

Ensign

An elderly couple, a woman with short white hair wearing a teal jacket and glasses, and a man with white hair wearing glasses and a light-colored jacket over a blue checkered shirt, are looking at a book together. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right. They are both smiling and appear to be engaged in reading or study. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and yellow light.

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Joseph and Emma, by Rose Datoc Dall

*On January 20, 1840, Joseph Smith wrote to his wife, Emma, from Chester County, Pennsylvania:
"My dear Emma, my heart is entwined around you and those little ones. I want you to remember me. Tell all the children
that I love them" (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith [2007], 242).*

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DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

The *Ensign* invites you to submit how-to articles for Random Sampler. (See page 66 for examples.) Articles should not exceed 500 words and might focus on any of these topics related to practical gospel living:

- Teaching ideas for home or church, especially for family home evening
- Personal or family financial management tips
- General health and physical fitness tips
- Home production and storage ideas
- Gospel-related holiday traditions that build testimony

Please label submissions "Random Sampler" and send them by November 30, 2008.

You can find this and other calls for articles online at <http://ensign.lds.org>. *Ensign* Magazine Writers' Guidelines are posted on the same page under "Resources."

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

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Ensign

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USING THIS ISSUE

Sing Primary songs. In

“Primary Songs Blessed Me” (p. 55), Author Jennifer Lynn talks about the power of music in her life. Did you know that you can order the Primary songbook, as well as recordings of the music (with or without words) online? Visit www.ldscatalog.com.

Remember your conversion.

Several articles in this issue focus on the power of personal conversion (see pp. 44, 50, 52, and 58). Think about your own conversion and record your thoughts about the strength it has brought to your life.

Build family relationships. It can be easy to take for granted the people closest to us, but that need not be the case. See pages 4, 10, 16, 23, and 58 for ideas on and examples of nurturing relationships.

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COMING IN OCTOBER

Look for articles on:

- *Protecting our families in the last days.*
- *The blessings of visiting teaching.*
- *Becoming converted.*

Be One



BY PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING
First Counselor in the First Presidency

The Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, said of those who would be part of His Church: “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). And at the Creation of man and woman, unity for them in marriage was not given as hope; it was a command! “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Our Heavenly Father wants our hearts to be knit together. That union in love is not simply an ideal. It is a necessity.

The requirement that we be one is not for this life alone. It is to be without end. The first marriage was performed by God in the garden when Adam and Eve were not subject to death. He placed in men and women from the beginning a desire to be joined together as man and wife forever to dwell in families in a perfect, righteous union. He placed in His children a desire to live at peace with all those around them.

But with the Fall it became clear that living in unity would not be easy. Tragedy struck early. Cain slew Abel, his brother. The children

of Adam and Eve had become subject to the temptations of Satan. With skill, hatred, and cunning, Satan pursues his goal. It is the opposite of the purpose of our Heavenly Father and the Savior. They would give us perfect union and eternal happiness. Satan, Their enemy and ours, has known the plan of salvation from before the Creation. He knows that only in eternal life can those sacred, joyful associations of families endure. Satan would tear us from loved ones and make us miserable. And it is he who plants the seeds of discord in human hearts in the hope that we might be divided and separate.

All of us have felt something of both union and separation. Sometimes in families and perhaps in other settings we have glimpsed life when one person put the interests of another above his or her own, in love and with sacrifice. And all of us know something of the sadness and loneliness of being separate and alone. We don’t need to be told which we should choose. We know. But we need the hope that we can experience unity in this life and qualify to have it forever in the world to come. And we need to know how that great blessing will come so that we can know what we must do.

We need the hope that we can experience unity in this life and qualify to have it forever in the world to come. And we need to know how that great blessing will come so that we can know what we must do.



The sacramental prayer can remind us every week of how the gift of unity will come through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our Natures Can Change

The Savior of the world spoke of that unity and how we will have our natures changed to make it possible. He taught it clearly in the prayer He gave in His last meeting with His Apostles before His death. That supernally beautiful prayer is recorded in the book of John. He was about to face the terrible sacrifice for all of us that would make eternal life possible. He was about to leave the Apostles whom He had ordained, whom He loved, and with whom He would leave the keys to lead His Church. And so He prayed to His Father, the perfect Son to the perfect Parent. We see in His words the way families will be made one, as will all the children of our Heavenly Father who follow the Savior and His servants:

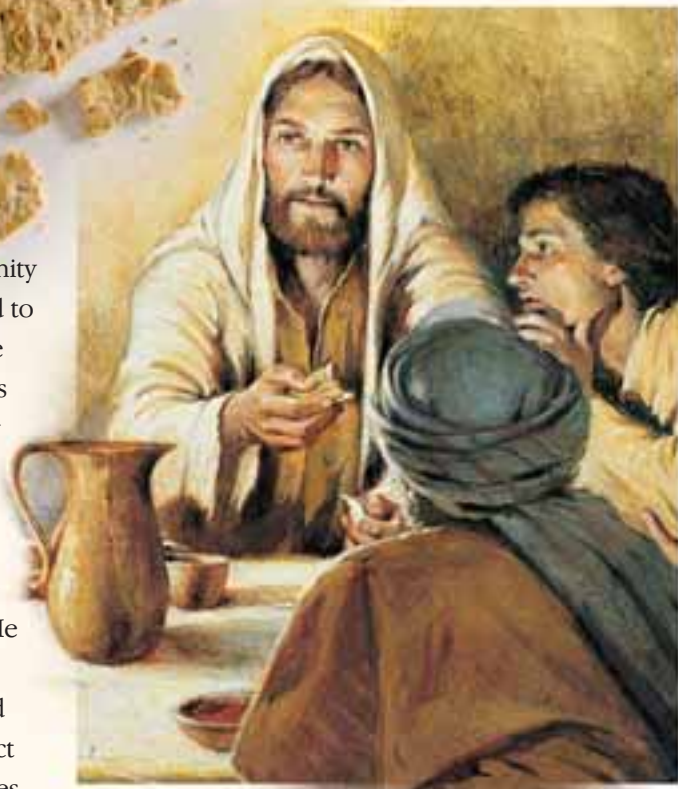
“As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:18–21).

In those few words He made clear how the gospel of Jesus Christ can allow hearts to be made one. Those who would believe the truth He taught could accept the ordinances and the covenants offered by His authorized servants. Then, through obedience to those ordinances and covenants, their natures would be changed. The Savior’s Atonement in that way makes it possible for us to be sanctified. We can then live in unity, as we must to have peace in this life and to



dwell with the Father and His Son in eternity.

The ministry of the apostles and prophets in that day, as it is today, was to bring the children of Adam and Eve to a unity of the faith in Jesus Christ. The ultimate purpose of what they taught and of what we teach is to unite families: husbands, wives, children, grandchildren, ancestors, and finally all of the family of Adam and Eve who will choose the way of unity.

You remember the Savior prayed, “For their sakes”—speaking of the Apostles—“I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:19). The Holy Ghost is a sanctifier. We can have Him as our companion because the Lord restored the Melchizedek Priesthood through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The keys of that priesthood are on the earth today. By its power we can make covenants which allow us to have the Holy Ghost with us constantly.

Where people have this Spirit with them, we may expect harmony. The Spirit puts the testimony of truth in our hearts, which unifies those who share that testimony. The Spirit of

God never generates contention (see 3 Nephi 11:29). This Spirit never generates the feelings of distinction between people which lead to strife.¹ Heeding the Holy Ghost leads to personal peace and a feeling of union with others. It unifies souls. A unified family, a unified Church, and a world at peace depend on unified souls.

Companionship of the Holy Ghost

Even a child can understand what to do to have the Holy Ghost as a companion. The sacramental prayer tells us. We hear it every week as we attend our sacrament meetings. In those sacred moments we renew the covenants we made at baptism. And the Lord reminds us of the promise we received as we were confirmed members of the Church—the promise that we might receive the Holy Ghost. Here are those words from the sacramental prayer: “They are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them” (D&C 20:77).

We can have His Spirit by keeping that covenant. First, we promise to take His name upon us. That means we must see ourselves as His. We will put Him first in our lives. We will want what He wants rather than what we want or what the world teaches us to want. As long as we love the things of the world first, there will be no peace in us. Holding an ideal for a family or a nation of comfort through material goods will, at last, divide them.² The ideal of doing for each other what the Lord would have us do, which follows naturally from taking His name upon us, can take us to a spiritual level which is a touch of heaven on earth.

Second, we promise always to

remember Him. We do that every time we pray in His name. Especially when we ask for His forgiveness, as we must do often, we remember Him. At that moment we remember His sacrifice that makes repentance and forgiveness possible. When we plead, we remember Him as our advocate with the Father. When the feelings of forgiveness and peace come, we remember His patience and His endless love. That remembering fills our hearts with love.

We also keep our promise to remember Him when as families we pray together and when we read the scriptures. At family prayer around a breakfast table, one child may pray for another to be blessed that things will go well that day in a test or in some performance. When the blessings come, the child blessed will remember the love of the morning and the kindness of the Advocate, in whose name the prayer was offered. Hearts will be bound in love.

We keep our covenant to remember Him every time we gather our families to read the scriptures. They testify of the Lord Jesus Christ, for that is and always has been the message of prophets. Even if children do not remember the words, they will remember the true author, Jesus Christ.

Third, we promise as we take the sacrament to keep His commandments, all of them. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), a counselor in the First Presidency, as he pled for unity in a general conference talk—and he did so many times—warned us against being selective in what we will obey. He put it this way: “The Lord has given us nothing that is useless or unnecessary. He has filled the Scriptures with the things which we should do in order that we may gain salvation.”

President Clark went on:
“When we partake of the



Sacrament we covenant to obey and keep his commandments. There are no exceptions. There are no distinctions, no differences.”³ President Clark taught that just as we repent of all sin, not just a single sin, we pledge to keep all the commandments. Hard as that sounds, it is uncomplicated. We simply submit to the authority of the Savior and promise to be obedient to whatever He commands (see Mosiah 3:19). It is our surrender to the authority of Jesus Christ that will allow us to be bound as families, as a Church, and as the children of our Heavenly Father.

The Lord conveys that authority through His prophet to humble servants. Then faith can turn our call as a home teacher or a visiting teacher into an errand from the Lord. We go for Him, at His command. An ordinary man and a teenage junior companion go into homes expecting that the powers of heaven will help them assure that families are united and that there is no hardness, lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking (see D&C 20:54). Faith that the Lord calls servants will help us ignore their limitations when they reprove us, as they will. We will see their good intent more clearly than their human limitations. We will be less likely to feel offense and more likely to feel gratitude to the Master, who called them.

Barriers to Unity

There are some commandments which, when broken, destroy unity. Some have to do with what we say and some with how we react to what others say. We must speak no ill of anyone. We must see the good in each other and speak well of each other whenever we can.⁴

At the same time, we must stand against those who speak contemptuously of sacred things, because the certain effect of that is to offend the Spirit and so create contention and confusion. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) showed the way to stand without being contentious as he lay on a hospital gurney and asked an attendant who, in a moment of frustration, took the name of the Lord in vain:

“Please! Please! That is my Lord whose names you revile.”

“There was a deathly silence, then a subdued voice whispered, ‘I am sorry.’”⁵ An inspired, loving rebuke can

be an invitation to unity. Failure to give it when moved upon by the Holy Ghost will lead to discord.

If we are to have unity, there are commandments we must keep concerning how we feel. We must forgive and bear no malice toward those who offend us. The Savior set the example from the cross: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). We do not know the hearts of those who offend us. Nor do we know all the sources of our own anger and hurt. The Apostle Paul was telling us how to love in a world of imperfect people, including ourselves, when he said, “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. On separate pieces of paper, write the three promises we make each week as we partake of the sacrament. As you hold each paper up, discuss what the promise means and how we can fulfill it.
2. Before your visit, cut a paper heart into three pieces and label them *Change*, *Companionship*, and *Faith*. Begin by explaining that we are to become unified and of one heart. Then lay down the “Change” piece. Read or explain what President Eyring meant by changing our natures, and have the family give examples of changing. Repeat the same process with the other two pieces. Having completed the heart puzzle, ask the family for ways that they can become of one heart.
3. Read, or have family members read, parts of the first two sections of the message. Talk about how a family, although made up of individuals, can be united. Show that a single piece of thread can be easily broken but that many threads wrapped together are stronger. Emphasize that a family is stronger when united.



THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST, COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY, AND ART, PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATTHEW REBER

puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil” (1 Corinthians 13:4–5). And then he gave solemn warning against reacting to the faults of others and forgetting our own when he wrote, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

The sacramental prayer can remind us every week of how the gift of unity will come through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we keep our covenants to take His name upon us, to remember Him always, and to keep all His commandments, we will receive the companionship of His Spirit. That will soften our hearts and unite us. But there are two warnings which must come with that promise.

First, the Holy Ghost remains with us only if we stay clean and free from the love of the things of the world. A choice to be unclean will repel the Holy Ghost. The Spirit dwells only with those who choose the Lord over the world. “Be ye clean” (3 Nephi 20:41; D&C

38:42) and love God with all your “heart, . . . might, mind, and strength” (D&C 59:5) are not suggestions but commandments. And they are necessary to the companionship of the Spirit, without which we cannot be one.

The other warning is to beware of pride. Unity which comes to a family or to a people softened by the Spirit will bring great power. With that power will come recognition from the world. Whether that recognition brings praise or envy, it could lead us to pride. That would offend the Spirit. But there is a protection against pride, that sure source of disunity. It is to see the bounties which God pours upon us not only as a mark of His favor but an opportunity to join with those around us in greater service. A husband and his wife learn to be one by using their similarities to understand each other and their differences to complement each other in serving one another and those around them. In the same way, we can unite with those who do not accept our doctrine but share our desire to bless the children of our Heavenly Father.

We can become peacemakers, worthy to be called blessed and the children of God (see Matthew 5:9).

God our Father lives. His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, is the head of this Church, and He offers to all who will accept it the standard of peace. May we all live worthy of that standard. ■

NOTES

1. See Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 131.
2. See Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places* (1974), 97.
3. In Conference Report, Apr. 1955, 10–11.
4. See David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, 7–8.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2006), 157.

We must forgive and bear no malice toward those who offend us. The Savior set the example from the cross: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”



“My Dear and Beloved COMPANION”

THE LETTERS OF JOSEPH AND EMMA SMITH

BY CAROL CORNWALL MADSEN

Though life was difficult for Joseph and Emma, they loved and supported each other through their letters.

During the 17 years of their marriage, Joseph and Emma Smith endured many hardships. Joseph traveled extensively for the Church and was often obliged to find safety among friends to avoid angry mobs or numerous legal harassments. While he was away, Joseph and Emma wrote consistently to one another, and though only some of those letters have survived, their content and the context in which they were written tell a powerful story. Despite the extraordinary and challenging circumstances Joseph and Emma suffered on behalf of their faith, the deep and abiding love they felt for each other and for their children never failed them.

“My Heart Is Entwined around Yours”

Joseph frequently wrote of his love and affection for Emma and his children. “The thoughts of home, of Emma and Julia, rush upon my mind like a flood and I could wish for a moment to be with them,”¹ Joseph wrote from New York in 1832. In another letter he wrote, “My heart is entwined around yours forever and ever.”² In 1838, while



being held prisoner in Independence, Missouri, he began a letter, “My dear and beloved companion of my bosom in tribulation and affliction.”³

He keenly felt the sacrifice of being absent from his family. He wrote to

Emma: “If you want to know how much I want to see you, examine your feelings, how much you want to see me. . . . I would gladly walk from here to you barefoot and bareheaded . . . to see you and think it great pleasure, and never count it toil.”⁴

Joseph was concerned for Emma’s welfare. When necessity required him to take a trip to New York in 1832 while Emma was expecting their fourth child, he wrote: “I feel as if I wanted to say something to you to comfort you in your peculiar trial and present affliction. I hope God will give you strength that you may not faint. I pray God to soften the hearts of those around you to be kind to you and take the burden off your shoulders as much as possible.”⁵

About two years later, while marching westward to Missouri with Zion’s Camp, Joseph was gratified to hear from Emma that all was well at home. In response to her letter, he wrote, “I sit down in my tent to write a few lines



This time line places the letters that are quoted in the article in their historical context.

January 18, 1827

Joseph and Emma were married at South Bainbridge, New York.

April 6, 1830

The Church was organized at Fayette, New York.

January–February 1831

Joseph and Emma moved to Kirtland, Ohio, the new gathering place for the Latter-day Saints.

October–November 1832

Joseph traveled with Newel K. Whitney to New York and Massachusetts. Emma gave birth to their fourth child, Joseph Smith III, a few weeks later on November 6—the day Joseph returned.



October 13, 1832, Letter from Joseph (New York City) to Emma (Kirtland)

May–June 1834

Zion's Camp, led by Joseph Smith, began its march from Kirtland, Ohio, to Clay County, Missouri, to assist the exiled Missouri Saints.

May 19, 1834, Letter from Joseph (Richmond, Indiana) to Emma (Kirtland)

March 27, 1836

The Kirtland Temple was dedicated.



Though Joseph and Emma often faced difficult and sometimes threatening situations, such as when Joseph was attacked by a mob in Missouri, they found solace in each other's love. Their letters convey a sense of love, hope, and faith in each other.

to you to let you know that you are on my mind and that I am sensible of the duties of a husband and father. . . . The few lines you wrote . . . gave me satisfaction and comfort.”⁶

“A Sweet Morsel to Me”

Emma did not always have notice before Joseph was forced to leave home to escape illegal arrests or mob action. “I cannot tell you my feelings when I found I could not see you before you left,” she wrote on one such occasion in 1837, “yet I expect you can realize them.” His unexpected flight worried their family as well. “The children feel very anxious about you because they don’t know where you have gone.” Her reliance on God, she often noted, provided her comfort at such times: “I verily feel that if I had no more confidence in God than some I could name, I should be in a sad case indeed, but I still believe that if we humble ourselves and are as faithful as we can be, we shall be delivered from every snare that may be laid for our feet.”⁷

Emma’s letters deeply touched Joseph. On one occasion he wrote, “I hope you will continue to communicate to me by your own hand, for this is a consolation to me to converse with you in this way in my lonely moments.”⁸ On another, he wrote, “I received your letter, which I read over and over again; it was a sweet morsel to me.”⁹

The separations that caused Joseph and Emma such anxiety for each other’s welfare extended to their concern for their children. While in prison in Independence, Joseph wrote: “Those little children are subjects of my meditation continually. Tell them that Father is yet alive.”¹⁰ Later that month he wrote: “O God, grant that I may have the privilege of seeing once more my lovely family. . . . To press them to my bosom and kiss their lovely cheeks would fill my heart with unspeakable gratitude.”¹¹

When measles afflicted one of the boarders in her Kirtland, Ohio, home, Emma was particularly anxious. “Neither of your little

...the privilege of seeing once more my lovely family; in the enjoyment of the sweetest of liberty, and attached like to press them to my bosom and kiss their lovely cheeks would fill my heart with unrepeatable joy.

boys have ever had them,” she wrote Joseph in 1837 and then poignantly added: “I wish it could be possible for you to be at home when they are sick. You must remember them, for they all remember you, and I could hardly pacify Julia and Joseph when they found out you were not coming home soon.”¹²

“Write to Me a Long Letter”

In 1839 Joseph once again was obliged to learn of his children’s welfare by letter. This time Emma had cheerful news for Joseph. She was clearly happy in the company of her children, difficult as their circumstances were, and pleased to report that only three-year-old Frederick was ailing at that time. Baby Alexander, just a year old, “is one of the finest little fellows you ever saw in your life. He is so strong that with the assistance of a chair he will run all around the room.”¹³

Her letter only whetted Joseph’s desire for more news. “Write to me a long letter,” he responded, “and tell me all you can and even if old Major [the family dog] is alive yet and what those little prattlers say that cling around your neck.”¹⁴

Joseph often fretted that his children would forget him. “I want you [to] not let those little fellows forget me. Tell them Father loves them with a perfect love, and he is doing all he can to get away from the mob to come to them,”¹⁵ he wrote to Emma while he was in Liberty.

Joseph also shared with Emma his thoughts on how to raise their children properly. “Do teach them all you can that they



may have good minds,” he counseled her. “Be tender and kind to them; don’t be fractious to them, but listen to their wants. Tell them Father says they must be good children and mind their mother. My dear Emma, there is great responsibility resting upon you in preserving yourself in honor and sobriety before them and teaching them right things to form their young and tender minds that they begin in right paths.”¹⁶

Of great concern to Joseph was how Emma felt about his status as a prisoner. “Dear Emma,” he wrote, “do you think that my being cast into prison by the mob renders me less worthy of your friendship?” He wanted to make certain his children understood the purpose behind his incarceration. “Tell them I am in prison that their lives might be saved.”¹⁷

Emma’s three visits to Joseph in Liberty Jail and her own horrific flight from Missouri to Quincy, Illinois, only intensified her feelings of separation. Her patient suffering, her

April–May 1837

A national financial crisis contributed to economic hardships for the Latter-day Saints in Kirtland, and many members of the Church turned against Joseph. However, Emma maintained her faith in Joseph and her testimony of the gospel.

April 25, 1837, and May 3, 1837, Letters from Emma (Kirtland) to Joseph (location unknown)

January–March 1838

Joseph and Emma moved from Kirtland to Far West, Missouri.

October–November 1838

Tension between the Latter-day Saints and Missourians erupted into violence; subsequently, Governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued an extermination order concerning the Saints. Joseph and other Church leaders were arrested and taken first to Independence, Missouri, and a few days later to Richmond, Missouri. At the



end of November, they were removed to the jail at Liberty, Missouri.

November 4, 1838, Letter from Joseph (Independence) to Emma (Far West)

November 12, 1838, Letter from Joseph (Richmond) to Emma (Far West)

February/March 1839

A mob of Missourians forced Emma and the children to leave their home in Far West. They fled to refuge in Quincy, Illinois. Although conditions were difficult for Emma, she and the children were well.

LEFT: COLD MISSOURI/NIGHT, © JOSEPH BRICKEY, MAY NOT BE COPIED; TOP RIGHT: LETTER TO EMMA, NOVEMBER 12, 1838, HANDWRITING OF JOSEPH SMITH, COURTESY OF COMMUNITY OF CHRIST ARCHIVE; RIGHT: EMMA'S HYMNS AND FAR RIGHT: MAJESTY IN CHAINS, BOTH © IZ LEMON SWINDLE, FOUNDATION ARTS, MAY NOT BE COPIED



One of the things that kept Joseph going during his long absences from Emma—particularly during his five-month incarceration in Liberty Jail—was the hope that he would see his family again. To his great joy, Emma was able to bring their children to see him.

unremitting anxiety, her fears for the future, and her irrepressible love for Joseph found voice in the long letter she wrote when she reached safety in Quincy. “The walls, bars, and bolts, rolling rivers, running streams, rising hills, sinking valleys, and spreading prairies that separate us and the cruel injustice that first cast you into prison and still holds you there, with many other considerations, places my feelings far beyond description,”¹⁸ she lamented.

Later in the same letter she wrote: “No one but God knows the reflections of my mind and the feelings of my heart when I left our house and home and almost all of everything that we possessed excepting our little children and took my journey out of the state of Missouri, leaving you shut up in that lonesome prison. But the reflection is more than human nature ought to bear, and if God does not record our sufferings and avenge our wrongs on them that are guilty, I shall be sadly mistaken.”¹⁹ Despite how this injustice

weighed on her, Emma could still say to Joseph, “I shall live and am yet willing to suffer more if it is the will of kind heaven that I should for your sake.”²⁰

Joseph too felt overwhelming feelings as he faced imprisonment in Missouri. “O Emma,” he pleaded, “do not forsake me nor the truth, but remember me; if I do not meet you again in this life, may God grant that we may meet in heaven. I cannot express my feelings; my heart is full. Farewell, O my kind and affectionate Emma. I am yours forever, your husband and true friend.”²¹

“May God Bless You All”

Joseph and Emma continued to endure separations, loneliness, and fear, particularly during the days leading to the final scene in Carthage. Joseph wrote the last letters of their surviving correspondence. On June 23, 1844, as Joseph sought safety across the river against the gathering fury of a determined mob, he promised Emma, “If God ever opens

a door that is possible for me, I will see you again.” His hope, he explained, was to “get to the city of Washington”²² to seek relief for the Latter-day Saints.

But this was not to be. Two days later, having returned to Nauvoo, where he was arrested and taken to Carthage, the always-solicitous Joseph assured his wife that “when the truth comes out, we have nothing to fear.”²³ Even on the ill-fated day of June 27, 1844, Joseph again wrote reassuringly to Emma. “There is one principle which is eternal,” he declared. “It is the duty of all men to protect their lives and the lives of their households whenever necessity requires, and no power has a right to forbid it. Should the last extreme arrive [meaning his death], but I anticipate no such extreme,” he emphatically assured her, “but caution is the parent of safety.” His final request of Emma was to “give my love to the children and all my friends. . . . May God bless you all.”²⁴

And thus their correspondence ended. The history books show the complexities in the lives of these two extraordinary people. But it is the private conversations of their letters to one another that convey the deep human dimension of their relationship. Though the surviving letters are few in number, they reveal the abiding love and concern Joseph and Emma felt for one another and their children, their unwavering faith in God’s overruling hand, and their commitment to fulfill the monumental mission to which they had been appointed. And finally, their letters vividly portray the personal struggles and sacrifices such commitment exacted. ■



March 9, 1839, Letter from Emma (Quincy) to Joseph (Liberty Jail)

March 21, 1839, Letter from Joseph (Liberty Jail) to Emma (Quincy)

April 5, 1839, Letter from Joseph (Liberty Jail) to Emma (Quincy)

April/May 1839

Joseph joined Emma in Quincy after being allowed to escape from Liberty Jail. The family moved to Commerce (later called Nauvoo), Illinois.

March 17, 1842

The Relief Society was organized with Emma as its first president.

May 28, 1843

Joseph and Emma were sealed for eternity.

June 1844

Joseph and his brother Hyrum fled to Iowa to escape from mob violence and then went to Carthage, Illinois, to face charges against them.



June 23, 1844, Letter from Joseph (Safety, Iowa) to Emma (Nauvoo)

June 25, 1844, Letter from Joseph (Carthage Jail) to Emma (Nauvoo)

June 27, 1844, Letter from Joseph (Carthage Jail) to Emma (Nauvoo)

June 27, 1844

Joseph and Hyrum Smith were martyred at Carthage Jail.

NOTES

1. Oct. 13, 1832, in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2007), 241. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in the letters have been modernized.
2. Nov. 12, 1838, in *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 242.
3. Nov. 4, 1838, in *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 244.
4. Apr. 4, 1839, in *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 242.
5. Oct. 13, 1832, in *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 241.
6. May 19, 1834, in *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, comp. Dean C. Jessee (2002), 341.
7. Apr. 25, 1837, Joseph Smith Letterbooks, box 2, folder 2 (Apr. 20, 1837–Feb. 9, 1843), Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
8. May 19, 1834, in *Personal Writings*, 340–41.
9. Nov. 12, 1838, in *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 241.
10. Nov. 4, 1838, in *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 245.
11. Nov. 12, 1838, in *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 241.
12. May 3, 1837, Joseph Smith Letterbooks, box 2, folder 2.
13. Mar. 9, 1839, Joseph Smith Letterbooks, box 2, folder 2.
14. Mar. 21, 1839, in *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 245.
15. Apr. 4, 1839, in *Personal Writings*, 464.
16. Apr. 4, 1839, in *Personal Writings*, 464.
17. Mar. 21, 1839, in *Personal Writings*, 449.
18. Mar. 9, 1839, Joseph Smith Letterbooks, box 2, folder 2.
19. Mar. 9, 1839, Joseph Smith Letterbooks, box 2, folder 2.
20. Mar. 9, 1839, Joseph Smith Letterbooks, box 2, folder 2.
21. Nov. 4, 1838, in *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 245.
22. June 23, 1844, in *Personal Writings*, 616.
23. June 25, 1844, in *Personal Writings*, 620.
24. June 27, 1844, in *Personal Writings*, 630.



My Father, My Hero

BY GREG HUDNALL

Dad was always serving others, and I resented always having to go along.

I grew up in Illinois in a small farming community on the main road to Nauvoo. Although I was raised in the Church, I was a somewhat rebellious teenager, struggling with my identity and my relationship with my father. He wasn't a bad person; in fact, everyone seemed to like him. It's just that I felt a little embarrassed by him because he was a farmer who had not finished eighth grade. Besides that, my dad was always serving other people. For me, that was the problem: he was always helping others, and I hated it because he took me along.

We were the only members of the branch for many miles. Since my dad was a mechanic, the branch president often called to ask him to assist stranded Church members whose cars had broken down. Many times my dad would get me out of bed late at night, grab his tools, extra gas, blankets, and even food to go help the weary travelers.

I resented these late night trips because I just wanted to sleep. I'd even sleep in the car on the way there. When we arrived, I reluctantly gave up my warm seat so the tired but grateful family could get warm. My dad always managed to fix these cars, some of which I thought shouldn't

even be allowed on the road. Sometimes Dad had to work for hours before the cars would run, but he never complained. Even though I grumbled a lot, he just listened and nodded his head and smiled.

I remember one cold, windy January night quite clearly. It was so cold that before we went to bed we had plugged an electric heater on the car engine so that it would start in the morning. I was snug in my warm bed when the phone rang. It was the branch president asking my dad to help another family from out of town whose car had broken down. I just lay in bed, hoping it was a bad dream. Just once I wanted my dad to say, "Sorry, President, but my kids are sleeping and I am in my warm house. Could you find someone else?" Instead, he said, "Of course we will help, President."

Well, my dad got me out of bed, we gathered our things, unplugged the heater, and set out. Dad drove while I slept most of the way. Inside the car it was warm; outside the temperature was below zero and the roads were covered with snow. When we found the stranded car, a woman got out and walked towards us. She told us how she and her three children were traveling to see her parents in Nauvoo.



I remember thinking that she was crazy to be out on the road with small children in such bad weather.

My dad immediately went to work on the car while I stood there complaining about having to be outside in the cold when all I wanted to do was sleep. The family sat in our warm car while we froze. After about four hours the woman's car finally sputtered to life and began to run well enough that it could finish the trip. The sun was rising when we woke the mother and her children. She expressed her gratitude to my father, and then she and her children went on their way. We went home, and I didn't think much about it for a long time.

Two years later I started turning my life around and became more active in the Church. I attended a youth conference at the University of Illinois, where the keynote speaker talked about the heroes in our lives. She explained that our society would have us believe that movie stars, athletes, and musicians are the heroes of our day because of their fame and greatness. But the truth, she argued, is that making a lot of money and being famous do not make them heroes. The true heroes in our lives are

the people around us who truly serve one another.

Next she told the story of how once she was traveling with her family when her car broke down. She didn't have the ability to get the car fixed. She was scared. After offering a prayer, she called the local branch president, who sent out help.

She then talked about her hero. He was a person who had left his family and his warm bed on a cold night to serve someone he didn't even know. Her hero had saved her family that night. Then she gave his name. It was my father.

I was stunned as tears ran down my face, and I realized she was right; my dad *was* a hero. He was a man who constantly helped others, even at great personal sacrifice. The service he offered made a big difference in other people's lives. Suddenly I was really proud of my dad. That night my dad became my hero too.

Years have passed. I have gained some of the things that were important to me in my youth: an education and the respect of my peers. But I have also gained something I didn't expect when I was young: a desire to serve my fellowmen. That came from my hero, my dad. ■

SPIRITUAL PROMPTINGS

Every Latter-day Saint is given the gift of the Holy Ghost after baptism. It “is the right to have, whenever one is worthy, the companionship of the Holy Ghost” (Bible Dictionary, “Holy Ghost,” 704), providing each of us the opportunity to have personal inspiration and comfort each day of our lives.

The following stories from Church members tell of experiences in which this gift blessed their lives.

As a new missionary, I couldn't speak Samoan well enough to really communicate.

Speaking Words I Didn't Understand

Unmistakable spiritual promptings attended me as a new missionary in Fitiuta, Manua, American Samoa, when I had to conduct a sacrament meeting in a room filled with curious villagers not of our faith.

Aviu, the only Samoan priesthood holder in the village, was bedridden with an illness and couldn't conduct the meeting. I fasted and prayed fervently, deeply concerned because I could not understand the Samoan language well enough to converse with the people.

When Sunday came, my companion and I blessed the sacrament in English and passed it. I then stood and looked at



the congregation. I knew what I wanted to communicate. I tried to open with traditional, polite greetings in Samoan, but the words didn't come out right. I stopped and closed my eyes, feeling I'd have to speak in English. As I began speaking again, I had a sensation that my mouth was several inches in front of me, speaking in Samoan. The animated expressions on the faces in the congregation showed they understood my words.

After the meeting my companion told me that our Church members said they were happy to hear my talk and that I was speaking perfect Samoan.

I acknowledged the gift in my prayers that night. As the following Sunday approached, Aviu was still unable to leave his sickbed. I again fasted and prayed and had the same experience as the previous Sunday. I was humbled, recognizing again the feeling of being a tool in the Lord's hands.

The third Sunday approached with Aviu still sick. This time I felt confident the Spirit would prompt me. I wasn't anxious. I didn't fast or pray with the same urgency as before. I felt proud to have received the gift of tongues. But this time

I failed. The congregation was puzzled when I couldn't speak Samoan clearly.

Pride stopped me from being receptive to the Spirit that time. This experience helped me learn that promptings will come to me only if I pray humbly and rely on the Spirit.

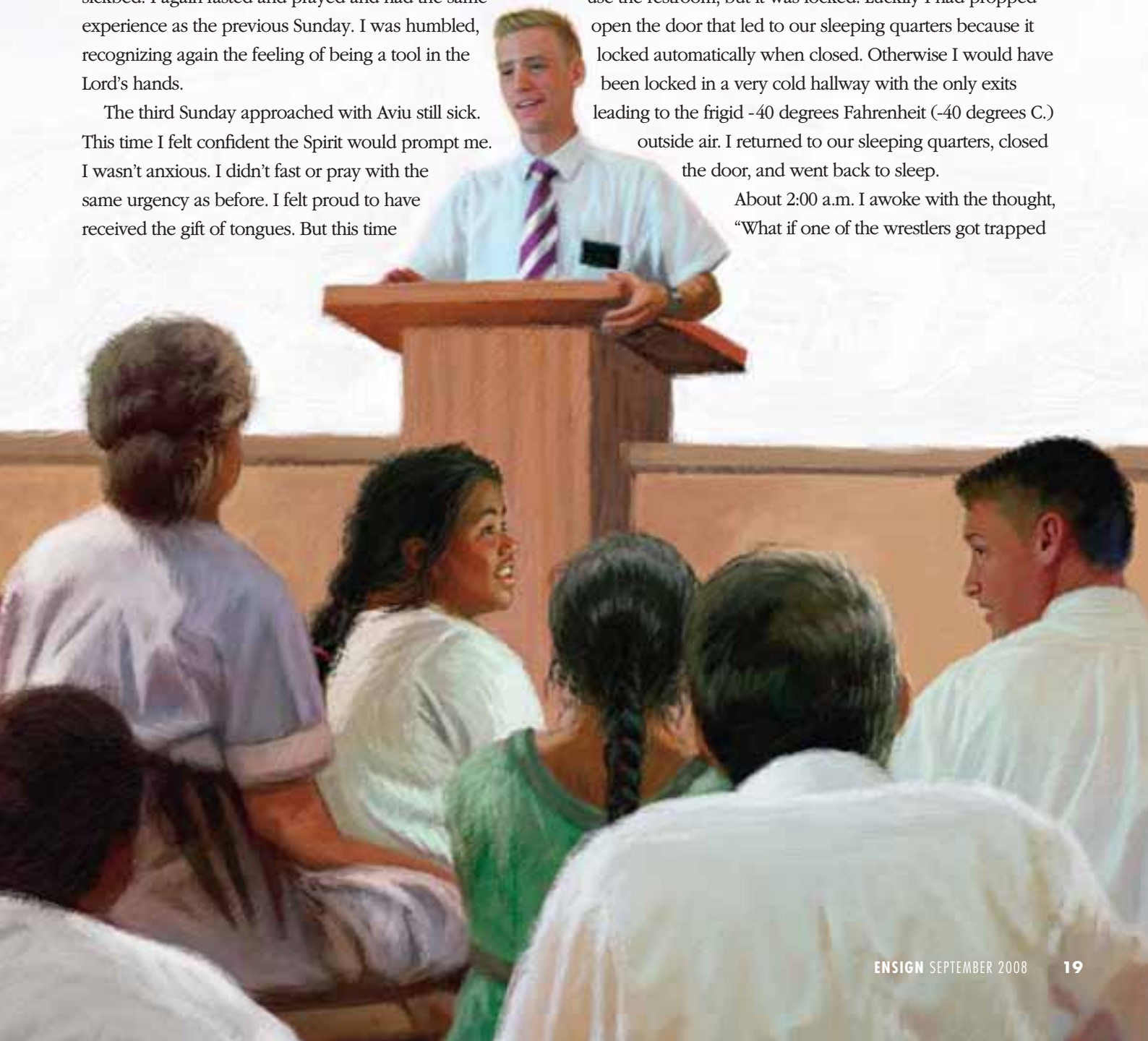
Blaine L. Gale, Utah

Trapped Outside in the Cold

I was the wrestling coach for a small high school in Alaska, and when we traveled for tournaments we often slept in the hosting school.

During one particular excursion, I got up in the night to use the restroom, but it was locked. Luckily I had propped open the door that led to our sleeping quarters because it locked automatically when closed. Otherwise I would have been locked in a very cold hallway with the only exits leading to the frigid -40 degrees Fahrenheit (-40 degrees C.) outside air. I returned to our sleeping quarters, closed the door, and went back to sleep.

About 2:00 a.m. I awoke with the thought, "What if one of the wrestlers got trapped



I propped open the door in case one of the wrestlers got trapped in the cold.

in that hallway?" I jumped up and saw an empty sleeping bag. I ran to the hallway, making sure the door was propped open behind me. I ran to the front door of the school building and saw no one, but I propped open the door. Then I checked the back door and still saw no one. When I returned to our sleeping quarters, I found that George had gotten back inside through a door I had left open. He was sitting on his sleeping bag shivering uncontrollably. He had been outdoors in subzero temperatures for nearly half an hour wearing only underwear and socks.





HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Wrap a small empty box as a present. Explain that it represents the Holy Ghost. Let a family member unwrap it. Read the first paragraph of the article. Explain that we cannot see the Holy Ghost, but His influence can be a great gift in our lives. Let family members share examples of promptings in their lives from the Holy Ghost. Challenge family members to listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

2. Have family members read the stories of people receiving spiritual promptings. Discuss why the Holy Ghost was available to these individuals and how He helped them. Have young children draw pictures of how the Holy Ghost prompted these people or how the Holy Ghost might prompt them in the activities of their lives.

Anyone familiar with extreme cold temperatures knows that one can go into hypothermia quickly if unclothed. The results could have been devastating if George had been outside even a few more minutes. I put him in his sleeping bag, covered him with my sleeping bag, and sat with him until he stopped shivering and fell asleep.

I had been praying for more guidance from the Holy Ghost in my life, and I recognized this experience as a prompting of the Spirit. I know now that if I pray for spiritual guidance, I will receive it.

Steven A. Wolfe, Alaska

Check the Rear Door

One way I distinguish my own thoughts from the promptings of the Holy Ghost is by recalling how I feel when I think about my testimony of the Savior. If I feel the same about spiritual promptings as I do when I think of my testimony—warm and sure—then I know I need to obey.

I first experienced this one day when I received an impression to check the rear door hatch on our van. I had just loaded our three daughters into their car seats while the grocery clerk placed several weeks' worth of groceries into the back of our van and slammed the hatch door. I dismissed the feeling to stop and check the door, and drove away. But the thought persisted.

As I compared the feelings I had about the persistent thought to how I feel when I think about my testimony of Jesus, I realized the warm and sure feelings were the same. I felt the guidance was from the Holy Spirit, so I stopped to check the hatch door just before we reached a steep hill.

Not believing there would be anything to discover, I was surprised to find that, although the door was completely closed, the 20-year-old latch was jammed and not secure. If I had driven up the hill, the force of the tilting grocery sacks

could have been enough to push the door open. Several weeks' worth of food would have spilled out the back, a loss our poor student budget could not have replaced. I am grateful the Lord was watching out for our needs.

S. Jill Wirtz, Wisconsin

One Scripture

Although I had not been active in the Church for nearly 18 years, I had decided to say

daily prayers. On one particular morning, each time I drifted out of sleep, I would say a silent prayer asking my Heavenly Father to help me wake up and stop being unhappy. I was weighed down by sadness and hopelessness, which I had often felt throughout the past year or so, but today was particularly difficult.

Then I heard a voice speak very clearly, "Psalm 24:7." I hadn't thought about the scriptures in years. I got dressed and headed toward my bookshelf, but I began to doubt. I didn't make it to the bookshelf until later that day when sheer curiosity got me to open the scriptures. I read the passage carefully: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

"What a coincidence," I thought. "Does God speak to people this way?" I decided to search for further answers in the scriptures. One passage stood out to me:

"Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

"For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:4–5).

From that passage I learned I needed to ask, knock, enter by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost in order to know all things I should do.

It was such a small thing—one passage of scripture. It was such a small voice, one that seemed it could have been my own thought. I could have shrugged off the experience as my mind playing tricks on me, but instead I continued to ask, knock, enter, and receive—here a little and there a little. I have been an active member of the Church since this experience and have also received my temple endowment.

Kristi Gatti, Texas

A Mother's Intuition

My daughter Stacey became ill a few days before her 14th birthday. When her condition did not improve over the weekend, my husband took her to the doctor the following Monday. She was diagnosed with the flu, and over the next two days her condition worsened. She coughed all night and burned with fever.

Something seemed terribly wrong, and I wondered what the problem could be. I felt I heard someone whisper, “She has pneumonia.”

I didn't know the symptoms of pneumonia but knew the disease could be deadly. I immediately called our doctor and scheduled an appointment for the same morning. At 10:00 a.m. our daughter had a fever of 105 degrees Fahrenheit (40.6 degrees C.). After checking her again, the doctor maintained that Stacey had only the flu.

“Could she have pneumonia?” I asked. He shook his head no. I asked him to check her lungs. He did so reluctantly and answered my searching look with a noncommittal shrug.



“Could she have pneumonia?” I asked.

The doctor shook his head no.

emergency room doctor told us to take her home. Because of the promptings I had already received, we refused and asked for another opinion from the pediatrician on duty. I felt peace the moment I saw him. He prescribed a different medication and admitted her to the hospital with acute pneumonia. Within three days Stacey was well enough to return home, and two weeks later she was healthy again. I believe the promptings I received from the Spirit had probably saved her life.

Diana Loski, Pennsylvania ■

“How can we eliminate the possibility of pneumonia?” I asked.

He clearly did not want to test her, but I insisted. His tone was strong when he said, “She would have to be X-rayed at the hospital, and she is clearly ill and needs bed rest. Don't drag her out anymore. Let her rest.”

I felt guilty when we left his office. Doctors are professionals. I wondered if I had overreacted, but I had learned to trust my feelings, so I decided to have her X-rayed.

The X-ray found pneumonia in her left lung. The doctor prescribed an antibiotic, and we thought that would be the end of it. It wasn't.

Her condition worsened so much that I felt I should take Stacey to the hospital immediately. When we arrived, the



TOOTHPASTE on the Mirror

BY BRYCE R. PETERSEN

Small things have a way of growing large when we dwell on them.

I learned some very good lessons from Mom and Dad, but the best one I ever learned was about six months after Dad died.

Toward the end of my parents' lives, there were times they really didn't get along very well. Dad was not active in the Church, and Mom was impatient with him. They seemed to wear on each other's nerves some of the time. The arguments weren't really serious, but I always felt pressured to take sides, a position I didn't like.

Small offenses have a way of growing large when we dwell on them. One of Mom's common complaints was that Dad splashed toothpaste on the mirror when he brushed his teeth and would never clean it off. It drove her crazy, and she couldn't let it go. I tried to explain that in the grand scheme of life, toothpaste on the mirror wasn't a very big thing. She wasn't mollified. I wished they could get along better, that they could overlook small things and not be so critical of each other and be more forgiving, but that didn't happen very often.

Dad died in the spring of 1991. It was a time of grief, especially for Mom. She realized after he was gone that

she missed him more than she had anticipated. It was lonely living alone in that big house; her partner of 62 years was gone. She started talking about him more frequently.

As the days turned to weeks and then to months, I visited Mom daily. During one visit her eyes turned watery as she told me of a mistake that she regretted. She reminded me of the toothpaste and how adamant she had been that he was slothful in neglecting to clean up his mess. She had been so angry over such a small thing.

Mom admitted that on the first cleaning day after Dad died, there was toothpaste on the mirror. She cleaned the mirror, but on the second cleaning day, there was more toothpaste on the mirror. The same thing happened on the third and fourth cleaning days as well.

Mom realized that she had blamed Dad for the toothpaste on the mirror for many years, but it had been both of them splashing toothpaste. She felt terrible that for years she had been so upset about such a small thing. She freely admitted that her anger had hurt her much worse than it had affected Dad.

I learned from this experience the need for forgiveness and tolerance in our relationships, and I honestly try to be more forgiving in my own. It seems such a waste of time to fret about small offenses. There are more important things to worry about than toothpaste on the mirror. ■

The Power of Diligent Learning

BY ELDER JAY E. JENSEN
Of the Presidency of the Seventy



Make the most of the many opportunities you have to learn.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord counsels, “Wherefore, now let every man [and woman] learn” and learn “in all diligence,” for he or she that learns not “shall not be counted worthy to stand” (D&C 107:99–100).

The scriptures contain 144 references to learning. Consider some of them:

“Yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8).

“Learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God” (Alma 37:35).

“Learn to be more wise than we” (Mormon 9:31).

“Learn of me, and listen to my words” (D&C 19:23).

“Seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118).

“Study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people” (D&C 90:15).

“[Seek] diligently to learn wisdom and to find truth” (D&C 97:1).

As we consider the mandate of such divine admonitions, it is important to reflect on how gospel learning occurs. Gospel learning requires careful reasoning, study, and prayer. However, it is important to remember that

each of us is a dual being: a personage of both body and spirit. Because we are spiritual beings, it is essential that we learn by the power of the Spirit.

Learning by the Spirit

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “All things whatsoever God in his infinite wisdom has seen fit and proper to reveal to us . . . are revealed to our spirits precisely as though we had no bodies at all; and those revelations which will save our spirits will save our bodies.”¹

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord further emphasizes His divine pattern for teaching and learning:

“Why is it that ye cannot understand and know, that he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth?”

“Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together” (D&C 50:21–22).

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles emphasized the blessings of following this pattern by explaining what it means to understand and be edified: “The



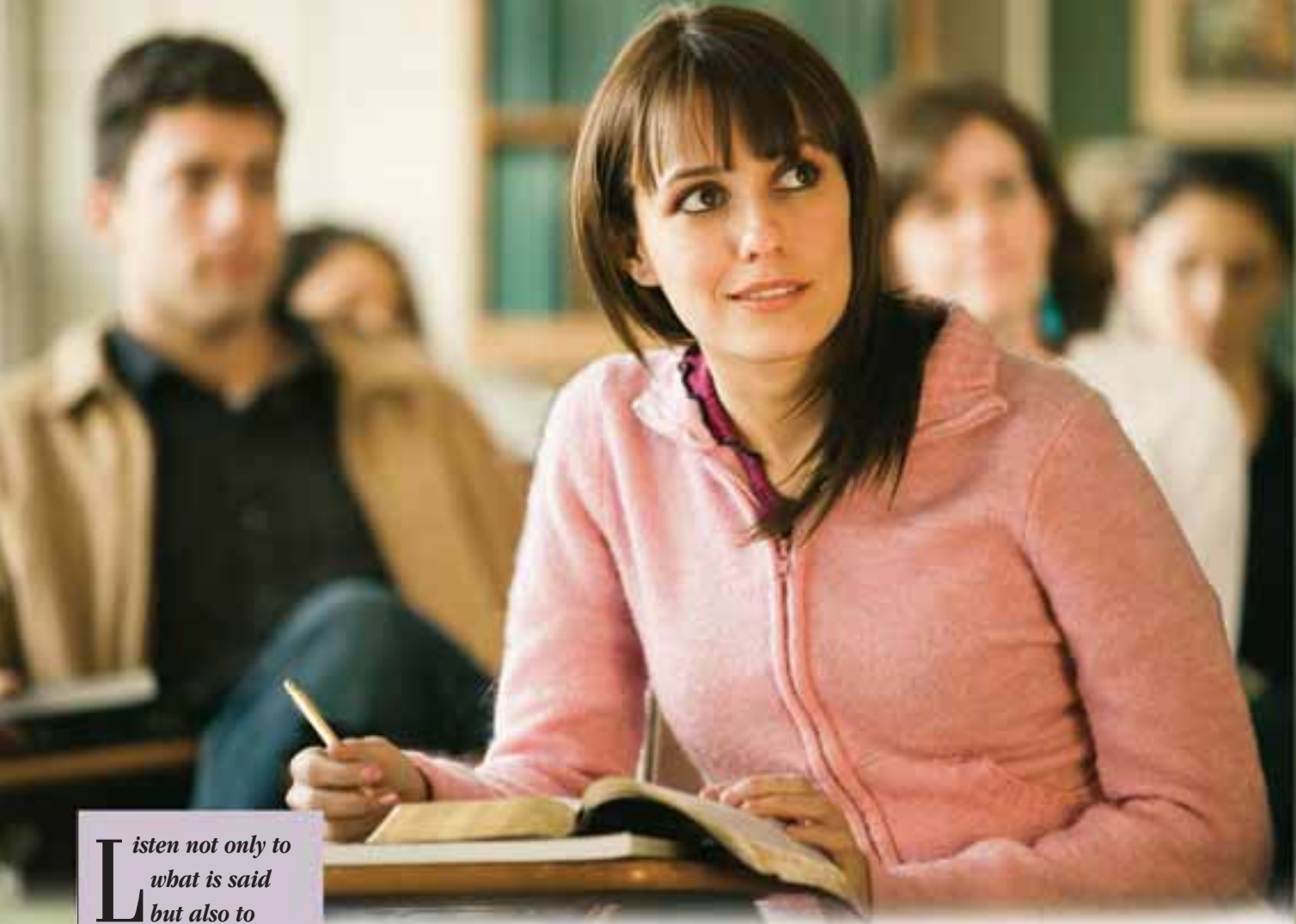
Gospel
learning
requires
careful reasoning,
study, and prayer.

verb *understand* refers to that which is heard. It is the same message to all. *Edified* concerns that which is communicated by the Holy Ghost. The message can be different and tailored by the Spirit to the needs of each individual.”²²

In 2 Nephi 33:1, Nephi reminds us of another aspect of learning by the Spirit: “When a man speaketh by the power of

the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men.” This is a powerful promise. Yet it is fulfilled only if we invite the Savior into our lives.

The Savior stands at the door and knocks (see Revelation 3:20). The Holy Ghost stands at the door and knocks (see 2 Nephi 33:1–2). All we have to do is use our agency and invite Them in.



Listen not only to what is said but also to what is not said: the unspoken promptings of the Holy Ghost.

Inviting Diligent Learning

In the February 2007 worldwide leadership training meeting on teaching and learning, President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, provided specific counsel on how we can invite such diligent learning. I would like to summarize a few of the things I learned from President Packer about learning.

First, President Packer taught that being diligent learners means we want to learn. We show this desire when we are teachable and when we can be taught without resenting it. When we resent instruction and correction, we offend the Spirit and limit our opportunities for growth and progress.

Second, we need to pray—particularly in specifics. Pray formally and informally for

yourself and for the teacher. The teacher may not say something quite right. He or she may be weak and feeble in words and expression. But the Holy Ghost is not, and each of us can pray for ourselves and for the teacher: “Oh, Father, the teacher does not know the load and burden that I currently carry. Help him or her to teach me directly.” When you start doing that as a learner, you start getting answers.

Third, and this is so significant: listen. In particular, President Packer encourages us to listen to those who are experienced: “I learned early on that there is great value in listening to experience in older people. . . . I remember in the Quorum of the Twelve, LeGrand Richards didn’t walk as fast as the other Brethren, and I would always wait and

open the door for him and walk back to the building with him. One day one of the Brethren said, ‘Oh, you’re so kind to take care of Brother Richards.’ And I thought, ‘You don’t know my selfish motive’—as we would walk back, I would just listen to him. I knew that he could remember Wilford Woodruff, and he would speak.”³

Further, listen not only to what is said but also to what is not said: the unspoken promptings of the Holy Ghost. Each is important. Hopefully, you are always sensitive to what is not said by the teacher. If you are, the Holy Ghost will tailor the message to your needs.

Fourth, as you listen, it is important to organize what you learn. Take what you have heard, and then make it yours by writing it down and expanding it. If you really want to ensure that you’ve got it, find somebody to whom you may teach it. Generally speaking, until you can articulate what you’ve learned, you haven’t really learned it. Make the effort to organize what you learn; it will be worth it.

Preparing to Learn

In addition to what we do in class, we can do many things to invite diligent learning even before we come to class.

President Packer counseled: “Arise from your bed early . . . and then reflect in the morning when your mind is clear. That’s when the ideas come.”⁴ I know that is true. As we arise early to study, pray, ponder, and listen, revelation will come.

Also, be punctual to your meetings, particularly sacrament meeting, one of the most spiritual meetings in the Church. As you come, be reverent; leave yourself open to revelation. Come and listen to

the prelude music. Don’t seek out somebody to talk to. Come as a diligent learner, and prepare yourself to receive revelation.

Further, we can make a commitment to accept the responsibility for learning no matter how well the teacher or speaker can teach. Several years ago President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) remarked: “Testimony meetings are some of the best meetings in the [Church] in the whole month, if you have the spirit. If you are bored at a testimony meeting, there is something the matter with *you*, and not the other people. You can get up and bear your testimony and you think it is the best meeting in the month; but if you sit there and count the grammatical errors and laugh at the man who can’t speak very well, you’ll be bored. . . . Don’t forget it! You have to *fight* for a testimony. You have to *keep fighting!*”⁵

Now that is a very powerful observation.

As we arise early to study,
pray, ponder, and listen,
revelation will come.





I want to follow the example of the Savior; a master teacher. But what made Him a master teacher? He was first a learner.

Making the Most of Opportunities

Above all, stay at it. President Packer was very emphatic about this in his interview. Don't give up. Be persistent in learning. Make the most of the many opportunities you have to learn.

Many years ago Elder Marion D. Hanks, while an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke of the power of making the most of our opportunities to learn. Elder Hanks told a story about Louis Agassiz, a distinguished naturalist, who was approached by an obscure spinster woman who insisted that she had never had a chance to learn. In response, Dr. Agassiz asked her to consider the chances for learning that she already had:

“What do you do?” he asked.

“I skin potatoes and chop onions.”

“He said, ‘Madame, where do you sit during these interesting but homely duties?’

“‘On the bottom step of the kitchen stairs.’

“‘Where do your feet rest?’

“‘On the glazed brick.’

“‘What is glazed brick?’

“‘I don't know, sir.’

“He said, ‘How long have you been sitting there?’

“She said, ‘Fifteen years.’

“‘Madam, here is my personal card,’ said Dr. Agassiz. ‘Would you kindly write me a letter concerning the nature of a glazed brick?’”

The woman took the challenge seriously. She read all she could find about brick and tile and then sent Dr. Agassiz a 36-page paper on the subject.

Elder Hanks continued:

“Back came the letter from Dr. Agassiz: ‘Dear Madam, this is the best article I have ever seen on the subject. If you will kindly change the three words marked with asterisks, I will have it published and pay you for it.’

“A short time later there came a letter that brought \$250, and penciled on the bottom of this letter was this query: ‘What was under those bricks?’ She had learned the value of time and answered with a single word: ‘Ants.’ He wrote back and said, ‘Tell me about the ants.’ . . .

“After wide reading, much microscopic work, and deep study, the spinster sat down and wrote Dr. Agassiz 360 pages on the subject. He published the book and sent her the money, and she went to visit all the lands of her dreams on the proceeds of her work.”⁶

Now there's something very fundamental about that, to invite diligent learning and not be content with mediocrity.

We can become better learners, and by being better learners, we will be better teachers. I want to follow the example of the Savior, a master teacher. But what made Him a master teacher? He was first a learner. May the Lord bless each of us as we follow Him and become better learners. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2007), 475.
2. “To Understand and Live Truth” (an evening with Elder Richard G. Scott, Feb. 4, 2005), <http://lds.org/library/display/0,4945,5344-1-2783-8,00.htm>.
3. “Principles of Teaching and Learning,” *Liabona*, June 2007, 52; *Ensign*, June 2007, 84.
4. *Liabona*, June 2007, 52; *Ensign*, June 2007, 84.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2006), 75.
6. “Good Teachers Matter,” *Ensign*, July 1971, 61–62.

Chalk It Up to Learning

The chalkboard can enhance your teaching—when you use it properly.

As a teacher, I am always looking for effective ways to engage my students in the lesson. I thought I was making good use of the chalkboard or whiteboard until I saw the board in the classroom next door. There, neatly displayed in the center, was a simple statement of doctrine, a picture, and two questions along with instructions for the students to answer the questions. As the class members came in, I watched as they looked in their scriptures for answers to the two questions. They even discussed the doctrine with each other. And all this activity was happening before the start of class!

I was impressed. Here was a teacher using a simple tool to engage his students in learning during a time that was normally wasted. He still greeted his students and gathered them for an opening prayer, but when the lesson began, the Spirit of the Lord had already touched the hearts of many of the students. They were prepared for a wonderful experience in the scriptures.

Basic Guidelines

In addition to the guidelines in *Teaching, No Greater Call* (see pp. 162 and 182), I have found the following helpful in using the chalkboard or whiteboard to teach the gospel.

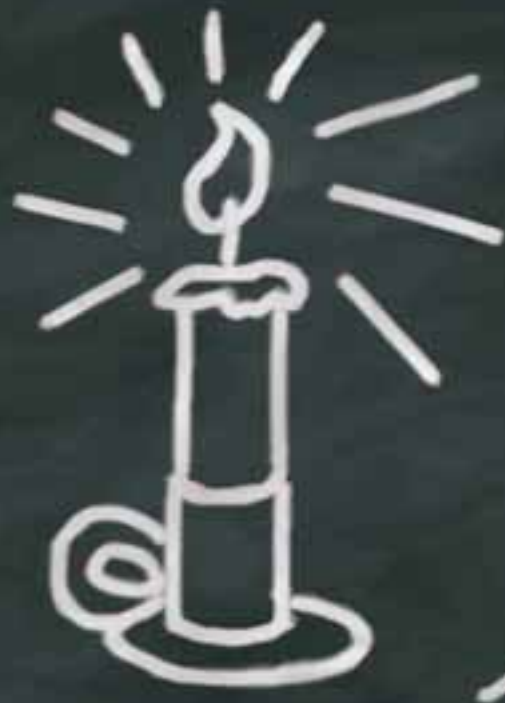
- *Keep it simple.* In the February 2007 worldwide leadership training meeting, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded teachers that visual aids are aids. He said: “They are not a substitute for a lesson. Use them in a way that you would use spice in cooking—to flavor, to heighten, to accentuate, to enrich. A map or a painting or a video clip or a key point written on the board—these can often make the difference between a good lesson and a great lesson.”¹

- *Prepare.* Before you teach your lesson, organize on paper what you want to put on the board.

- *Write legibly.* In *Teaching, No Greater Call* (item no. 36123), teachers are encouraged to “write clearly and large enough for all to see, making sure the material is well spaced, orderly, and easy to read.”² You may want to invite a class member to help you.

BY ROBB JONES
Church Curriculum
Development

If you're looking for something new to help others learn the gospel, you might start by taking a fresh look at something old—
THE CHALKBOARD!



Matthew
5:14–16

Consider drawing simple pictures on the board and inviting students to read a scripture to determine the relationship between the pictures.

What to Write

Here are several ways to use the chalkboard or whiteboard so class members have a more meaningful experience:

Write messages to class members:

- Greet students by writing, “Welcome to Class” or “Have a Great Day.”
- Compliment individuals for their school or Church achievements. For example: “Congratulations on achieving the Duty to God Award.”
- Have the quorum or class president write announcements for upcoming activities.

Create interest and enhance the lesson by writing:

- *The lesson title.* Write the title of the

lesson or a phrase that represents the lesson. This will help students think about the lesson before class starts.

- *A question.* Write a question on the board that you will ask later in the lesson. You could even ask students to write down a response before class starts. This will produce more meaningful discussions.

- *A drawing.* Many students are visual learners. Consider drawing or having a student draw simple pictures of people, objects, or events on the board. For example, you could draw a candle on a candlestick holder, a bushel, and a hill. Then you could invite students to read Matthew 5:14–16 and determine the relationship between the objects.



• *An outline.* The board can be used to organize the lesson into small parts that are easy for students to understand. For example, if you were teaching Mosiah 11:1–15 about wicked King Noah, his priests, and the burdens he put on his Nephite people, you could write on the board “Noah,” “Priests,” and “People.” As students discover the characteristics of each group, you or a student could write the characteristics under each title.

Increase student participation by writing:

• *Students’ thoughts.* Invite students to come to the board and write short phrases that represent their thoughts about



USE THE CHALKBOARD TO FOCUS ATTENTION

“I think that no teaching aid surpasses, and few equal, the chalkboard: first, because it is simple to use, and next, because it is universally available—everywhere in the world you

can get a chalkboard. You can use it to focus the eyes of your students while the main lesson is presented audibly. As you talk, you can put just enough on the board to focus their attention and give them the idea, but never so much that the visual aid itself distracts them.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, *Teach Ye Diligently* (1975), 266.

a topic, such as why temples are important to them.

• *Student surveys.* If you are teaching a lesson on Church standards, you could write the words “Word of Wisdom,” “Honesty,” and “Morality” in three columns. You could place check marks under the standards that class members think are most difficult for people to live. Then ask them to share their feelings.

• *Students’ answers.* Use the board to have students write their answers to a question. Suppose you were giving a lesson on the Holy Ghost. You could have students write their answers to this question: “What truths does God reveal to us through the Holy Ghost?”

Effective Teaching Using a Simple Tool

Of course, these are only some of the many ways you can facilitate learning by using the chalkboard or whiteboard. You can think of other ways, adapting them to your class and topic. ■

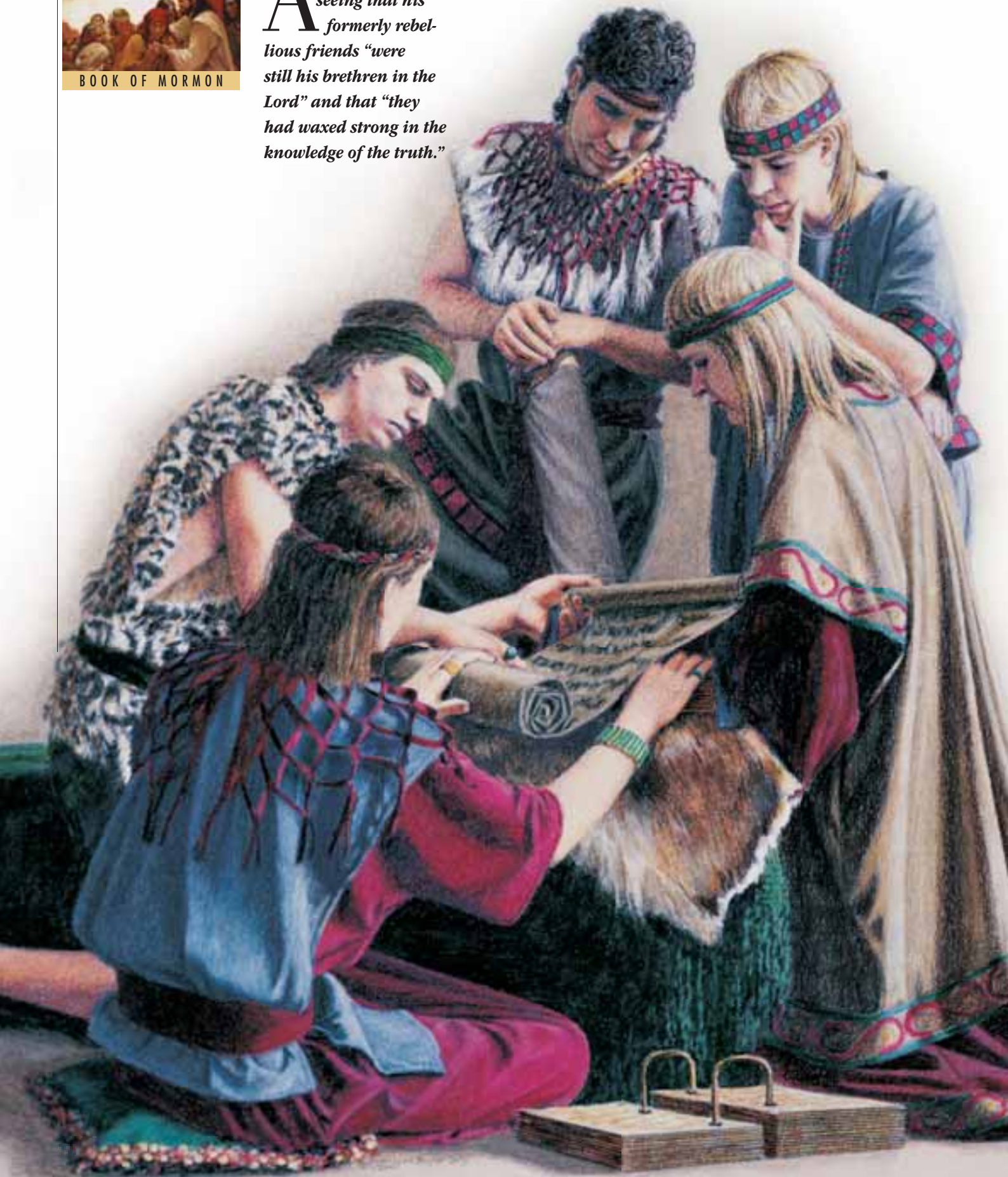
NOTES

1. “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” *Liabona*, June 2007, 71; *Ensign*, June 2007, 103.
2. *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 162.





Alma rejoiced upon seeing that his formerly rebellious friends “were still his brethren in the Lord” and that “they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth.”



MEN OF A SOUND UNDERSTANDING

BY DANIEL K JUDD

First Counselor in the
Sunday School General Presidency

The scriptural account of the sons of Mosiah—Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni—being transformed from “the very vilest of sinners” (Mosiah 28:4) to “men of a sound understanding” (Alma 17:2) includes important lessons for each of us.

Following their conversion and 14 years of missionary service in separate lands, the sons of Mosiah and Alma the Younger were reunited. Alma rejoiced upon seeing that his formerly rebellious friends “were still his brethren in the Lord” and that “they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth” (Alma 17:2). In addition to describing *who* these remarkable men had become, Mormon describes *how* they had become valuable instruments in bringing the Lamanites unto repentance. He recorded that the sons of Mosiah:

- “Confess[ed] all their sins” (Mosiah 27:35).
- “Searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God” (Alma 17:2).
- “Had given themselves to

much prayer, and fasting” (Alma 17:3).

- “Had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation” (Alma 17:3).
- Sought for “a portion of [the] Spirit to go with them” (Alma 17:9).
- “Taught with power and authority of God” (Alma 17:3).

The changes we need to make in our lives may not be as drastic as those made by the sons of Mosiah, but each of us is capable of improving our lives by increasing our commitment to the Savior, His gospel, and our fellow brothers and sisters. President Brigham Young taught that living the gospel of Jesus Christ can “make bad men good and good men better.”¹

Years ago when I was called to serve as a bishop, I naively believed that I was equal to the task. I had served a full-time mission and afterward had been called to a variety of Church callings. I had taught in the Church Educational System for a number of years. I had advanced academic and clinical training in psychology and marriage and family relations. But little did I realize the challenges that lay ahead.

It took only a few days for me to realize that effectively serving as a bishop was more difficult than I had anticipated. I quickly came to understand that though I had been given the authority to serve, I wasn’t the kind



I bear testimony that the scriptures, the teachings of latter-day prophets, and the influence of the Holy Ghost will assist each of us as we follow the examples of the sons of Mosiah and become men and women of “a sound understanding.”

of leader, teacher, father, or husband I knew the Lord wanted me to be. With all my heart I wanted to bless my family and my ward by being a man “of a sound understanding” (Alma 17:2) like the sons of Mosiah and like the many leaders and teachers who had blessed my life.

Despite working hard to serve, I began to be discouraged, feeling that I wasn’t helping my family and ward members in the ways they needed to be helped. My discouragement deepened, and my physical health declined. During these difficult days I discovered the following counsel from President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994): “Often we spend great effort in trying to increase the activity levels in our stakes. We work diligently to raise the percentages of those attending sacrament meetings. We labor to get a higher percentage of our young men on missions. We strive to improve the numbers of those marrying in the temple. All of these are commendable efforts and important to the growth of the kingdom. But when individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently, these other areas of activity will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened. Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow.”²

President Benson’s words pricked my heart and invited me to set a course that would change my life. I realized that while I might have been working hard to serve others, I hadn’t been serving in the way the Lord had intended. I felt a growing desire to study and truly immerse myself in the scriptures and to encourage my family and ward members to do the same.

The changes I was hoping for weren’t instant, but I was surprised at how quickly things began to turn around. Our sacrament meetings, priesthood and auxiliary classes, and

I discovered that while there was certainly value in inviting ward members to speak in sacrament meeting on topics such as honesty, friendship, patience, and kindness, there was even greater power in inviting them to teach doctrinal principles from the scriptures.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SMITH



leadership meetings came alive as we followed the examples of the sons of Mosiah and “searched the scriptures diligently, that [we] might know the word of God” (Alma 17:2). I discovered a much greater measure of the Spirit in my own life, in my relationships with my family, and in helping ward members with difficult challenges. My discouragement turned to joy, and my health problems improved dramatically.

I had previously come to love the scriptures as a missionary and as a seminary and institute teacher, but I’m not sure I had ever fully realized the great power they have to

change lives—including my own. I discovered that while there was certainly value in inviting ward members to speak in sacrament meeting on topics such as honesty, friendship, patience, and kindness, there was even greater power in inviting them to teach doctrinal principles from the scriptures—doctrines such as faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Our ward leadership meetings became important discussions on how we could better help ward members study and understand the scriptures and the words of the living prophets.

I bear testimony that the scriptures, the teachings of latter-day prophets, and the influence of the Holy Ghost will assist each of us as we follow the examples of the sons of Mosiah and become men and women of “a sound understanding.” I pray that each of us will consider what we can do to more faithfully follow the example of the sons of Mosiah, who, by searching the scriptures diligently, obtained the understanding necessary to become “instrument[s] in the hands of God to bring some soul[s] to repentance” (Alma 29:9). ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 1997), 21.
2. Ezra Taft Benson, “The Power of the Word,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 81.

An illustration showing a hand reaching into a grey mailbox to pull out a black magazine with the word 'ENSIGN' written vertically in white. The mailbox has a red flag and a silver handle. The background shows a green lawn and trees.

My Neighbor's Magazine

BY LAURA
PILCHER

the church we were attending and decided it was time to find another congregation of our faith. When we bought our first home in a nearby town, it was the perfect opportunity to attend another church.

One day the mailman accidentally delivered an *Ensign* magazine to our mailbox. It belonged to our new neighbors, Tom and Jan Smith, and that was how we learned they were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I did not know anything about the LDS Church except what I had learned in school about the Mormon Trail, so I was curious to find out all I could. I kept the *Ensign* for a week and read it cover to cover. That particular issue featured articles on the family. I was overjoyed to find a church that believed what I did—that families are important and that it is our responsibility to care for them. I took the *Ensign* to Tom and Jan when I had finished reading it, but I did not tell them I had kept it for a week.

We had become dissatisfied with

A year and a half later we received a job transfer to another state, but before we left, Tom talked to us about the Church. I truly believe the *Ensign* was delivered to our house for a purpose. The entire issue was devoted to the family, which was the very reason we had been searching for another church. As a result, I was able to listen to the plan of salvation with an open heart because I had felt the truth of the gospel in the pages I had read a year and a half earlier in the *Ensign*.

I gained a testimony and was baptized four months later. After my husband's baptism, we were sealed for time and eternity in the Washington D.C. Temple, and we have since raised four children in the gospel. Our son and his wife were sealed in the Atlanta Georgia Temple and are raising their son in the Church.

Now, many years later, the *Ensign* is a staple in our home. It is a blessing to our family to have such inspiring articles and artwork available at our fingertips every month. I will forever be grateful to the Lord that the mailman delivered the *Ensign* to our home and opened our door to the blessings of the gospel. ■



HOPE & HEALING

in Recovering from Abuse

BY SARAH E. MILLER

Those struggling with the results of abuse can receive peace through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As a child, Emma (name has been changed) was abused. Now, as a 33-year-old mother of four, she quietly weeps in my office. “I don’t understand,” she stammers. “I try to be faithful, pay an honest tithe, attend church, and serve in callings. Why do I feel so worthless? Why can’t I feel God’s love?” As a Latter-day

Saint psychotherapist living and practicing in the United Kingdom, I have witnessed this scenario repeatedly over the years as I have counseled abused Church members in a professional capacity.

Many of my clients, like Emma, currently live faithful lives but continue to struggle with the effects of abuse in their past. In some cases, they perceive Heavenly Father as remote, stern, critical, or condemning. They assume that they “deserved” the abuse, that it was somehow their fault. In other cases, they feel as though their experiences



place them beyond the healing power of the Savior. Church activity can seem overwhelming to these individuals, often because they compare themselves with other members and develop feelings of inadequacy. “What’s wrong with me?” they ask. “Why do I feel so unworthy?” Faced with ramifications such as addictions, self-hatred, mental illnesses, or broken relationships, they are eager to find hope and rest, but sometimes they are unsure about how to do so.

I am convinced that Latter-day Saints—or anyone, for that matter—struggling with the results of abuse or childhood trauma can receive peace through the gospel of Jesus Christ. The effects of abuse may persist for a while, but the power of the Atonement can ultimately relieve such burdens and facilitate healing. The Savior included those who have been abused when he beckoned, “Come unto me, all

ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). The Savior’s promise of rest can help victims know that God *does* love them, that they *can* feel His love, that they *can* forgive, and that their wounds *can* be healed.

“Why Did He Let This Happen?”

Clients frequently come to me feeling angry or resentful, asserting that a loving God would never have abandoned them to a fate of abuse. They perceive a lack of divine intervention as an indication of their personal unworthiness.

However, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “There can be some who choose willfully to violate the commandments and harm you. . . . [But] the Lord has provided a way for you to overcome the destructive results of others’ acts against your will.”¹

Healing occurs when individuals learn to search for and accept the Savior’s love. For example, I know of a case where a young brother and sister, twins, were forced to flee from their home late one night. Their stepfather had exploded in rage and threatened to kill them. As they wandered the dark streets searching for a place to rest, they discovered a secluded stairwell in an apartment building. Cold, exhausted, and fearful, they huddled together and somehow slept.

Years later, as an adult, one of those children questioned God, “Why didn’t you help us? Where were you?” An unexpected, gentle answer came to her mind, confirming that He had truly watched over her that night—that He in effect had sent angels who stood sentinel. In searching for answers, she hearkened to the Spirit’s whisperings and came to know that God loves her and is with her in times of need.

Our mortal experiences, however difficult they may be, can be channeled to help us know God and to learn about who we are in relationship to Him. When we learn that we are His children, we can feel that His love for us is unbounded: “Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life” (Isaiah 43:4).

“Why Am I Unable to Feel His Love?”

Even though they may know about God’s love on an intellectual basis, many people who have suffered abuse cannot, at least initially, fathom His caring for them individually. Some have never experienced a kind, loving, and respectful earthly father, so thinking about God in such terms is a difficult challenge.

To help transcend this barrier, I often ask clients to first think about the people they know who have loving qualities: a spouse, a bishop, or other Church leaders. Next, I ask them to visualize Heavenly Father listening to and



NOT MY WILL BUT THINE BE DONE, BY HARRY ANDERSON, COURTESY OF PACIFIC PRESS PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION, INC.

responding to their prayers in ways that their spouse, bishop, or leaders might respond. With practice, the Spirit teaches them, and they begin to feel Heavenly Father's tremendous love and compassion, often for the first time. As Jeremiah wrote: "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

"Then shall you call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:11–13).

Bishops play an especially vital role in the process of helping the abused feel God's love. Though not all aggressors are male, when this is the case, subsequent relationships with males may be awkward or difficult. To restore healthy attitudes, victims need to see examples of

T*he journey of recovery from abuse can be long and lonely, but I have witnessed the undeniable power of the Savior's Atonement to renew lives.*

men, particularly fathers, who live righteously and according to gospel standards. By serving in a fatherly role, bishops become healing instruments as they afford sensitive counsel, positive examples, and effective priesthood leadership devoid of unrighteous dominion. Others can assist in the recovery process by reflecting the Savior's love and sacrifice in how they serve selflessly.

"How Can I Forgive?"

Forgiveness is often difficult because offenders may deny their behavior or avoid acknowledging it. Regardless of how the offender responds—even if the perpetrator does not admit responsibility—the person who has been abused can choose to forgive. It is important to note that forgiveness does not necessarily mean forgetting the offense, trusting

the offender, or even associating with him or her. However, it *does* mean letting go of self-destructive anger.

To help the abused person forgive, leaders, friends, and family members can acknowledge the gravity of the offense, allowing the innocent person to work through his or her anger and pain. Much abuse involves the denial of feelings and truth, so people who have been abused need to be heard and have their feelings validated if they are to truly recover and regain self-worth. When the person who has been abused is pressured to forgive, he or she may feel an added measure of guilt, taking the blame not only for the abuse itself but also for being unable to forgive. Allowing the person time to forgive can be a lengthy process, but it is critical to healing.

Some may fear that their loved one might become stuck at this stage or obsessed with unhealthy rage. However, although needlessly extending this painful process can be unproductive, insisting on forgiveness before feelings have been adequately acknowledged may cause withdrawal and may impede healing. Bishops and other supportive members can facilitate healing by empathetically allowing the hurt to find its expression and then offering Christlike love.

“How Can My Wounds Heal?”

Some members feel so unclean, unworthy, or damaged that they live on the fringes, never allowing the blessings of the Atonement to heal their distress. They believe that their hurt can never be mended or that their pain is greater than the Savior’s ability to heal. Satan is the author of these lies, for “we believe that through the Atonement of Christ, *all* mankind may be saved” (Articles of Faith 1:3; emphasis added). Through patience, charity, spiritual awareness, and prayer, Church leaders can reach even the most troubled souls, dispelling negative ideas, instilling hope, and fostering self-worth.

The journey of recovery from abuse can be long and lonely. However, through my work I have witnessed the undeniable power of the Atonement to renew and revitalize lives. In the advent of abuse, people feel helpless in not knowing what to do or where to turn. But those who

suffer—and those charged with the responsibility to help them—are not alone. The saving principles of the gospel have the power and capacity to heal wounded souls. Not only does the Atonement wash the sins of repentant offenders, but it also reconciles with God all who may feel estranged from His love, including the abused and their families.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught that it is often necessary to “walk to the edge of the light, and perhaps a few steps into the darkness, and . . . the light will appear and move ahead of you.”² In other words, it takes faith to move forward. But when we exercise faith in His omnipotence, we begin to feel the atoning power of the Savior, who bore our pain in Gethsemane. We become free to receive refreshing inner peace born of spiritual renewal that arises from the Atonement’s cleansing and healing power.

Hope in His Sacrifice

The Savior’s sacrifice provides tremendous hope on the path of recovery from abuse: “He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18). Through prayer, faith, scripture study, hearkening to the Spirit, counseling with priesthood leaders, and receiving support from friends or relatives, those who have been abused can see a road to complete healing.

Many times I have counseled Latter-day Saints recovering from the trauma of abuse, I can testify that though recovery may seem difficult and fraught with temporary setbacks, the Savior offers solace to aching hearts, heals wounded souls, and changes sorrow into joy. All who have been hurt can receive relief through the Atonement of Him who knows and has experienced all: “He will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy . . . that he may know . . . how to succor his people” (Alma 7:12). ■

NOTES

1. “Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 31.
2. Quoting Harold B. Lee in Lucile C. Tate, *Boyd K. Packer: A Watchman on the Tower* (1995), 138.

A TIME OF HARV



Above: *Harvest Time in France*, by James T. Harwood

Oil on canvas, 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 31", courtesy of the Springville Museum of Art

The season for harvesting, preparing, and preserving is captured on these pages in the works of Latter-day Saint artists and in the words of latter-day prophets.

President Thomas S. Monson: “Oh, the joy of harvest time! Picture the scene of ward members canning peaches, sorting eggs, or cleaning vegetables, all for the use of those who are in need. Brows are sweat-lined, clothing is soiled, bodies are tired—but human souls are refreshed and lifted towards heaven.”¹

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008): “The best place to have some food set aside is within our homes, together with a little money

in savings. The best welfare program is our own welfare program.”²

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “We encourage you to grow all the food that you feasibly can on your own property. Berry bushes, grapevines, fruit trees—plant them if your climate is right for their growth. Grow vegetables and eat them from your own yard.”³ ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “The Bishop—Center Stage in Welfare,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 90.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “To Men of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 58.
3. Spencer W. Kimball, “Family Preparedness,” *Ensign*, May 1976, 124.

WEST



Left: The Harvester,
by Greg K. Olsen

*Oil on canvas,
24" x 36", © Greg K.
Olsen, may not be
copied*

**Right: Agriculture:
The Farm Worker,**
by Mahonri M. Young

*Bronze, 46½" tall,
courtesy of the
Museum of Church
History and Art*

**Bottom: The Faithful
Gardener,**
by Emma Allebes

*Sewn fabric quilt,
51" x 39", courtesy
of the Museum of
Church History and
Art, from the Seventh
International Art
Competition*





Above: Laborers in the Vineyard, by J. Kirk Richards
Oil on canvas, 105" x 73", private collection

Right: Preserving Posterity, by Lori Nicholas
Oil on canvas, 30" x 24", courtesy of the Museum of Church History and Art, from the Sixth International Art Competition



Below: Hearts Filled with Gratitude, by A. D. Shaw
*Oil on panel, 30" x 24",
courtesy of the Museum of
Church History and Art,
from the Sixth International
Art Competition*



Below: By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them, by Linda Etherington
*Oil on panel, 30" x 40",
courtesy of the Museum of
Church History and Art,
from the Sixth International
Art Competition*



Left: Servants of the Last Harvest, by David Koch
*Oil on canvas, 40" x 30",
courtesy of the Museum
of Church History and
Art, from the Seventh
International Art
Competition*



For the Savior's mandate to share the gospel to become part of who we are, we need to make member missionary work a way of life.

BY ELDER QUENTIN L. COOK
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In 1842 John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, wrote to Joseph Smith requesting information about the Church. The Church had been organized 12 years earlier and had just over 20,000 members. The Prophet Joseph replied and concluded his response by using the “Standard of Truth” as a preface to what we know today as the thirteen Articles of Faith. As I tour missions, I find that many missionaries memorize the Standard of Truth. It conveys in a concise way what must be accomplished:

“No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble,

for it, and two sister missionaries responded. They were surprised that he was only 13 and had requested the Book of Mormon. He was impressed with what they taught and what he felt, but after discussions with his family, he decided to become a priest in the Catholic Church. As he prepared to be a priest, he remained interested in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

He studied at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. He became acquainted with many who take the position we are not Christians, but he also associated with the students at the Latter-day Saint institute of religion at Berkeley. He decided to write a master's thesis on why some

Be a Missionary

calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear; till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.”¹

Becoming Effective Missionaries

I believe that we are on the threshold of the most significant missionary success to date.

The conversion of Jordan Vajda, a fine young man who had been a Catholic priest, is instructive. When he was in grade school, he had Latter-day Saint friends in his class who shared with him their love of the gospel. At age 13 he found an offer from the Church for a free Book of Mormon. He sent

people maintain that we are not Christians. This was primarily an academic pursuit. He became a priest in the Dominican order and had assignments in Arizona and then at the University of Washington. There he came in contact with our missionaries.

After being taught by them and praying sincerely, he received inspiration that he should resign as a Catholic priest and be baptized and confirmed into the Church of Jesus Christ. His letter of resignation expressed his love and appreciation for the Catholic Church and then stated:

“Why am I doing what I am doing? To put it most simply: I have found a fuller truth and goodness and beauty in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After years of study and reflection, I have come to believe that the LDS Church is the only true and living



All Your Life

Church of Jesus

Christ, guided and led by living apostles and prophets.

“I believe that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, called and ordained for this, the dispensation of the fullness of times. I love the Book of Mormon; I believe it to be the word of God for us in these latter days.

“I can no longer deny my feelings, my heart, my conscience. I cannot deny the confirming witness of the Holy Ghost, which has come after much prayer and

soul-searching. At this point in my life, at this moment, as I look forward to and prepare for my convert baptism, I have found a happiness greater than I ever imagined possible.”²

This good man is active in the Church, has been to the temple, teaches the Gospel Doctrine class in his ward, and

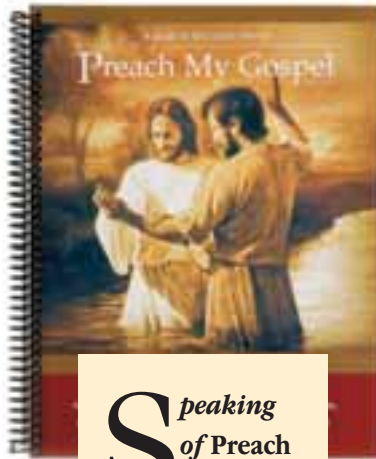
has a management position in a hospital in Seattle.

The gospel truly changes people's lives. Last year I met the missionaries who taught a family of five in South Carolina. The father of this wonderful African-American family was born and raised in Newark, New Jersey. His father had abandoned his mother when he was very young. He said his "angel mother" worked hard every day of her life to keep them from being homeless. He cannot remember one fun day as a child or as a teenager. He stated, "Other than the love of my mother, I felt very much alone in this world." He served in the United States Navy on the aircraft carrier *Kitty Hawk*, where he learned discipline, organization, and order. He met and married his sweetheart, and they have three children. They came in contact with the missionaries, and he subsequently wrote:

"The missionaries taught us to pray. They taught us about the Restoration. They taught us about revelation and truth. As they bore their testimonies, my heart became softened and I saw in their eyes the truth of what they said. In my whole life I have never seen such sincerity and love. On May 5, 2006, my family was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Now I really do believe that I have found my place in this world."³

The requirements for baptism are set forth in Doctrine and Covenants 20:37: "All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church."

When you think of these two accounts and realize that there were more than 279,000 converts who met the requirements for baptism last year, you get some idea of the significance of missionary work. Our challenge is to



Speaking of Preach My Gospel, President Boyd K. Packer said it "was designed beyond the veil and put together here."

share the joyous, eternally significant gospel with our brothers and sisters so they can find peace, happiness, and exaltation. With this in mind, how can we be more effective missionaries?

First, be a missionary all your life.

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught that "every member is a missionary."⁴ That is as true today as when it was first declared.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said it this way: "Great is our work, tremendous is our responsibility in helping to find those to teach. The Lord has laid upon us a mandate to teach the gospel to every creature."⁵

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, "After all that has been said, the greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel."⁶

Second, overcome feelings of hesitancy or inadequacy. The account of the first missionary to serve outside of North America in this dispensation is inspiring.

In June of 1837 in the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith whispered to Heber C. Kimball that the Spirit of the Lord had spoken that Heber should "go to England and proclaim [the] Gospel, and open the door of salvation to that nation."⁷

At the time, Heber C. Kimball was 36 years old. He had been a member of the Church for five years and an Apostle for two years. He had a wife and small children. He was the first missionary called to serve outside of North America. A financial panic had swept over the country and the Church in 1837. It was not an auspicious time for Joseph or Heber to commence such a project. But, as Joseph said, the Spirit of the Lord had directed the action.

Heber recorded his reaction: "O, Lord, I am a man of stammering tongue, and altogether unfit for such a work; how can I go to preach in that land?"⁸

Almost everyone who attempts missionary work feels inadequate in some way. The idea of such a mission was almost more than Heber could bear, but his faith and obedience prevailed. He stated: "However, all these considerations

did not deter me from the path of duty; the moment I understood the will of my Heavenly Father, I felt a determination to go at all hazards, believing that He would support me by His almighty power, and endow me with every qualification that I needed; . . . I felt that the cause of truth, the Gospel of Christ, outweighed every other consideration.”⁹

Think of the challenge of being a missionary and opening a new country without members, Church buildings, a mission home, or any funds! Despite these feelings of inadequacy, Elder Kimball worked hard and was humble. He and his companions were very successful.

Third, do not be discouraged because missionary work is hard. The New Testament tells of the Apostle Paul’s visit to Athens. Paul wanted to proclaim the message of the resurrected Christ. Certain philosophers invited Paul to Mars’ Hill.

Acts 17:21, describing Paul’s audience, states: “For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.”

Doesn’t that sound like the world we live in now? When the Athenians realized that Paul was speaking of the risen Savior, some of them mocked him, and the more polite but still not interested said, in verse 32, “We will hear thee again of this matter.” Missionaries in our own time experience this kind of rejection every day.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in speaking about how hard missionary work is and has been, said: “I am convinced that missionary work is not easy because *salvation is not a cheap experience*. Salvation *never* was easy. We are The Church of Jesus Christ, this is the truth, and He is our Great Eternal Head. How could we believe it would be easy for us when it was never, ever easy for Him?”¹⁰

Fourth, be a good example and take every opportunity to share the gospel. Paul counseled Timothy, “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in



Be a good example. Very often people are receptive to being taught because they have had a positive experience with a member of the Church.

charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). It is not enough to preach the gospel. One must also live the gospel. Very often people are receptive to being taught because they have had a positive experience with a Church member.

I know a graduate of Brigham Young University who is a great example, loves people, loves the Lord, and has a great desire to be everyone’s friend and share the gospel. He points out that there is a mirror quality to conversation. If we talk about the weather, people respond by talking about the weather. If we talk about sports, they respond by talking about sports. This friend says he asks people he meets about their school and listens intently. After they respond by asking him about his school, he tells them about BYU and then shares his testimony of the gospel. Then, in a positive way, he offers to let them learn more from the missionaries. He has been very successful in sharing the gospel. He has also remained on excellent terms with his friends who do not respond to his invitation, because he genuinely loves them and is interested in them.

Elder Clayton M. Christensen, who is a professor at Harvard Business School and an Area Seventy, indicated: “I have learned to use terms that associate me with Mormonism in my conversations—comments about my mission to Korea, my children’s missions, my assignments in the Church, my



There are many among your friends who would respond to the gospel if you would have the faith to share the message of the Restoration with them.

having attended Brigham Young University, and so on. These comments open the door for a conversation about the Church. Most who notice that I have opened this door choose not to walk through it. A few do, however, usually saying, ‘So you’re a Mormon?’ I then ask if they’d like to learn more about us.”¹¹

An Account of Our Progress

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve are the missionary committee of the Church and oversee all aspects of missionary work. Let me give you some numbers describing what has been accomplished under their direction since 1995.

- Approximately 435,000 missionaries have entered the mission field, which represents more than 40 percent of the missionaries who have ever served in this dispensation.
- About 3,800,000 converts have been baptized, which is the equivalent of more than one-fourth of the total current membership of the Church.
- The total number of missions in the Church has increased from 303 to 348.
- The number of converts continues to increase.

I am very enthusiastic about where we are at this time in missionary work. But we can still do better.

Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service was first introduced in October 2004. President Hinckley

commenced this effort in an address to all General Authorities. He called for the missionaries to learn the doctrine and teach the principles by the Spirit in their own words and avoid rote recitations of the discussions. The First Presidency subsequently “raised the bar” on missionary worthiness standards and instructed the Missionary Executive Council to bring forth the new guide to missionary service.

Every member of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve participated to a significant degree. The Missionary Executive Council, under the direction of Elder M. Russell Ballard, and the Missionary Department were inspired in their efforts. It literally felt as if the windows of

heaven were opened and the Lord’s inspiration poured out to bring forth this great resource.

I was deeply touched when President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, speaking of *Preach My Gospel*, said it “was designed beyond the veil and put together here.”¹²

More than 1.4 million copies of *Preach My Gospel* have been acquired by members of the Church. I hope you will all become familiar with this great missionary guide. It will help strengthen you to live worthily.¹³

Blessings of Missionary Work—and the Charge

There are great blessings, including eternal joy, in helping to bring souls unto Christ (see D&C 18:15). Among the blessings of being a full-time missionary are the lifelong relationships you develop with missionary companions. Other blessings of serving a mission are having the opportunity of being nurtured under the guidance of a mission president who has been called by inspiration; developing gospel knowledge and study habits that will serve you well throughout your life; and achieving the enormous strength that comes from doing something that is very challenging. Having increased faith in the Lord Jesus Christ



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. As a family, read the paragraphs following Elder Cook's question "How can we be more effective missionaries?" Write this question down so all can see it; then list under the question the four answers that he gives.

2. Read the story of Jordan Vajda. Invite family members to share how they gained a testimony of the gospel. Make a list of friends and family who are not members of the Church, and set a goal to be a good example to them. Pray for opportunities to share the gospel.

As I see missionaries all over the world teaching investigators in so many languages, it is inspiring to reflect on Doctrine and Covenants 90:11: "For it shall come to pass in that day, that every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language, through those who are ordained unto this power."

Missionary work is not just one of the 88 keys on a piano that is occasionally played; it is

a major chord in a compelling melody that needs to be played continuously throughout our lives if we are to remain in harmony with our commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

My specific challenge to each of you is to make a commitment to be a missionary for the rest of your life. There are many among your friends who would respond to the gospel if you would have the faith to share the message of the Restoration with them. What we desperately need is for member missionary work to become a way of life in order for the Savior's mandate to share the gospel to become part of who we are.

I pray that we all will follow the Savior's counsel and the prophetic counsel of all of the prophets of this dispensation to preach the gospel throughout our lives. ■

Adapted from a Brigham Young University devotional address given March 13, 2007. For the full text, please see speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. "The Wentworth Letter," *Ensign*, July 2002, 31.
2. Jordan Vajda to the Very Reverend Robert Corral, OP, June 21, 2003.
3. Personal correspondence.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2003), 53.
5. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Ensign*, May 1999, 107.
6. *History of the Church*, 2:478.
7. In Orson F. Whitney, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball* (1945), 104.
8. In Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 104.
9. In Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 104.
10. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Missionary Work and the Atonement," *Ensign*, Mar. 2001, 15.
11. Clayton M. Christensen, "My Ways Are Not Your Ways," *Ensign*, Feb. 2007, 58.
12. Boyd K. Packer, "One in Thine Hand" (address delivered at new mission presidents' seminar, Provo Missionary Training Center, June 22, 2005), 4.
13. See Richard G. Scott, "Now Is the Time to Serve a Mission!" *Ensign*, May 2006, 88.

and the Restoration of His gospel is a most significant blessing.

But the most important reason for going on a mission and being committed to missionary work throughout your life is that it is doctrinally what the Savior has asked us to do.

The last chapters of Matthew, Mark, and Luke; the last two chapters of John; the first eight verses of Acts; and the first chapter of Revelation contain the only New Testament accounts of the risen Christ. Suppose

for a minute that you had been a disciple of the Savior during His life here on earth. Suppose you had believed His teachings. Can you imagine how wonderful it would have been to actually behold the risen Lord? Can you imagine how attentive you would have been to His message?

There may have been other things the risen Lord taught that were not recorded, but the overwhelming message in each of the accounts was to preach His gospel.

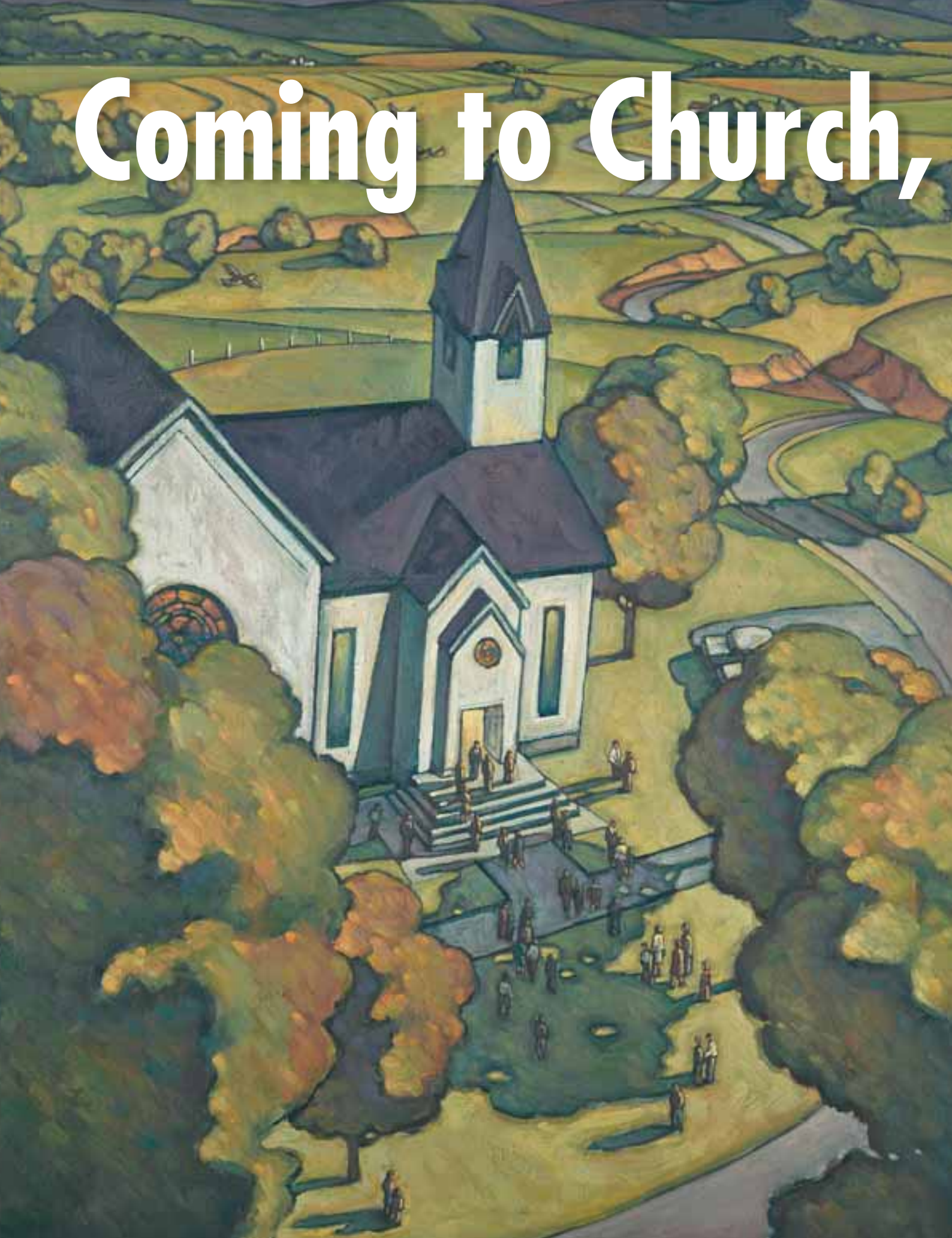
The next-to-last verse in Matthew is a good example: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).

We could go to almost any part of the Book of Mormon for the same message. Think of Alma and his lifelong commitment to bring souls unto repentance even when he was the head of state.

What about missionary work in this dispensation? I am particularly impressed with section 112 of the Doctrine and Covenants. There is much that could be said about section 112, but verse 21 is particularly significant for those preparing to serve missions. It states: "And again, I say unto you, that whosoever ye shall send in my name, by the voice of your brethren, the Twelve, duly recommended and authorized by you, shall have power to open the door of my kingdom unto any nation whithersoever ye shall send them."

That describes our missionaries today. Every missionary is called to serve by the prophet and assigned to a field of labor by one of the Twelve Apostles.

Coming to Church,



Becoming Converted

BY DALE M. VALENTINE

Six ways to help investigators feel the Spirit while at church.

Several years ago seven men—all converts to the Church—were presented for ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood during stake conference. Following the session they were asked to bring their wives and meet with the stake presidency. I also made my way to the stake offices. At the time, I was serving as the mission president of the Texas South Mission, and I too wanted to meet these new converts.

When I arrived, they were already there waiting. We introduced ourselves. The group included a businessman, a lawyer, a medical doctor, a schoolteacher, a physicist, a salesman, and an air force officer.

Soon the stake clerk appeared and announced that the stake presidency was tied up with an unexpected problem; there would be a short delay. Sensing this to be an opportunity for meaningful feedback on the conversion process, I informally asked these men what single factor or event contributed most to their conversion to the Church.

Their answers surprised me because they were essentially the same. With only slight variations, they all said the turning point in their conversion came the first time they attended a Latter-day Saint church service.

So I asked what impressed them most about our services and what members could do to help investigators. What they mentioned taught me a great deal:

Be united and dedicated. The converts were impressed by the spirit of love and true fellowship the members demonstrated. They often felt a very real and genuine spirit of unity among the members and a dedication to keeping the Sabbath day holy. The lawyer said, “I wanted to be a part of it.”

Focus on people. Making sure investigators meet members is also important. The air force officer observed, “The real warmth of the members will be more impressive to investigators than the physical surroundings of the church.”

Teach investigators what to expect. The first meeting the schoolteacher attended was sacrament meeting. The friend who brought him to church had prepared him by explaining in advance what to anticipate. Consequently, he attended the meeting without worrying about the unexpected. Because he was prepared, he enjoyed the services and the people.

Live your religion. Several of the converts were amazed that the members seemed so dedicated to living *all* of the commandments. Of course the members weren't perfect, but these men sensed their genuine efforts to be obedient. They noted that it was easier to attend church knowing that the members lived what they believed.

Share unique truths. When investigators come to church for the first time, they are excited to learn about the Church. Learning that the Church has an unpaid ministry or that living oracles guide the members is often surprising to investigators. “But keep the information simple,” the lawyer observed. “Intricate explanations and deep doctrine only confuse investigators.”

Bear your testimony. The informal testimonies that several members shared were very powerful in the lives of these men. When members testified of the restored truths of the gospel, the Holy Ghost bore witness of their veracity. It is difficult for investigators to dispute the feelings that come as a result of those testimonies.

That night I drove back to the mission home and mentally recapped the details of our conversation. I was grateful that I had met these men and had learned from their conversions. As I pondered their experiences, the Spirit testified of the importance of bringing investigators to church and of recognizing their needs. As we strive to do this, we become more instrumental in paving the way for investigators to enter into the fold of God. ■

Dale M. Valentine has passed away since submitting this article.

I Do My Part, and God Does the Rest

BY JENNY PIDERIT DE LA MAZA

I am a young adult now, but an experience I had when I was a little girl has helped me all my life. I'm from Renaico, a small town in Chile. I remember with some emotion when my mother, Ruby, was the president of the Primary. We had a small branch then; I was the only child who attended. She would teach the class. When we got to church on Sunday morning, she would say, "Good morning, Jenny. I'm your Primary teacher." This phrase was repeated every week. We would have an opening prayer and sing a song, and then she would proceed with the lesson.

She regularly visited children who were less active, whom she lovingly called "my little darlings." Often we would find these children playing in the street, and Mama would stop the car and say in a cheerful voice, "Hey, see you at church on Sunday." Most of them said OK. But on Sunday it would be just Mama and me.

Sometimes I got frustrated when those children didn't come to church. I would say, "That's enough, Mama. They don't want to come." But she, in her loving way, would reply, "I need to be responsible in my calling and persevere."

One day the unbelievable happened.

A boy named Carlos came to church and said, "See,

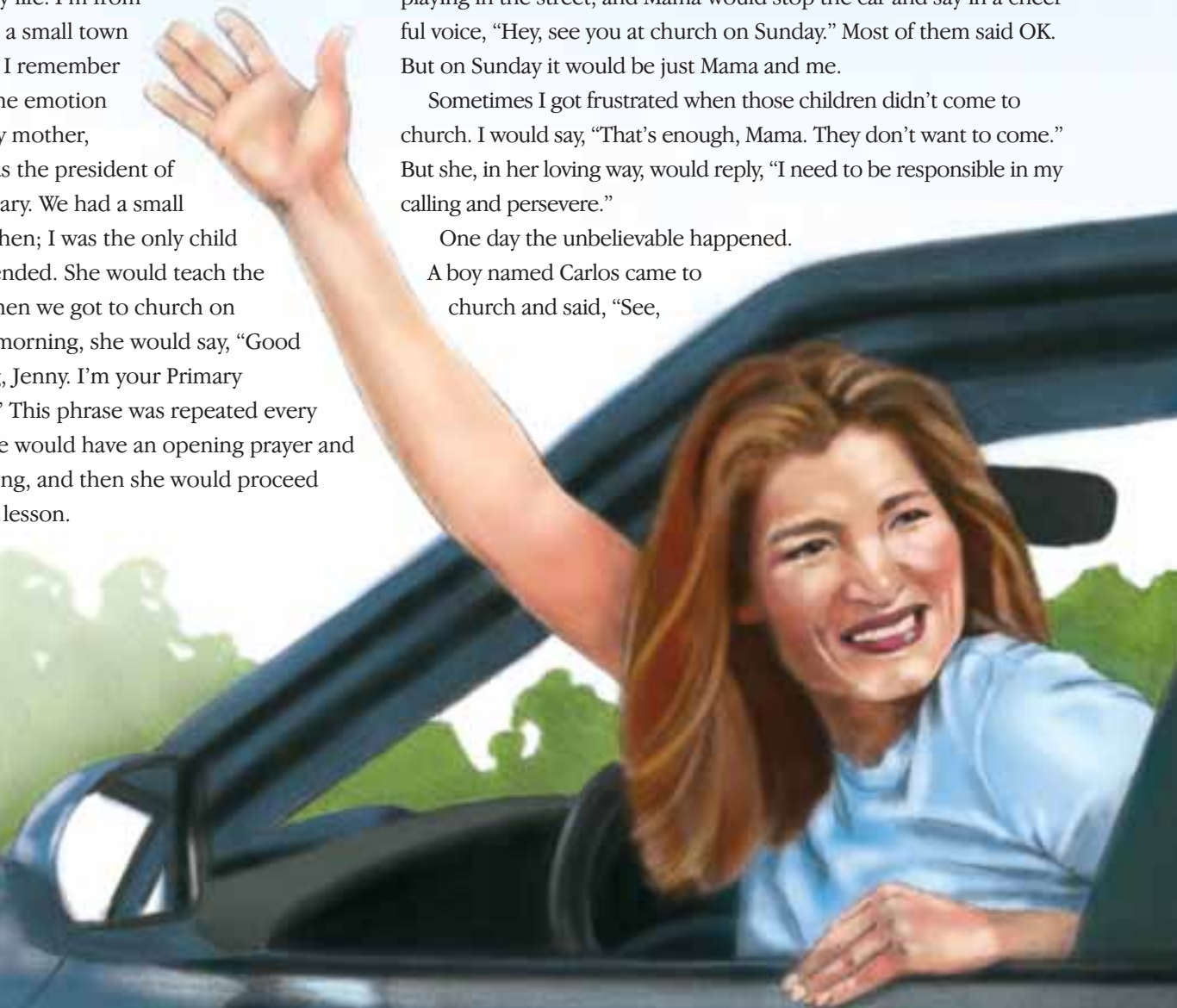


ILLUSTRATION BY NATALIE MALAN


Sister Ruby, I told you I would come.” Well, at least now there were two of us. This made my mother’s face shine with joy, and every time Carlos came to class, she would say to me, “See, sweetheart, we need to be persistent, and God will do the rest.”

One day Carlos started coming with a boy named Alexis. The three of us loved playing together, and we are still friends today. From that day, more and more children started coming.

My mother was released from her calling after two years. When she left the Primary, 35 children were attending every week. How wonderful it was to see that my

mother’s love for the children was returned. More than 10 years have passed since she was released, and the Church is larger here now, but nobody has ever surpassed her achievement of getting 35 children to attend!

I am the Primary president now. I love these little children, who have taught me so much. I’m so grateful for this wonderful calling and for my mother’s example of perseverance. I know that Heavenly Father lives and that it is true what my mother says: “I do my part, and He does the rest.” ■



When my mother saw children playing, she would stop the car and cheerfully invite them to church.

Casual Gratitude

BY ARLENE CALKINS

As my grandson screamed from a serious burn, I wanted to suffer in his place.

The morning to return home had arrived. My children, grandchildren, and I had been on vacation to a family reunion and were getting ready to leave. As I was preparing myself for the day, I decided I wanted to curl my hair, so I called my daughter's motel room and asked if I could borrow her curling iron. She said she had just finished using it and it was still hot, so she'd bring it right over.

I looked out the motel room window and saw her coming with the curling iron in one hand and my five-month-old grandson, Tyler, in the opposite arm. Just as they came to the door, the baby grabbed the hot iron. I tore open the door as he screamed in pain. Immediately, blisters raised on his tender skin. We ran his tiny hand under cold water and filled a wet rag with ice to apply to the burn. My son ran to a nearby drugstore to see if there was anything we could get to relieve the pain. Nothing.

My mind raced. There had to be *something* I could do. I felt I needed to find a quiet place to pray. I went into the bathroom, closed and locked the door, and knelt beside the bathtub. I thanked Heavenly Father for the knowledge that I could come to Him at any time, plead my case, and receive an answer. I told Him about the accident involving my grandson and the hot curling iron. I spoke to Him, choking on tears, of the pain of this small child. I did not understand why it was necessary for the baby to suffer. He was only five months old. If it was necessary for someone to suffer, *I* would do it. I asked Him to pass the pain to me, and I would bear it for the baby.

Immediately, I felt calm. A still, sweet voice came into my mind: "I have already done that. There is no need." Instantly, I understood. The lesson was for *me* to learn, not the baby. I opened the door to the bathroom and looked at my grandson. He ceased crying in that instant and, in fact, never cried once all the way home. My daughter looked at me and said, "What did you do?" I told her I had done nothing. The Lord had done it all.

Tyler bears no scars on his hand, but the Master does. And each time I see a painting or a statue of the Master's hands, I am brought to tears. I will never look upon the Atonement with such casual gratitude again. Those scars are there for me, my grandson, and for you. ■



Primary Songs Blessed Me

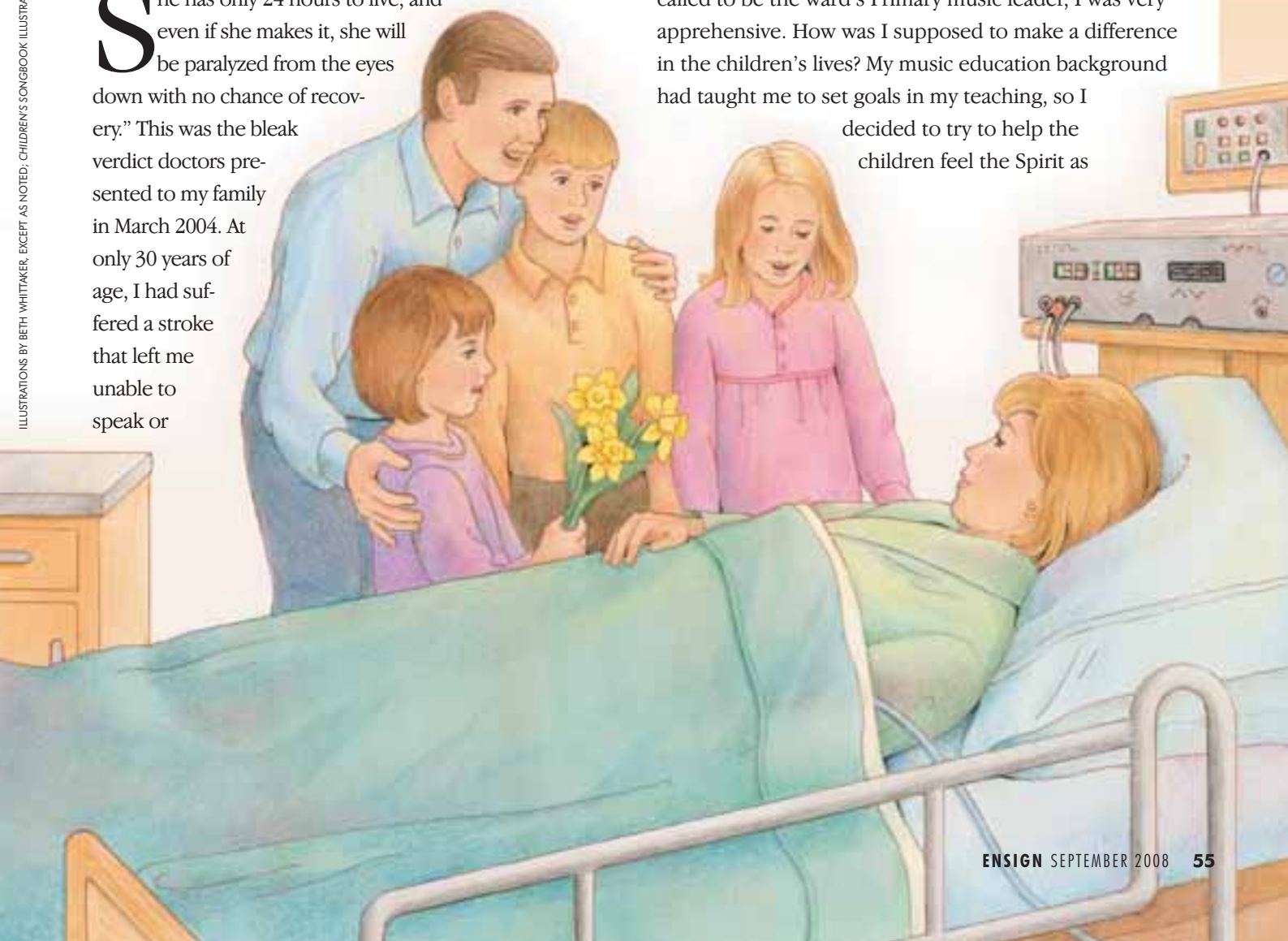
BY JENNIFER A. LYNN

I didn't expect to benefit from my calling as a music leader. Now it's hard to think of a way I haven't benefited.

She has only 24 hours to live, and even if she makes it, she will be paralyzed from the eyes down with no chance of recovery." This was the bleak verdict doctors presented to my family in March 2004. At only 30 years of age, I had suffered a stroke that left me unable to speak or

move. Yet in those dark, lonely hours, experiences from my previous calling as a Primary music leader gave me hope.

I have always loved music and felt strength in the words of the hymns. Yet prior to my stroke, when I was called to be the ward's Primary music leader, I was very apprehensive. How was I supposed to make a difference in the children's lives? My music education background had taught me to set goals in my teaching, so I decided to try to help the children feel the Spirit as





When my oldest son, Zach, was baptized, I was able to use my right hand to plunk out a song while my husband supported me at the piano bench.

we sang. When we sang songs such as “I Lived in Heaven,”¹ I was astonished by the strong presence of the Holy Ghost in the room and by the children’s deep, thoughtful questions about the lyrics.

One of my favorite teaching methods was using American Sign Language (ASL). I found that the children understood the songs better when we discussed how the signs offered a visual representation of the words. I really enjoyed hearing the children sing and watching them sign “I’m Trying to Be like Jesus.”² The message

rang true in my heart, and I often felt that I was the benefactor of the Spirit that the children invited. I could sense my testimony growing, and I truly felt blessed by the Lord.

The blessings of my calling as Primary music leader were not limited to the Primary room, though. With the calling came the need to practice and play the music at home so I would be prepared each Sunday. As a result, my own children’s love for Primary music increased. The words of these songs brought a peaceful, calm spirit, comforting our children when they were hurt and lulling them to sleep each night.





They insisted on listening to the *Children's Songbook* CDs³ in the car—even if the ride was just a short one—and consequently began to memorize many of the songs.

However, it was not until after my stroke that I was aware of the far-reaching effects of this music in my life. With so much recent experience singing Primary songs, I found they were what kept me going during my trials. During my darkest hours I would pray and sing “A Child’s Prayer”⁴ in my head. As I cried out like the child of the first verse, “Heavenly Father, are you really there?” He would mercifully answer by reassuring me that I was not alone and that He *was* there, as stated in the second verse of the song. What a strength and reassurance!

During the recovery process, my husband and children came to my hospital room to hold family home evenings and frequently sang “Love Is Spoken Here.”⁵ That was the last song I had taught in Primary, and it was wonderful to hear my children sing it, knowing that I had planted those seeds. As they sang, I could relate to the mother in the song, praying on her knees (how I wished that I too could kneel!). Her pleas to Heavenly Father were also mine. I also shared the same gratitude for priesthood authority in my home. While I could not voice these thoughts to my family, the Primary song voiced these feelings for me.

It has been nearly four years since I suffered my stroke,

and I have been able to regain far more abilities than the doctors expected I ever would. I have a small amount of movement in my right arm, which allows me to type on my computer and operate a powered wheelchair.

I use a modified form of ASL—which I first learned in my Primary calling—to communicate. Because of this, I can still “sing” Primary songs with my children and express my feelings to family and friends.

Before my stroke I had always planned on singing at my children’s baptisms. In August 2005 my oldest child, Zach, was baptized. I was able to use my right hand to plunk out “When I Am Baptized”⁶ while my husband supported me at the piano bench. It felt good to express my deepest feelings about baptism through music and in a way that Zach would understand.

When I began serving as a Primary music leader, I did not think the calling would benefit me. Yet it plainly has! The Primary songs have blessed me with a better understanding of gospel principles, a strengthened testimony, the ability to communicate with my family, and the strength to persevere. The words and melody of Primary songs may be simple, but the message and the power of each one are clear.

We may not always understand why the Lord has given us a particular assignment. Even so, we must trust the Lord and put our faith in Him and His promptings. I am so grateful I was a Primary music leader before my stroke! The songs I can no longer sing can still communicate my feelings of the gospel to others. Every time I hear my children sing Primary songs, I know that their testimonies are being strengthened and that they share my love for the Lord and His gospel. ■

The words and melody of Primary songs may be simple, but the message and the power of each one are clear.



NOTES

1. *Children's Songbook*, 4.
2. *Children's Songbook*, 78–79.
3. Item no. 50428.
4. *Children's Songbook*, 12–13.
5. *Children's Songbook*, 190–91.
6. *Children's Songbook*, 103.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What are some ways I can strengthen myself and progress spiritually when my spouse is not supportive of my Church activity?

I have discovered a few things that have helped me as I have struggled in my situation.

Pray. This simple act is a phenomenal source of strength. The love and support that Heavenly Father pours into my heart has sustained me in difficult times. I have found it important to pray for my husband. I also pray for the capacity to remain calm and loving rather than giving in to resentment and anger. Prayer has helped me to grow spiritually as I learn to depend on the Lord for things I cannot control.

Attend the temple. Whether you are endowed or not, attend the temple regularly if you can. I have found that simply being at the temple has given me additional strength and filled me with peace.

Find time to be alone. It can be difficult to feel the Spirit when your spouse is not supportive of Church activity. Feeling the promptings of the Holy Ghost is essential to personal growth. Find a regular time each day to be alone so that you can study

and ponder the scriptures and pray. Such times of concentrated spiritual feasting will give you strength and sustain you through difficult times.





PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT CASEY, POSED BY MODELS

Go to church and take the sacrament. Even if you can participate in no other Church activity, try to make Sunday worship mandatory for yourself. Taking the sacrament will remind you of the covenants you made and will help you remember the importance of the gospel in your life. Associating with other ward members on Sunday allows you to build friendships with others who share your beliefs.

Seek priesthood blessings. I have found priesthood blessings to be a tremendous source of comfort. They have given me strength to hold firm to my beliefs and encouragement to continue progressing.

Remember that growth is personal, so don't compare yourself to others; instead, look at where you have been and where you are now.

Nichole Gray, Iowa

Make friends in the ward and invite them over to your house to socialize with you and your family. Encourage your friends not to actively proselyte your spouse. Rather, they should simply be people with whom you can share friendships and recreational activities, such as watching movies, playing games, or talking about life and other interests. As your spouse comes to know and enjoy the company of other Latter-day Saints, he or she will likely become more open to your membership and Church attendance.

Peter Conti-Brown, California

My husband was not active for a period of 14 years. During the first seven years, while attending church regularly with our children, I felt as if I were walking on eggshells with regard to our Church participation. It was very stressful for all of us.

After seven years I decided to pursue regular Church participation, but I made sure to coordinate with my husband's schedule. For instance, after consulting with my husband, instead of holding family home evenings on Monday night, my children and I held family home *afternoon* while my

husband was working. We had family prayer and read our scriptures in the morning after he'd gone to work, and we always prayed for him.

I drove the children to Mutual or arranged rides so that the activities did not interrupt my husband's schedule. When there was a fireside, I would tell him what time we were leaving and when to expect us home, and I promised we'd bring him a treat if the refreshments included chocolate.

I also marked all Church activities and meetings on the family calendar so there were no surprises. After a few months he came to accept and even expect our activity. Eventually he even encouraged our children to be ready on time.

Our children were eventually baptized at ages 14 and 15, after their father gave permission. By adapting our activity to accommodate my husband's needs and feelings, the peace of the Spirit filled our home. I find courage in knowing that Heavenly Father knows me and is aware that I try to do my best every day.

Name Withheld

Although my husband and I were married in the temple, he has not been active for most of our 25 years together. In the beginning, I attended church feeling resentful that my husband wasn't with me. I later realized that my negative thoughts created discouragement, frustration, and self-pity, which blocked the Spirit. I decided that this was not how I wanted to live and tried diligently to be cheerful and optimistic. Instead of thinking about



STRENGTH THROUGH ADVERSITY

“The restored gospel of Jesus Christ gives us help in knowing how to qualify for the

strength of the Lord as we deal with adversity. It tells us why we face tests in life. And, even more importantly, it tells us how to get protection and help from the Lord.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “In the Strength of the Lord,” Ensign, May 2004, 16.

the qualities my husband lacked, I started praying for him. I focused on the good qualities I already enjoyed about my husband. My suggestion is to pray for your marriage and then act on your prayers by showing support and appreciation to your spouse.

Name Withheld

I make an effort to be considerate of my nonmember spouse’s time at home by carefully planning my Church participation. I fulfill Church responsibilities while he is at work. For example, I do my visiting teaching and prepare Primary lessons during the day. I attend the temple during the week with other sisters who are in similar situations.

Relief Society home, family, and personal enrichment meeting is usually my only night away from home. My husband doesn’t mind, especially when I bring him some leftover dessert! I reserve Saturdays just for him.

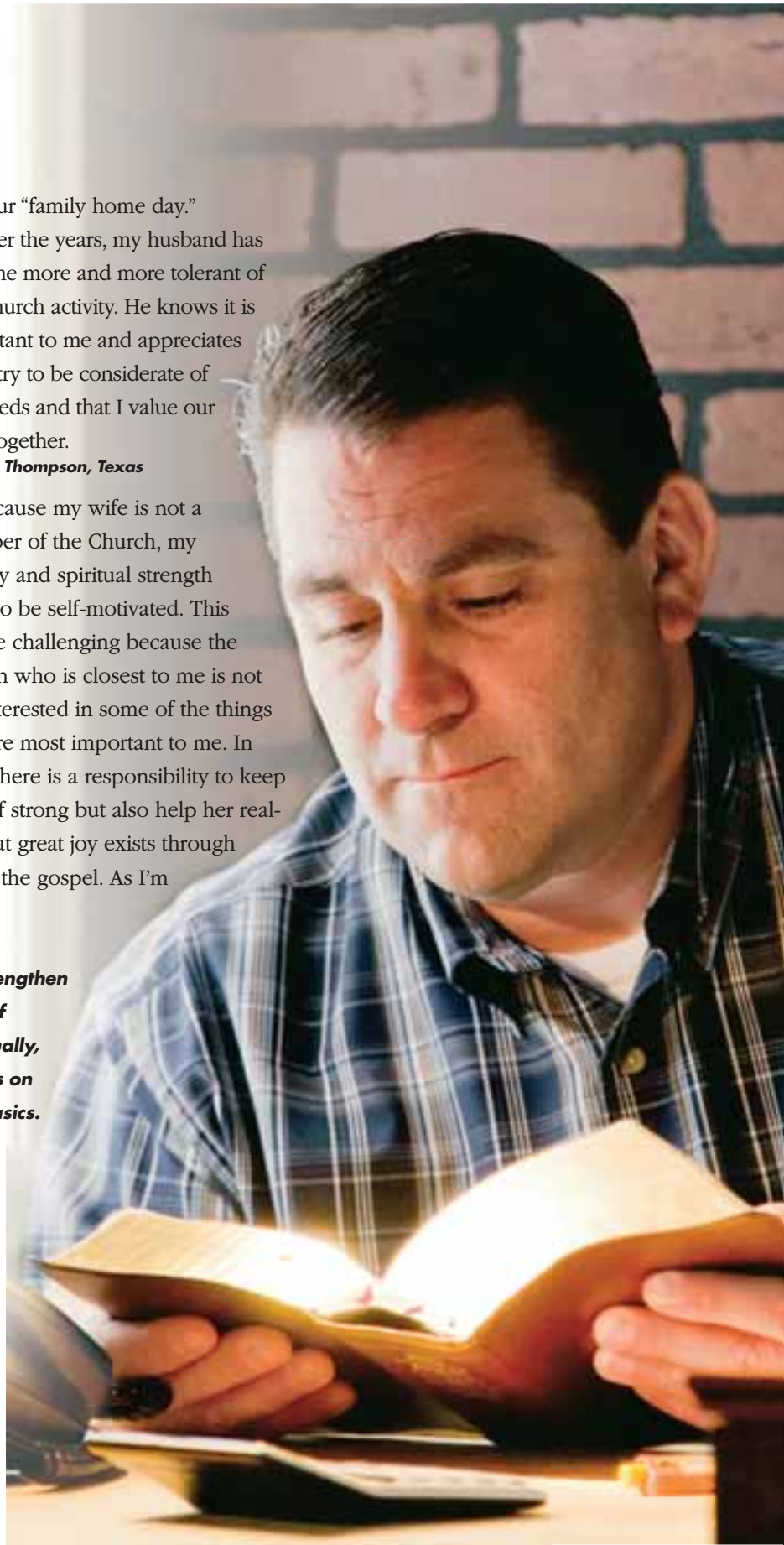
It is our “family home day.”

Over the years, my husband has become more and more tolerant of my Church activity. He knows it is important to me and appreciates that I try to be considerate of his needs and that I value our time together.

Connie Thompson, Texas

Because my wife is not a member of the Church, my activity and spiritual strength have to be self-motivated. This can be challenging because the person who is closest to me is not yet interested in some of the things that are most important to me. In turn, there is a responsibility to keep myself strong but also help her realize that great joy exists through living the gospel. As I’m

To strengthen myself spiritually, I focus on the basics.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

able to keep myself strong, there is an increased likelihood that the latter can be accomplished.

To strengthen my spirituality, I've found there is significant value in being consistent with the basics. These include scripture study, prayer, attending meetings, and magnifying Church callings. Consistently adhering to basic practices has allowed me to receive strength and revelation and has ultimately helped me to gracefully endure the challenges life places before me.

Remaining consistent also helps from a missionary perspective. I am better able to do what's right and remain strong spiritually, thereby setting a good example and being better able to lift and inspire those around me.

Name Withheld

My husband served a mission and we married in the temple, but he became less active after our marriage. He didn't care to participate in family home evening, family or couple prayer, temple attendance, or even scripture reading. In fact, it created conflict when I tried to include these activities in our home. I had agency to make my own choices, but I needed to do so carefully so as not to contribute to the contention between us. I found other ways to strengthen my children and myself spiritually that did not create conflict in our home.

I read the scriptures privately and made sure our children had access to the scriptures. I also purchased adaptations of the scriptures for children



After consulting with my husband, my children and I held family home "afternoon" while my husband was working.

SHARE YOUR IDEAS

An upcoming Questions and Answers feature will focus on the following question:

The Christmas season can seem hectic, but the angels sang of "peace on earth." In what ways do you find peace in your celebration of Christmas?

If you'd like to contribute your ideas and experiences, please label them "holiday preparations" and follow the submission guidelines under "Do You Have a Story to Tell?" in the contents pages at the beginning of the magazine. Please limit responses to 500 words and submit them by October 17.

with audiotapes that my young children enjoyed listening to before going to sleep at night. They each had a small picture of Jesus Christ near their beds as a quiet reminder to follow His example and pray to Heavenly Father.

We enjoyed Church music and Primary songs in the car as I drove them to school and other activities. I talked to my children about spiritual things as we went through our daily activities. This was our time to share our thoughts, experiences, feelings, and testimonies with each other.

When my children were old enough for me to leave them at home, I began attending the temple each month. These temple visits provided me time to deeply reflect and ponder on spiritual matters. In the temple I felt comforted concerning my situation and received the strength to carry on.

Most important, I counseled with my Heavenly Father each day. Through personal revelation I was given direction on how to manage my difficult situation and help my children to live gospel standards. I no longer felt alone in my efforts to raise my children in the gospel. Although my marriage continued to deteriorate and eventually ended in divorce, I developed a deep trust in my Savior in my hour of need. My children have strong testimonies and have now served missions and married in the temple. In seeking the guidance of the Lord, I found I could have a gospel-centered home and achieve happiness despite our circumstances.

Name Withheld ■



As I look to the Lord, He expands my limited, mortal vision to an eternal perspective.

Looking to the Lord

BY MARY N. COOK

First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency

While my husband and I were serving in the Asia Area, we would often walk up Wan Chai Gap, a trail near our home in Hong Kong. The ascent is steep and difficult to climb, particularly on hot, humid summer days.

One Saturday I noticed that I wasn't enjoying our walk, which seemed more like punishment than exercise. Looking down at the pavement for nearly the entire walk, I felt as though we were never going to reach the top.

I made an interesting discovery that day. When I looked down, my vision was limited to a narrow stretch of pavement. Trudging along, I saw the same narrow view of pavement, pavement, pavement. But when I looked up, I had a gorgeous view ahead of me. I saw trees with bright yellow flowers. I saw birds flying and singing melodious songs. I saw Tai Chi students rhythmically opening colorful fans as part of their exercise routine. Soon we reached our goal, Stubbs Road, and beyond that I saw bright blue skies and fluffy white clouds.



Looking to the Lord

When we look down, focusing on the narrow view of our circumstances, we may miss seeing many of the opportunities the Lord has in store for us. Do we allow our circumstances to limit our view, or do we look up to the Lord, who can expand our vision?

Challenges—such as poor health, loss of a loved one, accident, divorce, or financial reversals—are a part of everyone’s life. We all encounter unplanned difficulties. Responding positively to those difficulties is a great challenge.

In *For the Strength of Youth*, the First Presidency promises: “The Lord will make much more out of your life than you can by yourself. He will increase your opportunities, expand your vision, and strengthen you. He will give you the help you need to meet your trials and challenges.”¹

The sons of Mosiah understood this principle and looked

to the Lord when they faced difficult circumstances. In the book of Alma we read:

“They had many afflictions; they did suffer much, both in body and in mind . . . and also much labor in the spirit. . .

“And it came to pass that they journeyed many days in the wilderness, and they fasted much and prayed much that the Lord would grant unto them a portion of his Spirit to go with them, and abide with them, that they might be an instrument in the hands of God to bring, if it were possible, their brethren, the Lamanites, to the knowledge of the truth, to the knowledge of the baseness of the traditions of their fathers, which were not correct” (Alma 17:5, 9).

Then, rather than focus on their afflictions, they looked for ways to be instruments in the hands of God to lift and bless others. In answer to their fasting and prayers and their faith and works, the Lord gave them the help they needed in their difficult circumstances.



I didn't wait to be included; I looked for opportunities to be included.

Courage to Go Forth

I was 37 years old when I was sealed to my husband in the Salt Lake Temple. My single years presented many unique challenges. I had always thought that I would be married and have children by age 25, but I found myself in circumstances that were far different from my plans.

Many times I found myself looking down at the pavement, focusing on *me* and my circumstances. My perspective was narrow. Life seemed hard and unfair. I became discouraged. I lost my self-confidence.

I remember a significant point in my life when, like the sons of Mosiah, I looked to the Lord. I had always remained active in the Church and had a “knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Timothy 3:7), but I desired more. I made the decision to be more diligent in my scripture study, to be more prayerful, and to live more worthy of the guidance of the Spirit. I longed to be an “instrument in the hands of God,” as were the sons of Mosiah.

It “took courage to go forth” (Alma 17:12) and look for new opportunities. I set professional goals and enrolled in a graduate program to improve my job situation. I chose to move from a singles ward into a family ward. I became involved, attending family picnics and dinners and programs for adults. I joined the ward choir. I came to know the bishop well. He was a wise and caring man who extended callings to me that blessed my life.

Through visiting teaching and Relief Society activities, I became friends with many women, and they often included me in their family activities. But I didn't *wait* to be included; I looked for opportunities to be included. I volunteered to watch their children, and I invited their families to dinner. Their children became my children.

I also realized that the best place to love and be loved is within your own family. My brother had three children, and I became interested in their lives, schoolwork, and activities.

Because I was contributing, my self-confidence improved, and I found life to be more interesting and fulfilling as I looked to the Lord. Just as I saw the trees, flowers, birds, and people along the path when I looked up on Wan Chai Gap, looking to the Lord helped me see new opportunities for my life.

As I continue to look to the Lord, I recognize that He expands my limited, mortal vision to an eternal perspective. Through answers to prayers, I have learned that the Lord knows me, loves me, and is aware of me and of my circumstances. This knowledge has given me the faith that He *will* continue to help me meet future trials and challenges as I look to Him for opportunities and “choose righteousness and happiness, no matter what [my] circumstances.”² ■

NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2001), 42.
2. *For the Strength of Youth*, 5.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST TEACHES THE ETERNAL POTENTIAL OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD



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

What Is My Eternal Potential?

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “A woman’s richest rewards will come as she rises to fulfill her destiny as a devoted daughter of God. To all faithful Saints He has promised thrones, kingdoms, principalities, glory, immortality, and eternal lives. (See Rom. 2:7; D&C 75:5; 128:12, 23; 132:19.) That is the potential for women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is exalting, everlasting, and divine” (“Woman—Of Infinite Worth,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 22).

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president: “Oh, that every girl and woman would have a testimony of her potential for eternal motherhood. . . . Female roles did not begin on earth, and they do not end here. A woman who treasures motherhood on earth will treasure motherhood in the world to come, and ‘where [her] treasure is, there will [her] heart be also’ (Matthew 6:21).

By developing a mother heart, each girl and woman prepares for her divine, eternal mission of motherhood” (“A ‘Mother Heart,’” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2004, 76).

What Can Help Me Reach My Eternal Potential?

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “God expresses his love for us by providing the guidance we need to progress and reach our potential. . . . He who knows most about us, our potential, and our eternal possibilities has given us divine counsel and commandments in his instruction manuals—the holy scriptures” (“God’s Love for His Children,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 59).

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency: “The purpose of God’s creations and of His giving us life is to allow us to have the learning experience necessary for us to come back to Him, to live with Him in eternal life. That is only possible if we have our natures changed through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, true repentance, and making and keeping the covenants He offers all of His Father’s children through His Church” (“Education for Real Life,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2002, 16).

President John Taylor (1808–87):

“Our main object is eternal lives and exaltations; our main object is to prepare ourselves, our posterity and our progenitors for thrones, principalities and powers in the eternal worlds . . . ; that . . . they and we might be prepared, having fulfilled the measure of our creation on the earth, to associate with the intelligences that exist in the eternal worlds; be admitted again to the presence of our Father, whence we came, and participate in those eternal realities which mankind, without revelation, know nothing about. We are here for that



purpose; . . . we are building temples for that purpose; we are receiving endowments for that purpose” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* [Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2001], 8–9).

Doctrine and Covenants 78:18:

“Be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours.” ■

"GRAMMA" SCHOOL

Several years ago I had the impression that my grandchildren wouldn't live near me for long, and I wanted to spend lots of constructive time with them while I could. With their mothers' permission, I invited the children over to my house twice a week for two hours each time. We called it "Gramma" school.

We started our days together with prayer and talked about Heavenly Father. We emphasized good values, enjoyed scripture stories, and colored religious pictures. And that was for starters. The possibilities of what we could do together were endless. I didn't spend a lot of time preparing, nor did I spend

much money. I just brainstormed ideas or found activities in books.

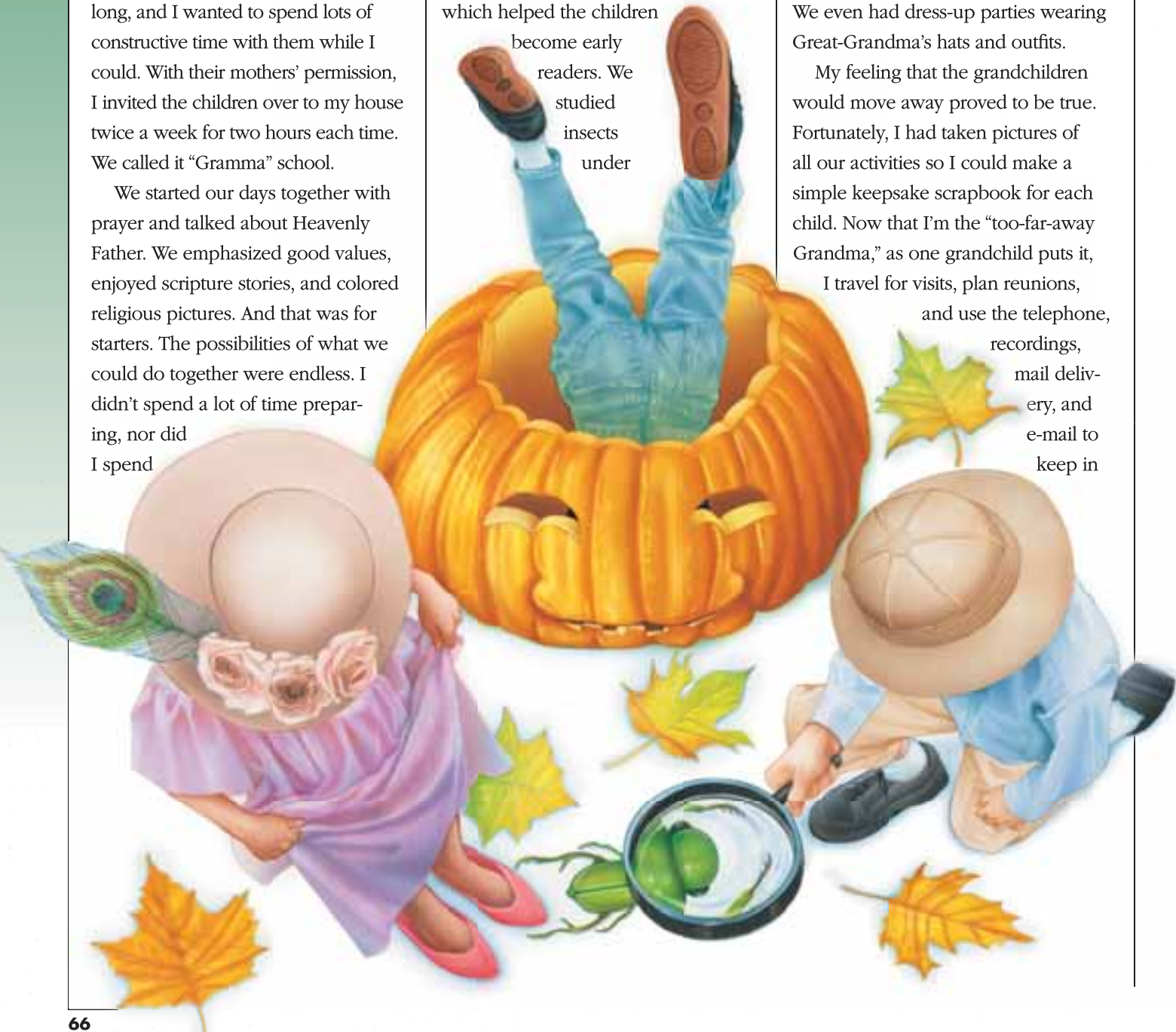
A few of our favorites included dancing while I played the piano, baking goodies, making play dough, and exploring nature. We also learned the alphabet and sounds of each letter, which helped the children

become early readers. We studied insects under

magnifying glasses and picked apricot blossoms to make "popcorn" balls while we sang "Popcorn Popping" (*Children's Songbook*, 242). We picked autumn leaves, carved pumpkins, and told stories (while wearing homemade costumes) about pilgrim ancestors. We even had dress-up parties wearing Great-Grandma's hats and outfits.

My feeling that the grandchildren would move away proved to be true. Fortunately, I had taken pictures of all our activities so I could make a simple keepsake scrapbook for each child. Now that I'm the "too-far-away Grandma," as one grandchild puts it,

I travel for visits, plan reunions, and use the telephone, recordings, mail delivery, and e-mail to keep in



touch. I love being a grandma and am grateful for the knowledge that families can be eternal.

Barbara R. Matson, Washington

"HI, I'M NEW"

In our first six years of marriage, my husband and I moved five times, so we had a lot of practice getting to know people in each new ward. We quickly learned that if we waited for others to make us feel at home we might have to wait a long time. But it wasn't that way when we did our part. Here are some ideas for getting to know people in a new ward.

Show up. Though it may seem intimidating to attend a new ward, go the first Sunday you're there. The longer you wait, the harder it will be. Along with your Sunday meetings, do your best to support home, family, and personal enrichment activities, youth activities, and other ward get-togethers.

Speak up. Don't be afraid to offer your insights during class. Sharing your thoughts and life experiences within the context of the lessons is an excellent way to let others get to know you.

Sign up. There are many opportunities to serve in your new ward. Whether it's taking someone a meal, saying a class prayer, making a dessert, or helping to clean the meetinghouse, be eager to volunteer. This not only gives you the opportunity to serve, but it also puts you in contact with others who wouldn't have known to ask for your help otherwise.



Helping Children Remember Him

How do you convince four young children to sit reverently during Church meetings? For a long time, my attempts to do so were in vain. And my solution—toys—was often the cause of our distractions.

In an attempt to remedy the

problem (or at least curb it), I came up with a useful family-night activity. I gave each child a small, inexpensive photo album, to be enjoyed only during sacrament meeting. I then provided various pictures of the Savior for them to cut out and paste

throughout their albums.

Now on Sundays, my children eagerly anticipate the time they have to view their special books. Not only does our family benefit, but everyone seated near us can focus better too. The key part of our Sunday worship can and should be spiritually edifying for everyone, including our little ones.



Clean up. When you attend activities and complete the service you signed up for, stay a little longer to help clean and put things away. This shows you are interested in being part of the ward family. It also gives you the opportunity to meet more people.

Meet up. Introduce yourself to the new bishop as soon as possible. We found it helpful to pay tithing on our first visit. It opens the door for conversation and demonstrates commitment to gospel covenants.

Josi Kilpack, Utah

OUR WARD'S "INSTANT" CHOIR

When our ward choir sings in sacrament meeting, it sometimes seems there are more people in the choir than in

our congregation. And they sing with spirit and enthusiasm even though they have not rehearsed together even once. How do they do it? They participate in our ward "instant" choir.

To attend practices before or after the meeting block or during the week would not be feasible for many in our ward. So our music leader, Sister Julie Lynch, chooses a favorite hymn and gives the ward a few weeks to practice it at home. On the third Sunday, everyone who wants to participate makes their way to the choir seats.

Instant choirs aren't intended to replace traditional rehearsals and performances where they are feasible. But the idea might be considered one of several options to help "every ward and branch in the Church . . . have a choir that performs regularly" (*Hymns*, x).

Gayle Spjut, Kentucky



I DIDN'T GIVE UP

BY CARLOS A. DEL LONGO

A year after my baptism in 1963 in Argentina, I was called to serve as branch clerk. One day I came across some blank family group records and pedigree charts. Without any training, I began filling out the sheets with the help of my mother. She remembered the names of her ancestors and my father's, as well as the important dates in their lives, back to the fourth generation. She even remembered some of the people in the fifth generation and one person in the sixth.

I felt the desire to go further in my search, and I worked to verify the information my mother had given me. When I learned the purpose of family history work, I immediately began submitting to the temple the names of my deceased loved ones.

Though I had been successful on my mother's line, I struggled with my father's side. Despite my efforts, for close to 25 years I was unable to confirm the date of my paternal grandfather's birth. His marriage certificate stated that he was born in Udine, Italy, so I wrote about 30 letters to that

town and the surrounding towns. None of the replies confirmed what I was looking for.

In 1988 a branch of the family history library opened in Rosario, and I was called to work as a librarian. It felt like touching heaven, having all of that material within reach. I spent hours reading, and I ordered microfilm records from many cities. In the International Genealogical Index (IGI), I found the exact names of my grandfather and great-grandfather. I wrote to the town in Italy where the two men had been born and asked for their birth certificates. The parish

I wrote about 30 letters to Udine, Italy, and surrounding towns, but none of the replies confirmed what I was looking for.

priest sent them to me, but the records proved these men were not related to me.

I wrote again—asking this time if the priest had any information on my grandfather. He referred me to the city hall, so I wrote a letter there. My heart leaped with joy when I received a sheet of paper containing the names

and important dates pertaining to my grandparents, great-grandparents, second great-grandparents, and many other family members. This sheet also told me that my grandfather's name had been changed after his arrival in Argentina, explaining the confusion in finding his information.

I wrote to the city again and asked them to send me the sheet that preceded the one they had already sent. They did so, and it included the names of 27 more people. I had the temple ordinances done for all these

family members, with the assurance that they were indeed my ancestors.

Because of wonderful experiences like these, I feel well rewarded for my efforts in doing family history research. Though there have been disappointments at times, I have not given up. I can see that Heavenly Father has surely led me in my search.

I know that our Heavenly Father will provide an opportunity for all of His children to receive temple ordinances, whether now or in the Millennium. But I also know that our ancestors who accept the gospel in the spirit world are longing for us to do our family history work. If we give our best efforts to the Lord, He will provide a way. ■

FAMILY HISTORY REFLECTIONS

BY STEPHEN C. YOUNG

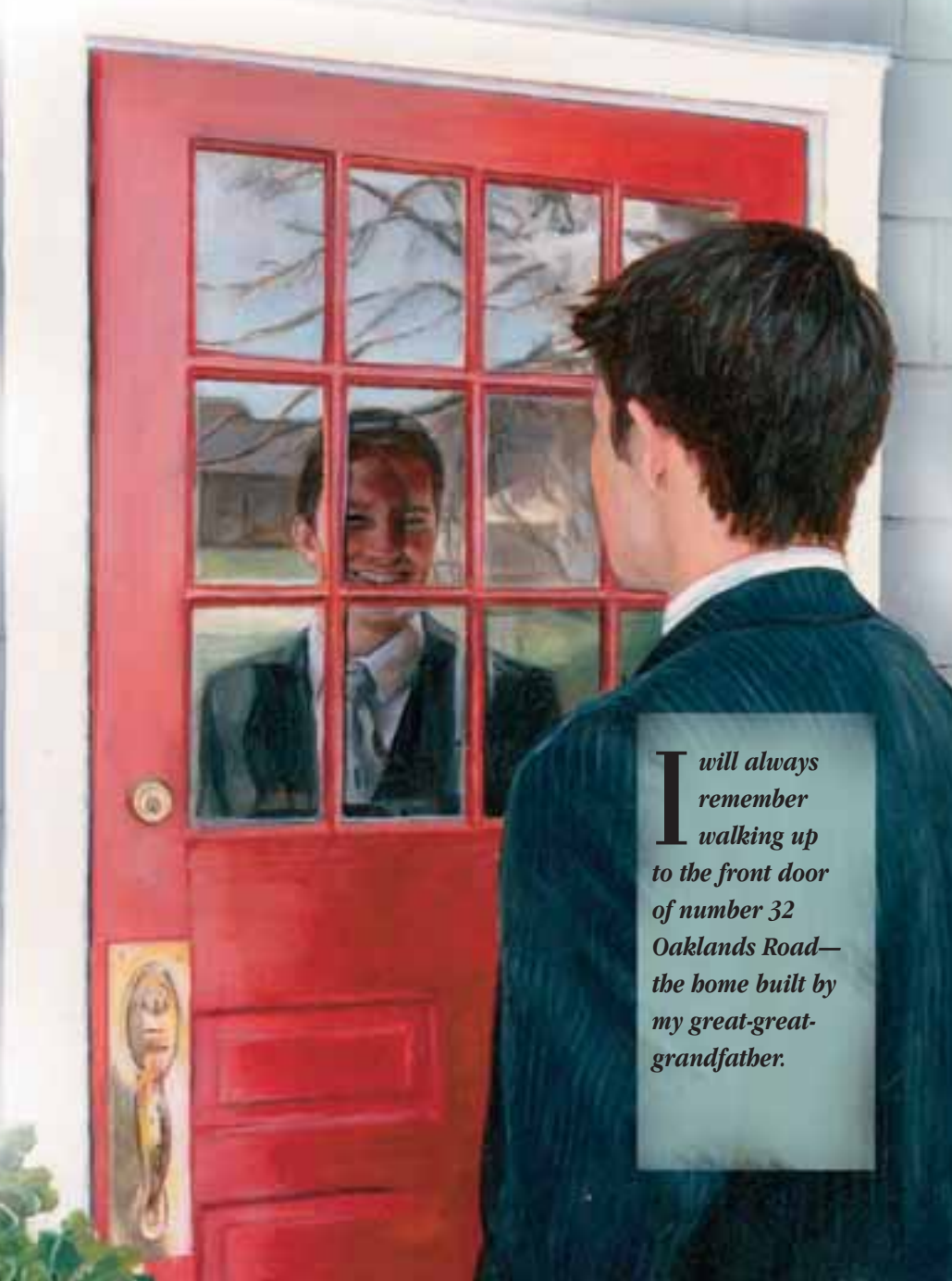
In the summer of 1979, I was surprised to learn that some of my mother's books and papers were stored in a backyard shed of ward members in my hometown of London, Ontario. In salvaging what I could from several moldering cardboard boxes, I discovered partially completed pedigree charts on my family, some family group records, and a few research notes. The real treasure was a four-page personal history written by my mother, who died when I was 11. This wonderful handwritten history

describes her childhood in England during the 1930s and her life through World War II. Finding these records stimulated my initial interest in family history and turned my heart to my ancestors.

Almost two years later, in April 1981, my father died unexpectedly. Among his effects I discovered a

ring that bore his initials, *CMY*, but I couldn't recall ever seeing it on his hand. He must have worn this ring as a young man while serving on a Canadian Navy minesweeper during the war.

Now, upon his death, I was the only living person appearing on my one-page pedigree chart, so I had to



I will always remember walking up to the front door of number 32 Oaklands Road—the home built by my great-great-grandfather.

rely on extended relatives to gather more information. One of these was Betty, a sister-in-law of my grandfather, still living at the family home in Bexleyheath, Kent, England. I had always hoped to visit and learn more about my mother's family, but as a single college student, I did not have the financial means to do so. Now, with the modest amount bequeathed to me after my father's passing, I could fund a trip across the ocean to visit.

On the day I went to visit Aunt Betty for the first time, I felt nervous. Would she understand my great desire to learn more about earlier generations? I looked at my father's ring, now on my own right hand, reflected in the window of the double-decker bus I was riding in. It brought me comfort, as if his hand were resting on my knee in support of my errand.

Happily, Aunt Betty received me warmly and revealed many new and helpful details about my family, including the fact that my great-great-grandfather had built the home she was living in. That night I even slept in my grandfather's childhood bedroom. I never met him, but from the photos she shared, I learned that I bear an uncanny resemblance to him. She generously gave me some of these old family photos, letters, and a family Bible listing the full names, birthdates, and birthplaces of two generations of my ancestors starting in the 1830s.

It has been over 25 years since that rainy September afternoon in England, when my tentative steps

took me from the bus stop to an uncertain welcome at my ancestral home. Since then I have discovered a treasure trove of information from extended family members about my ancestors on both sides of the Atlantic, allowing me to ensure their temple ordinances have been done.

I will always remember walking up to the front door of number 32 Oaklands Road and seeing my own reflection in the glass. Now I know that the familiar face reflected back at me was not unlike the young face of my grandfather welcoming me home. ■

SEARCHING IN FINLAND

BY JUDITH ANN LAURUNEN

MCNEIL

My sister and I felt an emptiness because we had no idea who our Laurunen forebears were. All we knew is that they had come from Finland to America in 1901. So in August 2004, my sister Janice and cousin Sandy joined my husband, Charlie, and me on a trip to discover our ancestors.

In the process of researching for our trip, Sandy discovered a two-page report on the Laurunen Homestead, built in 1605. The earliest mention of our family was in 1569 in the town of Kauhajoki.

Once in Finland, we rented a car and left early the next morning for

the long drive to Kauhajoki. We had a hard time finding it and were about to give up when Charlie caught sight of a small airport. We drove there to ask for help. Sandy showed a young man our report, and he kindly offered to take us to the town library. I am sure we would never have found Kauhajoki by ourselves since it is well hidden down a forested highway. It seemed the Lord was leading us in our journey.

At the library a young woman gave us a map, circling the Lutheran church and cemetery. We found the church easily. After two hours of research, with the help of the pastor and several clerks, one of them called our Laurunen relatives and told them they had visitors from America. They came immediately with family genealogies dating back to the year 1550.

With the church bookkeeper as our interpreter, we walked through the beautifully manicured cemetery. Sandy stood at her grandfather's grave for the first time. Later, she saw a picture of him and held his violin. We were all deeply touched as the void we had felt before was being filled.

Then our Finnish cousins drove us to the family homestead, which was pictured on our two-page report. They told us that our family had owned as much land as the eye could see. The house on the family homestead was enormous and had housed Laurunen families as far back as 1550. When the Russian military came into Kauhajoki, they used the homestead for military headquarters. They

burned down the church and all other homes in the area. Everyone, including our family, fled to the woods for safety. After the Russians left, our grandfather led the building of the new church that we had seen earlier. Eventually the land around the homestead was divided and sold.

In 2005 Janice, Sandy, and I returned to Kauhajoki for another visit with our newly found cousins

and more research. In 2006 we had our first Laurunen family reunion in America, and 15 of our Finnish cousins joined us. Eighty-nine family members celebrated the lives of our grandparents.

What a joy it has been to discover such a rich, fascinating family history and know more about who I am and where I came from. Family history is the work of the Lord. ■


MOM'S JOURNAL

BY EDNA F. CHANDLER

Mother had been living with me for almost five years. In love and gratitude I was glad I could care for her just as she had cared for me for so many years. But I missed her smiles and humorous comments. I longed to have her experience again the joy and excitement she had once felt when she went on rides with me. It hadn't really mattered where we went. Mother never missed pointing out the flowers, the birds on the telephone wires, or the children playing.

I missed the companionship we had enjoyed as we peeled potatoes, snapped beans, or read together. I longed to share childhood experiences with her and tell her news about my siblings and her grandchildren. She had always enjoyed family dropping by, especially the grandchildren. But now her dementia had changed things. She really wasn't sure anymore who I was, other than someone special who cared for her.

It had been a particularly difficult day with Mother. She gave me the usual blank stares when I tried to make conversation and distrustful looks when I tried to assist her. I was



We walked through the beautifully manicured cemetery, and my cousin stood at her grandfather's grave for the first time.

exhausted and frustrated as I sat down on the couch to think. I began to read aloud one of Mother's journals in hopes that she might be entertained by it and perhaps remember a little. My efforts proved futile, but as I continued to read to myself, the memories surfaced in me.

In those pages Mother repeatedly expressed the joy she had felt when her family would visit and the void she had felt when they left. She wrote of how hard it had been for her when my father became ill and, after a long struggle, had left her a widow at the age of 59. She wrote of how she missed Father and of how she worried about my older brother, who was stricken with the same disease.

Mother wrote of happy, fulfilling experiences like teaching Church classes and participating in single adult activities. She wrote of the satisfaction she had received in going to Dilkon, Arizona, to teach the gospel once a week on the Navajo Indian reservation. This brought to my mind how she had always emphasized the importance of being dependable when someone was counting on you. Sometimes her entries were short because she had been helping someone; they reminded me of how she often took food or gifts to anyone she thought needed help or cheer.

Many times in her entries she bore her testimony of the gospel.

I was especially touched by how she expressed the sorrow and worry she had felt when my daughter was born with Down syndrome and associated problems. Had she really spent almost a whole month feeding and caring for our other children as my

I felt an overwhelming surge of love for my brave mother and deep gratitude for the words of her journal that had brought her back to me.

husband and I went back and forth to the hospital while Debra Sue underwent open-heart surgery and related complications? Yes! And she had done it at age 70!

I remembered

how she had always been there for me when I needed her. Through the years I learned that if she could not be with me in person, her faithful letters and prayers would sustain me.

That night, as I sang hymns to Mother to calm her to sleep, I had an overwhelming surge of love for my brave, always-sacrificing mother and deep gratitude for the words of her journal that had brought her back to me. ■



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARCI JOHNSON



Like many families in the Voyager Ward, the Law family is dedicated to cultivating a missionary spirit.

Ward Members a Model of Missionary Preparation

By Lynda L. Hansen, Church Magazines

Strong, supportive families who are grounded in the gospel play a vital role in preparing youth to share the gospel as full-time missionaries. Add the support of dedicated leaders, and the result is a generation of committed missionaries.

Such has been the experience of the Voyager Ward in the Gilbert Arizona Val Vista Stake. Of its 310 members, 21 elders and 1 sister have accepted calls to serve the Lord over the past two years.

What has been done to help produce such dedication? Family foresight, excellent examples, and making preparation a priority early.

Family Foresight

Christopher Law recently returned from the Massachusetts Boston Mission. “I can’t remember when I decided to serve a mission,” he said. “I always knew I would. Going on a mission was a part of our family’s daily conversation.”

Families who help their children look ahead to missionary service from an early age help build enthusiastic, committed youth.

Bishop William Whatcott of the Voyager Ward said: “I believe the emphasis our parents have put on the importance of serving has been critical. Because of that, we have found that by the time

our young men receive the Aaronic Priesthood as deacons, the decision to serve a mission has already been made, and their desire to stay faithful and close to the gospel through their teenage years is greater.”

Families are best at equipping a future missionary with what he or she will need both spiritually and practically. One of the key tools a family has for helping children prepare to serve is family home evening.

Frank Lang, an advisor in the priests quorum and parent of a missionary, encouraged parents to hold family home evening whether they are new or established members. “That is where our children learn about the gospel,” he said. It also offers frequent opportunities to emphasize the importance

of missionary preparation and service.

Brother Law noted that family home evening was a time for his family to do member missionary work. “Making missionary work a part of the family helps develop the desire to serve,” he said.

Excellent Examples

While the family is key in fostering practical and spiritual preparation, the encouragement and examples of good Church leaders can support the instruction given in the home and can make a big difference in the lives of the family members.

“We have had wonderful leaders who have been great examples, mentors, and instructors,” Bishop Whatcott said. “From the time these young men are deacons until the time they leave on their missions, their leaders have focused on helping them stay active and maintain their desire to serve a mission.”

Once a month the young men of the Voyager Ward meet together to hear returned missionaries from their ward, including those who served many years ago, share their testimonies and life-changing mission experiences. Bishop Whatcott calls the monthly experience “invaluable.”

Brother Lang agrees. “The boys catch the vision of how important a mission is in their lives—that it still affects these men even now,” he said. “These returned missionaries bear powerful testimony of the importance of serving a mission.”

Leaders in the Voyager Ward have also felt it would be appropriate in their ward to gather the young men together on a Sunday evening before one of them leaves for the missionary training center. After a simple dinner, the young men share what the departing elder means to them. He in turn shares his testimony.

Making Preparation a Priority

Mission preparation is more likely to become a priority in the lives of young men when it is a priority in the lives of parents and leaders.

Priesthood leaders make an effort to support the family years before a young man is of missionary age.

At weekly missionary preparation classes, priesthood leaders teach with the assistance of recently returned missionaries. The *Preach My Gospel* manual is used for the lessons and discussions. Once a month parents attend the class to serve as investigators so the class participants can practice teaching the gospel.

Seminary attendance is also an important factor in helping to prepare young men for a mission, according to Brother Law. “Be active in seminary,” he said. “It helped me a lot. Scripture mastery is key. I used those scriptures every day on my mission.”

However, no matter how high a priority a mission may be for parents and leaders, the choice to serve and the choice to prepare must be made by the future missionaries.

“No one can convince them to serve without the Spirit touching their hearts,” Brother Lang said. “They each must be taught and converted by the Spirit. We leaders or other boys cannot do it.”

Vee Hiapo, the mother of two returned missionaries, B. J. and Kiana, says, “We must have faith that our children will make the right

decisions and allow them to use their agency.”

And in the end, if a young man or woman chooses to serve, even those who may be struggling with finances or a lack of family support will find a way. “The Lord will provide a way for them to serve if they follow Him in faith,” says Lothaire Bluth, Val Vista stake president. ■

and businesses and killing six people in Parkersburg. In New Hartford, the tornado destroyed an additional 30 homes and killed two people within a two-block radius of the Godfreys’ home.

After the tornado, neighbors stood in bewilderment, crying. Children ran around aimlessly, searching for lost pets. People drove through the area, asking if everyone was okay.

After calming his shoeless family, Brother Godfrey used his wife’s cell phone to call their home teacher, Jason Meyers, who lived 30 minutes away in Cedar Falls. Without hesitation, Brother Meyers said he was on his way. He and two other members journeyed along country roads,

Members Rely on Prayer During Deadly Tornado

By Eric Eames, Church Magazines

News reports on May 25, 2008, predicted the mile-wide tornado that had wiped out half of Parkersburg, Iowa, would head north. But as Wes Godfrey videotaped the tornado from his home to the east in New Hartford, Iowa, the rotating funnel slowly started to fill up his camcorder’s screen.

Brother Godfrey rushed his 8-months-pregnant wife, Erin, and two children into their tornado shelter and huddled his family together to pray. As Brother Godfrey asked Heavenly Father to spare their lives and the lives of their neighbors, the Spirit touched his heart, and he immediately knew two things: (1) they would be OK, and (2) they were going to get hit.

After the prayer, an eerie silence fell. Moments later, rain and wind exploded against the steel door of the shelter. The commotion lasted only a few seconds before silence returned.

When the family decided it was safe to come out,

their home was gone.

“I was devastated,” Sister Godfrey said. “I thought our house would still be there, but at the same time I was glad that we were alive. I realized how fragile life is.”

Winds of the tornado, rated as a low-end EF-5 on the Enhanced Fujita Scale,¹ peaked at 205 miles per hour (330 kilometers per hour), completely destroying more than 240 homes



Wes and Erin Godfrey walked out of their home—shown before and after the massive tornado struck.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF GODFREY FAMILY

past open fields, and around downed power lines to get to New Hartford. When they arrived, Brother Meyers jumped out of the vehicle to hug Brother Godfrey and his family.

"It was good, because we didn't have any family out there. But our ward family was there for us," Brother Godfrey said while choking back some tears.

They whisked the Godfreys out of the disaster area to stay at the Relief Society president's house, where members brought food and clothing.

The next morning the Godfreys wanted to try to find some valuables, even though pieces of their home were spread over 3 miles or more—and pictures of the Godfrey children were later found 100 miles away. Before they started searching, Brother Godfrey offered a prayer that they would be able to find some specific items, namely his and his wife's wedding rings, their wallets, scriptures, a journal, and a diabetic blood tester.

After 30 minutes of searching, a counselor in the stake presidency found the Godfreys' rings under some insulation. Fifteen minutes later their wallets turned up, fully intact with licenses and credit cards inside. Then the blood tester, the journal, and the scriptures were found.

"All that stuff is replaceable, but I think the reason we found them was to build everyone's testimony of prayer," Brother Godfrey said.

The home of another

member family, Laverne and Melva Gnade of Parkersburg, was also destroyed by the tornado. However, the one part of their house left standing contained their extensive family history and genealogical work. Home teachers also came to the aid of the Gnade family and helped take care of their needs.

Following the tornado, members of the Cedar Falls Ward, Cedar Rapids Iowa Stake, helped with various clean-up efforts. They helped turn an elementary school in nearby Aplington into the Parkersburg Distribution Center. At the center, tornado victims could pick up donated clothing, food, toiletries, cleaning supplies, and various other items, including microwaves and some appliances. Church members volunteered at the center three nights a week through August.

"We were so taken care of there," Sister Godfrey said. "Heavenly Father took care of us [then], and He still is, and that's what's so amazing." ■

NOTE

1. The Enhanced Fujita Scale, or EF Scale, is an updated version of the Fujita or F scale used for rating the strength of tornadoes in the United States by the damage they cause. It still estimates wind speeds, as did the original F scale, and still has 6 categories, from 0 to 5, but is more detailed and specific. It has been in use since February 2007.



PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURE SHARR

Members in their yellow Helping Hands T-shirts volunteer at the flooded home of Jeff and Melissa Smith.

Members Bring Hope to U.S. Flood Victims

By Eric Eames, Church Magazines

Throughout the midwestern United States, color-coded signs hanging outside buildings indicated the level of structural damage caused by the historic flooding that occurred between June 7 and July 1, 2008. More than 40 homes in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, received a purple placard from city inspectors. Such homes were considered beyond repair and were destroyed.

However, while purple signaled demolition, another color, yellow, came to symbolize service as hundreds of Church members and missionaries donned yellow Mormon Helping Hands T-shirts during sandbagging and other relief efforts.

Appreciation for those in yellow T-shirts surfaced as the floodwaters came and went.

For instance, after inspectors marked his home "unlivable but repairable," Dustin Kane, a 35-year-old single father, received help from members of the Cedar Falls Ward, who ripped out contaminated flooring and provided a generator for power washing. Dustin's mother, Nan, was impressed with the group's selflessness.

"These are people who didn't even know us, but they opened their arms and were so helpful and so kind, and nobody gave up," Mrs. Kane said.

To help flood victims, the Church sent 26,000 cleaning kits and 15,000 hygiene kits, which members distributed. Members also worked with other relief organizations as needed.

The Cedar Rapids stake set

up a relief warehouse filled with the wheelbarrows, shovels, and work clothes the Church sent. Being the most heavily impacted by the flooding, the stake also received funds to purchase power washers and generators. The community received the relief efforts with open arms.

The swollen waters killed at least 20, left thousands homeless, and resulted in damages of U.S. \$5 billion to North America's farmlands. The homes of several Church members were affected, but none were reported as being torn down.

In Nauvoo, Illinois, sandbagging efforts prevented floodwaters from damaging historical landmarks. Elder Vern Whisenant, a public affairs missionary in Nauvoo, said events in Nauvoo proceeded as normal in June and July.

This summer season,

Church directors felt inspired to move the Nauvoo Pageant from the Sunset by the Mississippi site, which became submerged during the flooding, to a spot near the Nauvoo temple. The new Nauvoo Outdoor Stage sits on top of a hill well above the flood plain. ■

Historic Help Remembered in Sandbagging Effort

During heavy flooding across the central United States in June, full-time missionaries joined in sandbagging efforts in many areas, including the city of Quincy, Illinois.

For two days, on June 18 and 19, 2008, more than 130 missionaries from the Illinois Peoria and Nauvoo Missions and the Missouri St. Louis Mission helped prevent flood damage to the city that once provided refuge for early Saints exiled from Missouri.

"I cannot put into words, quite frankly, how much it meant to us to have members of the ministry group from the Latter-day Saints, the young and the old, men and women, pitch in and help us like that," said Quincy mayor John Spring.

National Guard troops, prison inmates, missionaries, and others assembled about 25,000 sandbags per hour on June 18 and supplied 1.2 million sandbags in less than a week.

The missionaries

considered the two days spent sandbagging a small way to pay back the city of Quincy for its hospitality to early Church members.

In February 1839, heavy persecution stemming from the Mormon Extermination Order¹ in Missouri forced

nearly 10,000 Church members to flee to various locations in Illinois and Iowa. Quincy's 1,500 residents sheltered more than 5,000 members. Quincy provided the exiled Saints with clothes, jobs, and protection for a few months before the Prophet Joseph Smith led them 40 miles north to establish Nauvoo.

During the flooding,

missionaries also helped with many other sandbagging efforts throughout the Midwest, including towns south of Indianapolis, Indiana; Fort Madison and Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and in Niota and Dallas City, Illinois. ■

NOTE

1. See *History of the Church*, 3:175; also quoted in "News of the Church," *Ensign*, Jan. 1995, 76.



Missionaries in Mormon Helping Hands T-shirts fill sandbags in Quincy, Illinois.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LEE LYON

IN THE NEWS

New Manual Designed for Nursery Classes

A new lesson manual will soon be making its way to nursery classrooms throughout the Church.

The manual, *Behold Your Little Ones*, contains 30 lessons focused on gospel doctrine and is specifically designed for nursery classes.

Each lesson includes a color photograph as well as a line drawing that can be copied or traced to help

reinforce the principles taught in the lesson. Suggestions for using the visuals, teaching tips, and optional activities are included in every lesson.

The resource offers flexibility for teachers to present the lessons in any order or use consecutive weeks to emphasize a principle not easily understood by this age group.

With topics such as “I Can Pray to Heavenly Father” or

“My Family Can Be Together Forever,” these lessons can help build a foundation of understanding in any setting and can also be used by parents as a tool for teaching in the home.

“We are so pleased to have this new nursery manual,” said Cheryl C. Lant, Primary general president. “It has been created for the children, for their spiritual development, and for their social experience. It will be equally valuable in the hands of nursery leaders and parents.”

Behold Your Little Ones



Behold Your Little Ones is a new manual specifically for children in nursery.

will be available in 27 languages by the end of 2008 and will be distributed to local priesthood leaders. It is available through Church distribution at LDScatalog.com. ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Humanitarian Services Receives Award from Madagascar

In recognition of its welfare contributions in Madagascar, LDS Humanitarian Services received the Chevalier de L'Ordre Nationale Madagascar award in June 2008 from the country's Ministry of Health. In 2007 and 2008, the Church provided equipment for dentists treating patients in remote areas and for doctors to perform cataract surgery. The Church has also donated 500 wheelchairs and completed clean water projects for 17 communities.

Kenya Recognizes Church's Welfare Efforts

The Kenyan government commended the Church's relief efforts after a dispute following the country's presidential election left 1,500 people dead and displaced 600,000. The Church

sent 20 40-foot containers packed with blankets, hygiene and school supplies, dry milk, and nutritional food as well as kits for use in orphanages and for newborn care. The supplies will be distributed by partner agencies within the African country to families seeking assistance to return to their homes.

Preach My Gospel Downloads Available

The *Preach My Gospel* manual used by members and missionaries all over the world can be viewed online or downloaded in PDF format in 42 languages. It is also now available as an English audio recording in MP3 format. To download the files, visit GospelLibrary.lds.org and select *Preach My Gospel* from the “Shortcuts” menu on the right. Church audio files can also be found at www.lds.org/mp3/newarchive.

Joseph Smith Manual MP3s Available

The manual *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* is now available to download online in MP3 audio format in 11 languages. The files are available in Cantonese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Access all the audio files at www.lds.org/mp3/newarchive or by clicking on **Listen** in the individual text chapters found in the LDS.org Gospel Library.

Danish, Dutch, Hungarian Triples Available Online

The Danish, Dutch, and Hungarian versions of the triple combination are now available online at Scriptures.lds.org. The online triple combination provides footnotes, study helps, maps, photographs, and the ability to mark scriptures. To help more

members have access to the scriptures, the Church has previously placed English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish versions of the triple online. The LDS scriptures in more than two dozen languages are currently being converted for use online.

Swedish Triple Combination Now Available

Swedish-speaking members can now study the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price together with the publication of the new triple combination in Swedish. A First Presidency announcement encouraged members to obtain their own copies of the new triple combination, with associated study guides, through local Church distribution centers or local leaders. A new edition of the Book of Mormon is also available in the language. ■

Elder Paul V. Johnson New CES Commissioner

On June 7, 2008, the First Presidency announced the appointment of Elder Paul V. Johnson of the Seventy as Commissioner of the Church Educational System (CES), replacing Elder W. Rolfe Kerr, who was called to serve as president of the Logan Utah Temple. The change took effect in August 2008.

Under the direction of the Church Board of Education, Elder Johnson will oversee operations of all CES entities, including the Church's institutions of higher education:



Elder Paul V. Johnson

Brigham Young University, BYU-Idaho, BYU-Hawaii, and LDS Business College; the Church's seminary and institute of religion programs; and a number of Church-operated

primary and secondary schools.

After receiving a bachelor's degree in zoology/botany from BYU in 1978, Elder Johnson shifted his studies from dentistry to teaching seminary. He received a master of education degree from BYU in 1982 and a doctorate in instructional technology from Utah State University in 1989.

He taught seminary for 12 years in Arizona and Utah before working in administrative positions at CES in the departments of religious education and elementary and secondary education. Elder Johnson has served as a member of the Seventy since 2003. ■

medical science with the Spirit in the healing process. An additional spiritual component of healing we should remember is the influence of the Spirit on those medical providers from whom we seek help. The gift of healing and the power of the Spirit to heal often extend to the hands and minds of those health professionals caring for our loved ones.

Rourke M. Yeakley, MD, Idaho

Answers and More Answers

I received my July *Ensign* today and flipped right to "Lesson from a Milk Jug" (p. 48). It was an answer to hours of tearful prayers. I, too, have been dealing with the consequences of my husband's choices, and it can be a very lonely road to travel as a young wife. For every step I take forward, I feel as if I'm taking two back. I have prayed for peace and understanding, but the answers just didn't seem to be coming.

But then I read "Lesson from a Milk Jug;" the Spirit overcame me and the tears just flowed. It was Heavenly Father's way of reminding me, once again, that I'm not alone in this, and that I can be healed of my pain through Christ's Atonement, if I will just let Him carry me.

Then I turned the page to "Hope, Healing, and Dealing with Addiction" (p. 50) and found many more answers that I've been praying for, answers I haven't been able to find elsewhere. Thank you, thank you, thank you! I know you were guided at this time to share these stories. ■

Name Withheld

Comment

Turned to the Savior

Thank you for the article "Armor of Battle, Armor of God" (*Ensign*, June 2008, 24). My husband is in the Navy and returned in December from a goodwill deployment in Africa. Only two weeks ago, the ship left again for a three-month trip. We have small children, and my days are full of fun and

frustration. How I needed a reminder to turn to my Savior rather than try to fill my empty evenings with entertainment. Michelle Callihan, Virginia

Hymns of Sweet Comfort

I would like to share my own experience with "The Healing Power of Hymns" (*Ensign*, April 2008, 66). One early October morning, my husband, age 57, died

unexpectedly of a heart attack. I remember that first Sunday after losing him, forcing myself up the sidewalk and into the chapel alone. It was so difficult to sit on that bench and feel the vacancy beside me. But then the opening song brought sweet comfort to me: "Lead, kindly light . . . I do not ask to see the distant scene—one step enough for me" (*Hymns*, no. 97). Orvetta Groom, Utah

Hands Guided by the Spirit

Thank you for your recent article, "The Spiritual Component of Healing" (*Ensign*, June 2008, 46). As an emergency medicine physician, I have witnessed patients and families encounter the differing manifestations of the gift of healing in the face of tragedy. Thank you for discussing the relationship of



Ensign Reader SURVEY

We need your feedback to help us improve the *Ensign* magazine. You can go to www.ensignlds.org and complete the survey online, or you can fill out this printed questionnaire and mail it to:

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50 East North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150, USA

Do not include your name or other identifying information. Please complete the survey before October 31, 2008.

Thank you for your help.

1. Are you . . .

- Male
- Female

2. How old are you?

_____ years old

3. What is your current marital status?

- Single, never married
- Married
- Divorced, separated
- Widowed

4. Where do you currently live?

- Australia
- Canada
- New Zealand
- United Kingdom/Ireland
- United States
- Other _____

5. Including yourself, how many people read your copy of the *Ensign*?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

6. About how much of the *Ensign* do you read each month?

- 10 percent or less
- 25 percent or less
- 50 percent or less
- Most or all of it

7. During the past six months, how often have you used the Internet to read or download a general conference talk from the *Ensign*?

- Never
- Once or twice
- 3 to 5 times
- 6 or more times

8. During the past six months, how often have you used the Internet to read or download a non-conference article from the *Ensign*?

- Never
- Once or twice
- 3 to 5 times
- 6 or more times

9. How often do you use the annual index printed in the December *Ensign*?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often

10. How would you describe the layout and design of the *Ensign*?

Please mark all that apply.

- Modern
- Repetitive
- Fresh
- Too formal
- Appealing
- Dignified
- Old-fashioned
- Inviting
- Predictable
- Too idealized

11. I am less likely to read an article that is longer than:

- 1 page
- 2 pages
- 3 pages
- 4 pages
- 5 pages
- 6 or more pages
- Length is irrelevant to what I choose to read

12. I would like to read more articles about:

13. Besides the First Presidency and visiting teaching messages, what four features do you look at first when you receive the *Ensign*?

Please mark only four.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contents page | <input type="checkbox"/> Articles mentioned on the cover |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Articles on social issues | <input type="checkbox"/> News of the Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal experiences (including LDS Voices) | <input type="checkbox"/> Family or marriage articles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Articles for single adults | <input type="checkbox"/> General Authority articles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical or scholarly articles | <input type="checkbox"/> Articles related to a Sunday lesson |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures, art | <input type="checkbox"/> Random Sampler |

14. How often do you read the following types of articles in the *Ensign*?

Please mark one choice on each line.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Doctrinal articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historical and other scholarly articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal experiences (e.g., LDS Voices)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Random Sampler	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family or marriage articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles for single adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles related to a Sunday lesson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles that showcase gospel art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles on social issues (e.g., addiction, adoption, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. How much do you agree or disagree with the following?

Please mark one choice on each line.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The <i>Ensign</i> presents a realistic portrait of the lives and challenges of Latter-day Saints.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Each issue has something that speaks to my interests and concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The <i>Ensign</i> is intellectually stimulating.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles in the <i>Ensign</i> are consistent with official Church doctrines and policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The <i>Ensign</i> is spiritually uplifting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading the <i>Ensign</i> helps me better understand gospel doctrines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the *Ensign*? Please circle a number.

NOT AT ALL SATISFIED					COMPLETELY SATISFIED				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

17. On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rate the importance of the *Ensign* in your life? Please circle a number.

NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT					VERY IMPORTANT				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

18. Please share any other comments or suggestions you may have.



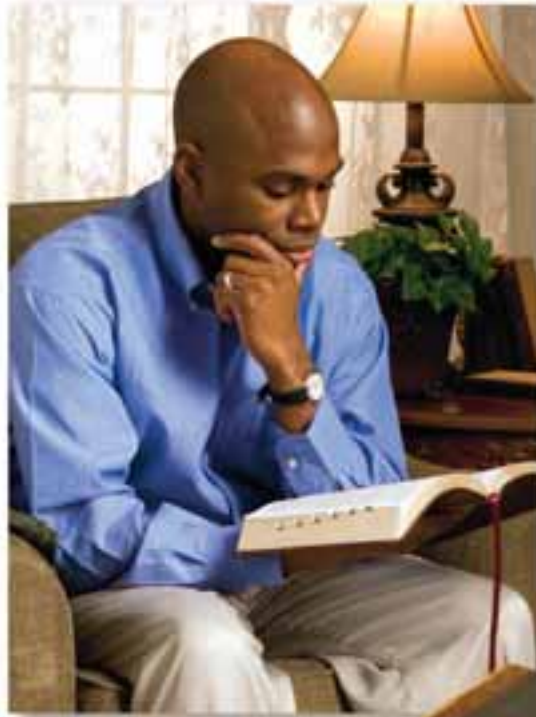
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Little One, by Jay Bryant Ward

During Jesus Christ's visit to the people gathered in the land Bountiful in A.D. 34, He "took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

"And when he had done this he wept again;

"And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones" (3 Nephi 17:21-23).



The Lord commands us to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). This is one of more than 140 scriptural references to learning. How can we make the most of our opportunities to learn? See “The Power of Diligent Learning,” p. 24.