Teacher's Lyceum of Music. Meanwhile, William Pitt gathered together some highly skilled instrumentalists into a brass band. Its music accompanied numerous gatherings of the Saints. Over the years the band became a beloved institution of the Saints. In addition, the Nauvoo Quadrille Band played at dances. And the Nauvoo Legion formed a band.⁶

ENJOYING DANCING

In the larger homes of Nauvoo, dancing was ever present, including reels and the square and round dances of Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and England. With its energetic and fancy stepping, dance played an important part in the lives of the Saints.

LEARNING TO PAINT

Watercolor paintings were the artistic fashion of the day, and the Prophet Joseph encouraged the young to learn to paint in this medium, even





Above: Joseph and Emma Smith enjoy a dance together at a social gathering in the Mansion House. Right: William Folsom, a popular theater actor in Nauvoo. Background: Musical instruments, including a brass horn, a violin, and a drum owned by William Fowler, author of "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" (Hymns, no. 19).



Left: Sketchbook of Bathsheba Smith, wife of Elder George A. Smith. Above: Nauvoo residents enjoyed an occasional recreational excursion on the steamboat Maid of Iowa. Picnic food and some form of music—flutes, fiddles, or accordion, with voices singing happily—made for a delightful trip. Background: Books and a paint box.



though it consumed precious and expensive paper.

Joseph and Emma Smith's daughter Julia, along with a number of others, took watercolor lessons from Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner. As a young mother, Mary had developed her painting skills in Missouri. She did so well that she fed her family on earnings from pictures she painted after the exodus from Missouri and "improved the time" giving painting lessons aboard a boat bound for St. Louis.⁷

Sutcliffe Maudsley, who had emigrated from England in 1842, was Nauvoo's first professional artist. He, with William W. Major, painted portraits of community leaders, as well as historical murals.⁸

ENCOURAGING FRIENDLY DEBATE

Public lectures, lyceum discussion groups, and a vigorous debating society occupied great numbers of citizens. When the debaters let a heated argument get out of control, the Prophet sometimes stepped in. Mercy Fielding Thompson heard him produce "clear and masterly explanations of

deep and difficult questions," cooling both sides into reasonable discussion.⁹

ATTRACTING TRAVELING SHOWS

As Nauvoo grew and illness decreased, the Saints could devote greater energy and resources to entertainment and the arts. In the spring of 1843 public performances of all kinds increased.

A circus and wild animal menagerie came to town in September. In that era, these kinds of attractions could always draw a crowd. A special arena must have been built, because circus advertisements listed box tickets at 50 cents and 25-cent tickets for the pit. Two hundred visitors came up the river on a ferry to attend the circus.

When traveling entertainer Dan Rice came to



Sutcliffe Maudsley's painting of Bathsheba Smith.

Nauvoo, he performed both feats of physical strength and comic recitations—an unusual combination. He recited "Major Jones' Courtship" in Southern dialect and a Yankee dialect piece.

After the performance, the Prophet remarked at a social gathering that he wished he could hear the comic pieces again. Hiram B. Clawson, a talented young man, immediately obliged the Prophet by repeating both of Rice's recitations on the spot. Amazed that the young man had memorized both pieces in just two hearings, the Prophet delightedly began to plan a series of theatricals, since there was local talent in abundance.¹⁰

A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

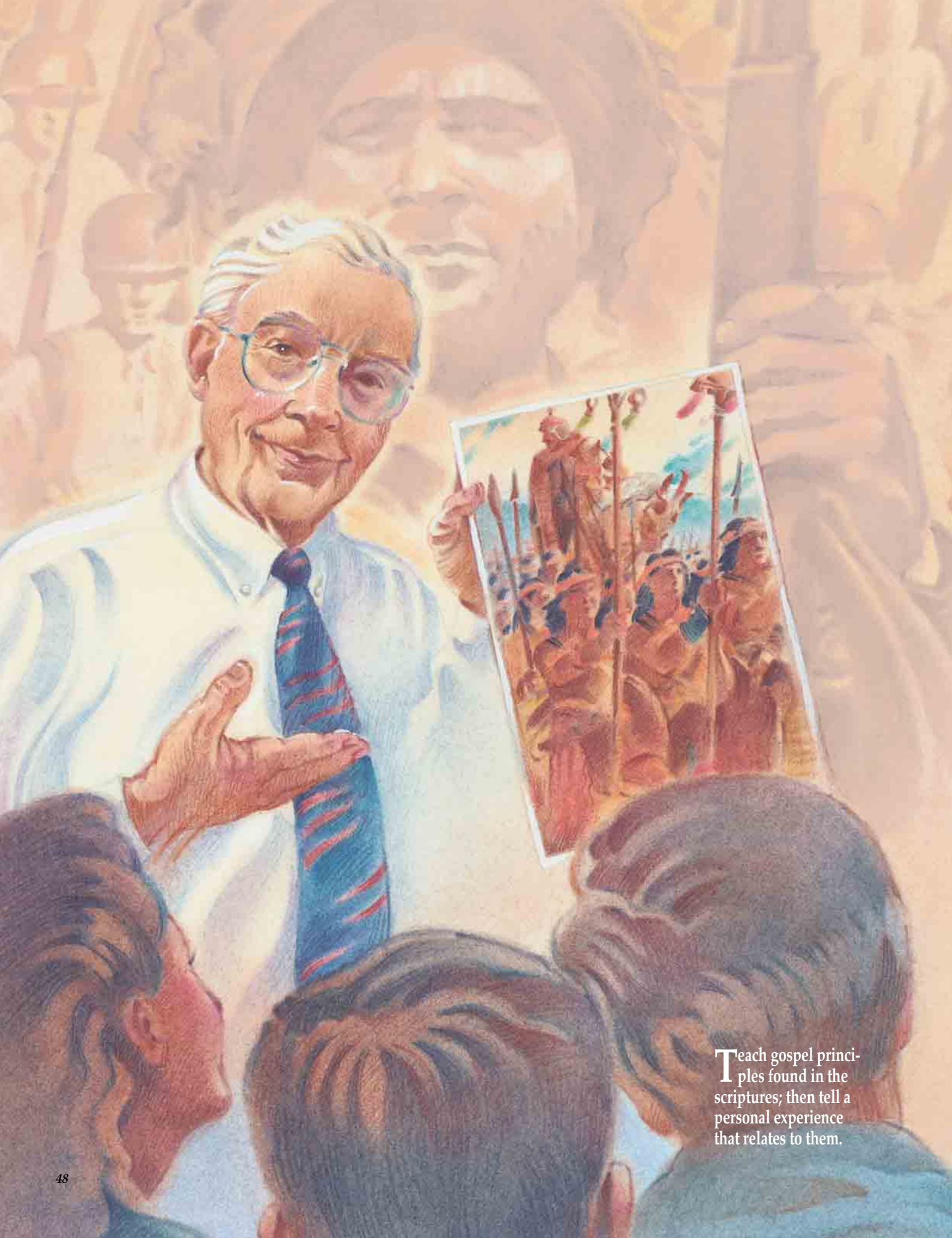
Truly the Saints in Nauvoo followed the Prophet Joseph Smith in using the cultural arts to help build the kingdom of God on the earth. After the physical and emotional trauma the Saints had suffered in New York, Ohio, and Missouri, their achievement in building Nauvoo into a beautiful city rich in cultural arts is nothing short of astonishing. Only a people convinced of the innate potential of man and persuaded of God's immediate help could have had sufficient courage to build such great things out of such small means. □

NOTES

1. Ida Blum, *Nauvoo: Gateway to the West* (1974), 68.
2. Letter from Joseph Smith to Edward Hunter, 5 Jan. 1842, in *History of the Church* 4:491.
3. George D. Pyper, *The Romance of an Old Playhouse* (1937), 24–25.
4. See Helen Mar Whitney, *A Woman's View: Helen Mar Whitney's Reminiscences of Early Church History*, ed. Jeni B. Holzapfel and Richard N. Holzapfel (1997), 227.
5. *History of the Church*, 4:243.
6. See George W. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo: Everyday Life in the City of Joseph* (1990), 177.
7. *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, July 1926, 201.
8. See Richard G. Oman, "Artists, Visual," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 1:70.
9. Reminiscence of Mercy R. (Fielding) Thompson, *Juvenile Instructor*, 1 July 1892, 399.
10. See *Young Woman's Journal*, Apr. 1919, 220.

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This article is excerpted from a forthcoming book by the author, The Cultural Arts in Nauvoo.



Teach gospel principles found in the scriptures; then tell a personal experience that relates to them.



Telling Personal STORIES

Relating personal experiences can have a powerful influence on those we teach at home or in church.

BY RICHARD NASH

A story I heard in sacrament meeting several years ago changed the way I pray each day. A member of our bishopric stood up and said, “I know the Lord answers prayers.” He told how he prays every night, sometimes almost by rote, for the Lord to watch over and protect his family. Then he shared an experience about a night his family stayed on a houseboat while on a waterskiing trip. He awoke suddenly at 5:30 A.M. and for no apparent reason got up and walked to the back of the boat. To his horror he found his two-year-old son stretched out over the water, with his toes on the houseboat and his little hands on a speedboat that was drifting slowly away to the

end of the mooring line. He grabbed his son, feeling grateful for how directly the Lord had answered his prayers. Since the day I heard that talk, I’ve asked the Lord to watch over and protect my family.

One of the most effective methods we can use when teaching or participating in a discussion—whether in the home, a Church classroom, or sacrament meeting—is to share a personal experience and then relate it to the point we are making. These points or main ideas should come from the scriptures, the words of living prophets, or other appropriate sources. Telling stories from your life—something that has happened to you—adds power to what you

teach. The events that have shaped our character and make us who we are can be tools in the hands of the Lord to help others when we use them appropriately. Some specific counsel from our Church leaders includes:

“Teachers and class members are encouraged to share insights, feelings, and experiences that relate to principles in the lesson. . . . This helps teachers and class members strengthen friendships and see how gospel principles apply to daily life.”¹

“Relating personal experiences can have a powerful influence in helping others live gospel principles. When you tell about what you have experienced yourself, you act as a living witness of gospel truths. If you speak truthfully and with pure intent, the Spirit will confirm the truth of your message in the hearts of those you teach.”²

MODERN STORYTELLERS

The example of our Church leaders shows the impact of telling personal experiences. President Gordon B. Hinckley is a model for using personal stories to teach gospel principles. In discussing profanity, for instance, President Hinckley said:

“When I was a small boy in the first grade, I experienced what I thought was a rather tough day at school. I came home, walked in the house, threw my book on the kitchen table, and let forth an expletive that included the name of the Lord. My mother was shocked. She told me quietly, but firmly, how wrong I was. She told me that I could not have words of that kind coming out of my mouth.

“She led me by the hand into the bathroom, where she took from the shelf a clean washcloth, put it under the faucet, then generously coated it with soap. She said, ‘We’ll have to wash out your mouth.’ She told me to open it, and I did so reluctantly. Then she rubbed the soapy washcloth around my tongue and teeth. I sputtered and fumed and felt like swearing again, but I didn’t. I rinsed and rinsed my mouth, but it was a long while before the soapy taste was gone. In fact, whenever I speak of that experience, I can still taste the soap. The lesson was worthwhile. I think I can say that I have tried to avoid using the name of the Lord in vain since that day.”³

The next time you listen to general conference,

A SEAL OF LIVING REALITY



“Perhaps the perfect pattern in presenting faith-promoting stories is to

teach what is found in the scriptures and then to put a seal of living reality upon it by telling a similar and equivalent thing that has happened in our dispensation and to our people and—most ideally—to us as individuals.”

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85),
“The How and Why of Faith-Promoting
Stories,” *New Era*, July 1978, 5.

note how often our leaders use personal experiences in their talks. For example, Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared this in a recent conference address:

“The afternoon my mother died, we went to the family home from the hospital. We sat quietly in the darkened living room for a while. Dad excused himself and went to his bedroom. He was gone for a few minutes. When he walked back into the living room, there was a smile on his face. He said that he’d been concerned for Mother. During the time he gathered her things from her hospital room and thanked the staff for being so kind to her, he thought of her going into the spirit world just minutes after her death.

He was afraid she would be lonely if there was no one to meet her.

“He had gone to his bedroom to ask Heavenly Father to have someone greet Mildred, his wife and my mother. He said that he had been told in answer to his prayer that his mother [my grandmother] had met his sweetheart. I smiled at that too. Grandma Eyring was not very tall. I had a clear picture of her rushing through the crowd, her short legs moving rapidly on her mission to meet my mother.

“Dad surely didn’t intend at that moment to teach me about prayer, but he did.”⁴

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND THE SCRIPTURES

The prophet Nephi was a master at blending the scriptures into his personal experiences. He referred to this practice as “likening” (see 1 Ne. 19:23). One example is when his brothers were ready to give up on obtaining the plates of brass and he said, “Let us go up; let us be strong *like unto Moses*” (1 Ne. 4:2; emphasis added).

Here’s how President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, also wove a scripture verse into a personal experience: “As a 12-year-old boy I had the privilege to serve as the secretary of my deacons quorum. I recall with joy the many assignments we members of that quorum had the opportunity to fill. . . . The most frightening one, however, happened at the leadership session of our ward conference . . . [when] without the slightest warning, President Perschon stood and said, ‘We will now hear from Thomas S. Monson, secretary of the deacons

quorum, to give us an accounting of his service and bear his testimony.' I don't recall a thing I said, but I have never forgotten the experience. Brethren, remember the Apostle Peter's admonition, 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.' " [see 1 Pet. 3:15].⁵

THE POWER OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Why are personal experiences so effective?

1. *They make the principles we are teaching more credible.* The people we teach are more likely to accept our words when they know we have tried to live what we are teaching. What we have done carries greater weight in their minds than what we say.

Elder Gene R. Cook of the Seventy has counseled: "One reason why personal experiences are so effective is that they have touched our hearts—and when we speak of things that we feel deeply, it is more likely that we'll be able to touch the hearts of others. If you read a lesson and tell a story in someone else's words, it won't have the same impact. . . . It is easier for us to apply a truth if we can see it in action in someone else's life. And it is easier to commit to live a truth if we can feel the Spirit through those experiences of other people."⁶

2. *Personal experiences are interesting.* Who can ignore the heartfelt story of how a particular event has influenced or changed one's life? Stories seem to have a magic that entices people of all ages. When we tell others of our experiences, we are inviting them onto the sacred ground of our memories. Listeners sense

that, and it strengthens their connection to the teacher and the principle being taught.

3. *They are memorable.* The details of a story help your listeners better remember what you teach. Illustrating a principle with a story enhances your listeners' ability to retain information. When you tell a personal story to support a gospel principle, you are restating the principle, only in a different way.

4. *Personal stories are easy to tell.* When you rely more on your memory than on your notes, you will probably be less nervous and more confident and natural in your presentation. By telling the story in the way you normally talk, the real you is much more likely to come through.

When we share appropriate personal experiences by the Spirit and follow other principles of effective teaching, the Lord will use the gospel principles we have learned to touch the hearts of those who are listening and change lives for good. We will be able to more effectively fulfill our responsibilities as teachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. □

NOTES

1. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* (1998), 304.
2. *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 180.
3. "Take Not the Name of God In Vain," *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 46.
4. "Write upon My Heart," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 87.
5. "Duty Calls," *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 50–51.
6. *Teaching by the Spirit* (2000), 64, 122–23.

Richard Nash is a member of the Parleys Fifth Ward, Salt Lake Parleys Stake.

CAUTIONS FOR SHARING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

1. Avoid embarrassing details.

Although the best stories come directly from your life, sometimes details about those events can be embarrassing to you and even hurtful to anyone who is characterized in an unflattering way. Avoid using stories without the permission of those who are in the stories. Leave out details that are unnecessary to the point. Be sensitive to the feelings of others. Pray for the guidance of the Spirit.

2. Don't stretch the truth.

To make a story more dramatic or emotional, it may be tempting to alter or exaggerate some details of what actually happened. Don't do it. Telling

the truth is the right thing to do, especially when you are teaching principles of the gospel. Any variation from the truth will cause you to lose the Spirit, which will dramatically diminish the impact of your lesson.

3. Make sure your story relates to a gospel principle.

A story told merely to entertain will defeat the purpose of why we have gathered: to be "nourished by the good word of God" (Moro. 6:4). Tie your stories to the scriptures and the principles found in Church lesson manuals.

4. Avoid making yourself the hero of your stories.

If you are always the paragon of virtue in your stories, the one who never makes a mistake, you will lose credibility. Your students could easily get

the wrong impression of why you are telling stories about yourself. "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand" (D&C 112:10).

5. Be cautious about sharing personal spiritual experiences.

"There are some things just too sacred to discuss," says President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Such experiences should not be shared, but "harbored and protected and regarded with the deepest reverence" (*Teach Ye Diligently* [1975], 71). The Lord has said, "Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit" (D&C 63:64). Trust that the Spirit will prompt you when it is appropriate to share experiences that are deeply personal. Wait for such promptings. □

Not Just

A photograph of a group of women sitting in a room, listening to a speaker whose back is to the camera. The women are seated in rows, and the focus is on the woman in the foreground, who is looking towards the speaker. The background is slightly blurred, showing other women and a window with curtains.

I was so full of gratitude
for the Savior and for my
teacher that I could not speak.

TEACHING A LESSON

BY DIANE M. TINGEY

Our prophets and other leaders have asked us time after time to go about doing good, to do our duty, and to be good examples. Sometimes we may wonder what difference it makes. A Relief Society teacher who was just doing her best to teach her lesson completely changed my life one Sunday.

Several years ago I found myself in a position I never would have imagined. My hopes for happiness were turning to despair, and I was fearful and anxious. My self-confidence was plummeting, and the feeling that I had no one to confide in about my troubles contributed to my feelings of isolation. Each day was a struggle, and nights were sleepless. At times my life seemed a ruin, hardly worth continuing, I thought. A belief in God and concern for my small daughter's future kept me hanging on.

I had not been active in the Church for some time. However, some wonderful visiting teachers and neighbors gently encouraged me until I felt comfortable attending church. I was usually late and often missed meetings, but I felt more and more as though I could not survive the week without the peace and safety I found in Relief Society.

One Sunday, Jane was teaching the lesson in Relief Society. She is a fun, bubbly person and a gifted teacher. I cannot recall exactly what the lesson was about that day, but it seems that Jane was talking about being worthy so we could be instruments in the hands of the Lord to bless the lives of others.

She related an incident from her life as an illustration. She had been shopping in the basement of a thrift store and overheard a mother repeatedly scolding her young child. The little girl was in a stroller and obviously was not excited about the bargains. As Jane listened, she thought that the mother sounded as though she might be angry enough to become abusive. Jane, a mother of four small children, felt uncomfortable, but headed off to another aisle. As she walked away, she felt compelled to turn back and approach the woman. She did not know what she would do or say and was not eager to interfere, yet she obeyed the spiritual prompting.

When she came close to the woman and child, Jane felt an overwhelming sense of compassion and love for them. She smiled her infectious

smile, her mouth opened, and she told the mother what a lovely child she had. The Spirit touched the angry woman. She looked at her child through new eyes, her face and heart softened, and she agreed with Jane as if it were a new revelation. The mother and child went their way, their lives changed for the better. Jane said she felt drained of energy by the experience and went to her car to weep, regain her composure, and express gratitude to Heavenly Father.

As Jane related this story, our hearts in Relief Society were touched and our eyes were wet with tears. She continued by saying how much the Savior loves each one of us. She looked around the room and said to various sisters, "Jesus loves Sarah," and "He loves Sister White." She looked right at me and said, "Jesus loves Diane." She then continued the rest of the lesson.

I have no idea what else she said that day. When she looked at me and said that Jesus loves me, I felt what I can only describe as a lightning bolt of the Spirit, and I knew without a doubt that despite my faults, the Savior truly loved me. It was almost overpowering, and it was the strongest witness I have ever had. After the closing prayer, I quickly found my daughter and returned home without stopping to chat with anyone. I was so profoundly affected and so full of gratitude for the Savior and for Jane that I could not speak.

Many times I longed to tell Jane what happened that day, and how thankful I am that she was doing her duty and living her life so she could be an instrument in the hands of the Lord. Time has passed. I moved far away and lost track of Jane. And though she probably thought she was just teaching a lesson, she was in fact the "small means" (see 1 Ne. 16:29) to a spiritual miracle that gave me hope and changed my life forever.

I am certain this sort of thing happens many times, perhaps unknown to teachers and parents who are the means of effecting great changes in the lives of their spiritually thirsty students and family members. They are just doing their duty, performing what the Lord asks of them. We cannot underestimate the wondrous and good things that are brought to pass when we do what small and simple things the Lord asks us to do (see Alma 37:6). □

Diane M. Tingey is a member of the Dayton Branch, Chattanooga Tennessee Stake.



Knowing our true position, we can change our bearings if they need changing; we can lay down anew our true course.

Excerpts from the CHARTED COURSE of the Church in EDUCATION

This prophetic 1938 address to Church educators offers much to guide parents and other teachers in their duties.



BY PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK JR. (1871–1961)
First Counselor in the First Presidency

As a schoolboy I was thrilled with the great debate between those two giants, [Daniel] Webster and [Robert Young] Hayne. The beauty of their oratory, the sublimity of Webster's lofty expression of patriotism, the forecast of the civil struggle to come for the mastery of freedom over slavery, all stirred me to the very depths. The debate began over the Foot Resolution concerning the public lands. It developed into consideration of great fundamental problems of constitutional law. I have never forgotten the opening paragraph of Webster's reply, by which he brought back to its place of beginning this debate that had drifted so far from its course. That paragraph reads:

"Mr. President: When the mariner has been tossed for many days in thick weather, and on an unknown sea, he naturally avails himself of the first pause in the storm, the earliest glance of the sun, to take his latitude, and ascertain how far the elements have driven him from his true

course. Let us imitate this prudence, and, before we float farther on the waves of this debate, refer to the point from which we departed, that we may at least be able to conjecture where we now are. . . ."

Now, I hasten to express the hope that you will not think that I think this is a Webster-Hayne occasion or that I think I am a Daniel Webster. If you were to think those things—or either of them—you would make a grievous mistake. I admit I am old, but I am not that old. But Webster seemed to invoke so sensible a procedure for occasions where, after a wandering on the high seas or in the wilderness, effort is to be made to get back to the place of starting, that I thought you would excuse me if I invoked and in a way used this same procedure to restate some of the more outstanding and essential fundamentals underlying our Church school education.

OUR PRIME DOCTRINAL POSITIONS

The following are to me those fundamentals: The Church is the organized priesthood of God. The priesthood can exist without the Church, but the Church cannot exist without the priesthood. The mission of the Church is, first, to teach, encourage, assist, and protect the individual member in his striving to live the perfect life, temporally and spiritually, as laid down in the gospel: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," said the Master (Matt. 5:48). Secondly, the Church is to maintain, teach, encourage, and protect, temporally and spiritually, the membership as a group in its living of the gospel; thirdly, the Church is militantly to proclaim the truth, calling upon all men to repent, and to live in obedience to the gospel, for "every knee [must] bow, and every tongue confess" (Mosiah 27:31).

In all this there are for the Church and for each and all of its members two prime things which may not be overlooked, forgotten, shaded, or discarded:

First—that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, the Creator of the world, the Lamb of God, the Sacrifice for the sins of the world, the Atoner for Adam’s transgression; that He was crucified; that His spirit left His body; that He died; that He was laid away in the tomb; that on the third day His spirit was reunited with His body, which again became a living being; that He was raised from the tomb a resurrected being, a

perfect being, the Firstfruits of the Resurrection; that He later ascended to the Father; and that because of His death and by and through His Resurrection every man born into the world since the beginning will be likewise literally resurrected. This doctrine is as old as the world. Job declared:

“And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

“Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another” (Job 19:26–27).

The resurrected body is a body of flesh and bones and spirit, and Job was uttering a great and everlasting truth. These positive facts, and all other facts necessarily implied therein, must all be honestly believed, in full faith, by every member of the Church.

The second of the two things to which we must all give full faith is that the Father and the Son actually and in truth and very deed appeared to the Prophet Joseph in a vision in the woods; that other heavenly visions followed to Joseph and to others; that the gospel and the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God, were in truth and fact restored to the earth from which they were lost by the apostasy of the Primitive Church; that the Lord again set up His Church, through the agency of Joseph Smith; that the Book of Mormon is just what it professes to be; that to the Prophet came numerous revelations for the guidance, upbuilding, organization, and encouragement of the Church and its members; that the Prophet’s successors, likewise called of God, have received revelations as the needs of the Church have required, and that they will continue to receive revelations as the Church and its members, living the truth they already have, shall stand in need of more; that this is in truth The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and that its

foundation beliefs are the laws and principles laid down in the Articles of Faith. These facts also, and each of them, together with all things necessarily implied therein or flowing therefrom, must stand, unchanged, unmodified, without dilution, excuse, apology, or avoidance; they may not be explained away or submerged. Without these two great beliefs the Church would cease to be the Church.

Any individual who does not accept the fulness of these doctrines as to Jesus of Nazareth or as to the Restoration of the gospel and holy priesthood is not a Latter-day Saint; the hundreds of thousands of faith-

ful, God-fearing men and women who compose the great body of the Church membership do believe these things fully and completely; and they support the Church and its institutions because of this belief.

I have set out these matters because they are the latitude and longitude of the actual location and position of the Church, both in this world and in eternity. Knowing our true position, we can change our bearings if they need changing; we can lay down anew our true course.

And here we may wisely recall that

Paul said, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8). . . .

THE EDUCATION OF OUR YOUTH

As I have already said, I am to say something about the religious education of the youth of the Church. I shall bring together what I have to say under two general headings—the student and the teacher. I shall speak very frankly, for we have passed the place where we may wisely talk in ambiguous words and veiled phrases. We must say plainly what we mean, because the future of our youth, both here on earth and in the hereafter, as also the welfare of the whole Church, are at stake.

In all our teaching there are two prime things which may not be overlooked, shaded, or discarded: that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that the Father and the Son in very deed appeared to the Prophet Joseph.

What our youth want. The youth of the Church, your students, are in great majority sound in thought and in spirit. The problem primarily is to keep them sound, not to convert them.

The youth of the Church are hungry for things of the Spirit; they are eager to learn the gospel, and they want it straight, undiluted.

They want to know about the fundamentals I have just set out—about our beliefs; they want to gain testimonies of their truth; they are not now doubters but inquirers, seekers after truth. Doubt must not be planted in their hearts. Great is the burden and the condemnation of any teacher who sows doubt in a trusting soul.

These students crave the faith their fathers and mothers have; they want it in its simplicity and purity. There are few indeed who have not seen the manifestations of its divine power; they wish to be not only the beneficiaries of this faith, but they want to be themselves able to call it forth to work.

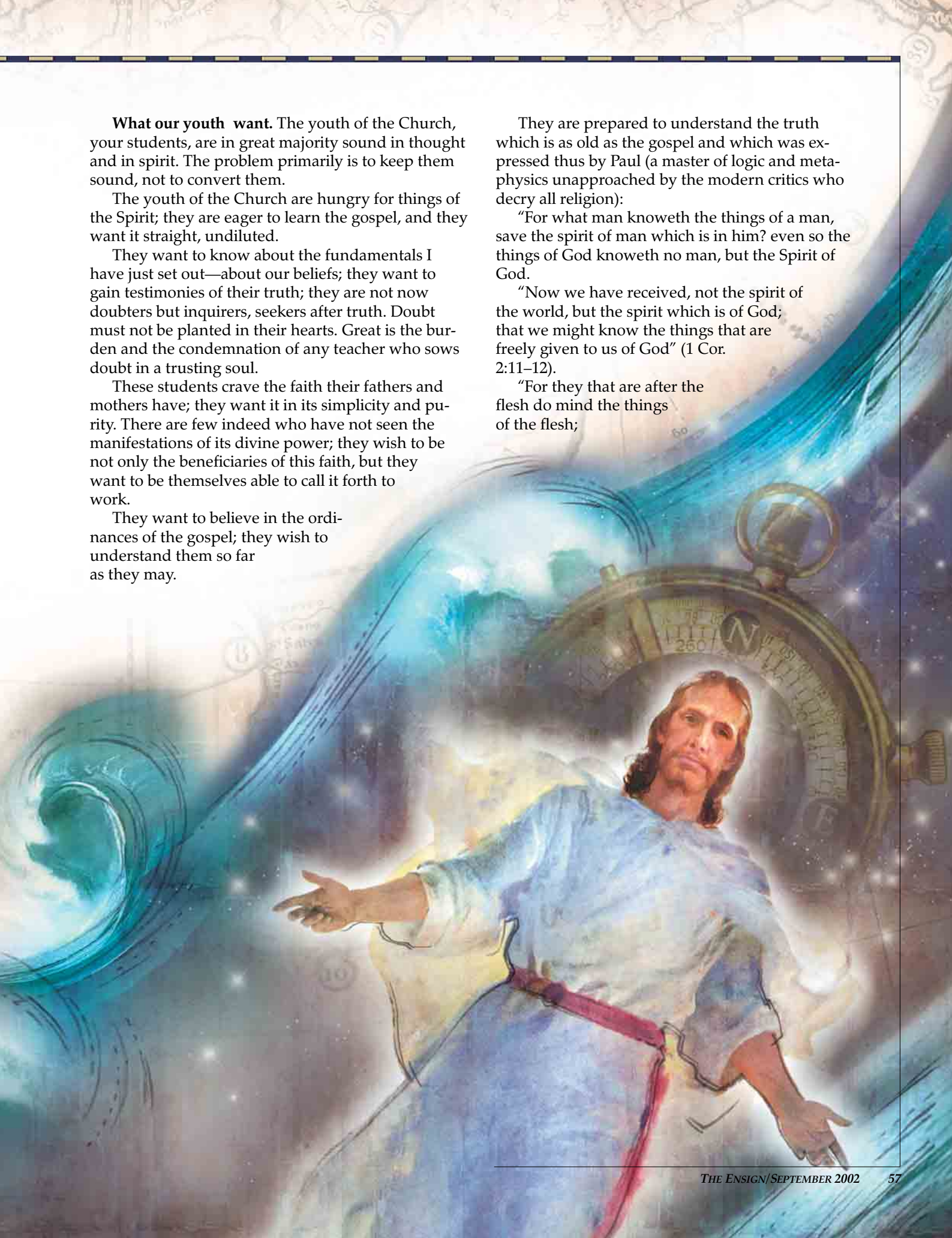
They want to believe in the ordinances of the gospel; they wish to understand them so far as they may.

They are prepared to understand the truth which is as old as the gospel and which was expressed thus by Paul (a master of logic and metaphysics unapproached by the modern critics who decry all religion):

“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. 2:11–12).

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;



but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:5).

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:16–18).

Our youth understand too the principle declared in modern revelation: "Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation" (D&C 58:3). . . .

What our youth already know. These students are prepared to believe and understand that all these things are matters of faith, not to be explained or understood by any process of human reason, and probably not by any experiment of known physical science.

These students (to put the matter shortly) are prepared to understand and to believe that there is a natural world and there is a spiritual world; that the things of the natural world will not explain the things of the spiritual world; that the things of the spiritual world cannot be understood or comprehended by the things of the natural world; that you cannot rationalize the things of the Spirit, because first, the things of the Spirit are not sufficiently known and comprehended, and secondly, because finite mind and reason cannot comprehend nor explain infinite wisdom and ultimate truth.

These students already know that they must be honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and do good to all men, and that "if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things" (A of F 1:13)—these things they have been taught from very birth. They should be encouraged in all proper ways to do these things which they know to be true, but they do not need to have a year's course of instruction to make them believe and know them.

These students fully sense the hollowness of teachings which would make the gospel plan a mere system of ethics; they know that Christ's teachings are in the highest degree ethical, but they also know they are more than this. They will see that ethics relate primarily to the doings of this life and that to make of the gospel a mere system of ethics is to confess a lack of faith, if not a disbelief, in the hereafter. They know that the gospel teachings touch not only this life but the life that is to come, with its salvation and exaltation as the final goal.

These students hunger and thirst, as did their fathers before them, for a testimony of the things of the Spirit and of the hereafter, and knowing that you cannot rationalize eternity, they seek faith and the knowledge which follows faith.

They sense by the Spirit they have that the testimony they



seek is engendered and nurtured by the testimony of others and that to gain this testimony which they seek for, one living, burning, honest testimony of a righteous God-fearing man that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph was God's prophet is worth a thousand books and lectures aimed at debasing the gospel to a system of ethics or seeking to rationalize infinity.

Two thousand years ago the Master said:

"Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

"Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" (Matt. 7:10–11).

These students, born under the covenant, can understand that age and maturity and intellectual training are not in any way or to any degree necessary to communion with the Lord and His Spirit. They know the story of the youth Samuel in the temple; of Jesus at 12 years confounding the doctors in the temple; of Joseph at 14 seeing God the Father and the Son in one of the most glorious visions ever beheld by man. They are not as were the Corinthians, of whom Paul said: "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Cor. 3:2).

They are rather as was Paul himself when he declared to the same Corinthians: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Cor. 13:11).

These students as they come to you are spiritually working on toward a maturity which they will early reach if you but feed them the right food. They come to you possessing spiritual knowledge and experience the world does not know.

So much for your students and what they are and what they expect and what they are capable of. I am telling you the things that some of you teachers have told me and that many of your youth have told me.

May I not say now a few words to you teachers?

COUNSEL TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS OF YOUTH

In the first place, there is neither reason nor is there excuse for our Church religious teaching and training facilities and institutions, unless the youth are to be taught and trained in the principles of the gospel, embracing therein the two great elements that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph was God's prophet. The teaching of a system of ethics to the students is not a sufficient reason for running our seminaries and institutes. The great public

school system teaches ethics. The students of seminaries and institutes should of course be taught the ordinary canons of good and righteous living, for these are part, and an essential part, of the gospel. But there are the great principles involved in eternal life, the priesthood, the Resurrection, and many like other things, that go way beyond these canons of good living. These great fundamental principles also must be taught to the youth; they are the things the youth wish first to know about.

A testimony. The first requisite of a teacher for teaching these principles is a personal testimony of their truth. No amount of learning, no amount of study, and no number of scholastic degrees can take the place of this testimony, which is the *sine qua non* [essential quality] of the teacher in our Church school system. No teacher who does not have a real testi-

mony of the truth of the gospel as revealed to and believed by the Latter-day Saints, and a testimony of the sonship and messiahship of Jesus and of the divine mission of Joseph Smith—including in all its reality the First Vision—has any place in the Church school system. . . .

Moral and intellectual courage. But for you teachers the mere possession of a testimony is not enough. You must have besides this, one of the rarest and most precious of all the many elements of human character—moral courage. For in the absence of moral courage to declare your testimony, it will reach the students only after such dilution as will make it difficult if not impossible for them to detect it; and the spiritual and psychological effect of a weak and vacillating testimony may well be actually harmful instead of helpful.

The successful . . . teacher must also possess another of the rare and valuable elements of character—a twin brother of moral courage and often mistaken for it—I mean intellectual courage—the courage to affirm principles, beliefs, and faith that may not always be considered as harmonizing with such knowledge—scientific or otherwise. . . .

An object of pity (not of scorn, as some would have it) is that man or woman, who having the truth and knowing it, finds it necessary either to repudiate the truth or to compromise with error in order that he may live with or among unbelievers without subjecting himself to their disfavor or derision as he supposes. Tragic indeed is his place, for the real fact is that all such discardings and shadings in the end bring the very punishments that the weak-willed one sought to avoid. For there is nothing the world so values and reveres as the man who, having righteous convictions, stands for them in any and all

The youth of the Church are hungry for things of the Spirit; they are eager to learn the gospel, and they want it straight, undiluted.

circumstances; there is nothing toward which the world turns more contempt than the man who, having righteous convictions, either slips away from them, abandons them, or repudiates them. For any Latter-day Saint psychologist, chemist, physicist, geologist, archaeologist, or any other scientist to explain away or misinterpret or evade or elude or, most of all, to repudiate or to deny the great fundamental doctrines of the Church in which he professes to believe, is to give the lie to his intellect, to lose his self-respect, to bring sorrow to his friends, to break the hearts and bring shame to his parents, to besmirch the Church and its members, and to forfeit the respect and honor of those whom he has sought, by his course, to win as friends and helpers. . . .

Your spiritual trust. Another thing which must be watched in our Church institutions is this: It must not be possible for men to keep positions of spiritual trust who, not being converted themselves, being really unbelievers, seek to turn aside the beliefs, education, and activities of our youth, and our aged also, from the ways they should follow, into other paths of education, beliefs, and activities which (though leading where the unbeliever would go) do not bring us to the places where the gospel would take us. That this works as a conscience-balm to the unbeliever who directs it is of no importance. This is the grossest betrayal of trust, and there is too much reason to think it has happened. . . .

I have already indicated that our youth are not children spiritually; they are well on toward the normal spiritual maturity of the world. To treat them as children spiritually, as the world might treat the same age-group, is therefore and likewise an anachronism. I say once more there is scarcely a youth that comes through your seminary or institute door who has not been the conscious beneficiary of spiritual blessings or who has not seen the efficacy of prayer or who has not witnessed the power of faith to heal the sick or who has not beheld spiritual outpourings of which the world at large is today ignorant. You do not have to sneak up behind this spiritually experienced youth and whisper religion in his ears; you can come right out, face to face, and talk with him. You do not need to disguise religious truths with a cloak of worldly things; you can bring these truths to him openly, in their natural guise. Youth may prove to be not more fearful of them than you are. There is no need for gradual approaches, for "bedtime" stories, for coddling, for patronizing, or for any of the other childish devices used in efforts to reach those spiritually inexperienced and all but spiritually dead.

You do not have to sneak up behind our spiritually experienced youth and whisper religion in their ears; you can come right out, face to face, and talk with them.

Educate for eternity. You teachers have a great mission. As teachers you stand upon the highest peak in education, for what teaching can compare in priceless value and in far-reaching effect with that which deals with man as he was in the eternity of yesterday, as he is in the mortality of today, and as he will be in the forever of tomorrow. Not only time but eternity is your field. Salvation of yourself not only, but of those who come within the purlieu [confines] of your temple, is the blessing you seek and which, doing your duty, you will gain. How brilliant will be your crown of glory, with each soul saved an encrusted jewel thereon.

But to get this blessing and to be so crowned, you must, I say once more, you must teach the gospel. . . .

You do have an interest in matters purely cultural and in matters of purely secular knowledge; but, I repeat again for emphasis, your chief interest, your essential and all but sole duty, is to teach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as that has been revealed in these latter days. You are to teach this gospel using as your sources and authorities the standard works of the Church and the words of those whom God has called to lead His people in these last days. You are not, whether high or low, to intrude into your work your own peculiar philosophy, no matter what its source or how pleasing or rational it seems to you to be. To do so

would be to have as many different churches as we have seminaries—and that is chaos.

The philosophies of the world. You are not, whether high or low, to change the doctrines of the Church or to modify them as they are declared by and in the standard works of the Church and by those whose authority it is to declare the mind and will of the Lord to the Church. The Lord has declared that He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (2 Ne. 27:23).

I urge you not to fall into that childish error, so common now, of believing that merely because man has gone so far in harnessing the forces of nature and turning them to his own use, that therefore the truths of the Spirit have been changed or transformed. It is a vital and significant fact that man's conquest of the things of the Spirit has not marched side by side with his conquest of things material. The opposite sometimes seems to be true. Man's power to reason has not matched his power to figure. Remember always and cherish the great truth of the Intercessory Prayer: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). This is an ultimate truth; so are all spiritual truths. They are not changed by the

discovery of a new element, a new ethereal wave, nor by clipping off a few seconds, minutes, or hours of a speed record.

You are not to teach the philosophies of the world, ancient or modern, pagan or Christian, for this is the field of the public schools. . . .

All that has been said regarding the character of religious teaching, and the results which in the very nature of things must follow a failure properly to teach the gospel, applies with full and equal force to seminaries, to institutes, and to any and every other educational institution belonging to the Church school system.

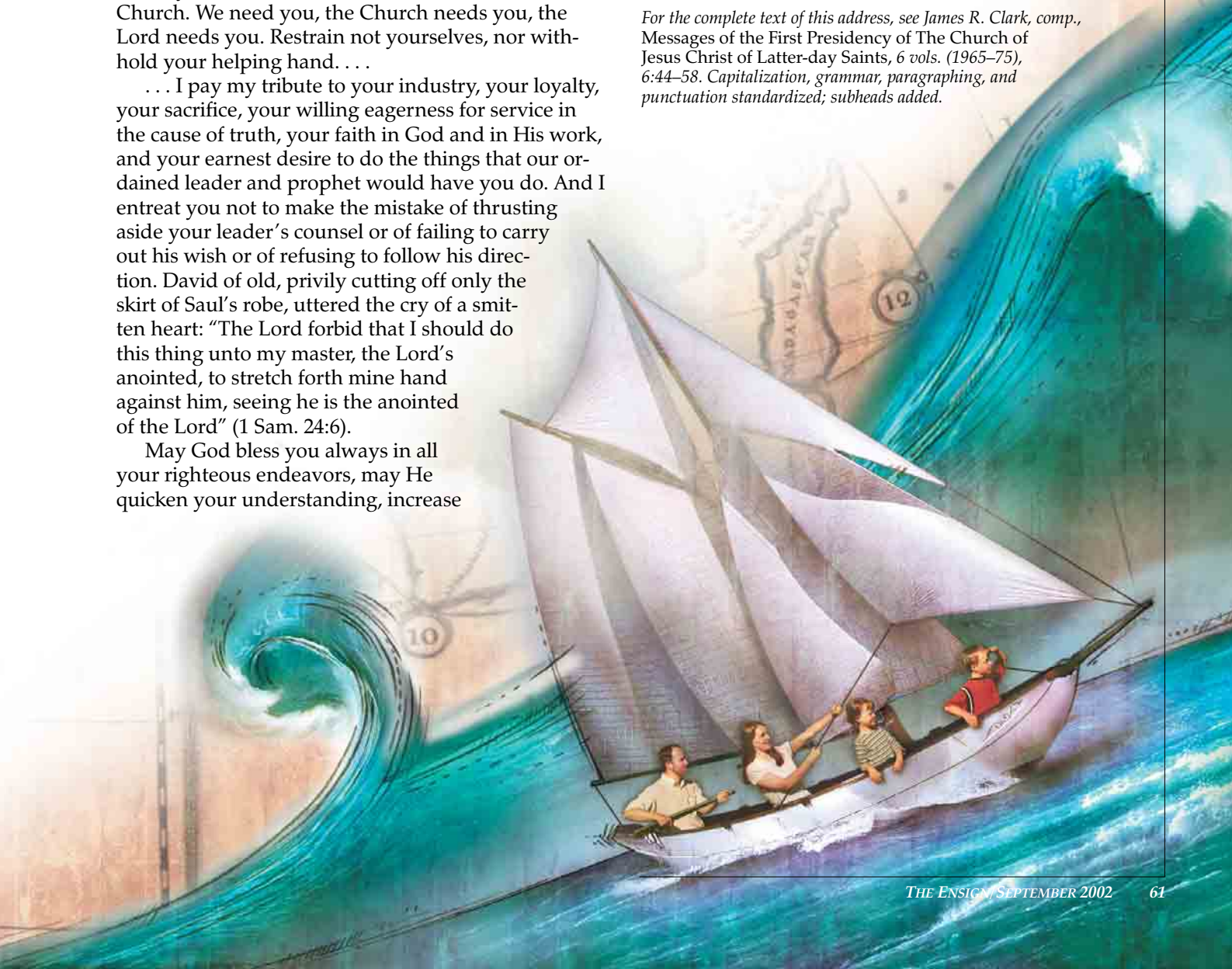
A tribute and blessing. The First Presidency earnestly solicit the wholehearted help and cooperation of all you men and women who, from your work on the firing line, know so well the greatness of the problem which faces us and which so vitally and intimately affects the spiritual health and the salvation of our youth, as also the future welfare of the whole Church. We need you, the Church needs you, the Lord needs you. Restrain not yourselves, nor withhold your helping hand. . . .

. . . I pay my tribute to your industry, your loyalty, your sacrifice, your willing eagerness for service in the cause of truth, your faith in God and in His work, and your earnest desire to do the things that our ordained leader and prophet would have you do. And I entreat you not to make the mistake of thrusting aside your leader's counsel or of failing to carry out his wish or of refusing to follow his direction. David of old, privily cutting off only the skirt of Saul's robe, uttered the cry of a smitten heart: "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord" (1 Sam. 24:6).

May God bless you always in all your righteous endeavors, may He quicken your understanding, increase

your wisdom, enlighten you by experience, bestow upon you patience, charity, and, as among your most precious gifts, endow you with the discernment of spirits that you may certainly know the spirit of righteousness and its opposite as they come to you; may He give you entrance to the hearts of those you teach and then make you know that as you enter there you stand in holy places that must be neither polluted nor defiled, either by false or corrupting doctrine or by sinful misdeed; may He enrich your knowledge with the skill and power to teach righteousness; may your faith and your testimonies increase, and your ability to encourage and foster them in others grow greater every day—all that the youth of Zion may be taught, built up, encouraged, heartened, that they may not fall by the wayside but go on to eternal life, that these blessings coming to them, you through them may be blessed also. And I pray all this in the name of Him who died that we might live, the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, Jesus Christ, amen. □

For the complete text of this address, see James R. Clark, comp., Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (1965–75), 6:44–58. Capitalization, grammar, paragraphing, and punctuation standardized; subheads added.



CHOOSING AND BEING THE RIGHT SPOUSE

BY THOMAS B. HOLMAN

Prophetic counsel teaches us that finding a marriage partner takes spiritual sensitivity, maturity, and preparation—including preparing ourselves to be the right spouse.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has counseled that marriage “will be the most important decision of your life. . . . Marry the right person in the right place at the right time.”¹ But who is the right person? Where is the right place? When is the right time?

Fortunately, President Hinckley and other Church leaders have given us inspired counsel concerning these questions. Moreover, some 60 years of research confirms the wisdom of their counsel.

The right place is, of course, the temple. “There is no substitute for marrying in the temple,” counsels President Hinckley. “It is the only place under the heavens where marriage can be solemnized for eternity. Don’t cheat yourself. Don’t cheat your companion. Don’t shortchange your lives.”²

But how to find the right person?

We sometimes are given false expectations by movies, plays, and fiction based on the idea that there is a “one-and-only” somewhere out there whom we are intended to marry. This would mean that finding a mate is simply a matter of waiting to lock eyes with the right someone “across a crowded room,” as the song in *South Pacific* says,³ heading off hand in hand to the closest temple and then living happily ever after. No matter how romantic this idea is, it is not supported by prophetic counsel. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught: “‘Soul mates’ are fiction and an illusion; and while every young man and young woman will seek with all diligence and prayerfulness to find a

mate with whom life can be most compatible and beautiful, yet it is certain that almost any good man and any good woman can have happiness and a successful marriage if both are willing to pay the price.”⁴

THE RIGHT PERSON

Many of us have the mote and beam problem (see Matt. 7:3–5)—that is, we can easily see the faults of others, but not our own. So before we start holding others up to scrutiny to see if they are worthy of us, maybe we ought to work first on becoming a “right person” for someone else. Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles offered this counsel: “If the choice is between reforming other Church members [including fiancés, spouses, and children] or ourselves, is there really any question about where we should begin? The key is to have our eyes wide open to our own faults and partially closed to the faults of others—not the other way around! The imperfections of others never release us from the need to work on our own shortcomings.”⁵ Therefore, when we focus on finding the right person, we should also focus on becoming the right person for someone else. The strengths we bring to a marriage will undoubtedly contribute to the success of the marriage.

The first quality many young people look for in a potential spouse is someone with whom they can “fall in love,” which often means someone for whom they



Before we start holding others up to scrutiny to see if they are worthy of us, maybe we ought to work first on becoming a “right person” for someone else.

feel a strong physical attraction. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “The right person is someone for whom the natural and wholesome and normal affection that should exist does exist.” But he went on to add, “It is the person who is living so that he or she can go to the temple of God and make the covenants that we there make.”⁶

Being “in love” and attracted to a person is a good start, but clearly not enough. President Gordon B. Hinckley and Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have suggested several other factors we should keep in mind.

“Choose a companion of your own faith. You are much more likely to be happy,” said President Hinckley. “Choose a companion you can always honor, you can always respect, one who will complement you in your own life, one to whom you can give your entire heart, your entire love, your entire allegiance, your entire loyalty.”⁷

Elder Scott suggested several attributes of a potential spouse that will contribute to happiness in marriage: “a deep love of the Lord and of His commandments, a determination to live them, one that is kindly understanding, forgiving of others, and willing to give of self, with the desire to have a family crowned with beautiful children and a commitment to teach them the principles of truth in the home.”⁸

SOME FACTORS TO CONSIDER

More than 60 years of research studies bear out the truth of these inspired recommendations by priesthood leaders. So do my personal experience and observation through years of teaching university classes about good marriage relationships. Research suggests several areas that we need to look at in choosing a spouse⁹ if we want to have the greatest chance of success in marriage. These are the individual attributes and deeply held values of the person, the quality of the relationship we are able to build with that person, the person’s background, and the things in our own lives that affect our decisions. Let’s consider each of these.

First, we need to know a lot about the person we are thinking of marrying. As Elder Scott suggested, the person’s beliefs about family life are very important. Research confirms that the more a potential spouse values marriage and family life, the better that marriage can be. Studies show also that the kind of person

“Choose a companion you can always honor, you can always respect, one who will complement you in your own life, one to whom you can give your entire heart,” President Gordon B. Hinckley has counseled.



President Hinckley advises seeking—someone to honor, respect, and give our whole heart to, someone who inspires love, allegiance, and loyalty—will usually have good mental and emotional health, including maturity, self-control, and a healthy sense of self-respect.

The self-respect that prepares one well for marriage is not, as President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) said, “an abnormally developed self-esteem that becomes haughtiness, conceit, or arrogance, but a righteous self-respect that might be defined as ‘belief in one’s own worth, worth to God, and worth to man.’”¹⁰ One young wife’s comments about her husband illustrate how a poor sense of self-worth can harm a marriage. “I love him and I hope he will change. He has poor self-esteem. In any discussion of problems in our relationship, he puts up defenses and throws everything back on me or says he is worthless.”

Two immature behaviors are impulsive spending and losing one’s temper. One young woman broke up with a young man after she observed his problem in controlling his anger. She said to me: “He had a bad temper, and he was power oriented and controlling. I really thought that he would abuse me or my children if I married him.”

There is a need to find a person not only of good character but also one with whom we can have a good relationship. The way we communicate in dating and courtship is a key to building a solid marital relationship. Sincere, positive communication practiced in dating and courtship increases the likelihood of greater commitment, better conflict resolution, and more love between partners in marriage.

Good communication begins with a righteous heart. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matt. 12:34). On the other hand, communication from a selfish heart is generally just manipulation. Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “If we would know true love and understanding one for another, we must realize that communication is more than a sharing of words. It is the wise sharing of emotions, feelings, and concerns. It is the sharing of oneself totally.”¹¹

Steve and Linda, who divorced after five years of marriage, realized this on looking back. Linda said it this way: “We had problems, I think, from the time we started dating. Neither of us is really good at communicating. I think I am a little better now than when we were dating. But neither one of us discussed our thoughts and feelings; we would get full of anger and neither one of us would talk.”

THE EFFECT OF HERITAGE

In addition to weighing a potential spouse’s character and our ability to create a good couple relationship with that person, we need to consider past and present

family relationships. President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught, “In choosing a companion, it is necessary to study the disposition, the inheritance, and training of the one with whom you are contemplating making life’s journey.”¹²

Both research studies and experience show the wisdom of President McKay’s counsel. Good family environments and family relationships tend to lead to good quality marriages by the children; poor family environments and family relationships often foreshadow poor marriages by the children from these homes. Young adults from divorced families, for example, may experience some depression and anger and have trouble trusting or committing to others as a result of the trauma of parental divorce. Whether their parents divorced or not, some individuals may have been exposed to poor models of communication and conflict resolution in their families. Children from families that were emotionally cold and distant, chaotic, dangerous, unpredictable, detached, full of conflict, or where addictions or violence were chronic problems may need special help in overcoming such an upbringing.

Fortunately, however, our backgrounds do not have to control the outcome of our lives or our marriages. While we can do little to change our “gene pool,” we can choose how to respond to the events and conditions of our upbringing, and courtship is one of the most opportune times to do so. President McKay also said: “In our early youth, our environment is largely determined for us, but . . . in courtship and marriage we can modify, aye, can control to a very great extent, our environment. Morally speaking, we can carve the very atmosphere in which we live.”¹³

Even if we came from a less-than-perfect family environment, we are not doomed to suffer the consequences of our parents’ iniquities “unto the third and fourth generation” (Deut. 5:9). The very scriptures that warn of wickedness being passed on unto the third and fourth generation also show the way out of a troubled family background. Doctrine and Covenants 124:50, for example, tells us that the iniquities of the fathers will be visited upon the head of the children “so long as they [the children] repent not, and hate me.” Thus repentance and loving the Lord help free us from the sins of our parents.

The Book of Mormon is also full of examples of how to deal with parental influences. It talks about these influences in terms of “the traditions of their fathers” (Alma 9:17). The story of the Lamanites who responded to the teaching of Ammon and his brethren is a powerful example of a people who overcame generations of wicked traditions. In brief, the Book of Mormon teaches us that we can overcome these negative effects by having faith in the Lord, allowing ourselves to be taught by inspired leaders, learning the lessons of the scriptures, suffering in patience the afflictions that parents may have brought

upon us, and repenting of any of the unrighteous habits and behaviors we may have picked up (see Mosiah 1:5; Alma 9:16–17; Alma 17:9, 15; Alma 25:6; Hel. 15:7).

It is important to have family and friends on our side and supportive of the upcoming marriage, Elder Richard L. Evans (1906–71) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles advised. “Don’t let this choice [of a marriage partner] ever be made except with earnest, searching, prayerful consideration, confiding in parents, [and] in faithful, mature, trustworthy friends.”¹⁴ Loving parents who genuinely want the best for us, and “faithful, mature, trustworthy friends,” can often act as a sounding board and counsel us on how best to proceed.

THE RIGHT TIME

President Hinckley offered this counsel about timing: “I hope you will not put off marriage too long. I do not speak so much to the young women as to the young men whose prerogative and responsibility it is to take the lead in this matter. Don’t go on endlessly in a frivolous dating game. Look for a choice companion, one you can love, honor, and respect, and make a decision.”¹⁵

Waiting too long is clearly ill advised. But jumping into marriage too quickly can also be a problem. President Lee advised that a young man not think of marriage until he is able to take care of a family of his own, to be independent. “He must make sure that he has found the girl of his choice, they have gone together long enough that they know each other, and that they know each other’s faults and they still love each other. . . . Brethren, think more seriously about the obligations of marriage for those who bear the holy priesthood at a time when marriage should be the expectation of every man who understands [his] responsibility.”¹⁶ Women also need to wait until they are mature enough to assume the responsibilities of a wife and mother, without waiting too long while pursuing less important things.

MAKING THE DECISION

After thoughtfully and prayerfully considering all of these factors, we must be sure the decision we make is based on inspiration, not infatuation or desperation. As we seek a spiritual confirmation, we need to keep at least five things in mind.

First, we must be worthy to receive the inspiration we need.

Second, we must understand the balance between agency and inspiration. As Elder McConkie taught, “We make our own choices, and then we present the matter to the Lord and get his approving, ratifying seal.”¹⁷ The experience of one young man illustrates this: “There are two things in my life that I’ve always felt would be important: a career and marriage. Yet at

the time I didn’t feel like I was getting a response. I prayed, ‘Heavenly Father, this is so important, I need to know whether or not it’s right.’ Then toward the end of our courtship, I went to the temple. I was so frustrated because I wasn’t getting an answer either way. After praying and waiting for an answer, I got more frustrated and gave up. That was when an impression came to me: ‘You already know the answer.’ Then I realized that God *had* answered my prayers. The decision to marry Becky always made sense and felt right. I can see now that God had been telling me in my heart and in my mind that it was a good decision. And later, at the time of the ceremony, I had another confirmation that what I was doing was right.”

Third, we may seek several witnesses if we feel the need for additional confirmation. Sometimes we may have difficulty distinguishing between spiritual impressions and our own emotions, desires, or fears. A spiritual witness may be confirmed again in various ways. In His infinite love, mercy, and patience, our Heavenly Father is generous with His counsel and response to His children.

Fourth, we can learn to discern the differences between inspiration, infatuation, and desperation. Inspiration, as we have already seen, comes when one is living worthily, exercises agency righteously, and studies the situation out carefully. It can be confirmed by multiple spiritual enlightenments and peaceful feelings (see D&C 6:15, 22–23). Infatuation is usually manifest by an immature “love” that includes great anxiety, possessiveness, selfishness, clinging, and overdependence; this may be more likely with individuals who lack emotional and spiritual maturity. Desperation is often associated with social or cultural circumstances that create an atmosphere (at least in the person’s mind) of “now or never”; pressure from peers, family, or cultural norms may lead to an unwise decision. A desire to get away from an unpleasant family situation or fear of failure in school or work can cause someone to look desperately to marriage as a way out of a problem. Such fears and anxieties often speak so loudly in our minds that we cannot hear the still, small whisperings of the Holy Spirit.

Fifth, the spiritual confirmation needs to come to both parties involved. A person should not feel that if his or her prospective partner receives a confirmation, he or she is therefore released from the necessity of seeking a similar personal confirmation. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has discussed this issue: “If a revelation is outside the limits of stewardship, you know it is not from the Lord, and you are not bound by it. I have heard of cases where a young man told a young woman she should marry him because he had received a revelation that she



was to be his eternal companion. If this is a true revelation, it will be confirmed directly to the woman if she seeks to know. In the meantime, she is under no obligation to heed it. She should seek her own guidance and make up her own mind. The man can receive revelation to guide his own actions, but he cannot properly receive revelation to direct hers. She is outside his stewardship."¹⁸

Not long ago, my wife, Linda, and I were reminiscing about our courtship, and as I looked back, it seemed to me that I had been immature and inexperienced. I asked how she had dared to marry me. Her simple answer was, "I saw potential."

In that same vein, as we search for a mate with whom we can spend the eternities, we would do well to remember Elder Scott's counsel to recognize potential for growth: "I suggest that you not ignore many possible candidates who are still developing these attributes, seeking the one who is perfected in them. You will likely not find that perfect person, and if you did, there would certainly be no interest in you. These attributes are best polished together as husband and wife."¹⁹ □

NOTES

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2. *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 2.
3. Oscar Hammerstein II, "Some Enchanted Evening," 1949.
4. *Marriage and Divorce* (1976), 16.
5. "A Brother Offended," *Ensign*, May 1982, 39.
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7. *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 2.
8. "Receive the Temple Blessings," *Ensign*, May 1999, 26.

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10. *Stand Ye in Holy Places* (1974), 7.
11. "Family Communications," *Ensign*, May 1976, 52.
12. *Gospel Ideals* (1953), 459.
13. *Gospel Ideals*, 462.
14. "This You Can Count On," *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1969, 73.
15. "Thou Shalt Not Covet," *Ensign*, Mar. 1990, 6.
16. "President Harold B. Lee's General Priesthood Address," *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 100.
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18. "Revelation," in *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 1981 (1982), 25.
19. *Ensign*, May 1999, 26.

Thomas B. Holman is a member of the Aspen Second Ward, Orem Utah Aspen Stake.

More on this topic: Richard G. Scott, "Receive the Temple Blessings," *Ensign*, May 1999, 25; Jonn D. Claybaugh, "Dating: A Time to Become Best Friends," *Ensign*, Apr. 1994, 18.



As we search for a mate with whom we can spend the eternities, we would do well to remember the wise counsel to recognize potential for growth.

Alone in a Foreign Country

By Maria Mabilia

A few years ago my husband and I were returning home to Italy from the Frankfurt Germany Temple. With us in the car were another couple and a young man about to leave on a full-time mission. We had spent a wonderful week attending the temple, but as we journeyed home, my heart was agitated and I could not figure out why.

While we were still in Germany, I noted that Angelo, my husband, took a wrong turn. But trying not to worry the other passengers, I didn't say anything. Suddenly a huge truck coming from the opposite direction ran into us. The force of the blow sent our car spinning out of control. Angelo was powerless; all we could do was pray.

Our car finally stopped when it smashed against a tree. All the windows broke out, and glass was everywhere. Even my eyeglasses were broken into pieces. I soon learned that six other cars were involved and some of the victims were in serious condition.

The paramedics arrived right away and took my husband, the couple traveling with us, and some of the other victims to the hospital. The young, soon-to-be missionary and I were left at the accident scene. I felt confused and lost since I was in a foreign country without my husband and without any information about what was happening. And so I continued to turn my heart to Heavenly Father in prayer. His answer came almost immediately.

A man approached me. He was German, but he spoke to me





After the paramedics took my husband away, I felt lost and frightened.

in English. Even though I don't speak either English or German, I was able to understand when he offered to take us to the hospital. Since he was on a bicycle, he said he would return home to get his car.

We were alone again. But in a few minutes another man approached. He spoke Italian! I was so happy that I hugged him and started to cry. He also wanted to help us, but he too had to get his car.

Both men soon returned. They loaded our suitcases in their cars and took us to the hospital. The second man left, but the first stayed with me the entire day, helping me find my husband, buy new glasses, and locate a hotel room for the night. Above all, he gave me encouragement and moral support.

When he came back the next day, I couldn't help but think of the parable of the good Samaritan. This man, although he didn't know my husband or me, helped us through a very difficult time.

That day I located and contacted some local Church members. Almost immediately the mission president and the bishop arrived. They were strangers to us, but in their faces I saw the pure love of Jesus Christ. While my husband and our traveling companions recovered, the Church members helped us. Each time they came to visit, they brought their love.

The most important blessing we received during this time of adversity was the reminder of the great love God has for His children. Now I know from experience that if we trust in Him, He will never leave us alone but will be at our side through everyday people. □

Maria Mabilia is a member of the Como Branch, Como Italy District.

The Home Teachers Who Wouldn't Quit

By David Head

A year after my wife, Anthea, and I joined the Church in 1965, we were sealed with our two small daughters in the London England Temple.

At that time the Church in Britain had only one stake. Because there was a great need for priesthood leadership, I was soon called to serve as a branch president in a town 15 miles away from my home branch. I welcomed the challenge this new calling brought and eventually served in the district presidency and then in the bishopric when our branch became a ward.

As our family grew in the gospel, the sales management position I held became more and more demanding, often requiring me to be away from home two or three nights a week. The pressures of my life, combined with newfound friends not of our faith, caused me to start to have doubts regarding some aspects of Church doctrine.

I had received a good education and enjoyed deep discussions with these new intellectual friends. They tried to use the scriptures to prove that the Church was not following some basic concepts laid down as commandments since the time of Adam. I should have borne testimony to the truth of the restored gospel and turned away. Instead, I began to listen to them, and my little doubts about doctrine started to grow. Soon I stopped

paying tithing and going to the temple. When I stopped attending church, my wife protested, as did our daughters when we ceased holding family home evening.

As this was happening, two people from the Church never gave up on me. Our home teachers invited me to church every Sunday, sometimes by a visit and other times by a phone call. They visited our home at least once and sometimes twice each month. They even knew when we needed something. I especially remember the time I ordered a garden shed that was delivered

unassembled during my absence. Upon returning home, I found our home teachers had already assembled the shed.

I particularly admired our senior home teacher, Des Gorman, an Irish Canadian. He was a genuine person who truly cared for people. To me he represented the Church, so I felt that the Church must be a good organization, even if I wasn't attending.

Eventually we were blessed with a baby boy. Our home teachers reminded me that it is a priesthood practice to name and bless a baby at fast and testimony meeting. I did not want to participate,

though I finally agreed to allow our baby to be blessed by others.

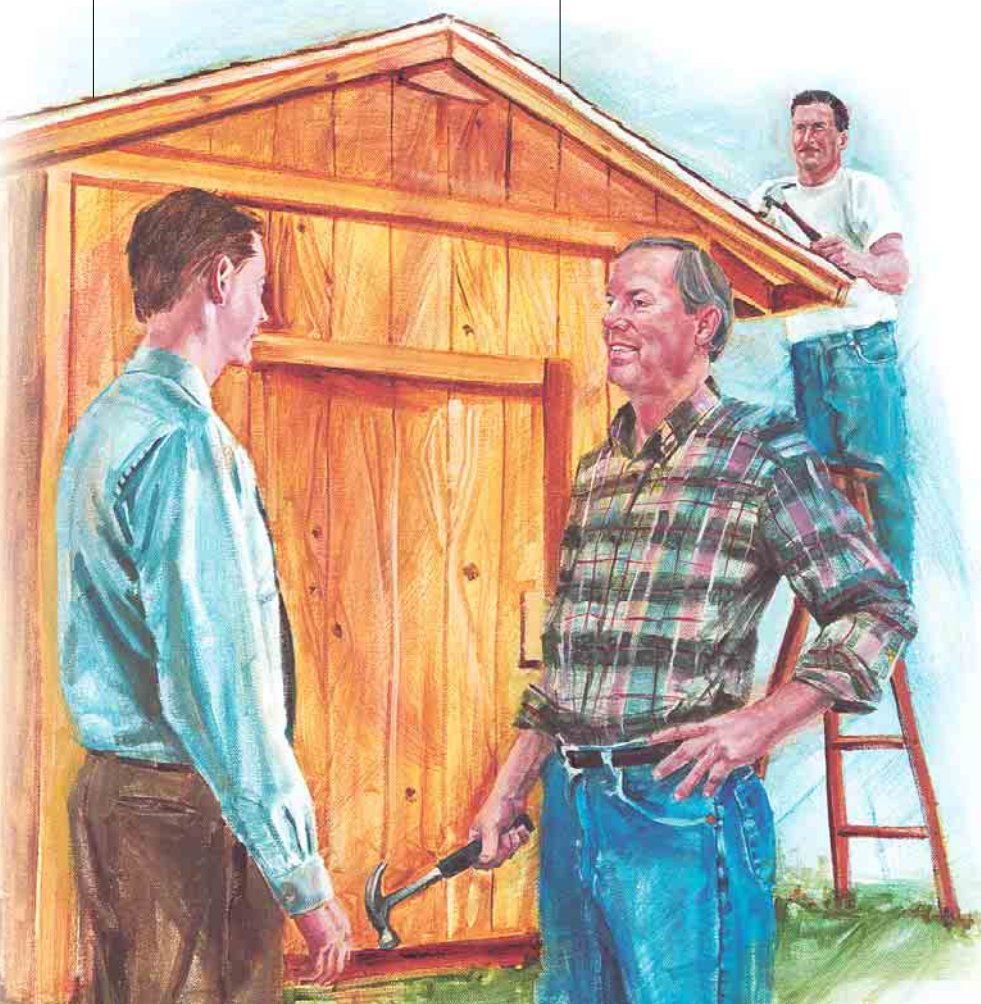
Brother Gorman stood in my place and was the mouthpiece for a beautiful blessing on our son, Ronan. As I listened, I received a powerful witness from the Spirit. I had been proud. I had made some big mistakes. I had nearly lost my testimony of the truthfulness of the restored gospel. I still had my family, but I had almost lost the sweet peace the gospel brings. Many tears flowed as my wife, Brother Gorman, and the bishopric hugged me as I felt the sorrow that leads to repentance.

From that time on, I have been active in the Church, with our home teachers continuing to support me. Our baby boy is now a returned missionary, married in the temple, and raising a family of his own. I feel his life is a tribute to the man who gave him a name and a blessing.

I shall ever be grateful to two dedicated home teachers who took their assignment seriously. Although Brother Gorman has been deceased for some years, I know I won't forget him for his patient consistence in inviting me back. He never gave up. Today I continue to seek to emulate his quiet and loving persistence in my own home teaching and Church callings. □

David Head is a member of the Worcester Ward, Cheltenham England Stake.

Our home teachers seemed to know when we needed something. Once while I was away, they even assembled a garden shed I had ordered.



Loving Lifelong Learning

Read the following with the sisters you visit, and discuss the questions, scriptures, and teachings from our Church leaders. Share your experiences and testimony, and invite those you teach to do the same.

President Gordon B. Hinckley:

"You belong to a church which espouses education. . . . Train yourselves to make a contribution to the society in which you . . . live. There is an essence of the divine in the improvement of the mind. 'The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.' (D&C 93:36.) 'Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.' (D&C 130:18.) . . . Education is an investment that never ceases to pay dividends of one kind or another" ("Rise to the Stature of the Divine within You," *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 96).

D&C 88:118: "As all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"We seek learning by studying the accumulated wisdom of various disciplines and by using the powers of reasoning placed in us by

our Creator. We should also seek learning by faith in God, the giver of revelation. . . . Seekers who have paid the price in perspiration have been magnified by inspiration. The acquisition of knowledge by revelation is an extra bonus to seekers in the sciences and the arts, but it is the fundamental method for those who seek to know God and the doctrines of his gospel. In this area of knowledge, scholarship and reason are insufficient" ("Alternate Voices," *Ensign*, May 1989, 29).

D&C 88:77–79: "I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom. Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in . . . all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand; Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have

There is an essence
of the divine in the
improvement of the mind."

been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms."

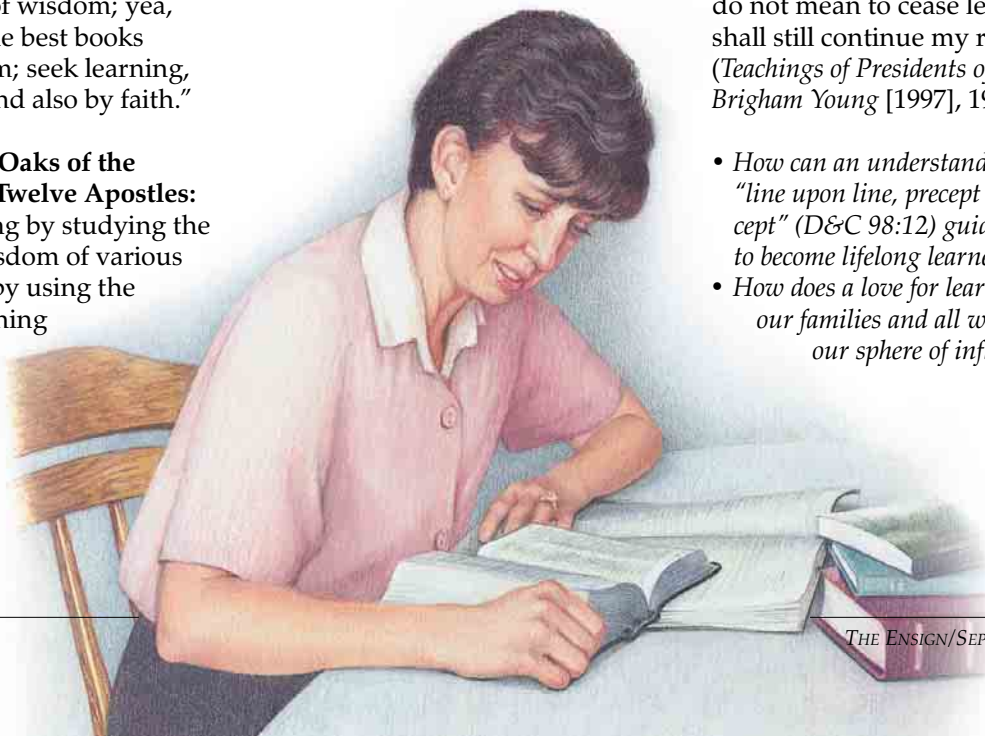
President Spencer W. Kimball

(1895–1985): "We must be trained to clarify minds, heal broken hearts, and create homes where sunshine will make an environment in which mental and spiritual health may be nurtured. . . . Our schooling must not only teach us how to bridge the Niagara River gorge, or the Golden Gate, but must teach us how to bridge the deep gaps of misunderstanding and hate and discord in the world" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 391).

President Brigham Young

(1801–77): "I shall not cease learning while I live, nor when I arrive in the spirit-world; but shall there learn with greater facility; and when I again receive my body [in the resurrection], I shall learn a thousand times more in a thousand times less time; and then I do not mean to cease learning, but shall still continue my researches" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 195).

- How can an understanding of "line upon line, precept upon precept" (D&C 98:12) guide our efforts to become lifelong learners?
- How does a love for learning affect our families and all who fall within our sphere of influence? ☐



Tips for Beginning Organists

Our ward has five organists who alternate playing for sacrament meetings. How is it that we have more than the usual one or two? The answer is that we encourage our pianists to learn to play the organ.

Competent pianists who want to play the organ can learn basic skills that will quickly enable them to play in church. Following are tips for playing the organ and a quick introduction to the instrument:

Pedal board and volume (expression) pedals: The beginning organist should not worry about using the pedal board. Proper pedal board technique can be learned later. Keep the volume steady when an appropriate level is established with the volume pedals.

Manuals (keyboards): Most meetinghouse organs have two keyboards, called manuals. The lower manual is called the Great; the upper manual, the Swell. Play hymns with both hands on the Great.

Fingering: There are many fingering techniques for playing the organ, such as legato, finger substitution, and glissando. Beginning organists can improve their fingering by practicing on a piano, trying to play smoothly without using the damper (right)

pedal. Moving parts should be played legato. When the fingering becomes awkward, sacrifice the legato of the alto and tenor parts first. It is sometimes desirable to tie frequently repeating notes, particularly in the bass and tenor parts. Use a precise attack and release of the keys. An experienced organist can suggest fingering that could be marked in a personal hymnbook.

Tonal families: There are four tonal families on an organ: Principal (Diapason),



Flute, String, and Reed. The individual sounds are marked on stops and activated by either tabs or draw-knobs.

Pitch: The stops are marked with numbers that indicate pitch, such as 8' (same as the pitch written on the music), 4' (octave higher), 2' (two octaves higher), and 16' (octave lower).

Couplers: These allow a stop for one manual to be heard from a different manual or pedal. For

example, if the "Swell to Great" coupler is on, the organist can play the Great manual and hear stops from the Swell division. The pedal board Bass coupler, if available, offers an improvement to the performance of an organist who is not yet using the pedal board.

Registration: The registration refers to the stops selected for a particular hymn. The stops can be manually selected or, with some organs, programmed. For hymns, 8' and 4' Principals and Flutes can be used for the manuals, with 16' and 8' stops selected from the pedal division. For clarity and brighter sounds, 4', 2', and mixture stops could be used. Strings also add clarity. Reeds add power and brilliance. Each stop has a unique quality, volume, and pitch. Beginners can experiment with the stops until they feel confident using them.

Vibrato, tremolo, tremulant, and crescendo pedal: These controls are not recommended for congregational hymns.

Hopefully, many beginning organists will pursue formal training. In addition to building musical skills through practice and training, accompanists should remember to pray to contribute to the spirit of the meeting.—**Paul R. Howarth, Quail Ridge Ward, Las Vegas Nevada Green Valley Stake**

My Motherhood Manual

As a mother, I have often wished that my children had come equipped with instruction manuals. Sometimes it is hard to know how to raise them properly. But I do know

Emergency Preparedness Game

Often when I watch the news on television, I see reports of natural disasters. With each new report, I am reminded of the counsel given by Church leaders to be prepared. Since our family did not have an emergency supply kit and preparing one seemed overwhelming, I wanted to find a doable solution. As my husband and I counseled together, we realized that we didn't have to accomplish the task alone—we could enlist our children's help.

To involve everyone and make preparing for an emergency seem fun instead of daunting or upsetting, we decided to have a scavenger hunt as part of family home evening. Together we could gather items for an emergency preparedness kit. Considering family members' individual needs, I made a list of supplies for our search. For starters, the baby would need a bottle, formula, and diapers, while my

husband would need sturdy clothes and work gloves. I also found ideas from information I had saved from Home, Family, and Personal Enrichment lessons.

At the start of our family night, we discussed possible natural disaster situations and the importance of being prepared so we don't have to be afraid (see D&C 38:30). After our discussion, we divided our family into teams and gave each group an empty laundry basket and part of our list. Then we had our scavenger hunt throughout the house, collecting the needed supplies. The children had a great time gathering the items and choosing which clothing to include. Within an hour, we had items for a complete emergency kit—tailored for our family's needs. What once had seemed an overwhelming task became a fun activity for our family, and we now feel better prepared should an emergency arise.—**Windy L. Hasson, Celeste Ward, Las Vegas Nevada Sandstone Stake**

The Church offers helpful suggestions for preparing emergency supplies in a booklet titled Essentials of Home Production and Storage (item no. 32288; U.S. \$.75), available in



distribution centers. Regarding emergency storage, the booklet advises everyone to have portable containers with the following: water; food requiring no refrigeration or cooking; medications and critical medical histories as needed; change of clothing, including sturdy shoes and two pairs of socks; sanitary supplies; first aid booklet and equipment; candles; waterproof matches; ax; shovel; can opener; and blankets (see p. 7). The booklet also recommends preparing a portable packet with valuable family documents, such as family history records.



that my calling as a parent is important, sacred, and eternal. Fortunately, as members of the Church, we have many resources to assist us in rearing and teaching our children. With the aid of these resources, I have compiled my own motherhood "manual."

In a three-ring binder, which I keep close to my scriptures, I have included scriptural verses pertinent to being a parent. For instance, Mosiah 4:15 reminds me to teach my children "to walk in the ways of truth and soberness."

I have also included "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," additional counsel from Church leaders, and the resource book *Teaching, No Greater Call* (item no. 36123; U.S. \$2.00). The Church also offers many other helpful materials such as *A Parent's Guide* (31125; U.S. \$1.25) *Family Guidebook* (31180; no charge), the *Family Home Evening Resource Book* (31106; U.S. \$5.00), and *For the Strength of Youth* (36550; no charge).

To further personalize my manual, I have added ideas for family home evening and family traditions, as well as goals we have set together.

I know that motherhood is a sacred, important calling. When I get caught up in the everyday tasks of caring for my children, I know that my motherhood manual will help me quickly refocus my perspective.—**Brenda Minor, Suncrest Fifth Ward, Orem Utah Suncrest Stake**

PHOTO BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN



The new Nauvoo temple sits on the same site as the original and has almost the same outward appearance.

Nauvoo Illinois Temple Dedicated

Early on the evening of 27 June, President Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the Nauvoo Illinois Temple in a session broadcast to thousands of members participating in 72 countries. The place and the time were closely tied to the history of the Church and its first President, Joseph Smith, charging the event with a sense of history as well as sacredness.

As a time capsule was sealed in the cornerstone box earlier in the day, President Hinckley spoke of an “unseen audience” that he expected to be present for the dedication, including the Prophet Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum, and “many others who gave their life and their time and their energies to the construction of [the

original Nauvoo] temple.” The dedication began at 6:00 P.M. Central Daylight Time on the same date—27 June—when the Prophet Joseph and his brother were martyred in Carthage Jail, about 15 miles away, in 1844. Adjusting for daylight savings time, even the hour was the same.

In the dedicatory prayer he offered on the temple, President Hinckley said: “We thank Thee that those harsh days are now long past. We thank Thee for this season in which we live, with the many blessings of peace and prosperity which we enjoy at Thy hands. Thy Spirit has brooded over us and moved upon us, and in obedience to its promptings we have now reconstructed on this hallowed

ground the temple that once stood here.” He petitioned: “We pray that Thou wilt accept of this our offering. The hearts of the children have literally turned to those fathers who worked on the original building. They have done so with love and a wonderful spirit of consecrated effort.”

President Hinckley added: “Bless this city of Nauvoo, which came to be known as the city of Joseph. May it shine with a renewed luster as the home of a temple of God. May this sacred house stand as a memorial to him who lived here and was buried here, Joseph Smith, the great prophet of this dispensation, and his brother Hyrum, whom he loved.”

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, also spoke in the first dedicatory session, as did President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; Elder Ben B. Banks of the Presidency

of the Seventy; Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop; and Margaret D. Nadauld, Young Women general president. Elder D. Todd Christofferson and Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Presidency of the Seventy offered the invocation and the benediction.

Members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles participated at each of the 13 dedicatory sessions through Sunday, 30 June. The first dedicatory session and the last were broadcast live via satellite to members gathered at approximately 2,300 locations around the world, and rebroadcasts of the first session were scheduled at other times.

This was the first temple dedication broadcast on an international scale, and its reach far exceeded that of any previous Church satellite broadcast. An expanded satellite system allowed it to go to areas of the world that have never



President Hinckley prepares to seal the temple cornerstone.

PHOTO BY CRAIG DIMOND

before received any type of Church satellite broadcast, including Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Armenia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russia, and Romania.

The dedication of the Nauvoo Illinois Temple is significant because this building is in large part a re-creation of the temple that the Prophet Joseph Smith had located on this bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. The new temple is built on the same site and to virtually the same exterior specifications and design as the original Nauvoo Temple. Thousands of today's members have ancestors who contributed to the building of that original temple, and every member can feel a kinship to those pioneers who sacrificed so much for their faith.

More than 330,000 people—from every state in the United States and from 70 other countries—toured the Nauvoo Illinois Temple during the seven-week public open house before its dedication. Visitors included prominent business and government leaders as well as officials from other religious faiths.

Music for the dedication sessions was provided by members of the Tabernacle Choir and by choirs of local Latter-day Saints.

The Nauvoo Illinois Temple is the Church's 113th. It will serve 13,000 Latter-day Saints in western Illinois, eastern Iowa, and northeastern Missouri, in stakes in Nauvoo, Peoria, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, and Iowa City. □



PHOTO BY JOHN BEUTLER

President Hinckley's remarks about the volunteer efforts of Church members were repeatedly greeted with applause.

President Hinckley Addresses L.A. World Affairs Council

"Volunteer service is the genius of this Church," said President Gordon B. Hinckley, speaking to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council on 12 June 2002.

President Hinckley focused his remarks on the elderly and on the Church's Perpetual Education Fund as he addressed the more than 2,100 people attending the event. They included diplomats, professors, local government officials, media representatives, and Church members hosting their guests. Religious leaders of many faiths were represented.

President Hinckley spoke first about the challenging service opportunities available to retirees and the thousands of individuals taking advantage of these opportunities. "God bless them for their great and dedicated service."

He highlighted a few of

the 5,300 retired Church members on missions who are having a tremendous impact in serving others: two widows teaching and encouraging Jamaicans in need; two brothers, retired doctors, who established a neonatal clinic and a general practice to help the disadvantaged in Ho Chi Minh City; and twenty retired people teaching English to Thai children in Bangkok.

"Now I know, of course, that there are many other volunteer groups doing a great service in the world," he said. "But I know of no other organization which so harnesses the abilities, the capacities, and the willingness of retired men and women in an organized program of Christian service in many areas of the world."

"These people are experiencing in a very real way the promise of the Master,

the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, 'Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it' " (Mark 8:35).

President Hinckley then spoke of the Perpetual Education Fund, designed to help the many young men and women who may return to poverty in their home countries after they finish their missions and do not have the opportunity to get an education. They receive loans to finance their education in their own country, then pay these loans back.

A quarter of a million people have sent in donations to the fund. "We have, without touching the corpus, earnings enough to provide loans to more than 3,000 individuals," said President Hinckley. "Today, only 14 months after the first announcement, we have made loans to 720 young people in Brazil, 696 in Chile, 338 in Peru, 194 in Mexico, 523 in the Philippines, and 634 in other countries," he reported. "I am confident the number will rise dramatically."

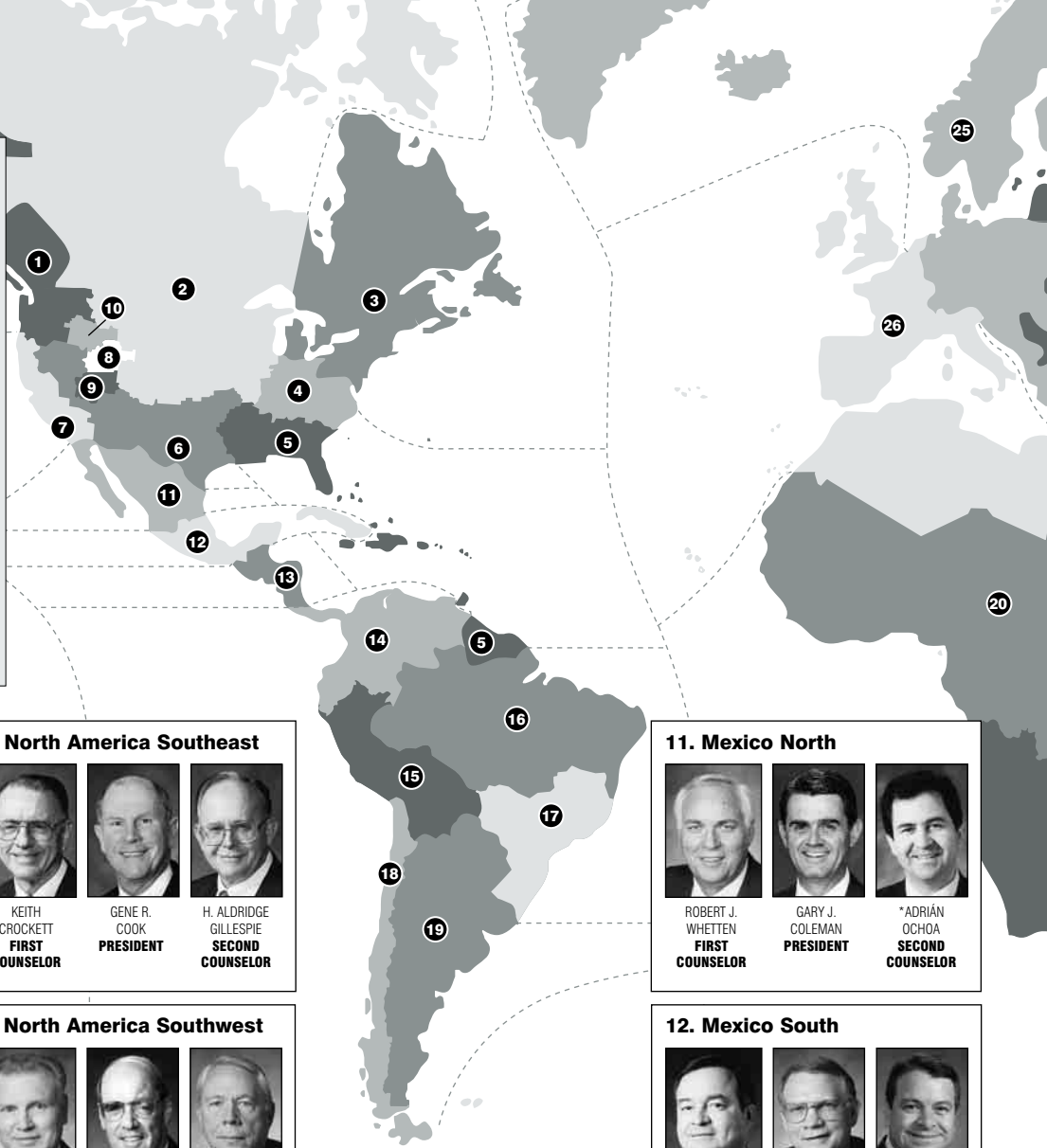
One young man from Concepción, Chile, wrote to the President: "This is a great blessing. Today I can change the future and give something better to my children. Thanks to all who have made this possible."

Loans from the Perpetual Education Fund are helping finance training in fields from automobile mechanics to hotel administration and Web technology.—**Kathleen Lubeck Peterson, Harbor Hills Ward, Newport Beach California Stake** □

New Area Presidency Assignments

The First Presidency has announced changes in assignments for Area Presidencies. The changes are effective 15 August 2002. All presidency members belong to the Quorums of the Seventy.

** Indicates Area Authority Seventy.*



1. North America Northwest



WILLIAM R. BRADFORD
FIRST COUNSELOR

QUENTIN L. COOK
PRESIDENT

STEPHEN A. WEST
SECOND COUNSELOR

5. North America Southeast



KEITH CROCKETT
FIRST COUNSELOR

GENE R. COOK
PRESIDENT

H. ALDRIDGE GILLESPIE
SECOND COUNSELOR

11. Mexico North



ROBERT J. WHETTEN
FIRST COUNSELOR

GARY J. COLEMAN
PRESIDENT

*ADRIÁN OCHOA
SECOND COUNSELOR

2. North America Central



BRUCE C. HAFEN
FIRST COUNSELOR

DONALD L. STAHEFJ
PRESIDENT

LYNN A. MICKELSEN
SECOND COUNSELOR

6. North America Southwest



H. BRUCE STUCKI
FIRST COUNSELOR

F. BURTON HOWARD
PRESIDENT

STEPHEN B. OVESON
SECOND COUNSELOR

12. Mexico South



*ARMANDO GAONA
FIRST COUNSELOR

RICHARD H. WINKLER
PRESIDENT

*BENJAMIN DE HOYOS
SECOND COUNSELOR

3. North America Northeast



GLENN L. PACE
FIRST COUNSELOR

SPENCER J. CONDIE
PRESIDENT

H. BRYAN RICHARDS
SECOND COUNSELOR

7. North America West



DUANE B. GERRARD
FIRST COUNSELOR

LYNN G. ROBBINS
PRESIDENT

VAL R. CHRISTENSEN
SECOND COUNSELOR

9. Utah South



W. ROLFE KERR
FIRST COUNSELOR

JOHN H. GROBERG
PRESIDENT

NED B. ROUECHÉ
SECOND COUNSELOR

13. Central America



JULIO E. ALVARADO
FIRST COUNSELOR

ENRIQUE R. FALABELLA*
PRESIDENT

E. ISRAEL PÉREZ
SECOND COUNSELOR

4. North America East



J. KENT JOLLEY
FIRST COUNSELOR

DALE E. MILLER
PRESIDENT

GORDON T. WATTS
SECOND COUNSELOR

8. Utah North



MONTE J. BROUGH
FIRST COUNSELOR

CREE-L. KOFFORD
PRESIDENT

MERRILL C. OAKS
SECOND COUNSELOR

10. Idaho



*D. REX GERRATT
FIRST COUNSELOR

*C. SCOTT GROW
PRESIDENT

*RONALD L. LOVELAND
SECOND COUNSELOR

14. South America North



WALTER F. GONZÁLEZ
FIRST COUNSELOR

CLAUDIO R. COSTA
PRESIDENT

*ROBERTO GARCÍA
SECOND COUNSELOR

24. Australia/New Zealand



JOHN M. MADSEN
FIRST
COUNSELOR



KENNETH JOHNSON
PRESIDENT



*LINDSAY T. DIL
SECOND
COUNSELOR

26. Europe West



WAYNE S. PETERSON
FIRST
COUNSELOR



HAROLD G. HILLAM
PRESIDENT



W. CRAIG ZWICK
SECOND
COUNSELOR

27. Europe East



KEITH K. HILBIG
FIRST
COUNSELOR



DOUGLAS L. CALLISTER
PRESIDENT



ROBERT F. ORTON
SECOND
COUNSELOR

25. Europe Central



RONALD A. RASBAND
FIRST
COUNSELOR



D. LEE TOBLER
PRESIDENT



MARLIN K. JENSEN
SECOND
COUNSELOR

28. Asia North



YOSHIHIKO KIKUCHI
FIRST
COUNSELOR



DONALD L. HALLSTROM
PRESIDENT



GARY S. MATSUDA*
SECOND
COUNSELOR

29. Asia



E. RAY BATEMAN
FIRST
COUNSELOR



JOHN B. DICKSON
PRESIDENT



*D. ALLEN ANDERSEN
SECOND
COUNSELOR

15. South America West



CARLOS H. AMADO
FIRST
COUNSELOR



DAVID R. STONE
PRESIDENT



*WILLY F. ZUZUNAGA
SECOND
COUNSELOR

16. Brazil North



ROBERT R. STEUER
FIRST
COUNSELOR



ADHEMAR DAMIANI
PRESIDENT



*PEDRO J. PENHA
SECOND
COUNSELOR

18. Chile



FRANCISCO J. VINAS
FIRST
COUNSELOR



JEFFREY R. HOLLAND
PRESIDENT



CARL B. PRATT
SECOND
COUNSELOR

20. Africa West



H. ROSS WORKMAN
FIRST
COUNSELOR



SHELDON F. CHILD
PRESIDENT



R. CONRAD SCHULTZ
SECOND
COUNSELOR

22. Philippines



ANGEL ABREA
FIRST
COUNSELOR



DALLIN H. OAKS
PRESIDENT



RICHARD J. MAYNES
SECOND
COUNSELOR

17. Brazil South



DARWIN B. CHRISTENSON
FIRST
COUNSELOR



NEIL L. ANDERSEN
PRESIDENT



*PAULO R. GRAHL
SECOND
COUNSELOR

19. South America South



L. WHITNEY CLAYTON
FIRST
COUNSELOR



JAY E. JENSEN
PRESIDENT



*CARLOS E. AGÜERO
SECOND
COUNSELOR

21. Africa Southeast



STEVEN E. SNOW
FIRST
COUNSELOR



ROBERT C. OAKS
PRESIDENT



*DAVID J. BARNETT
SECOND
COUNSELOR

23. Pacific Islands



ROBERT K. DELLENBACH
FIRST
COUNSELOR



RONALD T. HALVERSON
PRESIDENT



DENNIS E. SIMMONS
SECOND
COUNSELOR



Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Changes in Presidency of the Seventy

The First Presidency has called Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf as a member of the Presidency of the Seventy. He succeeds Elder Ben B. Banks.

Elder Uchtdorf began his service in the Presidency on 15 August. The other members of the Presidency are Elder Earl C. Tingey, Elder D. Todd Christofferson, Elder David E. Sorensen, Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander, Elder Charles Didier, and Elder Cecil O. Samuelson Jr.

Elder Uchtdorf was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy in 1994. In 1996 he was sustained to the First Quorum of the Seventy and has served as president of several areas, most recently the North America West Area. He has also served as Assistant Executive Director of the Correlation Department.

Elder Uchtdorf was born in Czechoslovakia and has lived most of his life in Germany. He and his wife, Harriet Reich Uchtdorf, have two children. □

New Visitors' Facilities in New York, Ohio

On 1 July, following the Nauvoo temple dedication, President Hinckley traveled to Palmyra, New York, to dedicate the newly completed Hill Cumorah Visitors' Center.

President Hinckley spoke fondly of visiting the Hill Cumorah as a returning missionary 67 years earlier and of watching President Heber J. Grant and other Church leaders unveil the statue of the angel Moroni on the hilltop. He also spoke of how intrigued he is by the events that occurred there.

President Hinckley bore testimony of the Restoration, the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. He then challenged members in the audience to be true and faithful to the restored gospel and to stand ready to declare the truth of that divine gift. "I know that the Church that came out of these events and others that followed is true," President Hinckley said.



PHOTO BY LYMAN KIRKLAND

The new, larger Hill Cumorah center will handle growing numbers of visitors to historic sites and the annual Hill Cumorah pageant.

In the dedicatory prayer, President Hinckley prayed that the Spirit of the Lord would touch the hearts and minds of the people who would visit the center and that they would come away with a greater appreciation of the events that transpired there.

One week earlier, on 24 June, the Church opened the doors of another new visitors' center in Kirtland, Ohio, along with two other historic structures, one rebuilt and the other restored.

The Historic Kirtland Visitors' Center is designed to resemble the gristmill that Church members saw when they arrived in the area in the 1830s. The years 1831 to 1838 were "a defining period for the Church," said

David Brown, visitors' center director. "During the Kirtland era, we believe God revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith the essential organization and much of the doctrine of the Church that is still in place today. Kirtland was the site of the first Latter-day Saint temple and the Church's first implementation of the welfare, Church education, and international missionary programs."

Church leaders hope to dedicate other restored and reconstructed sites in historic Kirtland by summer 2003 as part of the Ohio bicentennial celebration. These sites include the John Johnson Inn, the Newel K. Whitney Store and Home, an 1819 schoolhouse, a 170-year-old sawmill, and an ashery. □



President Hinckley Celebrates 92nd Birthday

President Gordon B. Hinckley prepares to cut the cake for a brief celebration of his 92nd birthday with the General Authorities and other colleagues in the Church Administration Building on Friday, 21 June. He was born 23 June 1910.

PHOTO BY CRAIG DIMOND

Missionary Training Center Dedicated in Ghana

The first missionary training center in Africa was dedicated in Ghana on 17 May. The center is the Church's 16th and will serve missionaries called from West Africa.

Speaking at the dedication, Elder H. Bruce Stucki of the Seventy, President of the Africa West Area, quoted counsel from the Doctrine and Covenants: "Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men" (D&C 11:21). Then he added that the Lord has indicated the fulness of the gospel will be taught to people in their own tongue and their own language (see D&C 90:11).

Missionaries at the center will receive instruction in both English and French. Instructors will be local returned missionaries.

"The purpose of the training center is—under the influence of the Spirit and in an atmosphere of love, trust, confidence, and respect—to help missionaries draw nearer to God and begin to obtain power so that more of Heavenly Father's children will accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, receive saving ordinances, and come unto Him," said Stephen Merrill

Hadley, president of the Ghana Missionary Training Center, in his remarks.

Also present at the dedication were Elder Stucki's counselors, Elder H. Ross Workman and Elder R. Conrad Schultz of the Seventy; Area Authority Seventies Elder Emmanuel O. Opare Sr. and Elder Emmanuel A. Kissi; and other local Church leaders. □

1881 Canadian Census Available

Searching for ancestors in Canada just got easier. Information concerning 4.3 million people living in Canada in 1881 is now available on CD.

This census data includes the provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec.

The National Archives of Canada microfilmed the 1881 census, and the Church purchased a copy of it. Latter-day Saint volunteers in Canada extracted the census into computer databases, and the Church and Family History Department processed the information. The Institute of Canadian Studies at the University of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, helped in preparing the data for publication.

The CD package (item no. 50179; U.S. \$11.00), includes Resource File Viewer 4.0 and three CDs. □

Fires Affect Members in Arizona, Colorado

In June and July some 12,000 Church members were evacuated from their homes in Arizona, where wildfires burned over 400,000 acres and destroyed some 200 houses. Approximately 35 Latter-day Saint families lost their homes. Local Church units worked actively with the Red Cross to provide shelter and supplies for displaced families. Church humanitarian funds were used to purchase food and other supplies. In addition, several semitrailer loads of emergency items were transferred to the area

from bishops' storehouses in Mesa, Arizona, and Salt Lake City.

Other blazes in southern Colorado burned some 66,000 acres, causing the evacuation of 1,100 people. Several members' homes were extensively damaged and one destroyed. Church members worked with the Red Cross to provide meals and lodging for most evacuees. Church welfare resources were donated to the Southwest Colorado Chapter of the Red Cross to help purchase food and other items. □

Comment

NAUVOO TEMPLE

I just wanted to thank you for a wonderful magazine. I'm particularly thankful for the July 2002 issue featuring articles on the Nauvoo Illinois Temple. How wonderful these articles were in helping prepare me for the temple's dedication. What a powerful witness the Spirit bore regarding the rebirth of this historic, sacred building.

Thanks once again for the Spirit-filled articles that have deepened my understanding of and appreciation for the early Saints' sacrifices and the sacrifices of today's Saints as well in the rebuilding of this sacred, holy house of God.

Michelle Piercy
Greencastle, Pennsylvania

ISAAC WAS NOT A CHILD

While the picture on page 25 of the June 2002 *Ensign* is moving, it regrettably perpetuates a falsehood that Isaac was a child at the time of his prospective sacrifice. This is likely not accurate, and people would miss one significant point: that Isaac, being an adult, could have easily stopped his aged father's hand but chose to willingly submit to his father, as did the Savior. We do not have enough detail to know Isaac's age at the time, but it is likely he was not a child as depicted.

Boyd Peters
Fullarton, South Australia

Making the Most of This Issue

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 0 2



• “I wish my children had come equipped with instruction manuals,” mothers often say. The good news is that many Church resources can help. See page 73.

Second Chances

• Jonah got a second chance to change his life—but he didn’t want others to have the same opportunity. Are we ever guilty of not giving others a second chance? See page 26.

• In response to King Hezekiah’s pleas, the Lord spared him from death. But was it a blessing? See page 30.

Who Will You Marry?

Looking for just the right person to marry? Have you thought about whether you’re the right person for someone else? See “Choosing—and Being—the Right Spouse,” page 62.

Being a Better Teacher

• Do you think your family or your students won’t care about your personal experiences? Sharing them can make you a better teacher. Learn why and how, page 48.

• Ever wondered if teenagers are really ready to learn

the gospel? Gain a prophetic view into the hearts and minds of youth in the Church from President J. Reuben Clark Jr., page 54.

A Cultural Oasis on the Frontier

In spite of hardship and privation, the Saints in Nauvoo actively sought refinement through music, art, and the theater. See page 40.



Growing through Spiritual Experiences

“Spiritual experiences confirm our testimonies and help us to endure moments of doubt and uncertainty,” writes Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Presidency of the Seventy. To learn more about the nature and purpose of spiritual experiences, see page 20.

Do You Have a Wayward Child?

It is possible to keep both sanity and hope when you struggle with a wayward child. Turn to page 8 to see how one family does it.

Home Teachers and Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pages 2 and 71.

Quiet Blessings

Four of their five children were born with a severe disability. Terrible burdens? No, sources of joy. See “In a Quiet House,” page 34.

Tips for Beginning Organists

How did one ward train five organists? Discover on page 72 some tips to help accomplished pianists learn to play the organ.

Did You Know?

Most articles in the *Ensign* can easily be turned into family home evening lessons. If you need a family home evening on obedience and making the right choices, for example, turn to “Hezekiah’s Tunnel

Vision,” beginning on page 30. You could use questions like these for discussion: “What would you do if you knew you were going to die and the Lord told you He would give you 15 more years? What choices would you make?” “When we look at the choices of King Hezekiah in the Old Testament, do they seem to be good ones?” “What can we do to make the right choices every day?”

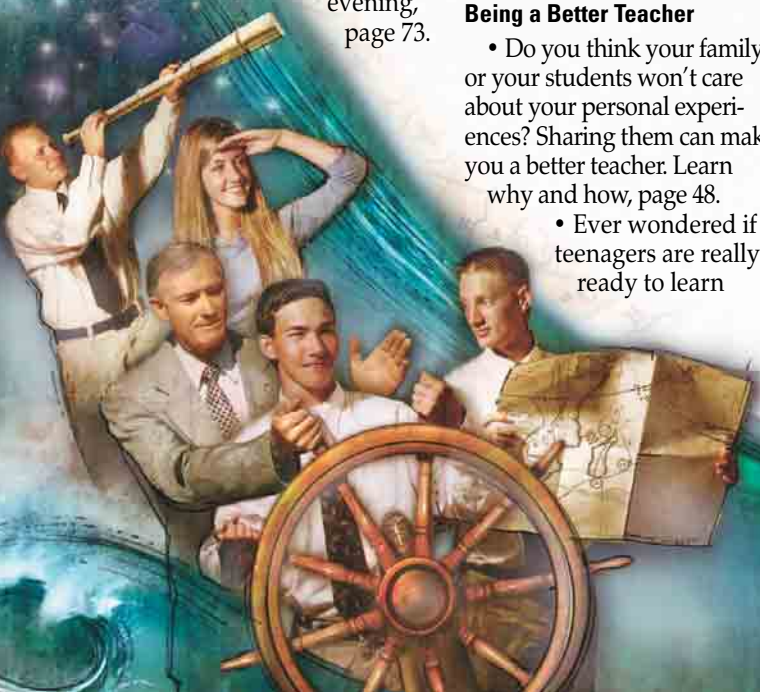
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To Strengthen Your Family

• Can the Lord really watch over every one of us in our day-to-day activities? Two stories in Latter-day Saint Voices strongly reaffirm that the answer is yes. See “The Home Teachers Who Wouldn’t Quit” or “Alone in a Foreign Country,” pages 68–70.

• What do a scavenger hunt and an emergency supply kit have in common? Find out how you can bring them together in family home evening, page 73.



Moroni Buries the Plates, by Clark Kelley Price



"Behold, I am Moroni. . . . And I am the same who hideth up this record unto the Lord. . . . For he truly saith that no one shall have [the plates] to get gain; but the record thereof is of great worth; and whoso shall bring it to light, him will the Lord bless" (Morm. 8:12, 14).



*L*atter-day Saints were noticed on the rough American frontier not only for their firm faith but also for the vibrancy of their cultural life. While some observers were surprised that a people of faith should be so merry, their leaders (the Prophet Joseph Smith with his wife Emma at a ball, front cover, and Brigham Young, upper left, above) taught the value of recreation and the worthiness of praising God through the arts.