

Ensign



**Marriage in
Heavenly Father's
Plan, pp. 8, 12,
44, 50, 52**

**General Conference—
It's for You, pp. 4, 58**

**Blessed by Personal
Progress and Duty to
God, p. 20**

**Anticipating the Need
to Forgive, p. 60**



The Twelve-Year-Old Jesus in the Temple, by Carl Heinrich Bloch

"[Joseph and Mary] found [Jesus] in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

"And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

"And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, . . . behold, [we] have sought thee sorrowing.

"And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:46–49; see Luke 2:46, footnote c; from Joseph Smith Translation).

Contents September 2011

Volume 41 • Number 9



4

MESSAGES

FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

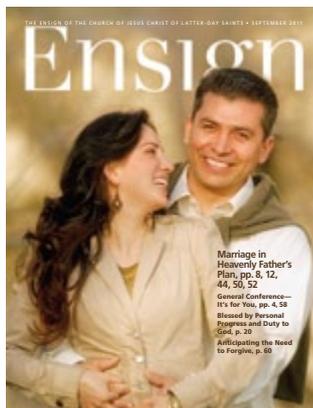
- 4** General Conference—No Ordinary Blessing
President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

- 7** Strengthening Families by Increasing Spirituality

ON THE COVER

Photo illustrations by Robert Casey.



Marriage in Heavenly Father's Plan, pp. 8, 12, 44, 50, 52
General Conference—It's for You, pp. 4, 58
Blessed by Personal Progress and Duty to God, p. 22
Anticipating the Need to Forgive, p. 60

FEATURES

- 40** Relief Society History: A Look at the Lord's Vision for His Daughters

Julie B. Beck

Our Relief Society history helps us know where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going.

- 44** A Little Heaven on Earth

Elder Robert D. Hales

Temple marriage happens in a place. Celestial marriage is created throughout lifetimes.

- 52** Giving God a Chance to Bless Us

Michael R. Morris

For these Argentine couples, obedience was the key to marrying in the temple.

- 58** A General Conference Just for Me

Ann Singleton

From beginning to end, I was comforted and felt I was an audience of one.

OUR HOMES, OUR FAMILIES

- 12** Building My Eternal Marriage

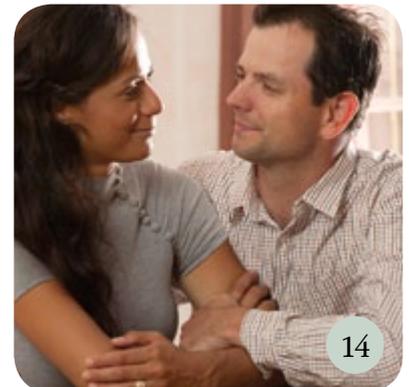
Rosana Pontes Barbosa Neves

Learn how this Brazilian sister used the gospel to build a strong marriage.

- 14** Repentance and Forgiveness in Marriage

Richard Miller

Discover how these gospel principles can strengthen your marriage.



14

LIVING AS LATTER-DAY SAINTS

- 18** Setting Their Sights on the Temple

Vicki Phillips Casto

Six ways to help your children set goals to marry in the temple.

- 20** Duty to God and Personal Progress

Paul VanDenBerghe and Melissa Merrill

When parents and youth work together, good things can happen.



22 Courage to Serve

Preparing to serve a mission? Find out how other young adults overcame the opposition that often accompanies a good choice.

26 Preparing for the Future

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Don't let anything that's going on in the world slow you down in your progress in mortality.

30 Dreams, Covenants, and Secondhand Buses

Tom Gandolph Jr.

Two families. One goal. And 2,200 miles between the nearest temple and us.

66 Our Family History Game

Cynthia Green

Our ancestors used to be just names to us. Now we know and love them.

TEACHING, LEARNING, SERVING

34 Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus Christ

Elder Lawrence E. Corbridge

Being valiant requires that we choose the right regardless of the consequences.



BY STUDY AND BY FAITH

50 Gospel Classics: The Eternal Nature of Marriage

President N. Eldon Tanner

Like all of God's truths, marriage is eternal.

GOSPEL SOLUTIONS

60 Anticipating the Need to Forgive

A. Dean Byrd

Deciding ahead of time to forgive those who hurt us—even intentionally—empowers us to move forward.

DEPARTMENTS

WHAT WE BELIEVE

8 The Sealing Ordinance Links Families Eternally

Families are meant to be together forever.

WE TALK OF CHRIST

10 Finding Peace in Troubled Times

Elder Per G. Malm

Faith in our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ will bring us hope.

SERVING IN THE CHURCH

38 Qualified through Church Service

Alice A. Lewis

Serving in the Church blesses others' lives as well as our own.

68 LATTER-DAY SAINT VOICES

72 SMALL AND SIMPLE THINGS

67 FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

74 NEWS OF THE CHURCH

79 IN OTHER CHURCH MAGAZINES

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN

80 Temple Blessings Now and Eternally

Stacy Vickery

Finding hope and joy in temple blessings.

COMING IN OCTOBER

- Who wrote the Book of Mormon
- How to study the Book of Mormon
- The Book of Mormon in many languages

AN OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
SEPTEMBER 2011 VOLUME 41 • NUMBER 9

The First Presidency:

Thomas S. Monson, Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Richard G. Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, David A. Bednar, Quentin L. Cook, D. Todd Christofferson, Neil L. Andersen

Editor: Paul B. Pieper

Advisers: Keith R. Edwards, Cristoffel Golden Jr., Per G. Malm

Managing Director:

David L. Frischknecht

Editorial Director: Vincent A. Vaughn

Graphics Director: Allan R. Loyborg

Managing Editor: R. Val Johnson

Assistant Managing Editor:

LaRene Porter Gaunt

Senior Editors: Larry Hiller, Melissa Merrill,

Michael R. Morris, Joshua J. Perkey

Associate Editor: Lia McClanahan

Assistant Editor: Heather F. Christensen

Editorial Staff: Susan Barrett, Ryan Carr,

Jenifer L. Greenwood, Adam C. Olson

Editorial Intern: Rachel Lynn Bauer

Administrative Assistant: Faith S. Watson

Managing Art Director: J. Scott Knudsen

Art Director: Scott Van Kampen

Senior Designers: C. Kimball Bott,

Colleen Hinckley, Eric Johnsen, Scott M. Mooy

Production Staff: Collette Nebeker Aune,

Howard G. Brown, Julie Burdett,

Reginald J. Christensen, Kathleen Howard,

Denise Kirby, Ginny J. Nilson, Jane Ann Peters

Prepress: Joshua Dennis

Printing Director: Craig K. Sedgwick

Distribution Director: Evan Larsen

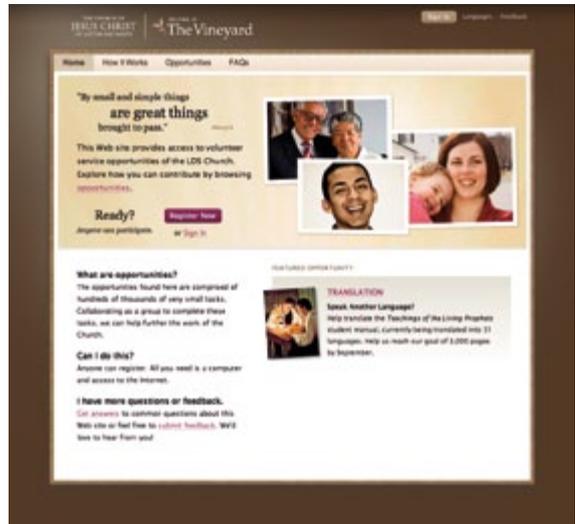
© 2011 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

All rights reserved. The *Ensign* (ISSN 0884-1136) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah.

Copyright information: Text and visual material in the *Ensign* may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use. Visual material may not be copied if restrictions are indicated in the credit line with the artwork. Copyright questions should be addressed to Intellectual Property Office, 50 E. North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0018; e-mail: cor-intellectualproperty@ldschurch.org.

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

Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431.



ENSIGN ONLINE

If you're looking to get more from your Church magazine experience, check out additional features at ensign.lds.org.

CONTRIBUTE PHOTOS FOR CHURCH USE

Go to vineyard.lds.org to see how you can contribute photos for possible use in brochures, posters, blogs, videos, or websites.

DISCOVERING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

New online classes give you step-by-step directions on how to find your ancestors. Visit familysearch.org/learn/researchcourses.

HELP WITH HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we strive to follow the Savior's admonition to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, and clothe the naked. Visit Humanitarian Services at lds.org/service/humanitarian/ help to learn what you can do.

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

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

Please submit articles through ensign.lds.org, or if you do not have Internet access, send them to Ensign Editorial, 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA. Authors whose work is selected for publication will be notified.

TO CHANGE ADDRESS

Send both old and new address information to Distribution Services, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA. Please allow 60 days for changes to take effect.

SUBSCRIBE TO OR RENEW THE ENSIGN

Online: Visit store.lds.org.
By phone: In the United States and Canada call 1-800-537-5971.
By mail: Send U.S. \$10 check or money order to Distribution Services, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in
the First Presidency



GENERAL CONFERENCE— No Ordinary Blessing

A fine member of the Church was talking with a neighbor who was not of our faith. When the topic of discussion turned to general conference, the neighbor asked, “You say you have prophets and apostles? And twice a year in a worldwide conference they reveal the word of God?”

“Absolutely,” the member replied with confidence.

The neighbor thought about that for a moment. He seemed genuinely interested and then asked, “What did they say in the last general conference?”

At this point the good member of the Church went from feeling excited about sharing the gospel to feeling embarrassed. Try as he might, he couldn’t think of the details of a single talk.

His friend found this troubling and said, “You mean to tell me that God speaks to man in our day and you can’t remember what He said?”

The brother felt humbled by this exchange. He vowed that he would do better to remember the words spoken by the Lord’s servants in general conference.

We all know how hard it is to remember every message of general conference, and I’m confident that we need not be embarrassed if we don’t remember everything. Nevertheless, there are messages in each general conference given as a gift and a blessing from

heaven specifically for our personal life situations.

In preparation for general conference, let me suggest three basic concepts that may help us to better receive, remember, and apply the words spoken by the Lord’s servants.

1. Members of the Church are entitled to personal revelation as they listen to and study the inspired words spoken at general conference.

As you prepare for general conference, I invite you to ponder questions you need to have answered. For example, you might yearn for direction and guidance by the Lord regarding challenges you are facing.

Answers to your specific prayers may come directly from a particular talk or from a specific phrase. At other times answers may come in a seemingly unrelated word, phrase, or song. A heart filled with gratitude for the blessings of life and an earnest desire to hear and follow the words of counsel will prepare the way for personal revelation.

2. Don’t discount a message merely because it sounds familiar.

Prophets have always taught by repetition; it is a law of learning. You will hear repetition in themes and doctrines in general conference. Let me reassure you: this is not due

to a lack of creativity or imagination. We continue to hear messages on similar issues because the Lord is teaching and impressing upon our minds and hearts certain foundational principles of great eternal importance that must be understood and acted upon before we can move on to other things. A wise builder first lays the foundation before erecting the walls and the roof.

3. The words spoken at general conference should be a compass that points the way for us during the coming months.

If we listen to and follow the promptings of the Spirit, they will serve as a Liahona, guiding us through the unknown, challenging valleys and mountains that are ahead (see 1 Nephi 16).

Since the world began, God has raised up prophets who speak the will of heaven to the people of their times. It is our responsibility to listen and then apply the messages the Lord provides for us.

Our merciful and loving Heavenly Father has not forsaken and will not forsake His children. Today, as well as in times past, He has appointed apostles and prophets. He continues to reveal His word to them.

What a marvelous privilege it is to hear God's messages for each of us during general conference! Let us prepare well for this great blessing of divine guidance delivered by His chosen servants.

For this is no ordinary blessing. ■



TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

- Read the article together. Encourage the family to identify things to listen for during general conference.
- To help young children apply the counsel given by President Uchtdorf, show them a General Authority chart (found in the conference issue of the *Liahona* and *Ensign*). Let them know that the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will be speaking in general conference. Encourage children to listen to conference and draw a picture to help them remember what they learned. Parents can visit conferencegames.lds.org for more conference activities for children.



Good, Better, Best

By Mary-Celeste Lewis

In his October 2007 general conference talk, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles talked about activities that are “good, better, and best.” When he got to

the part about “the overscheduling of children,” I squirmed guiltily in my seat.

I knew I was doing too much. I was in school plays, taking challenging classes in school, and was involved in several other activities. I hadn’t been attending Young Women activities faithfully, and my Sundays were filled with the stress of trying to complete last-minute homework. Practicing music and editing the school newspaper had lost their element of fun and had become work.

Elder Oaks’s talk made me take a good look at my schedule. My activities were good, but there were too many of them. I had to choose the best ones. As I tried to decide which activities to forsake, I realized that the gospel of Jesus Christ was the best priority anyone can have. I put prayer and scripture study at the top of my list, and since then, my life has run more smoothly.

Elder Oaks taught me that when we do what the Lord wants us to do *first*, everything else will fall neatly into place. If I study my scriptures before I play games or even before I do my homework, everything important will get done. When I base my life around the Lord, instead of adding Him in as an afterthought, my life has an added measure of peace and success.

Now I’m very careful to listen to the counsel given at general conference!

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL MANN

CHILDREN

I Can Find Answers through General Conference

President Uchtdorf teaches that if you think of some questions before general conference, the Lord can speak to you through His prophets and apostles during conference.

1. As a family or class, discuss what you need to learn, either individually or together. (For example: How do I strengthen my testimony? How should I deal with a problem at school?) On a piece of paper or

in your journal, write down your questions.

2. In the weeks leading up to conference, you could think and pray about these questions.
3. Listen carefully during conference (it may help to take notes). Then write how the Lord—through Church leaders—answered your questions.
4. On another piece of paper, you could draw a picture of yourself doing what you learned.



Faith • Family • Relief

Strengthening Families by Increasing Spirituality

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

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president, said: “There has grown in me an overwhelming testimony of the value of daughters of God. . . . I have felt that there has never been a greater need for increased faith and personal righteousness. There has never been a greater need for strong families and homes.”

Sisters can help create strong homes and families as they act on personal revelation. “The ability to qualify for, receive, and act on personal revelation is the single most important skill that can be acquired in this life,” Sister Beck continued. “Qualifying for the Lord’s Spirit begins with a desire for that Spirit and implies a certain degree of worthiness. Keeping the commandments, repenting, and renewing covenants made at baptism lead to the blessing of always having the Lord’s Spirit with us. Making and keeping temple covenants also adds spiritual strength and power to a woman’s life. Many answers to difficult questions are found by reading the scriptures because the scriptures are an aid to revelation. . . . Daily prayer is also essential to having the Lord’s Spirit with us.”¹

We also strengthen our family members spiritually as we help them understand Heavenly Father’s eternal plan. “What can we do to better prepare our children spiritually for their eternal roles?” asked Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Perhaps the most inclusive answer is: Teach them how to live the principles of the gospel.” This teaching comes through daily prayer, scripture study, and family mealtimes as well as weekly family home evening and Church attendance. Elder Ballard explained: “We prepare each day, right now, for eternal life. If we are not preparing for eternal life, we are preparing for something else, perhaps something far less.”²

What Can I Do?

1. How can I help my sisters increase in spiritual self-reliance?
2. How can I improve my own ability to recognize and respond to the Holy Spirit?

From the Scriptures

Proverbs 22:6;
1 John 3:22;
Doctrine and Covenants 11:13–14;
19:38; 68:25

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

From Our History

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught the sisters in an April 1842 Relief Society meeting that they had a solemn obligation to seek their own salvation. He said, “After [my] instruction, you will be responsible for your own sins; it is a desirable honor that you should so walk before our heavenly Father as to save yourselves; we are all responsible to God for the manner we improve the light and wisdom given by our Lord to enable us to save ourselves.”³ He taught them to be righteous individuals, to become a holy people, and to prepare for temple ordinances and covenants.

NOTES

1. Julie B. Beck, “And upon the Handmaids in Those Days Will I Pour Out My Spirit,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2010, 10, 11.
2. M. Russell Ballard, “Spiritual Development,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 65, 66.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 355.



The Sealing Ordinance

LINKS
FAMILIES
ETERNALLY

While on earth, we can make sacred covenants (promises) with God in the holy temple through priesthood authority. Among these covenants is the opportunity for husbands and wives to be sealed (married for eternity) and their children to be sealed to them. This means that if we keep our covenants with the Lord and each other, death cannot permanently separate us. This sealing ordinance is an essential part of our Heavenly Father's plan for us to live with Him eternally. (See D&C 128:9–10; 132:19.)

Once we have made temple covenants for ourselves, we can gather our family history and perform temple ordinances for our deceased ancestors. This makes temple covenants available to them (see D&C 138:29–37).

The priesthood power to seal families was prophesied anciently (see Malachi 4:5–6) and in modern times (see D&C 2). Both prophecies revealed that the prophet Elijah “shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers” (D&C 2:2).

Elijah's promised return was fulfilled on April 3, 1836, in the newly dedicated Kirtland Temple in Ohio, USA, when Elijah among others

appeared and gave his priesthood keys to the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 110:13–15).

Currently, there are 134 temples in operation throughout the world, where worthy Latter-day Saints can make covenants with God and be sealed as families for eternity. They can return to serve as proxies for their deceased ancestors, thus fulfilling the prophecy that the hearts of the children will be turned to the fathers. ■

For more information, see *Gospel Principles* (2009), 207–11; *True to the Faith* (2004), 44, 61–64, 97–101, 170–74; and “Being Worthy to Enter the Temple,” *Liahona*, Aug. 2010, 12–13; *Ensign*, Aug. 2010, 8–9.

“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).



PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAURENI FOCHETTO, JOHN LUKE, CRAIG DIMOND, MATTHEW REIER, AND DAVID STOKER; PHOTOGRAPH OF RECIE BRAZIL TEMPLE BY LAURENI FOCHETTO

We must receive certain covenants and ordinances in order to return to live with our Heavenly Father:

1. *We are baptized and confirmed (see Matthew 3:16–17; John 3:5; 2 Nephi 31:5–18).*



2. *Men receive the Aaronic Priesthood and later the Melchizedek Priesthood (see D&C 128:11).*



3. *In the temple we make additional covenants associated with the endowment.*



4. *Husbands and wives are sealed (married) in the temple for time and all eternity.*



5. *Children born to a sealed couple are born "in the covenant." Children who are not born in the covenant may be sealed to their parents.*



6. *We then prepare the names of our ancestors for temple work and perform necessary ordinances for them in the temple (see 1 Corinthians 15:29; D&C 128:15–16, 24).*

By Elder
Per G. Malm
Of the Seventy



Finding Peace

IN TROUBLED TIMES

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

IN A WORLD OF TRIBULATION

“The Savior [spoke] to His disciples as He faced His Crucifixion and as they faced fear, disarray, and persecution. In His last collective counsel to them in mortality, He said: ‘These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world’ (John 16:33).

“So, in a world of tribulation, let’s remember our faith. . . . And let’s live life more fully, with more boldness and courage than at any other time.

“Christ has overcome the world and made a path for us.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “This, the Greatest of All Dispensations,” *Liahona*, July 2007, 20; *Ensign*, July 2007, 54.

In downtown Gothenburg, Sweden, there is a broad boulevard with beautiful trees on each side. One day I saw a hole in the trunk of one of the huge trees, so I curiously looked inside and saw that the tree was completely hollow.

I was surprised that the tree could still stand. So I looked up and saw a wide steel belt mounted around the upper part of the trunk. Attached to the belt were several steel wires, and they in turn were fastened and anchored to nearby buildings. From a distance it looked like the other trees; it was only when looking inside that one could detect that it was hollow instead of having a solid, strong trunk. In time, the tree could not be saved and had to be taken down.

Just as a young tree grows bit by bit into a sturdy tree, so we can grow step by step in our capacity to be solid and

filled from the inside out, in contrast to the hollow tree. It is through the healing Atonement of Jesus Christ that we may have the strength to stand tall and strong and to have our souls be filled—with light, understanding, joy, and love.

Faith in Jesus Christ and following His teachings give us a firm hope, and this hope becomes a solid anchor to our souls. We can become steadfast and immovable. We can have lasting inner peace; we can enter into the rest of the Lord. Only if we turn away from light and truth will a hollow feeling of emptiness, like the tree’s, occupy the innermost chambers of our souls.

Let us focus on those things that will sustain a lasting peace of mind and heart. Then our confidence will “wax strong in the presence of God” (D&C 121:45). The promise to enter into the rest of the Lord,



HOW CAN WE FIND PEACE AND HOPE IN TROUBLED TIMES?

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles helps answer this question in “This, the Greatest of All Dispensations” (*Liahona*, July 2007, 18; *Ensign*, July 2007, 53):

to receive the gift of peace, is far from a temporary, worldly satisfaction. It is indeed a heavenly gift: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). He has the power to heal and strengthen the soul. He is Jesus Christ. ■

From “Rest unto Your Souls,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 101–2.

For more information on this topic, see Mosiah 24:15; D&C 6:34, 36; 59:23; 78:17–18; Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Peace Within,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 36; and Neal A. Maxwell, “Encircled in the Arms of His Love,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 16.

“Great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them:

“Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel” (Matthew 15:30–31).

1. “Live as faithfully as we possibly can. . . . We must not be paralyzed just because [of events] ahead of us somewhere.”
2. “Never let fear and the father of fear (Satan himself) divert us from our faith and faithful living.”
3. “Be faithful. God is in charge. He knows your name and He knows your need.”

Consider searching the scriptures for verses on hope, peace, and faith in Jesus Christ.

BUILDING MY Eternal Marriage

By Rosana Pontes Barbosa Neves

When I was a teenager, I developed faith that marriage could be a wonderful and eternal experience. It was difficult for me to always believe, however, because the examples of marriage I had growing up were not strong ones, and I kept a fear of marriage in my heart. But I determined that failure and unhappiness didn't have to be the rule and that Heavenly Father would help me know how to have a happy marriage.

When I was 26 years old, I married Sidnei in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. While we were still dating, we tried to prepare ourselves spiritually and emotionally for the most significant event of our lives. We decided what type of marriage we wanted, we established goals together, and we shared our thoughts—our testimonies of the gospel, our wishes and worries, and our dreams. We also read together the counsel of the prophets on marriage. We did everything we could to prepare, wishing to provide happiness and security to each other and our future children. We asked the Lord to give us wisdom to live a happy life.



Now we have been married for 18 years. During these years, we have continued to learn from the precepts of the gospel, the counsel of our leaders, and, of course, the Spirit. Some of the things we have done to have a strong, happy marriage are:

1. Pray together every day. When we pray at night, we thank Heavenly Father for our marriage, for the love we have for each other, and we ask that our feelings will be strengthened and that we can become strong individually in the face of the



MARRIAGE IN HEAVENLY FATHER'S PLAN

As a husband and wife are each drawn to the Lord (see 3 Nephi 27:14), as they learn to serve and cherish one another, as they share life experiences and grow together and become one, and as they are blessed through the uniting of their distinctive natures, they begin

to realize the fulfillment that our Heavenly Father desires for His children. Ultimate happiness, which is the very object of the Father's plan, is received through the making and honoring of eternal marriage covenants."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan," *Liahona and Ensign*, June 2006, 86.



other, and when we're with others, we speak positively about each other.

4. Defend the institution of marriage. Whenever we have a chance—and especially if we are around people who are criticizing the institution of marriage—we stand up for families and what we believe in.
5. Talk a lot and listen. We stop what we are doing to really listen when the other person is talking.
6. Treat each other with love and consideration. We do not insult, accuse, or criticize each other.
7. Continue to seek help and counsel about marriage from the scriptures and the words of modern prophets. We do not know everything. We are imperfect and prone to forgetting and making mistakes. We prefer not to wait for problems to afflict us, but instead we work to build a strong marriage before a situation can hurt us.

These things have been instrumental in strengthening the relationship between my husband and me. I know that if we share our lives and our feelings with Heavenly Father and seek counsel from Him, the Holy Ghost will inspire us and we will be able to become an eternal family, overcoming all difficult times. We also know that Heavenly Father will help us as we seek to know and do His will. ■

designs of the adversary, who works to destroy families.

2. Ask for forgiveness. We work to never allow pride to keep us from asking for forgiveness or admitting we are wrong. Love and unity are more important than who is right or who is wrong.
3. Never speak evil of each other. It is obvious that neither of us is perfect, but we don't say bad things about each

SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGES

Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities."

"The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.



Repentance & Forgiveness IN MARRIAGE

How these gospel principles will strengthen your marriage.

By Richard Miller

School of Family Life, Brigham Young University

When couples get married, they joyfully anticipate the prospect of spending eternity together. They often enjoy having long conversations, going for walks, and spending time together. It is wonderful to be with someone you love so deeply.

Unfortunately, for some couples the bliss of deep love and immensely satisfying companionship does not last. Long talks are replaced by frequent arguments or angry silence.

Many of these couples divorce. Others withdraw emotionally from the relationship. The spouses become distant from each other, and they keep their interaction to a minimum.

How do these couples go from ecstatic levels of love and happiness to frequent conflict, bitterness, and in many cases, divorce? Researchers have identified a number of reasons, but in my professional experience, I have found that most of these explanations boil down to two fundamental factors: a lack of repentance and a lack of forgiveness.

Repenting

In most cases, we are married only for a short time before we hurt our spouse's feelings. Whether our mistakes are intentional or inadvertent, we all end up doing things that hurt our spouse. Elder Joe J. Christensen, an emeritus member of the Quorum of the Seventy, said, "To develop a solid marriage, we must be able to admit we are sorry for mistakes we make. . . . When conflicts in marriage arise, we should be swift to apologize and ask for forgiveness, even though we may not be totally at fault. True love is developed by those who are willing to readily admit personal mistakes and offenses."¹

Apologizing Sincerely

In order to be effective, an apology must be sincere and heartfelt. There needs to be evidence that you are truly sorry that you have hurt or offended your spouse and that you take responsibility for your mistake or offense. A simple "sorry" or the slightly more eloquent "sorry about that" rarely provides the necessary evidence that you feel remorseful and take responsibility for your actions. A thoughtful apology might sound something like: "I'm sorry

that I didn't do the dishes last night like I had agreed to. It wasn't right, and I apologize." Such an open and honest apology can do wonders for healing wounded hearts.

Sometimes it is necessary to apologize more than once, especially if the offense is particularly hurtful. I have learned over the years that it sometimes takes several apologies before the sincerity of the apology is able to penetrate the wounded heart of an offended spouse.

Striving to Improve

Besides a sincere apology, repentance includes striving to forsake our shortcomings and weaknesses. For example, we keep our promises to do the dishes. We focus on not being grumpy or short-tempered. We try to become better listeners.

As we repent, we continually improve ourselves. We overcome our weaknesses and develop more Christlike qualities. By so doing, we become better people and better spouses.

Overcoming Pride

Repenting requires us to look inward, be humble, and take responsibility for our mistakes and weaknesses. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught: "Think of the repentance that could take place with lives changed, marriages preserved, and homes strengthened, if pride did not keep us from confessing our sins and forsaking them. . . .

"The antidote for pride is humility—meekness, submissiveness. . . . It is the



Repentance and forgiveness are complementary gospel principles. Both invite the healing power of the Atonement to wash over us so that we can maintain peace and harmony in our marriage.



Just as our sins and weaknesses are washed away through repentance, forgiveness washes away the hurts and emotional injuries that must be anticipated in being married to someone who is imperfect.

broken heart and contrite spirit. . . .

“We can choose to humble ourselves by receiving counsel and chastisement. . . .

“We can choose to humble ourselves by confessing and forsaking our sins and being born of God. . . .

“Let us choose to be humble.”²

The essence of repentance is trying to change *ourselves* in ways that will make us better people. On the other hand, the foundation of pride is the desire to cover up our own weaknesses and focus on changing *our spouse’s* behavior. As we humble ourselves, we desire to improve our lives and take responsibility for our weaknesses. We are willing to apologize and become better people, which is at the core of repentance.

Forgiving

In order for a marriage to be successful, there also needs to be forgiveness. Repentance and forgiveness are complementary gospel principles, and both are necessary in order for us to progress spiritually.

Resentment is one of the worst poisons in marriage. It doesn’t ruin a marriage overnight. Rather, it is like decay that gradually and silently damages your teeth. Forgetting to brush your teeth once doesn’t ruin your teeth; however, numerous instances of neglect over many years will. Similarly, resentment accumulates gradually, often

without us even noticing it. If left untreated, it builds up over a number of years to the point where it destroys love.

Just as our sins and weaknesses are washed away through repentance, forgiveness washes away the hurts and emotional injuries that must be anticipated in being married to someone who is imperfect.

Letting Go of Hurt

Forgiveness is the perfect antidote for the poison of resentment. It neutralizes our hurt feelings and makes room in our hearts for love to flourish and grow. President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

“All of us carry excess baggage around from time to time, but the wisest ones among us don’t carry it for very long. They get rid of it. . . . Often . . . the things we carry are petty, even stupid. . . . If you resent someone for something he has done—or failed to do—forget it. We call that forgiveness. It is powerful, spiritual medicine.”³

These same principles apply within a marriage, and perhaps more so. The best response to being hurt is, as President Packer implied, to get over it. Marriage is too important for us to clutter our minds and hearts with resentment that is created by dwelling on the faults and weaknesses of our spouse. We need to forgive and move on.



Relying on the Atonement

But what if we can't simply forgive, forget, and move on? Some serious offenses are difficult to overcome, and some hurts run very deep. Sometimes a spouse has a difficult time forgiving something that others might consider trivial. In other cases, the level of resentment reaches a point where the spouse is unable to forget about it and move on with the relationship.

In these situations, we need to rely on the healing power of the Savior's Atonement. His Atonement not only allows us to repent of our sins; it also heals those who suffer and grieve. Certainly it comforts those who sorrow because they have been hurt by their spouse. During the process of the Atonement, the Savior suffered all of the pain, sorrow, and grief that we will experience in this life. Because of His atoning sacrifice, He shoulders the pain that we experience, which gives us the ability to overcome these hurts and to heal and forgive our spouse.

President James E. Faust (1920–2007) said: "Our Redeemer took upon Himself all the sins, pains, infirmities, and sicknesses of all who have ever lived and will ever live. No one has ever suffered in any degree what He did. He knows our mortal trials by firsthand experience. . . .

"The Atonement not only benefits the sinner but also benefits those sinned against—that is, the victims. By forgiving 'those who trespass against us' (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:13), the Atonement brings a measure of peace and comfort to those who have been innocently victimized by the sins of others. The basic source for the healing of the soul is the Atonement of Jesus Christ."⁴

A few years ago, I had the opportunity of serving as the bishop of a married student ward. I had wonderful

people come into my office devastated because they had been terribly hurt by the actions of their spouse. Through their tears they would ask, "Bishop, how can I ever forgive my spouse?" We would then talk about the Atonement and its ability to heal broken hearts and to give us the ability to forgive.

As a bishop, I saw miracles. I saw individuals repent of their sins and earn back the trust of their spouses. I saw brokenhearted spouses find peace and the ability to forgive. I saw couples that were on the verge of divorce humble themselves, look inward, take responsibility, apologize for mistakes, and forgive each other. Every one of these miracles was made possible by the healing power of the Atonement.

Now don't misunderstand. There are situations where forgiveness does not mean staying in a relationship that is abusive or dangerous. There are some scenarios where divorce may be the proper choice. But even in these cases, the Atonement can bring personal healing.

May we be willing to take responsibility for our own sins and weaknesses that create stress and pain in our marriages. May we use the power of the Atonement to allow the Savior to heal our hurts and sorrows to help us fully forgive our spouses. I testify that the Savior not only heals broken souls; He also heals broken hearts. If we allow Him to help us sincerely repent and freely forgive, our lives and our marriages will be blessed throughout eternity. ■

Based on a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on January 19, 2010.

NOTES

1. Joe J. Christensen, *One Step at a Time: Building a Better Marriage, Family, and You*, 39.
2. Ezra Taft Benson, "Beware of Pride," *Ensign*, May 1989, 6–7.
3. Boyd K. Packer, "The Balm of Gilead," *New Era*, Aug. 1979, 39.
4. James E. Faust, "The Atonement: Our Greatest Hope," *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 19–20.

SETTING THEIR SIGHTS ON THE Temple

By Vicki Phillips Casto

You look so pretty!” my wide-eyed daughter told the radiant bride who had just emerged from the Washington D.C. Temple with her new husband. Our family had made the seven-hour trip to the temple for that very purpose—so our daughters, Hannah and Lauren, could see a temple bride.

Most of the adults in our stake are converts to the Church and were sealed in the temple when their children were young. Few of us have a heritage of temple weddings to celebrate. My husband and I work hard to teach our daughters the importance of eternal marriage, but we struggle because in our area there are very few examples for the rising generation of young couples marrying in the temple.

We have faced many challenges as we have taught our daughters to make temple marriage a goal. Here are several ways we have strengthened their resolve to marry in the temple.





ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN CALL

1 Have family home evening lessons about temple marriage. General Authorities' addresses and the *Family Home Evening Resource Book* are good resources for lessons about temple marriage. Teach your children the importance of marrying "the right person, in the right place, by the right authority."¹

2 Hang up pictures of the temple in your home. President Spencer W. Kimball said, "It seems to me it would be a fine thing if every set of parents would have in every bedroom in their house a picture of the temple so the [child] from the time he is an infant could look at the picture every day and it becomes a part of his life. When he reaches the age that he needs to make this very important decision, it will already have been made."²

3 Participate in ward or stake temple activities. My children and I drove for three hours to attend the meeting at which President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) announced that a temple would be built in Columbus, Ohio, USA. After its dedication my children participated in youth baptisms there, and my husband and I attended together as often as we could.

4 Take your children to visit the temple grounds, if possible. Our family traveled to Utah

and toured Temple Square. After we saw numerous brides, my older daughter set a goal to be married in the Salt Lake Temple. Even when children are outside the temple, they can see the temple's beauty and feel the Spirit.

5 Help your children understand that the day you were sealed was a special day. Our younger daughter was sealed to us when her older sister was five. I cherish the day we were all in the temple together. A portrait of the girls in their temple dresses hangs at the top of the stairs. The girls know that we treasure that photo because of the special event that happened that day.

6 Become familiar with the Primary song "Families Can Be Together Forever." We have adopted it as our "family song," and we sing it often. We hope the words will sink deep into our daughters' hearts and increase their commitment to "prepare most carefully, so [they] can marry in God's temple for eternity."³

Making temple marriage a goal has helped us teach our children to want to live worthy to receive this wonderful blessing. ■

NOTES

1. Bruce R. McConkie, "Agency or Inspiration?" *New Era*, Jan. 1975, 38.
2. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* (1982), 301.
3. *Children's Songbook*, 188.

Duty to God and

As the following stories show, great things can happen when parents and youth work together on Duty to God and Personal Progress.

Duty to God with Dad

By Paul VanDenBerghe
Church Magazines



Aleks Miller and his father, Chris, work together on Duty to God every Sunday.

After learning about the new *Duty to God* booklet in a special fireside last year, Aleks Miller—deacons quorum president of the North Shore Ward, Vancouver British Columbia Stake—was eager to get started. He and his father set up a schedule to meet each Sunday to work on a section of the booklet together.

“My dad and I, every week, sit down and look through a section of the book,” says Aleks. “We start with a prayer and then we study a section. We read the scriptures, answer the questions in the section, and then write down how we can implement what we’ve learned into our lives.”

Aleks often shares with his mother what he and his father are working on. “I talked with my mom about the sacrament and the meaning of the prayers and wrote down some ideas about how I as a deacon could help make the sacrament more meaningful for her,” he says.

After only a few weeks of these Duty-to-God-with-Dad meetings, Aleks noticed it was making a difference in his life. “It makes me feel really good,” he says. Sitting down with his father is not always the first thing Aleks wants to do on a Sunday afternoon, “but when we start learning and reading together I’m a lot happier and I feel better about doing it,” he says.

Aleks has set new goals and is gaining a greater understanding of the gospel as he studies and learns with his father. “One of the sections in *Duty to God* suggested we study a few topics in *For the Strength of Youth* and then write down a goal for each one so that we can do better,” explains Aleks. “I chose honesty. So one of my goals was to let my parents know when I do something wrong instead of just keeping it to myself.”

Another topic Aleks chose was education. “My goal was to go an entire month in school with no messing around in class and finishing all my work so I wouldn’t have any homework,” he says. “It’s going pretty well, and now I have a lot of extra time.”

Now Aleks is encouraging all the deacons in his quorum to work on fulfilling their Duty to God. And he offers the same advice to anyone else who is thinking about opening the booklet and getting down to work: “Just do it,” he says. “If you can’t seem to get started on your own, do like I do, and ask your dad to do it with you.” ■

Personal Progress

Helping Daughters with Personal Progress

By Melissa Merrill

Church Magazines



Annette Barnes helps her daughters Lisa and Katie set meaningful goals for Personal Progress.

Annette Barnes of Georgia, USA, didn't always love Personal Progress. Although her first two daughters, Christie and Lori, both earned their Young Women medallions, Annette saw the program as just another project in her teens' already-too-full schedules.

That changed when Annette decided to complete Personal Progress herself so that she could better support her youngest daughters as they participated. She worked alongside Lisa, now 17, for three and a half years. While mothers should not feel obligated to participate in Personal Progress with their daughters, Annette says doing so showed her how the program could strengthen her daughters.

Today, Annette serves as the Young Women president in her ward and is working with her youngest daughter, Katie, 14, in completing Personal Progress.

The Barneses commit time on Sunday afternoons to the program. "Progress doesn't always require big chunks of time," Annette says. "We just need to be consistent."

Annette recalls that in an effort to jump-start one of her daughters on a particular value, she gave her an assignment, to which her daughter reluctantly agreed. Even though her daughter knew Annette was just trying to help, the experience, Annette says, wasn't as positive as it might have been.

"I've learned that it's better to give my daughters lots of ideas and then step back and let them choose. It's best to explore ideas together and then let this be theirs—their *Personal Progress*."

Annette has found that Personal Progress is a setting in which she can share her testimony with her children. "There are little moments when you're talking—when they come to you and ask you to sign something so they can pass off a goal—that you can ask, 'What did you learn?'" says Annette. "Sometimes I listen and then simply tell them 'That's great' and let them go on their way. But other times there's a chance to tell them about a similar experience I had or a different principle I learned from doing the same goal. Personal Progress regularly provides little moments like that to bear testimony in informal ways."

Annette attributes those moments to her decision to become more involved with the program. She says, "I know someday I will be released as the Young Women president, but I will never be released as a parent. I will be able to see the benefits of Personal Progress in my daughters' lives, not only for them but for my grandchildren as well. And that is an exciting, heartwarming prospect.

"Personal Progress really does change lives. I know because it has changed ours." ■

For more information on this topic, see the following articles:

- Henry B. Eyring, "Help Them on Their Way Home," *Ensign*, May 2010, 22–25
- Robert D. Hales, "Our Duty to God: The Mission of Parents and Leaders to the Rising Generation," *Ensign*, May 2010, 95–98
- Mary N. Cook, "Never, Never, Never Give Up!," *Ensign*, May 2010, 117–19

COURAGE TO SERVE



Modern prophets have asked every worthy and able young man to serve a full-time mission and have welcomed the service of young women. Young adults around the world are responding to this call to serve, but following the prophet requires faith and courage. In the following stories, young returned missionaries share how they found the strength to overcome the obstacles that come with deciding and preparing to serve a mission.

STICKING TO MY DECISION

When I turned 21, I started feeling promptings to serve a mission. I had never planned on a mission, so these thoughts were unexpected. My priesthood leader encouraged me to pray about it, and I did so.

My answer came very clearly: I knew that God wanted me to serve a mission. I initially felt excited about serving, but leaving on a mission was more challenging than I had anticipated.

My boss did not understand why I would leave for 18 months, and he

didn't want to give me time off to prepare for leaving. He gave me an ultimatum: "Work or don't work. It's your choice." As scary as it was to not work in the final weeks before my mission, I chose to leave that job.

Completing the medical requirements was also complicated. My doctor in my native country, Russia, had never seen the Church's missionary medical documents before and refused to sign them.

Obstacles like these made me wonder whether I had really made the right choice. Several times I came close to changing my mind. But in those times of doubt, I remembered

the answer I had received to my prayer and was able to stick to my decision to serve. Eventually, I found solutions to these and other challenges I encountered.

I was called to serve in the Russia St. Petersburg Mission. The first few months in the mission field were not easy. But because of what I learned in dealing with the obstacles I faced in preparing to serve, I was able to confront the challenges of my mission. My mission—and the difficulties I faced in preparing for it—taught me that I can do difficult things with the Lord's help.

Elena Ogneva Anderson, Utah, USA



MY LIFE BELONGS TO HIM

When I turned 18, a lot of members in my ward and stake began telling me I should go on a mission. Even though I had always planned to serve a mission, I didn't like all the pressure.

Soon I began my first year of college. As a result of hard work, I won a scholarship that allowed me to study in Germany. Germany was very different from my native country, Mexico, but I became immersed in the culture and learned the language quickly.

Eventually I was offered a permanent job at a prestigious European company. Serving a mission suddenly felt more like a duty than a desire. I thought that I could take this job and enjoy worldly success.

One snowy day I traveled to the city of Heidelberg with my friend Melanie. After several hours, the highway was covered with snow, and we became sleepy. We were driving around 65 miles (105 km) per hour when we passed through a red light and hit a bus.

When I woke up, I saw the police, the ambulance, and Melanie, who was crying. The car was destroyed, and I was still in it. Tears came to my eyes when I realized how blessed we were to be alive. I began praying and thanking

my Heavenly Father for letting us survive, but a new fear came to me—I was not able to move my legs.

On our way to the hospital, I heard the nurses saying that if I had a spinal injury, I probably wouldn't be able to walk again. I prayed with all my heart to my Heavenly Father. First I thanked Him again for letting me survive, realizing that my life was not my own. Then I promised Him, "If my legs are OK and I can walk, I will serve a mission with all my heart and mind."

After four hours at the hospital, my diagnosis was promising: I would walk again. I no longer had any hesitation about serving a mission. Instead I felt a strong desire to share my testimony that God lives, that He is our Father in Heaven, and that He can perform miracles in our lives.

After that experience I decided not to take the job I'd been offered. I knew that my time and everything I have belong to the Lord. Why shouldn't I give Him a little of that time and serve Him for two years?

After graduating, I was called to serve in Frankfurt, Germany. During my mission I testified of my Heavenly Father. I know that He lives, that He is my Father, and that He protects me. He has given me my life, and it will always belong to Him.

Mahonry Gonzalez, Morelos, Mexico



I CHANGED MY MIND

I was 21 years old and part owner of a beauty salon. I taught a Primary class at church. My life was good, but I felt restless. It seemed that there was something else that I needed to be doing—I just didn't know what.

My bishop called me into his office one Sunday and asked me if I had considered serving a mission. I was totally caught off guard. I had been a member of the Church for only two years and had never thought of serving a mission.

I told the bishop that I didn't think a mission was right for me. As I was leaving his office, he said, "Well, if you change your mind, let me know." I thought the topic was closed, but the bishop's words continued to echo in my mind.

I asked myself how I could possibly serve a mission. I was the only member of the Church in my family. How would my family feel? What would I do with my share of the beauty salon? Could I handle serving for a year and a half?

As I pondered these questions, I was prompted to read the Book of Mormon. I picked it up and turned to the eighth chapter of Alma. As I read about Alma and Amulek embarking on their mission, I knew that I also needed "to declare the words of God" (verse 30). The next Sunday I told my bishop that I had changed my



ENTITLED TO THE LORD'S HELP

"Some of you may be shy by nature

or consider yourselves inadequate to respond affirmatively to the call to serve. Remember that this is the Lord's work, and when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help. The Lord will shape the back to bear the burden placed upon it."

President Thomas S. Monson, "The Lord Needs Missionaries," *Liahona and Ensign*, Jan. 2011, 4.

mind and I wanted to serve a mission.

My family was supportive, and I was able to sell my share of the beauty salon. I served in Caracas, Venezuela, and I continue to reap the blessings of having honorably served the Lord.

Jessica Baksis, Idaho, USA

CONVERTED TO THE GOSPEL—AND A MISSION

I grew up in the Church and had always planned on serving a mission. Yet as the time for me to serve approached, I longed to have a powerful conversion experience of my own such as I heard other people talk about when they described joining the Church.

I knew that leaving on a mission would require sacrifices. I had a good job that paid well, and I wondered if I would be able to find one as good upon my return. I worried about interrupting my education and

leaving family and friends. But I knew deep down that serving a mission was right, so I continued to prepare.

As part of that preparation, I went with the elders in my area to their teaching appointments. One evening the missionaries and I were teaching a man about the Word of Wisdom, but he would not accept the principle. When we left his home, I could tell that the elders were discouraged, and I felt sad too.

I wasn't sure why I should be sad though, because I didn't really know this man. I kept thinking about it, and I realized that I had these feelings because I had felt the Spirit during the lesson. I was saddened that this man had rejected something that had brought me so much joy.

With that thought I realized I *was* truly converted. I knew the gospel was true, and I couldn't wait to share it. I was soon called to serve in the Italy Rome Mission.

I was blessed abundantly for the sacrifices I had made in preparing for my mission. I taught the gospel to many wonderful people, I made lifelong friends, and I learned English. The blessings continued after my return home. I was hired at the same job I had before my mission and even received a promotion.

Perhaps the greatest blessing, however, was an increased testimony of the gospel. My mission was a period of unparalleled spiritual growth, for which I will always be grateful. ■
Marco Brando, Italy

Preparing for the Future



**By Elder
M. Russell Ballard**

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

You need to see yourselves 20 years from now. By then, you young men will be sitting in stake presidencies, on high councils, and in bishoprics, elders quorum presidencies, and high priests group leadership in your wards and in your stakes. You young women will be called to direct the affairs of the Relief Society, the Young Women, and the Primary. We need you to catch the vision of what your roles will be 20 years from now, maybe even sooner than that. Some of you may be called in your late 20s and early 30s to carry on some great responsibility in the kingdom of God.

I want to make it very clear that we understand that not every one of you may find an eternal companion. Some of you may not have the privilege or the opportunity to marry in mortality. But we promise you in the name of the Lord, as prophets have promised both anciently and in the modern day, that if you remain true and faithful, keep your covenants, serve God, and love your Father in Heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not be denied any of the eternal blessings our Heavenly Father has for His faithful children.

You ought to enjoy the Church. The reason we're eager for you to reach out and to encourage some of the young single adults that are not active is that one of the great ways to enjoy peace and joy and fellowship, a sense of belonging, is by being active in the Church. The Church is established to give us guidance and direction and to make available the ordinances and covenants that we need to progress in this life and prepare for all that our Heavenly Father has in store for us in the life to come.



Therefore, I would like to draw your attention to why we have asked over and over again that you do what you can to try to draw some of those who are less active back into fellowship in the Church. That is critical for us to understand because it's what the Atonement is all about. When we contemplate the Savior's experience in Gethsemane, when we think of Him in that moment in His majesty and His love for you and for me and for every other child of God, when we pause and ponder what He has done, then all of a sudden we see that every living soul is precious—very precious—to our Father in Heaven because they are His children, and to the Lord Jesus Christ because He went to Gethsemane for each one of them.

And so as you look about in your ward and your area and as you're going to school or to work, may I give you an assignment to have the courage to accept the challenge to try to bring one of our Father's children back

*Trust in the Lord.
Believe in Him.
Study His words.
The Lord will
bless you with the
courage to do the
things that are
most important
in your life.*



There's not any one of you who has done anything that you can't fix and who can't have a sense of peace in your life.

into activity. I promise you as you do that and as you trust the Lord and you pray about it and you seek for guidance and for strength to do what you can do, you're going to have some spiritual experiences. You'll have some promptings of the Spirit that will be unusual to you. That will happen because all of God's children are precious to Him, and all are precious to the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is the Church of Jesus Christ, restored to the earth in these, the latter days.

I encourage you to not be afraid of the future. Don't let anything that's going on in the world slow you down in your progress in mortality. Don't be afraid to marry. Don't think you have to have everything lined up. Don't think you have to have all of the resources and finances "necessary" to enter into that kind of a commitment.

Sister Ballard and I have been married for more than 60 years. I think back to when I returned from my mission to England, over 60 years ago. I used every skill I had developed as a full-time missionary to convince Barbara that I was the only true and living returned missionary that she should give any consideration to. If you could see her, you'd know that she was very beautiful and still is, and a lot of young men had the same idea I had. So I used the old commitment pattern, elders. I asked find-out questions, and I resolved concerns, and we moved on, and that's what you've been counseled to do.

Don't be afraid of marriage. I have been much more effective and much more able to accomplish things in my life with Barbara at my side than I ever would have been alone. Did we have hard times? Oh, yes. But they were some of the best times because we drew together, we prayed together, we worked

together, we saw our way from one point of our lives on until today. We are so blessed that we've had seven children, none of which we could afford. You young people are very expensive. But don't let that worry you. Pay your tithing. The Lord said that He'll provide, He'll make the way, and that was the case with us. Those wonderful seven children have given us grandchildren, and those grandchildren have given us great-grandchildren.

Our family, and your family, is an eternal unit. As an eternal unit, families go to the eternities together. My counsel to you is do not lose your faith. Go forward with faith. Faith is a principle of the gospel. Faith is one of the greatest powers that you and I have in this sojourn of mortality. Fear is one of those principles that the devil uses. He likes to seed in your minds and in mine doubt and questions. He's the father of all lies; he lies to us, and he can confuse us if we allow ourselves to be caught up in fear. So replace any fear or apprehension you have now with faith—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith in your fathers and your mothers. Stay close to them.

You may be living a long way away from your mom and your dad. My counsel is that you stay constantly in touch with them. Communicate. You can do that easily now, and at no cost. It's so important for you to keep that tie to your mother and your father wherever they may be.

We're on a journey, you and I, a great journey. We knew the consequences of this journey when we left the presence of our Heavenly Father to come here and receive a body, a tabernacle of flesh and bone. We knew that we would make some mistakes as we went along this pathway, and God gave



us the wonderful principle of repentance. There's not any one of you who has done anything that you can't fix and who can't have a sense of peace and calm as you continue your sojourn in mortality. If you have something that's seriously weighing on you, then take care of it. Work it out with your bishop and move on so that faith and trust in the Lord can have their greatest possible power in your lives.

I'd like to ask our Heavenly Father to bless you. It's one of the privileges we have as members of the Twelve, to leave a blessing upon you in the name of the Lord and through the holy apostleship. I ask Heavenly Father to bless you now that you capture the vision, maybe in a deeper and a more meaningful way than you ever have before, of who you are and what the purpose of your mortal existence is. I ask Heavenly Father to bless you with faith to trust in Him and to call down the blessings of heaven into your lives.

Trust the Lord. Believe in Him. Study His words. Worship your Father in Heaven in the holy and sacred name of His Beloved Son. May the Lord bless you with courage to do now the next things that are very most important in your lives. May you have the courage to reach out and bring souls unto Christ on conditions of repentance. May every righteous desire of your hearts be granted through your faithfulness and your trust in your Heavenly Father. May this blessing go with each and every one of you.

Enjoy the future; prepare, my beloved brothers and sisters. When the Lord needs you, you'll be able to say, "Here am I; send me" (2 Nephi 16:8). May this be the case in your lives. ■

Adapted from an address given to young single adults at an April 28, 2011, meeting in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah. For the full text, visit lds.org/study/prophets-speak-today/in-terms-of-the-future.

Being active in the Church is one of the great ways to enjoy peace, joy, fellowship, and a sense of belonging. The gospel gives us guidance and direction as we progress through life.

DREAMS, COVENANTS & SECONDHAND BUSES

*The bus my family bought
broke down in every state
between New York and Utah.
But we refused to let that deter us
from getting to the temple.*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL MANN



By Tom Gandolph Jr.

I grew up in the small town of Manorville, Long Island, New York, USA. My parents, eight siblings, and I were baptized in 1969, when I was 15. As happy as we were the day we made that first covenant with the Lord, we realized that it was just the first step. Being sealed in the temple was our next goal.

At the time, the nearest temple was in Salt Lake City, Utah—some 2,200 miles (3,500 km) away. The Washington D.C. Temple had just been announced but wouldn't be completed for another five years. We began planning a trip to Utah.

We did not have the money to make the trip. Over the course of three years we sold candy to earn the funds we needed. Our good friends, the Krugers, who had introduced us to the Church, decided to make the trip with us so their family could also be sealed.

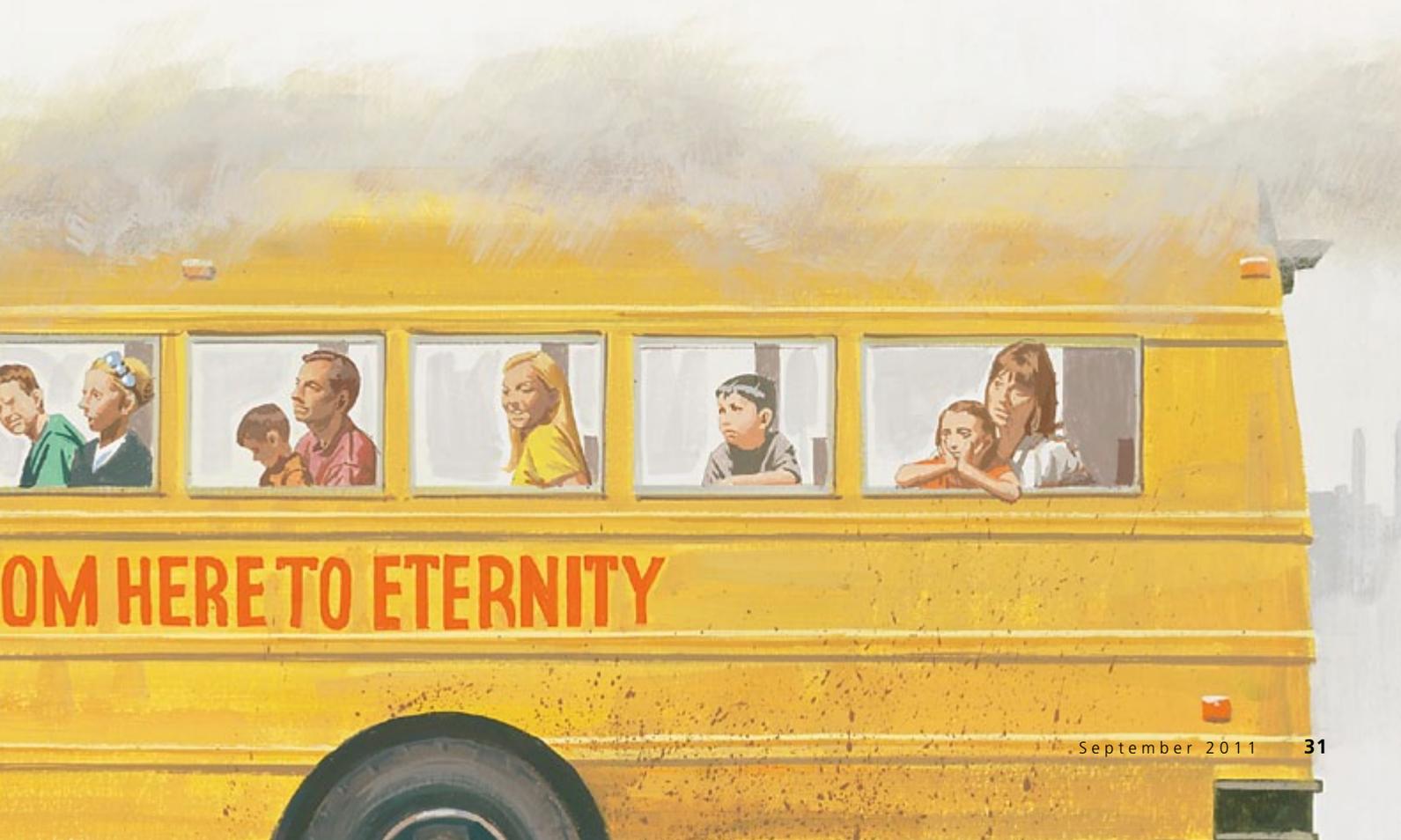
In 1973, during my freshman year at Brigham Young University, we finally earned enough to make our dream a reality. We purchased a secondhand bus for \$600 to

transport both large families—19 people in all. And in April of that year, the group embarked on the trip to Utah. Inscribed on the side of the bus were the words “Temple Express—from here to eternity.” The group traveled simply: they slept on the bus, and they ate meals at parks and rest stops along the route. The semester at BYU was wrapping up, and I waited eagerly in Provo for them to arrive.

These days, you can drive to Utah from New York in as little as two days. But it took our group nine. The reason: the bus broke down in every single state on the way.

The first issues were relatively minor: they replaced a fan belt, then a blown tire, and then a piece of the gas line. But 30 miles (48 km) outside of Chicago, Illinois, the worst setback occurred. It was raining as the bus crawled along the highway. The engine started smoking, and then there was a loud noise.

Mechanics determined the engine would have to be replaced. But there was simply no money for it. The



families started talking about turning back and offered a prayer.

Then the oldest daughters in each family, Jacqui Kruger and my sister Sharon, offered their first year's college tuition savings to cover the cost of a new engine. With such a generous sacrifice, how could the families do anything *but* continue?

While Dad and Brother Kruger started shopping for an engine, local Church members came to the families' aid, housing and feeding the group. My family saw in them a dedication to the Savior's admonition: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). On Easter Sunday they attended church in the Chicago Heights Ward, where there were about 350 members—something incredible to us since our branch's weekly attendance was about 50.

Meanwhile, our branch president from New York was in Utah and had learned from friends back home of the group's setbacks. He called to find out how he could help and shared with my parents his phone card number so that they could make necessary calls. (This was a tremendous blessing; in those days, long-distance calling was extremely expensive. Because of our branch president's generous offer, both sets of parents were able to contact their employers and arrange for additional time off.) The branch president also offered to stay in Utah to give me a ride back to New York if the families didn't make it.

A missionary serving in the Chicago area was given special permission to assist us in rebuilding a used engine my dad and Brother Kruger found for \$100. The missionary had spent the summer before his mission



rebuilding the same type of engine with his dad; in fact, it was the only engine he had ever rebuilt. The engine was put in place, but it froze. Work on the engine continued—at one point there were nine men working full-time on the bus—but everyone's optimism was fading. Trying to muster their spirits, the group sang "Come, Come, Ye Saints" (*Hymns*, no. 30). We learned that members of our branch in New York were praying and fasting for us. We definitely felt those prayers. Finally, two days later the engine was running, and the group was on its way.

We felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for being worthy of temple recommends and for having the opportunity to participate in this sacred ordinance.

During the next three days, the group would replace the fan belt twice more, use a coat hanger to hold a generator bracket in place, and jump a dead battery. There were mishaps all along the way, but finally, and much to my relief, they arrived in Utah on Saturday, April 28, 1973.

We spent the next two days with old friends, including the first missionaries who taught our family, Michael Burbage and Scott Christianson, and the missionaries who baptized our family, Rick Perry and Gary Shiner. On Monday we were able to sightsee around BYU and Temple Square.

Then on Tuesday we awoke at 5:00 a.m. and put on our Sunday best. Everyone cried as we offered family prayer that morning. We felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for being worthy of temple recommends and for having the opportunity to participate in this sacred ordinance. We felt even more grateful at the sight of friends who joined us in the temple.

My family was sealed first. In the sealing room, there was a feeling of total peace as all 11 of us knelt around the altar. Of our sealing, my youngest brother, Scott, who was five at the time, later recorded: "It was beautiful and very spiritual. My mother felt like a new bride. [We were] joined together forever."

Then it was the Kruger family's turn. Our whole family was permitted to stay in the sealing room to observe their sealing, just as they had been able to observe ours. The Gandolph family's journey into the gospel had happened because of the Krugers, and now, on this monumental day, our lifelong friendship was secured.

The next day we headed back to New York, our bus packed with lots of food from

members in Utah. Less than four days later and with only minor mechanical issues, we were home in Long Island, where we were greeted by a sheet hanging in front of our house that read, "Welcome home, pioneers." We also found letters for each individual from members of our branch.

In the end we sold the bus and recouped our expenses for the trip, minus \$200. Moreover, Jacqui and Sharon, who had sacrificed college savings to purchase the new bus engine, received scholarships for their first year at BYU that more than covered what they had given up. It was a tremendous blessing.

I am so thankful for the sacrifices the girls made as well as the generous aid we received from others. If I were to enumerate all of the people who helped in both small and large ways, I could fill volumes. Suffice it to say, we received blessings daily and even hourly. We felt the hand of the Lord and the love of other people throughout our experience.

Our journey was fraught with challenges. We learned that doing what is right does not mean the road will be easier, but it does mean you will be happier along the way. Our journey took faith, devotion, and perseverance.

The temple has endured as a symbol of discipleship through multiple generations of both families. Today my parents' descendants number over 100. There have been dozens of temple marriages. The effects of temple covenants have been similar for the Kruger family.

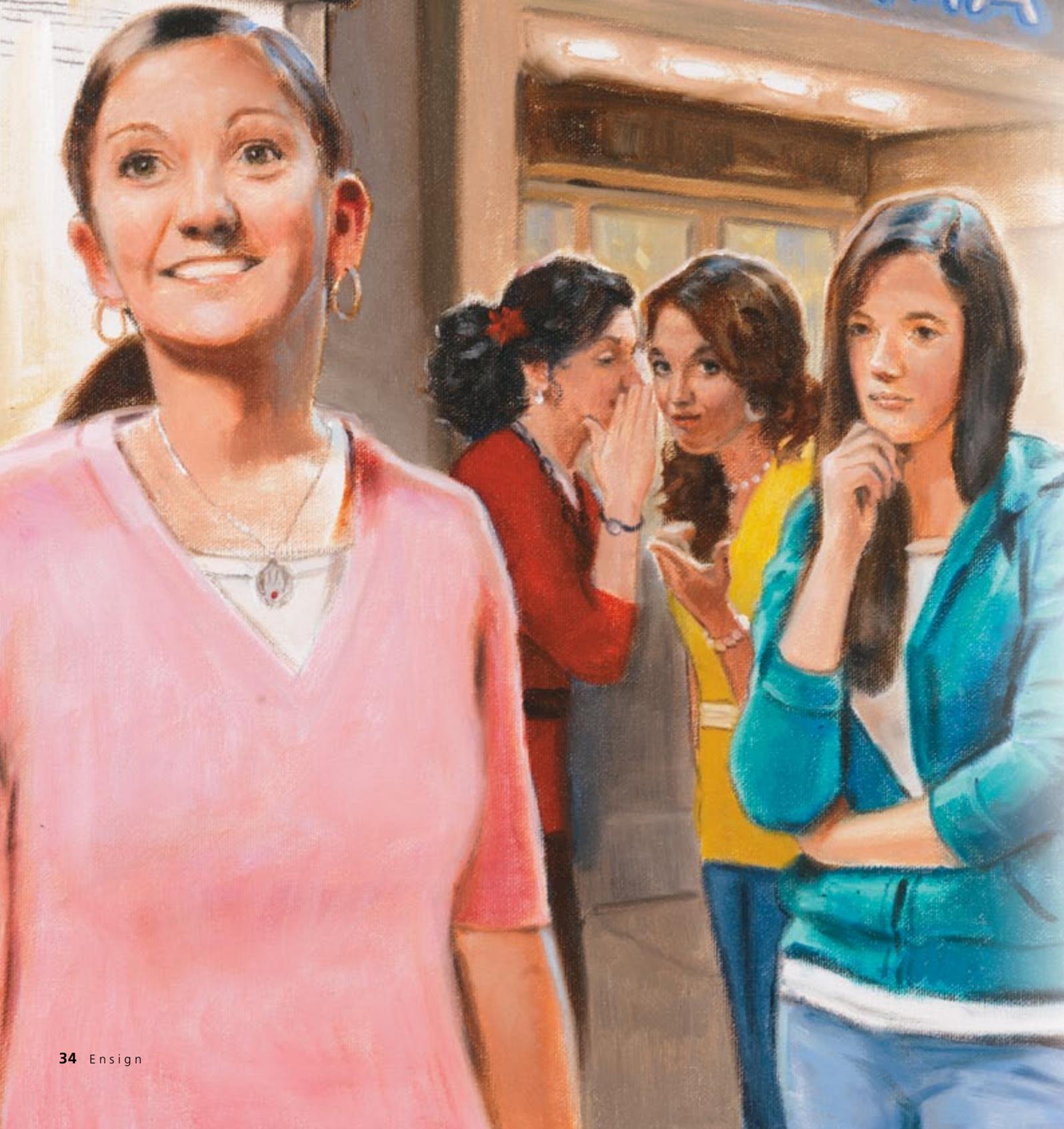
My mother's journal summarizes our experience perfectly: "If we were shown on one hand all of the mishaps and trials and on the other hand being in the temple with our family all dressed in white, we'd pack up tomorrow and head out again." ■

*We learned
that doing
what is right
does not mean
the road will
be easier, but
it does mean
you will be
happier along
the way.*

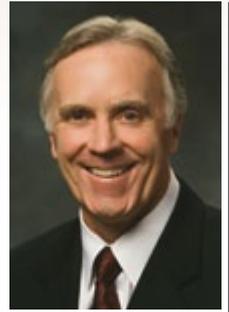


NOW SHOWING
RATED **R**

CINEMA



By Elder
Lawrence E. Corbridge
Of the Seventy



VALIANT
IN THE
TESTIMONY
OF

The Lord tells us to follow Him and not be ashamed or unwilling to stand out. Do not be ashamed to hold up His light. Do not be afraid to shine.

Jesus Christ

Several years ago as I was thinking about the effect my call to serve as a mission president in Chile would have on our family and on my work, my thoughts were directed to Gethsemane, and a simple, clear impression came to me: “Don’t count the cost.” I realized then that in comparison with the immeasurable price paid in Gethsemane and on Calvary, whatever might be required of me was “small change.” I felt ashamed to have been adding up the sum of our small sacrifices.

Whatever the Lord asks is little in comparison with what He has given and in light of what we receive through our small sacrifices—even redemption, revelation, power, joy, peace, knowledge, confidence, faith, hope, charity, dominions, eternal life, and all the Father has.

The Apostle Paul did not count the cost. He was relentless in his efforts to go “into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). He went to Jerusalem, Damascus, Cilicia, Syria, Antioch, Turkey, Greece, and Rome, proclaiming “Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). He taught in the temple and in the streets, in homes and in synagogues, in royal courts and behind prison walls, in churches and in marketplaces, and in peril, sickness, and chains. He also taught before the Sanhedrin, kings, governors, angry mobs, and friends.

He was beaten, derided, whipped, stoned, shipwrecked, impoverished, imprisoned, forgotten, and ultimately killed because of his words. Words that others carefully measured and softly whispered from behind closed doors thundered forth from the mouth of Paul in the broad light of day—words that will echo to the end of time.

Keeping the Faith

One of the hallmarks of a life well lived, a life worthy to return to God’s presence and receive a fulness of the Father, is to be “valiant in the testimony of Jesus” (D&C 76:79). Paul was valiant, and we can be valiant as well. To be “valiant in the testimony of Jesus” is to be faithful.

Paul was faithful. The Lord told Him to go, and he went. He never stopped. He was committed to following the Lord and doing right regardless of the consequences.

The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith may be viewed as faithfulness in the face of uncertainty. It is following the Lord, going forward without knowing the outcome. Following the Lord and being faithful to the end are the qualities most linked to eternal life. Of all that Paul might have otherwise said in summing up his amazing life and ministry, he merely would say that he was faithful. He wrote:



Paul was valiant, and we can be valiant as well. To be “valiant in the testimony of Jesus” is to be faithful.

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, *I have kept the faith*” (2 Timothy 4:6–7; emphasis added).

Like Paul, we can be faithful. We can fight the good fight and stay the course, one day at a time. We can keep going come what may. Even when we think we can’t, we can.

Letting Your Light Shine

The Savior said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). He also said, “Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. *Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up*—that which ye have seen me do” (3 Nephi 18:24; emphasis added).

For those of us who feel wanting when it

comes to talents and gifts, it is encouraging to know that this invitation is not to dazzle others with who *we* are or what *we* know. Rather, our light is the Light of the World reflected in us as we simply strive to do as He did. That’s it. The Lord tells us to follow Him and not be ashamed or unwilling to stand out. Do not be ashamed to hold up His light. Do not be afraid to shine. Do not worry about the outcome.

As with the Savior and the Prophet Joseph Smith, Paul was embroiled in controversy and opposed wherever he went. Controversy was his constant companion but never his object. It was rather the frequent consequence of faithfulness.

The Savior and those who have taken upon them His name have always drawn and will always draw criticism. The truth never exists unopposed. It will always have many times more than its share of antagonists,

desperately striving to disprove, debunk, discredit, and destroy. That is so because it is truth; if it were not, it would be of no consequence and the world would pay it no mind, much less waste any effort to oppose it. It would be permitted to roll along into oblivion, unnoticed and forgotten.

Human tendency is to blend in with the crowd. “Broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat” (Matthew 7:13). But we must be willing to speak up, stand up, and stand out for the truth.

Many of us are not comfortable with attention, much less criticism. Many of us would rather go unnoticed because if we can blend in, less will be expected of us. Safety is sought in the crowd rather than in the Lord, and the crowd almost always seeks a silent consensus of mediocrity. However good the crowd, it expects less of us than what we are truly capable of giving. There is only one Light, one standard that reveals and requires the full measure of our potential and offers the power by which it can be realized. Jesus Christ is the Light and Life of the world. He alone both reveals our weaknesses and provides us with the power to change and become strong where we are weak.

If you follow the Savior, like Paul you will stand out as a light shining in the darkness. Your light, which is His light, will shine, and whether or not you choose it or want it, you will be a city set on a hill. Your light will shine as an inevitable consequence of faithfully choosing to follow the Lord whatever the cost. You will not be able to hide, even though you may want to hide. Often you will stand alone, but you won't really be alone. He will stand by you. He will be with you.

Being Valiant

If measured by the life of Paul, valiance in the testimony of Christ may seem to be a very high standard. So what about those of us who have never been driven from home or threatened with harm or death because of our beliefs? Are we valiant? Can we be? The consequences for us may not be as extreme as with Paul, but the principle is the same: choose the right regardless of the consequences.

You are valiant if you:

- Keep on going when you think you can't go anymore.
- Admit your mistakes and strive to be better.
- Pick up the scriptures and put down the TV remote.
- Tell the truth when a lie would be easier.
- Refuse to do wrong even when everyone else is doing wrong.
- Set aside personal interests and postpone education to serve a mission.
- Speak no ill of another.
- Are honest even when it seems that no one else is.
- Choose not to click on a pornographic site.
- Smile and help another even when you yourself need help.
- Exercise self-control.
- Pray with all your heart.
- Forgive.
- Strive to raise your children in light and truth.
- Share the gospel without regard to consequences.
- Remember the Lord and keep His commandments.
- Don't count the cost.

Heavenly Father's plan is not that there be only a few lights shining here and there; rather, His purpose is to empower, uplift, and exalt all of His children so that the light of their lives may shine forth everywhere. He said to *all* who have accepted His gospel:

“For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“*Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth*, that thy light may be a standard for the nations;

“And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth” (D&C 115:4–6; emphasis added).

Paul was faithful and unafraid to shine. May we also be faithful and valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ, and may we let His light shine in our lives whatever the cost. ■

QUALIFIED THROUGH CHURCH SERVICE

By Alice A. Lewis

“Church members are responsible for their own spiritual and temporal well-being,” states Handbook 2: Administering the Church. “Blessed with the gift of agency, they have the privilege and duty to set their own course, solve their own problems, and strive to become self-reliant. Members do this under the inspiration of the Lord and with the labor of their own hands” ([2010], 6.1.1).

I was 57, newly divorced, with little work experience outside the home, and desperately in need of a job. I had raised four children, and here I was alone after 32 years of marriage with a bit of college behind me and great trepidation in front of me to have to find a job at my age.

I sat waiting to interview for a position as a scheduling and productions specialist with the county library district, all the while thinking I must be out of my mind to believe I was qualified for such a position. I had just convinced myself to get up and leave when the secretary suddenly said they were ready for me in the conference room. I felt sick but straightened up, said a silent prayer, and stepped forward.

Two articulate and professional people told me that experience in certain areas was vital for this

position and began to ask me about my experience. This job required a person who could make arrangements for large conferences, including announcements, invitations, catering, and cleanup. Did I have the experience needed? I was thinking I didn't when my mind suddenly captured an image of a stake Relief Society conference. I had been a counselor in the stake Relief Society presidency. From that experience I had learned how to organize large gatherings and shop for bulk food for large groups. I could honestly say I had experience doing exactly what was required.

The interviewers continued: “Are you proficient on the computer? You will be corresponding with patrons and will be required to keep a schedule of conference room use.” All I could think of was how grateful I was

to all the people who had taught me to use the computer so I could create the ward bulletin and calendar and write the stake newsletter. Yes, I was proficient on the computer.

“You will be expected to develop programs and provide classes for the public. Would you be able to teach classes to children and adults?” they asked. All those homemaking and Cub Scout crafts I had done sprang to mind. I explained that I had taught classes to children and adults my entire adult life. I knew I was creative and artistic and felt sure I could come up with interesting programs for children and adults.

I was thrilled when I got the position. I loved the work and tried to do as I would in a Church calling: magnify my work, go the extra mile, and not whine about overtime.



A LIFETIME INVESTMENT

“The Church may call upon you to make sacrifice. It may call upon you to give of the very best that you have to offer. There will be no cost in this, because you will discover that it will become an investment that will pay you dividends for as long as you live.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “Life’s Obligations,” *Liahona*, May 1999, 6; *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 4.

I developed computer classes in English and recruited a young student to teach the classes in Spanish. I taught arts and crafts classes and hosted numerous authors and prominent speakers. I decorated the library for every holiday and displayed related books.

One day someone called me at work, claiming to be from the governor’s office and wanting to know if I would be interested in a position as the governor’s assistant. I laughingly asked, “Who is this?” He explained that the call was legitimate and invited me to come the next day for an interview. I went with a sinking feeling that it could be a joke. It wasn’t. The interview went well, and I was hired on the spot.

In my new job I used the skills I had gained from years of speaking in church. The governor could not

attend all the events to which he was invited; therefore, his staff members were expected to speak in his place. All those talks in church and from serving in leadership positions had given me the experience I needed to speak in public alongside senators, local and national dignitaries, and celebrities. I served as the governor’s assistant for seven years until we both retired.

Where would I have been without the wide range of experience I had received while serving in Church callings? All that I have learned as a servant of the Lord in His Church has given me a life rich with blessings. Not only was I helping others while serving, but I was also growing by leaps and bounds. I am deeply grateful for the gospel and have a solid testimony of the value of service in the Church. ■



By Julie B. Beck
Relief Society General President

Relief Society History:

A LOOK AT THE LORD'S VISION FOR HIS DAUGHTERS

As daughters of God seeking eternal life, we can go forward with confidence inspired by examples of those who have gone before us.

When we were called as a new Relief Society general presidency, we were given a history of the Relief Society to study. We prayerfully did so, searching to know what the Lord wanted us to learn and then do as a result of that study. Our study revealed a heritage rich in the spiritual power and contribution of Latter-day Saint women. It was an impressive record of the Lord's dealings with His daughters and His expectations for them. Through our study and the inspiration that came with that effort, we came to know the purposes of Relief Society. We learned that in our preparation for the blessings of eternal life, the Lord wanted His daughters to *increase faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes, and seek out and help those in need*. As sisters today prayerfully read their history, they will receive insights, answers, and inspiration just as we did.

Our hope is that as we study the history and work of Relief Society we will see how our Heavenly Father helped sisters in the past. As we

learn how He helped them, we will gain a testimony that He will also help us today. We will learn that if, through the Holy Ghost, God could guide a woman more than a hundred years ago, He can do the same for women in our day.

Sister Eliza R. Snow, our second Relief Society general president, was a strong and faithful early leader. She understood that the Spirit "satisfies and fills up every longing of the human heart, and fills up every vacuum." Through different seasons in her life, she struggled with poor health and loneliness. However, she was strengthened as she was able to receive and act on personal revelation. To her, personal revelation and the constant companionship of the Spirit were like a fountain. She said, "And is it not our privilege to so live that we can have this constantly flowing into our souls?"¹

Examples such as this throughout our history help us remember that the ability to receive and act on personal revelation is the single most important skill we can acquire in this life. With it we cannot fail; without it we cannot succeed.



Increase Faith and Personal Righteousness

great capacity in the women of the Church, which come from their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. This faith has given women the ability to make correct choices and overcome challenges and difficulties. It has enabled them to call upon the fire of their faith and the power of their covenants to be exemplary in their mortal experiences. In every country, there is found a legacy of faith among the women who have helped to establish the Church and strengthen the homes of the Latter-day Saints.

Silvia H. Allred, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, has told of her mother, Hilda Alvarenga, who was called to serve as Relief Society president in a branch in El Salvador when she was a convert in her 30s. She told the branch president that she

Relief Society history is important for sisters throughout the world today.

Our history reveals a long line of strong, righteous, faithful, dedicated women. This legacy began with Eve, and the stories of these women belong to each of us and give us vision for our future. If we are going to continue this legacy of righteous, dedicated women, it will be because we build upon what they have done. Through our study of history we learn that there is strength and

was inexperienced, unprepared, and inadequate. But the branch president called her anyway. While serving, she learned leadership skills and developed new gifts, such as teaching, public speaking, and organizing meetings, activities, and service projects. She helped others in the branch become builders of the kingdom.² Today, as in our past, Heavenly Father expects His daughters to have a leadership role in every ward or branch. Sisters such as Hilda Alvarenga are becoming pioneers and role models for future generations.



Strengthen Families and Homes

their lives by doing those things that would be most enduring, thus ridding themselves of less rewarding activities.³ Her counsel is still valuable today. A study of our history helps us gain the perspective we need to keep our focus on the essential things that will bless our lives eternally.

Increasing faith, strengthening families, and serving others are as important today as they were when Relief Society was organized.

Our history teaches us that strong faith is a propelling and stabilizing force in the lives of righteous women. Faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ not only heals us, but it also enables us to do difficult things and live in an exemplary way. Our history teaches us that charity, the pure love of Christ, which never fails, has helped women endure beautifully through some very

History can help today's women, who have many pressures in their lives.

As our presidency has traveled throughout the world, we have been in the homes of the sisters. We have seen their struggles and know the heartbreaking troubles they deal with. Many sisters feel overwhelmed. Some of them find it hard to make time for daily prayer and scripture study and to do the things that will help them feel the Spirit in their lives. We live in increasingly challenging times and are surrounded by beliefs and practices that could detract us from our eternal goal. Because we as women have great influence on those around us, we must do all we can to keep ourselves spiritually strong.

Our Relief Society history helps us focus on what is important and prioritize what we do. Every day we are given the opportunity to make choices that will increase our faith and strengthen our families. Over 60 years ago, Belle S. Spafford, our ninth Relief Society general president, asked sisters to appraise their interests, evaluate their activities, and simplify

difficult trials. We increase our faith and personal righteousness when we make choices to align our will with God's will. As we do, we feel peace. When we are misaligned, we feel guilt. That is the Spirit telling us we need to repent and realign ourselves with God's will. Repentance is a principle we use daily to remain spiritually strong.

We learn from our history that strong families are not an accident. Living the Lord's plan with precision, intention, and determination is a conscious, faith-filled choice in today's world. It is a faith-filled, charitable service to strengthen those around us and nurture all families.

Our history is rich with role models of sisters who embraced the charge to "relieve the poor" and to "save souls."⁴ Amy Brown Lyman served as the eighth Relief Society general president during World War II. She counseled the sisters to strengthen their faith and hold on. She turned their focus to making their homes a safe place and a priority in their lives.⁵

Upon entering Relief Society, every sister becomes part of a great worldwide sisterhood, united in discipleship. This

Seek Out and Help Those in Need

is when she begins to participate with others who also are determined to keep their covenants and to give all they have to building the Lord's kingdom.

Our history helps us understand our inseparable connection to the priesthood.

The Lord has important work for His sons and for His daughters. Priesthood quorums and Relief Societies do the Lord's work. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "I will organize the women under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood."⁶

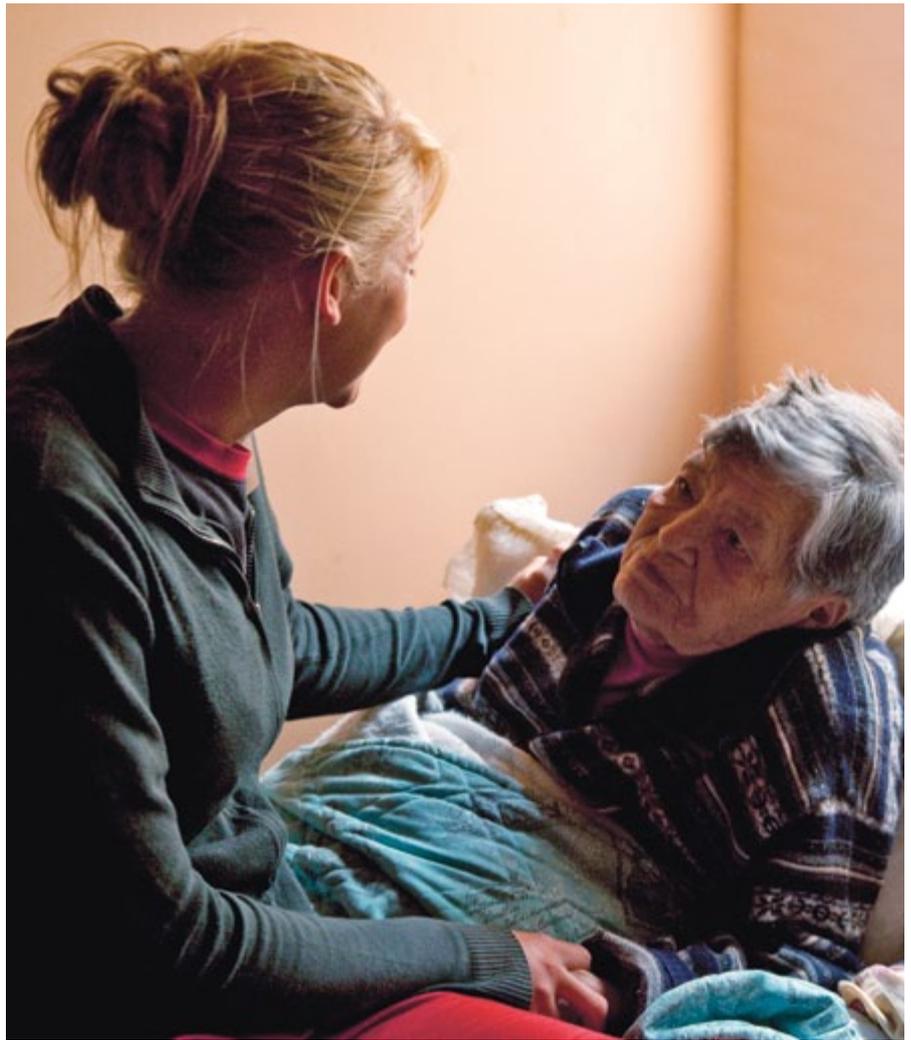
Now as in the past, the Relief Society president functions under the direction of the bishop or branch president, who holds the keys of the priesthood to lead the ward or branch.

Barbara W. Winder, our 11th Relief Society general president, said, "I want so, and desire so, that we be unified, one together with the priesthood, serving and building the kingdom of God here today."⁷

Additionally, it is no small thing to know that each sister has access to all of the ordinances of salvation and can make covenants that enable her to fulfill her earthly and eternal mission. Each sister can have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost to guide her, bring her comfort, and affirm her righteous actions. She also has full access to spiritual gifts that enhance her ability to live her life with confidence and protection. Our history teaches us how the women of the past utilized these blessings.

Knowing our history helps us prepare for the blessings of eternal life.

We learn that Relief Society sisters in the past faced difficult times, but today we are also battling a determined



enemy who wants to destroy our faith and families and leave us alone and suffering. Our Relief Society history provides context for everything we do. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Savior gave women of this dispensation a call to help carry out His work.

We learn through our history who we are and our vital role in our Heavenly Father's plan. We can't delegate our responsibilities to someone else. Because our Heavenly Father knows us and loves us, He will sustain us as we seek to align our will with His. "Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:20). ■

NOTES

1. Eliza R. Snow, quoted in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 46.
2. See *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 91–92.
3. See *Daughters in My Kingdom*, xiii.
4. See *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 17.
5. See *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 67–68.
6. Joseph Smith, quoted in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 12.
7. Barbara W. Winder, quoted in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 140.



A LITTLE ON Heaven Earth

A celestial marriage requires living a consecrated life of worthiness and celestial principles, which leads to happiness in this life and exaltation in the next.

Temple marriage describes the place you go to have a marriage performed. *Celestial marriage* is what you create by being true to the sacred covenants you make during the temple marriage ceremony.

After the vows are taken, a celestial marriage requires living a consecrated life of worthiness and celestial principles, which leads to happiness in this life and exaltation in the next. If we live the laws pertaining to celestial marriage, we will, with our spouse and with our family, be able to have a little heaven on earth. And when we live those laws, we are practicing the same laws that are practiced in heaven. We are practicing how to live with the Father and the Son and with our families in the eternities to come. That to me is the message to the world of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

By Elder
Robert D. Hales
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles





When you are choosing your companion, make sure that both of you have a desire for a celestial marriage relationship, a desire to have a companion for eternity, a desire to have a family for eternity, and a desire to live in the presence of our Heavenly Father.

Selecting a Companion

Single members of the Church often ask, “How do I find the right person to marry?” Let me suggest an approach. Measure the spiritual level of your potential future companions. First, if they are members of the Church, are they active and fully committed, or are they passive or antagonistic? Second, if they are not members, are they receptive to the gospel and its teachings, or are they noncommittal or antagonistic?

If you marry an active member in the temple for time and all eternity in the new and everlasting covenant, will you have problems? Yes. Will you be able to solve them? Yes. Will your chance be better to solve them and strengthen your testimony than if you had not married in the temple? Yes. But if you marry somebody who is antagonistic to the Church or passive toward the gospel, you are placing yourself in a position where you will find someday that you may have to choose between that individual and the Church. That is a very heavy responsibility.

When you are choosing your companion, make sure that both of you have a desire for a celestial marriage relationship, a desire to have a companion for eternity, a desire to have a family for eternity, and a desire to live in the presence of our Heavenly Father.

Abiding the Law

The Lord has made it clear that we can be together in eternity with our

companion only if we abide the law. In modern revelation He says:

“Prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

“For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant” (D&C 132:3–4).

Every member of the Church should read and study section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Do you realize that there is no one between the Lord and the sealer when he performs the sealing ordinance? It is a beautiful and a touching ceremony.

The deep underlying purpose of temple marriage was clarified by the Redeemer Himself when He said, “As pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant [of marriage], it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned” (D&C 132:6).

The Lord also said, “Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world” (D&C 132:15).

Do we realize that in the Doctrine and Covenants we are told that unless

we enter into celestial marriage, we cannot reach the highest degree of glory in the celestial kingdom (see D&C 131:1–4)? It is also clear what will happen to those who never receive the blessings of temple marriage: their binding is until death do they part—a very sad thing to contemplate.

The aim of the gospel and the purpose of celestial marriage are not only to keep us together but also to make us eligible for our Heavenly Father's highest reward: exaltation in the celestial kingdom, increase in that kingdom, and eternal life with our families.

Ascending Together

Celestial marriage is like climbing a mountain. You tie yourself to an eternal companion, and you start up the mountain. As children come along, you tie into them as well and continue your journey. The ropes will hold all of the mountain climbers together, but the wind, rain, snow, and ice—challenges of the world—will tear at you to pull you off that mountain.

How do you reach the summit? If Mom or Dad gives up and cuts the rope that binds them to each other and their children, chances are that one or the other may fall off the mountain and perhaps pull down other family members with them. The whole family could fall off that mountain and not reach the eternal summit. We can't take that chance.



Let us always be mindful that as members of a family, we are tied to a mountain team that is attempting to return to the presence of our Heavenly Father.

A popular proverb says, “Thee lift me and I’ll lift thee, and we will ascend together.”

A marriage partnership is not a crutch. You do not marry somebody you think is a little higher than the angels and then lean on that person. Rather, you develop yourself and your own gifts and talents. As you develop, you grow together, supporting and strengthening one another.

Celestial marriage is like climbing a mountain. You tie yourself to an eternal companion, and you start up the mountain. As children come along, you tie into them as well and continue your journey.



The secret of a happy marriage is to protect the Achilles' heel and not take advantage of the weaknesses of those you know the best, love the most, and ultimately can hurt the most.

Before my wife and I were married, I said to her, "You know, Mary, I feel that to be successful in business I will have to work hard domestically and perhaps internationally. Do you want to go on that trip with me?" She said she did. Ten years after we were married, I was asked to go to England, and there she was with me. Then we went to Germany and later to Spain. She became international, multicultural, and bilingual because she had made up her mind that we would work and grow together.

Remember to treat each other with kindness and to respect each other for who you are and what you want to be.

I remember a woman in my ward some years ago when I was a bishop. She and her husband were having marital problems. As they spoke with me, she began to tear down her

husband in all the key areas that a man needs praise in order to respect himself. She talked of his inadequacy as a father, his inadequacies in marital relations, his inadequacy as a provider, and his inadequacies socially.

I asked her, "Why do you do this to a man you should love and sustain?"

She replied, "It's much better to argue with someone you love because you know where you can hurt him the most."

And she *meant* it.

As Latter-day Saints, however, we are to use our moral agency and utilize our opportunities for growth. Everyone has weaknesses. The adversary knows the Achilles' heel of your loved ones, your friends, your roommates, your brothers and sisters, and your parents. Do you understand *your* Achilles' heel? Do you know the situations you have to stay away from and what your weaknesses are? The secret of a happy marriage is to protect the Achilles' heel and not take advantage of the weaknesses of those you know the best, love the most, and ultimately can hurt the most.

"Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings" (D&C 108:7). In other words, every day you are to help one another as you pray and speak in your exhortations and in your doings.

I remember a young couple just out of college. One parent gave them a home; the other parent gave them

furnishings and a new car. They had everything in the world given to them. Within three years they were divorced. They hadn't worked and sacrificed. They had leaned on each other and on their parents as a crutch, had crippled themselves, and hadn't grown. They hadn't learned the hard part. They hadn't worried about making their marriage work. Make sure you sacrifice, share, and grow together.

Supporting One Another

After I had served as an elders quorum president, a branch president, and a bishop over a period of five years, we moved to a new ward. My wife was soon called to be the Relief Society president. She went to her first meeting with the bishop while I chased our two youngsters up and down the halls and through the parking lot and cultural hall. I had my first experience with waiting. I waited one and a half hours. When Mary came out of the bishop's office, I had one boy in my arm and the other by the hand. I didn't have the courage to say anything, but I just gave her a look that said, "Do you realize you've kept me waiting an hour and a half?"

All she did was raise five fingers and say, "Five years." That is how long she had been waiting for me. Then I began to realize it was going to be my job to support my wife in her calling just as she had supported me in my callings.

I ask you not to lean on your spouse as a crutch but to stand strong, strengthen each other, and ask for



help as you pray together each night. I bear testimony that those moments in my life when I have been unhappy, depressed, or sad are when I have deviated, even to a minor degree, from the teachings of the Lord. That you might have true happiness and find the joy of a celestial marriage with a little heaven on earth is my prayer. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on November 9, 1976. For the full text in English, visit speeches.byu.edu.

I ask you not to lean on your spouse as a crutch but to stand strong, strengthen each other, and ask for help as you pray together each night.

THE ETERNAL NATURE OF Marriage



**By President
N. Eldon Tanner
(1898–1982)**

First Counselor in
the First Presidency

Nathan Eldon Tanner was born on May 9, 1898, in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was ordained an Apostle in 1962 and, between 1963 and 1982, served as a counselor in the First Presidency under four Presidents of the Church. The following is excerpted from his talk “Celestial Marriages and Eternal Families,” delivered in the April 1980 general conference. For the full address in English, go to conference.lds.org.

One of the happiest times in a person’s life is when contemplating marriage. . . . It is safe to assume that at the time of marriage most couples are sure they are making the right choices; but all too often the honeymoon ends, and trouble begins, and the marriage terminates in divorce.

The frequency of divorce has led some to a lifestyle where they feel inclined to escape from the seemingly meaningless rituals, without benefit of clergy or other legal sanctions. I often wonder how well informed they are about the purpose of the Creation of the earth on which they dwell and how fully they have researched the scriptures to learn why God created man and woman and instituted the sacred ordinance of marriage.

Let us consider first the purpose of the Creation of the earth. The scriptures make it clear that it was for no other purpose than to provide a place for the sons and daughters

of God to dwell in mortality and prove themselves worthy, through keeping the commandments, to return to the presence of God from whence they came.

Following the Creation of the earth, “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . .

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it” (Genesis 1:26–28).

When God created woman and brought her to the man, He said, “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).

Yes, marriage is ordained of God, and following that first reference to husband and wife, we find recurring scriptures as evidence that men and women became husbands and wives in marriage ceremonies followed by wedding feasts. We are not here just to “eat, drink, and be merry” (2 Nephi 28:7). We have been given an earth to subdue and instructions to multiply and replenish it. It is interesting to note that God said “multiply” and not just “replenish” the earth (see Genesis 1:28).

It is important for us to understand, as we can learn from the scriptures, that God



is eternal, that His creations are eternal, and that His truths are eternal. Therefore, when He gave Eve to Adam in marriage, that union would be eternal. Marriage as ordained of God and performed in His holy temples is eternal—not just until death. In Ecclesiastes we read, “I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever” (Ecclesiastes 3:14).

When Christ asked Peter to tell Him who He was, Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus gave Peter the assurance that he knew this by revelation from God the Father and that it would be upon this rock of revelation that He would build His Church. Then He said, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou

N. Eldon and Sara Tanner with their daughters, about 1927. Their fifth and last child, Helen, was born in 1931.

shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (see Matthew 16:15–19).

When the Pharisees came to Jesus, tempting Him, to ask about divorce, His answer included the following:

“Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

“And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

“Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:4–6).

These scriptures indicate that celestial marriage, ordained by God and performed by His authority in His holy temples, is eternal, and couples so united are sealed for time and all eternity, and their children are born in the covenant of the everlasting gospel. They will be an eternal family according to their faithfulness. . . .

Jesus Christ came to earth to give us that very message—who we are and what we are supposed to do. He gave us the gospel plan of life and salvation and said there was no other name under heaven whereby we could be saved (see Acts 4:12). We have that same gospel restored in these latter days, with the living prophet today . . . to speak for God, as has been God’s method of communication with man through the ages. . . .

I know that through the gospel of Jesus Christ and through keeping the commandments of God and the covenants we make with Him, we can each make of our home a heaven on earth while we prepare ourselves and our children to return to our Heavenly Father. ■

Spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing standardized.



Giving God

A CHANCE TO BLESS US

By Michael R. Morris

Church Magazines

How does a district in Argentina with only a few small branches have 17 temple marriages in less than four years? Leaders say the answer is simple: obedience.

When 21-year-old Gisela Silva moved with her family from Mendoza, Argentina, to the nation's southernmost city of Ushuaia, she wondered whether she'd left behind her chances of marrying in the temple. Mendoza, after all, has a stake filled with wards of Latter-day Saints, while isolated Ushuaia—located on the island of Tierra del Fuego—has only about 600 members attending three small branches.

“My parents had married in the temple, and I wanted this blessing for myself—to marry a faithful member of the Church, someone with whom I could form an eternal family,” she recalls. “But when I arrived in Ushuaia, there were so few young adults here that I wondered whether that would happen.”

Lucas Romano had the same concerns as Gisela. During his mission to Uruguay, his family had moved to Ushuaia. When he joined them after completing his mission, he quickly noticed that young single adult men outnumbered young single adult women. He was determined, nevertheless, to obey the counsel of local leaders to date only members of the Church.

That counsel became easier to follow after Lucas met Gisela at church and she enrolled in English classes at a school where he teaches. He began walking her home after class, and they soon began dating. As they prayed individually about their growing



PHOTOGRAPH OF BUENOS AIRES ARGENTINA TEMPLE BY NÉSTOR CURBELO; MAP BY MOUNTAIN HIGH MAPS © 1993 DIGITAL WISDOM, INC.

relationship, they say that confirmation came “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30; D&C 98:12).

In April 2005, Lucas and Gisela married civilly, as required by Argentine law, and then were sealed in the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple. Their sealing was significant for the young Church membership in Ushuaia: it was the first of 17 temple marriages in less than four years.

A Great Success Story

How does a district with only a few small branches have so many temple marriages in such a short time? The answer, according to local leaders, is simple: obedience.

“This is a great success story,” says Marcelino Tossen, former president of the Ushuaia district. “These young people are setting a great example for Church members. One of the qualities they have is that they obey the Lord, the prophets, and their local leaders, and they follow the impressions of the Spirit. This quality unites the young people here in the Ushuaia district.”

President Tossen admits, however, that local leaders “had to work on this districtwide effort for a while” before their teaching and counseling about the importance of temple marriage bore fruit.

Roberto Ignacio Silva, Ushuaia district president, says what got his attention after he moved with his family to Ushuaia in 2004 was the number of unmarried returned missionaries and young adult women. His daughter Gisela became part of that group. He said young adults had a goal to marry in the temple but needed some encouragement and direction.

“I told them that if we desire an eternal companion, we don’t have to look for someone perfect,” says President Silva. “But we must pray and ask the Lord to help us, and we must remain faithful in the Church.”

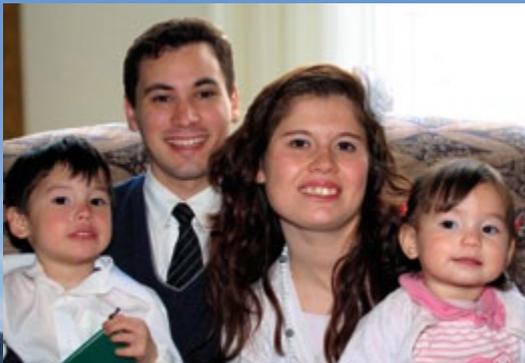
In addition to increasing activities for young single adults—including firesides and combined activities with young single adults from Rio Gallegos and other cities to the north—leaders emphasized the importance of prayer, faithfulness, and worthiness. They also encouraged young adults in Ushuaia to muster sufficient faith to overcome their fears.

We Had Nothing

“One big preoccupation the young people have here is how they can marry if they don’t have much,” President Silva says. “We have helped them understand that we don’t have to have everything before we get married.”

“The largest blessing of being married in the temple is the happiness I feel in knowing that we are united as an eternal family,” says Ruth Silva, pictured at right center with her husband, Emanuel, and their daughter, Banira. Top: Ezequiel and Marina Frau, with their daughter, Ailin. Bottom: Lucas and Gisela Romano, with their children, Benjamin and Rebeca.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL R. MORRIS, EXCEPT AS NOTED, BACKGROUND © ISTOCKPHOTO



Ruth Rodríguez got to know Emanuel Silva when the two were asked to help organize a combined district young single adult activity in Rio Gallegos, more than 200 miles (320 km) to the north, in February 2006. The friend who asked the two to work together hoped they would hit it off. “It worked,” recalls Emanuel, who had been home two years from serving in the Arizona Tucson Mission.

When he and Ruth married six months later, their preparation—spiritual and temporal—helped them overcome their fear of the future.

“I felt the love of my Father in Heaven and that He wanted me to form my family,” Emanuel says of answers to his prayers. “Once I set that goal, He showed me the way and helped me find a wife.”

Ruth adds that goals they set as a couple, including working hard to save money for their trip to the temple, helped them move forward. “Sometimes there were things we wanted to buy,” she says, “but we said, ‘No, we have to save so we can go to the temple.’”

The cost of their flight to and from the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple in 2006 exhausted their savings. “Afterward we had nothing,” says Emanuel, echoing a common newlywed refrain. Today he and Ruth laugh at that memory, grateful that their faith afforded them the “beautiful experience” of being sealed in the temple—an experience that still means everything to them.

“We can have a lot of fearful feelings as we contemplate marriage,” says Ruth. “What about the things we lack? What about our economic situation? What about raising children? But if we are obedient to the word of the Lord, go to the temple, and start our families, we don’t need to worry. The Lord will bless us in ways we never could have imagined.”

You Can't Plan Everything

When Ezequiel Agustín Frau lost his job in early 2006, he'd been home from his mission to Colombia for nearly two years. He was still single but felt that his future wife was not in Ushuaia. He decided to go to the temple to seek direction.

"I wanted to be more in contact with the Holy Ghost, learn the Lord's will for me, and seek inspiration," he says. "The temple helped me find it."

When he reached Buenos Aires following a three-day, 2,000-mile (3,200 km) bus ride, he stayed with friends and then a relative while frequenting the temple. Several weeks later Ezequiel was running out of money and considering a return to Ushuaia. A local bishop found him a job, however, so he decided to stay.

At a Church activity a short while later, Ezequiel met a young woman named Marina Mas. They found it easy to talk, and he quickly felt comfortable around her. When he saw Marina again at a young single adult gathering, she said something that impressed him.

"We should be living at the level of the kind of person we are looking to marry," Ezequiel recalls Marina saying during a discussion about goals.

For her part, Marina had been praying to find a worthy companion. She knew a lot of young men but was immediately impressed with Ezequiel's spirituality.

A mutual friend helped Ezequiel find a place to live that was closer to his work, then three hours by bus from where he was staying. It turned out that his new apartment—in a city of 13 million people—was only two blocks from Marina's home.

"I didn't plan to live two blocks from her home," he recalls. "I didn't even know where she lived."

Living in close proximity gave Ezequiel ample opportunity to see Marina, whose family gave him a warm welcome. The confluence of events was an answer to his prayers.

The couple dated and soon began planning their future together. After marrying in the temple in the fall of 2006, they moved to Ushuaia.



THE DIVINE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE

"How wonderful a thing is marriage under the plan of our Eternal Father, a plan provided in His divine wisdom for the happiness and security of His children and the continuity of the race. . . .

"Surely no one reading the scriptures, both ancient and modern, can doubt the divine concept of marriage. The sweetest feelings of life, the most generous and satisfying impulses of the human heart, find expression in a marriage that stands pure and unsullied above the evil of the world."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "What God Hath Joined Together," *Ensign*, May 1991, 71.



“We can’t always understand the vision our Father in Heaven has, and we can’t plan everything,” Ezequiel says in retrospect. “But we can be obedient and give Him a chance to bless us.”

It’s a Beautiful Thing to Have a Family

President Tossen says one of the greatest blessings temple marriage has brought to Ushuaia is that “the day is arriving when the Church will be led by children of the covenant. The gospel will spread here as a result, and the Lord will bless the Church”—just as He is blessing faithful couples who marry in the temple.

“When I was small and our leaders spoke to us of marriage, all the stories were happy ones,” says Ruth Silva. She realizes that “happily ever after” takes work, “but I feel that those stories were true. The largest blessing of being married in the temple is the happiness

I feel in knowing that we are united as an eternal family.”

Her example helped her father enter the waters of baptism in 2008 and then take his family to the temple, where they were sealed a year later.

“The blessing I enjoy the most, in addition to rearing my children in the gospel, is the joy and peace in my heart of knowing that I have complied with the saving ordinance of eternal marriage,” adds Lucas Romano.

“Being with my wife and children renews that feeling of happiness. Like a rolling snowball, it’s constantly growing. Every day I’m more grateful to the Lord that I got married and started a family.”

Marina Frau adds, “It’s a beautiful thing to have a family. It can be difficult at times because there’s much to learn, but it’s beautiful.” ■

“If we desire an eternal companion, we don’t have to look for someone perfect. But we must pray and ask the Lord to help us, and we must remain faithful in the Church,” Roberto Ignacio Silva, Ushuaia district president, told young adults, many of whom (pictured above) have taken that advice to heart and have married in the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple.

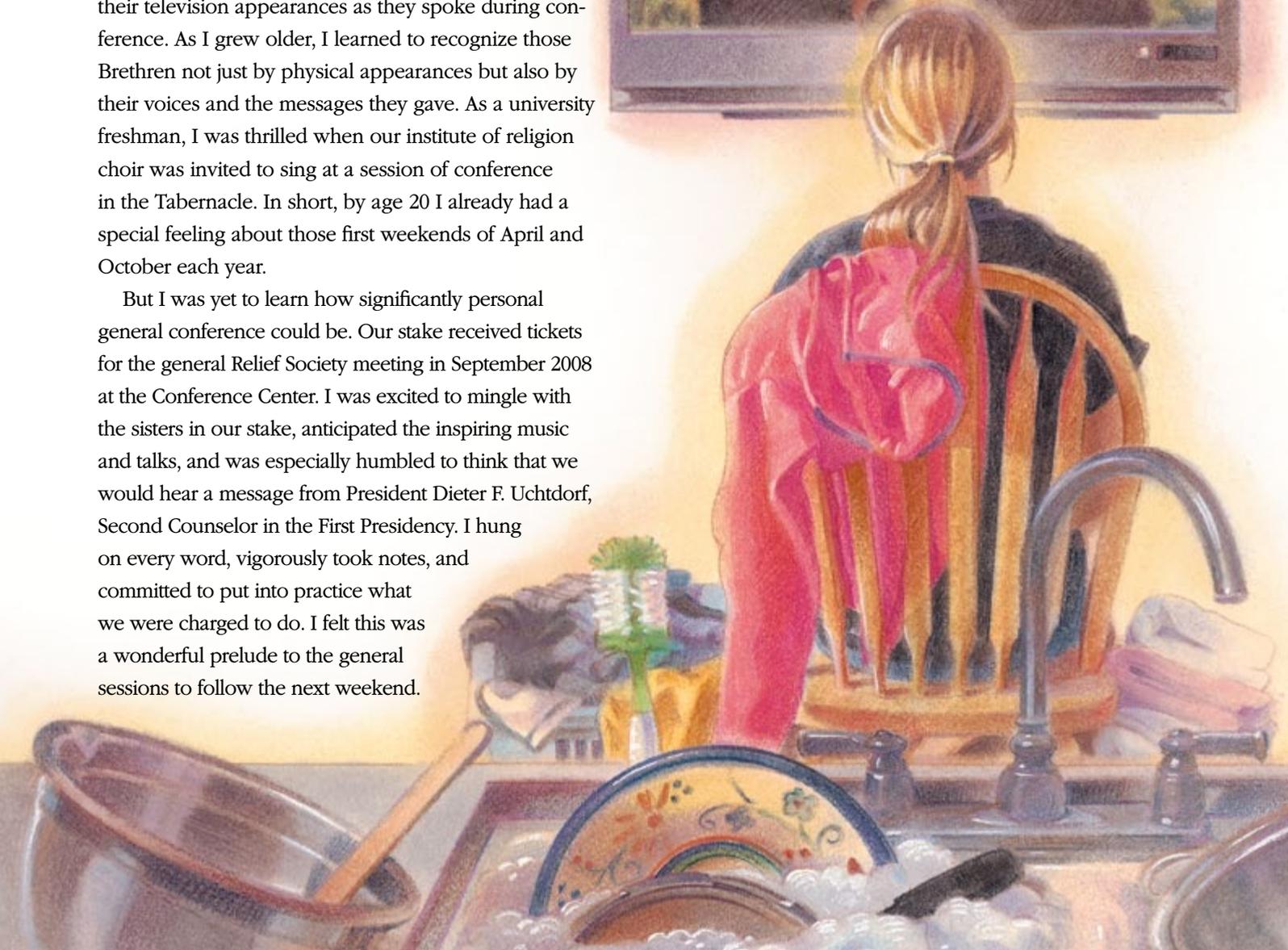
A GENERAL CONFERENCE JUST FOR **MIE**

What I was facing was terrifying, but Heavenly Father was aware of me that first weekend in October.

By Ann Singleton

I grew up in a home where general conferences were as much anticipated as a holiday. I remember as a young girl being given a Sunday School assignment to match the pictures of the General Authorities with their television appearances as they spoke during conference. As I grew older, I learned to recognize those Brethren not just by physical appearances but also by their voices and the messages they gave. As a university freshman, I was thrilled when our institute of religion choir was invited to sing at a session of conference in the Tabernacle. In short, by age 20 I already had a special feeling about those first weekends of April and October each year.

But I was yet to learn how significantly personal general conference could be. Our stake received tickets for the general Relief Society meeting in September 2008 at the Conference Center. I was excited to mingle with the sisters in our stake, anticipated the inspiring music and talks, and was especially humbled to think that we would hear a message from President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. I hung on every word, vigorously took notes, and committed to put into practice what we were charged to do. I felt this was a wonderful prelude to the general sessions to follow the next weekend.



Then my world shattered. While at work the following Thursday, I received a telephone call from my doctor informing me that the tests I had had the previous week indicated cancer.

The next days were a blur of doubts, fear, anxiety, sadness, despair, and agony. So many emotions churned inside me that sleep did not come and my tears flowed constantly. I had never felt so afraid.

When Saturday morning came, I intended to listen to conference while doing other tasks. Staying busy, I hoped, would help focus my mind away from my trial. But I found myself putting down the laundry and letting the dishes sit in the sink as I was drawn to the television. My heart almost skipped a beat as Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles began the first session with this statement: “We can’t predict all the struggles and storms in life, not even the ones just around the next corner, but as persons of faith and hope, we know beyond the shadow of any doubt that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true and the best is yet to come.”¹

Surely, I thought, the next topic would be on moral cleanliness or the Sabbath day. But each succeeding message was also one of hope in times of trial!

Sunday was a peaceful day as our family united in prayer and fasting on my behalf. I continued to hear words of hope just as I had the previous day, with a powerful concluding message in the afternoon from Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “I testify that the Atonement of Jesus Christ covers all of the trials and hardships that any of us will encounter in this life,” he said. “At times when we may feel to say, ‘Hope you know, I had a hard time,’ we can be assured that He is there and we are safe in His loving arms.”²

Perhaps it was the fasting or the prayers or simply my humble emotional state, but from beginning to end, I felt this was my own personal general conference with an audience of one.

The following days, weeks, and months brought many challenges as I faced tests, surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation treatments. I wish I could say that I never felt despair during those 12 months. I did. But during those times, I also felt sustained by the prayers and fasting of ward and family members, priesthood blessings given by my father, and the faith of my mother. I read the Book of Mormon completely during the first few months of treatments, knowing that comfort can come through the word of God.

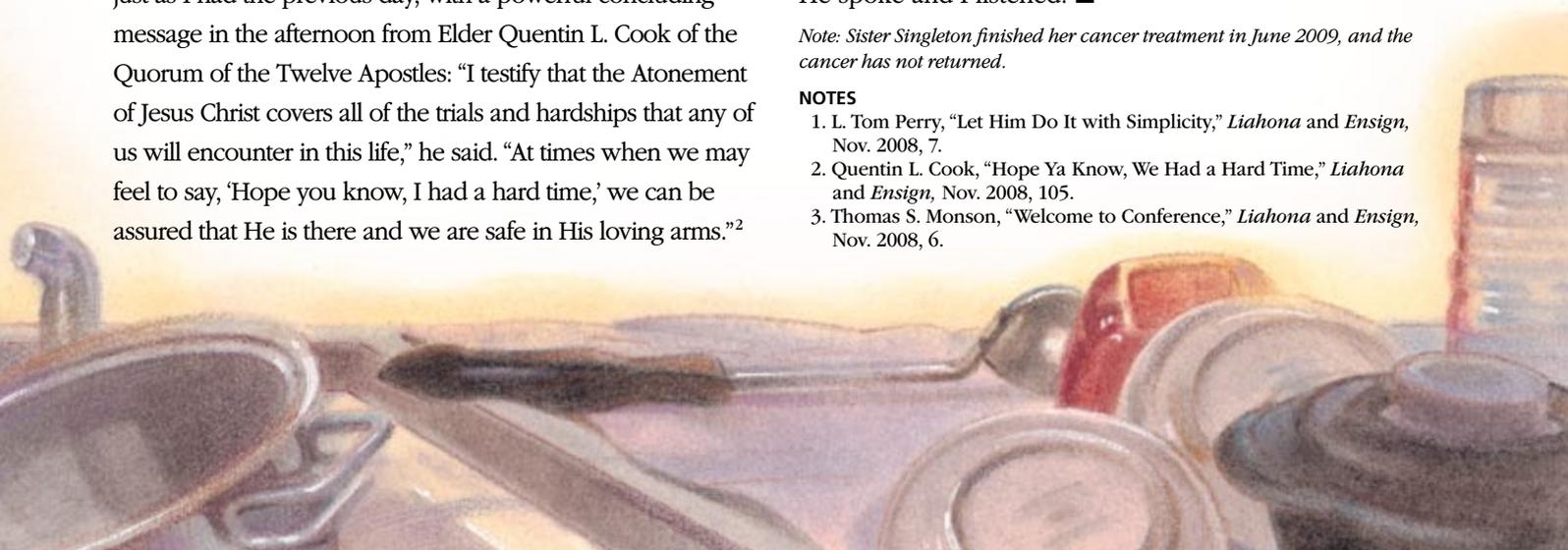
But on the darkest days, I always went to my well-worn copy of the November 2008 *Ensign* and reread those words that came from a loving Father through inspired servants and directly to my fearful heart. I was amazed at a phrase I hadn’t remembered President Thomas S. Monson saying in his opening address: “Our Heavenly Father is mindful of each one of us and our needs. May we be filled with His Spirit as we partake of the proceedings of this, the 178th Semiannual General Conference.”³

I had gained a testimony of that truth. Heavenly Father was mindful of me that weekend in October. He knew of my need of hope in His love and hope in His plan for me. He spoke and I listened. ■

Note: Sister Singleton finished her cancer treatment in June 2009, and the cancer has not returned.

NOTES

1. L. Tom Perry, “Let Him Do It with Simplicity,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 7.
2. Quentin L. Cook, “Hope Ya Know, We Had a Hard Time,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 105.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 6.





ANTICIPATING THE NEED TO Forgive

By A. Dean Byrd

We will be on the receiving end of hurtful remarks or actions countless times throughout our lives. Deciding ahead of time to forgive those who intentionally or unintentionally hurt us empowers us to move forward without bitterness or pain.

We are required to “forgive all men” (D&C 64:10). Christ is our example. As He hung on the cross, He prayed for the soldiers who crucified Him, saying, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34; see footnote c). As the Savior was ready to forgive even the greatest offenses, we can also prepare ourselves to forgive those who will hurt or offend us.

The following hypothetical example helps show how important it can be to make decisions in advance. A man is bitten by a rattlesnake. He must quickly make a choice: should he chase down the snake and kill it to avenge the offense, or should he

immediately tend to his wound? If he kills the snake, he will get his revenge on the creature that has caused him pain. However, this rash act would neither dull the pain nor delay the onset of the poison. If he chooses instead to address the problem and tend to the wound, he will not have his revenge—but he may save his life in the process. Choosing this course of action ahead of time helps him take lifesaving steps as quickly as possible and avoid prolonged suffering.

We can apply the same pattern when others hurt us with their remarks or actions. We can decide to forgive them in advance. While it is not likely that a rattlesnake will bite us, it is likely that we will be on the receiving end of intentional or unintentional negative remarks or actions from others many times in our lives. Anticipating that and forgiving ahead of time keeps the “poison” out of our system and spares us from unnecessary pain and suffering.

Deciding ahead of time to forgive those who hurt us—even intentionally—empowers us to move forward.



WE ARE REQUIRED TO FORGIVE

“A spirit of forgiveness and an attitude of love and compassion toward those who may have wronged us is of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “Of You It Is Required to Forgive,” *Tambuli*, Nov. 1991, 2, and *Ensign*, June 1991, 2.

Learning to Forgive

As a mental health professional, I am often called upon to assist priesthood leaders with those who struggle. That is how I came to meet Jared (not his real name). He was a 38-year-old married man who was “heavy laden” and burdened with care (Matthew 11:28). Jared had experienced years of disappointing experiences with the accompanying feelings of anxiety, depression, and worry.

As a child, Jared had been teased because he was a bit overweight. He had been a sensitive child, and the teasing had caused pain that had never gone away—even after he married and became a father. He recalled feeling disconnected from his peers throughout his childhood and adolescence, although he tried to fit in with others at school. He remembered even laughing along with those who teased him, only to feel sad when he was alone. He noted, “I know that it was just good-natured teasing for the most part, but afterwards I would repeat dialogues in my mind, thinking of what I should have said and of how to get even with those who were making fun of me.” Though his weight was no longer a problem, these earlier feelings lingered, and he often found that the old hurts returned.

Jared became increasingly frustrated with himself as he continued to struggle in his relationships at church, in the workplace, and especially with his own family members. He knew he would take little things personally even if the person hadn’t intended to hurt him. Jared would become angry with himself when he took offense too easily, and it seemed an insurmountable challenge to forgive both himself and others. In one of our meetings he said, “It becomes quite lonely when you have a battle with yourself and lose.”

Jared knew that he couldn’t overcome his emotions alone. He prayed earnestly that he could realize forgiveness for himself and those around him, and he started to take his problems to his Heavenly Father with increased faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. As Jared gradually began to embrace the power of forgiveness, the healing power of the Atonement seemed to be reflected in his countenance. As he fully engaged in the sincere process of repentance, he found a new self beginning to emerge. The change in behavior toward himself and others was almost palpable, and those around him began noticing a change in him. Gradually but assuredly, Jared began a movement toward the mighty change of heart. *Being* forgiven changed to *feeling* forgiven, demonstrating to himself and others the power of the believing heart. He found himself being reminded of the admonition to “humble yourselves before God” and to “ask in sincerity of heart” (Mosiah 4:10).

The scriptures, which had been Jared’s anchor and hope since his childhood, took on new meaning, not because the words were new but because a new Jared was emerging. He had often imagined the man he wanted to become but felt like a failure because he never measured up to his own expectations. Now he was learning to have forgiveness in his heart as he sought to forgive those who had hurt him in the past.

Jared realized that as an adult he had lost sight of the truth that he was a child of God. He had sung the song in Primary and had known the reality of it when he was younger, but he had somehow lost hold of that basic truth. He wanted that childlike knowledge to be an integral part of him again. He knew that if he once again believed he was a child of God, he could overcome the challenges he was trying to defeat. Jared remembered as a child being sensitive

to the promptings of the Holy Spirit; how he longed to be sensitive to those promptings now. He knew that having forgiveness on his mind, in his heart, and on center stage in his life would help him to reclaim that childlike trait.

One day as I talked with Jared, he related a new understanding he had gained from the story about the Lord forgiving the woman who had committed adultery. When the Lord said to her, “Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more,” she “glorified God from that hour, and believed on his name” (Joseph Smith Translation, John 8:11). Jared realized that once the woman had tasted of divine forgiveness, she was able to repent. Applying this interpretation to himself, he wondered if when he forgave others his forgiveness would likewise serve as a catalyst for them to repent.

From the reclaiming of the spiritual gift of forgiveness in his life, Jared shared the following gospel truths that had become important to him.

1. The Lord’s grace is sufficient

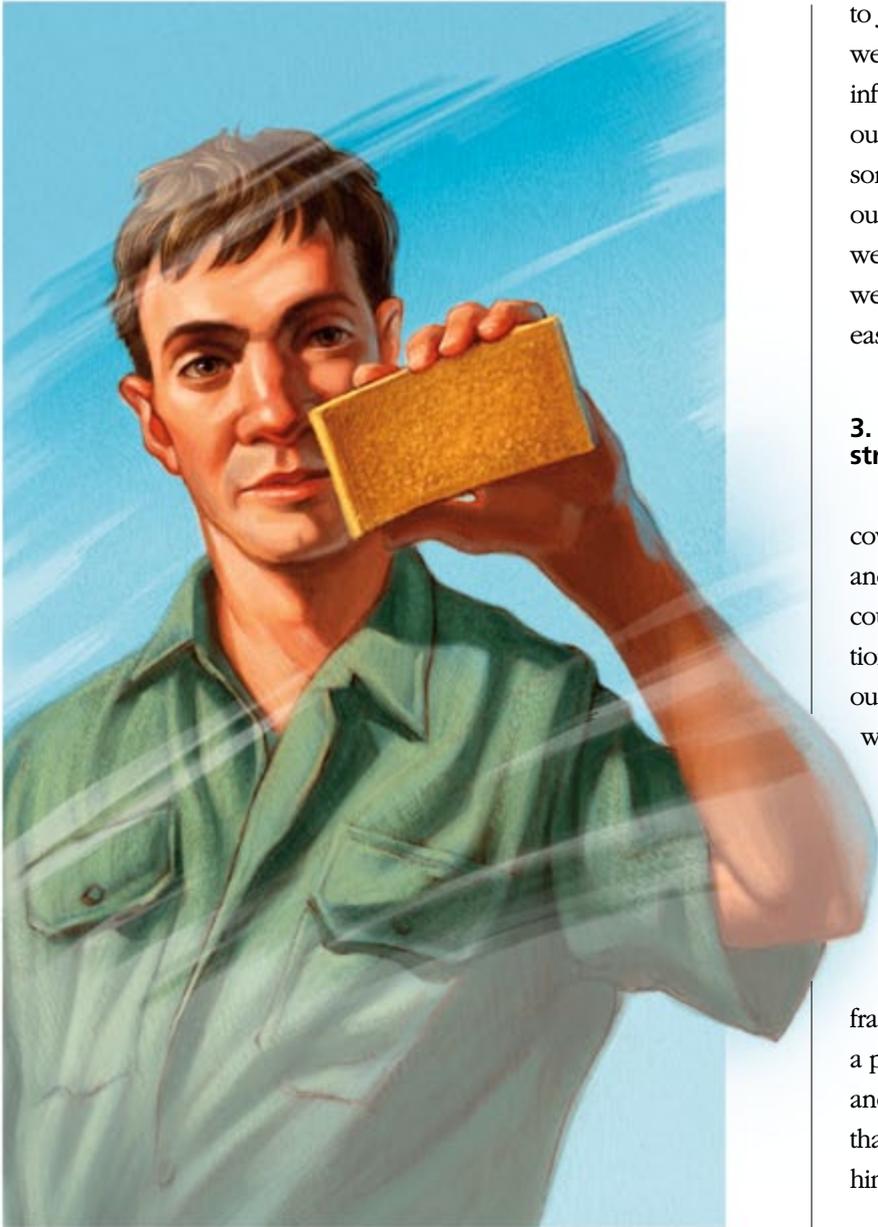
There is no struggle for which the Atonement is not sufficient. This did not mean that all Jared’s challenges would necessarily be resolved in this lifetime, but rather that the Lord’s grace is sufficient to cleanse, succor, and forgive. The challenges of mortality are constant for most of us, but His grace is an ever-present spiritual resource available to us all. And certainly, forgiveness emerges as a gift from the Atonement and can be freely accessed by all of us.

2. The infinite Atonement has no bounds

We cannot sink lower than the arms of the Atonement can reach, if we are willing to repent. What comfort this gospel truth brought



There is no struggle for which the Atonement is not sufficient. The challenges of mortality are constant for most of us, but His grace is an ever-present spiritual resource available to us all.



The power of forgiveness is critical to this process, helping us to erase the sins that beset and overcome the imperfections that seem so much a part of mortality.

to Jared! The blessings that come to us when we allow the Atonement to enter our lives are infinite. The Atonement helps us to discover our true selves with all of our divinity, and somehow as we develop a relationship with our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, we see ourselves and others as He does. When we see through the Savior's eyes, it becomes easier to forgive others and ourselves.

3. Our imperfections can become strengths

The blessings of the Atonement don't just cover our sins but extend to our imperfections and shortcomings. In short, we develop the courage to be imperfect as we strive for perfection (wholeness) in our lives. When we view ourselves and others through our spiritual eyes, we become more tolerant and forgiving of imperfections. We can screen out the negativity, the hurt feelings, the offenses. We can see people based on intent—giving them the benefit of the doubt and assuming their good intent. Sometimes when we feel hurt, offended, or frustrated, we frame what we see much like a frame around a photo. Forgiveness allows us to frame people and interactions differently. Jared soon learned that framing forgiveness around others and himself made his life's journey much smoother.

4. Our thoughts and actions determine who we become

One of the more valuable lessons that Jared learned from this new journey of forgiveness is that challenges don't determine who we are; rather, our responses to those challenges determine who we become. What a realization this was to Jared! It wasn't how people treated him; it was his response to that

treatment that determined the outcome of his life. When he greeted the treatment of others with forgiveness, he was able to move on. In fact, forgiveness empowered him to move on, knowing that he was taking the higher road.

5. God loves us and wants us to progress

Jared learned that the Lord loves us. He wants us to become like His Son and has made a way for us to become like Him. The power of forgiveness is critical to this process, helping us to erase the sins that beset us and to overcome the imperfections that seem so much a part of mortality.

We Can Decide to Forgive in Advance

The most powerful lesson Jared learned was something he and I called anticipatory forgiveness. Here is Jared's description from the pages of one of his journal entries:

"As I think of times I have had conflicts with my spouse or others, these conflicts usually have left me with two contrary feelings—first, a feeling of the need to convince the other person that I was right; and second, a feeling of rejection. Although I describe these two feelings as contrary, the one feeling would usually lead to the other. For example, the need to feel that I was right would lead me to feel bad, which would lead me to want to feel good about myself, which would lead me to desire the feeling that I was right. This cycle of feelings became a burden. While I do not understand completely why my personality fell into that cycle, I do know that it was likely based on my failure to appreciate the person I was.

"Anticipatory forgiveness has helped me to relieve, and in some cases remove, that burden in my life. Instead of nurturing those

feelings during times of conflict, my mind is now focused on listening to the other person and objectively looking at other issues that might be contributing to the conflict. In some ways, forgiveness has already occurred on my part, and I am ready to reconcile and move on. It's like putting on sunblock before going into the sun. The healing balm of forgiveness takes the sting out of the conflict and the hurt, and even soothes the pain.

"I believe that anticipatory forgiveness relates to those gospel principles surrounding the concept of forgiveness. I wonder about Christ's statement that we are required to forgive all men [see D&C 64:10]. I have often thought about the difficulty of this requirement for me. With my limited understanding, I wonder about forgiving those who have really wronged or hurt me. As I have thought about the life of Christ, I think He practices anticipatory forgiveness in the purest form. Because of his unique role in the plan of happiness, He has already anticipated my faults and frailties. He has the ability to see me as a whole person and judge me based upon my heart. When He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, it was at that time that anticipatory forgiveness was granted to me and to all men."

In Doctrine and Covenants 84:61, the Lord says, "For I will forgive you of your sins with this commandment—that you remain steadfast in your minds in solemnity and the spirit of prayer, in bearing testimony to all the world of those things which are communicated unto you." Herein is another expression of anticipatory forgiveness.

Perhaps we, like Jared, can learn to anticipate the opportunities to forgive and do as Jared learned to do—ask daily, "Whom may I forgive today?" ■



THE PEACE OF FORGIVENESS

"The blessings that flow from the gift of forgiveness are many. Chief among them is peace. . . . The forgiveness we offer to others and the forgiveness we receive from Jesus Christ lead us to Him and along the path to eternal life."

Elder Cecil O. Samuelson Jr. of the Seventy, "Words of Jesus: Forgiveness," *Liahona*, Feb. 2003, 29, and *Ensign*, Feb. 2003, 51.

Our Family History Game

By Cynthia Green

I can do that! I thought. I'd just finished reading an *Ensign* article by a mother who had created a game to help her children learn their ancestors' names.¹ She'd drawn a six-generation pedigree chart on a large piece of butcher paper and made a card for each ancestor featuring the individual's name and a bit of biographical information. The children then had to place the cards in their proper places on the chart.

For some reason I was drawn to that article, and something clicked inside me. Before that, I'd had no interest in my family history because I had always believed it was already done. But as I read, I realized it would be good for my children to be familiar with their ancestors' names and photos. And it would probably be good for me too, since except for my grandparents, I didn't even know who my ancestors were.

Using information provided by my parents and my husband's parents, I prepared six-generation pedigree charts for my children. As I did so, I was moved by this visual representation of my family and my husband's family becoming one.

Our family enjoyed playing the ancestor game in family home evening. We started out using the 15 names in the first four generations. After time, as

we became more familiar with the names and faces, we added 48 more ancestors. The game became a favorite at our house.

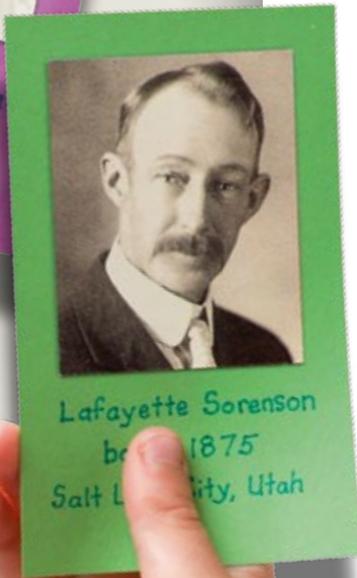
As we played, I looked at the photos and began wondering about these people. Where did they come from? What kind of lives had they led? I wanted to know more. So I asked our parents to share information about these ancestors that I could add to our game.

As I read their stories, I felt like I was walking beside them, living their lives with them. I wept over their hardships, cried when their loved ones died, rejoiced when they overcame trials, and laughed with them as they celebrated simple pleasures. I put my heart and soul into learning more. They became more than just photographs and names to me; they were real people with real lives. As my heart turned to theirs, I felt them turning toward me. I sensed they loved me and were happy I was getting to know them.

My love for my husband and his family grew as well. Knowing their history helped me understand them better. My family has learned from our ancestors' good choices as well as their poor ones. We've been blessed by their sacrifices. We have come to love them. I have learned that our ancestors are a part of us and that we are a part of them. ■

NOTE

1. See Dorine McDaniel, "The Ancestor Game," *Liahona*, Mar. 2000, 44-45; *Ensign*, Sept. 1995, 73.





A Lesson from Our Son on Temples

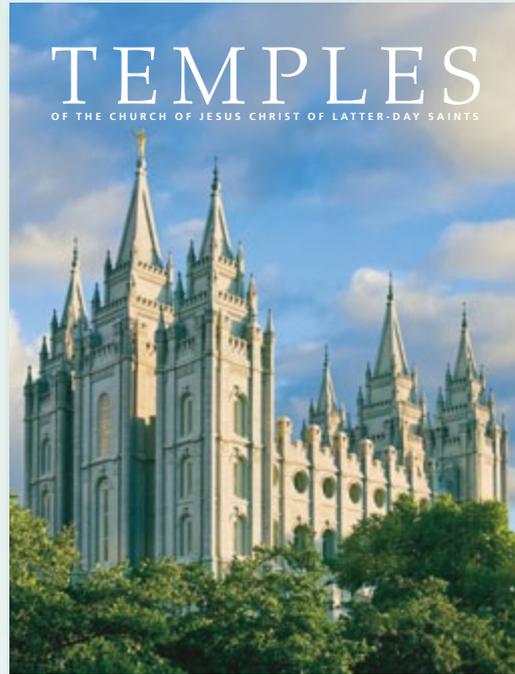
One Sunday, our sons brought the Church *Temples* booklet (item 09339000) home from Primary. I meant to sit down with them and go through it but never did. It sat on a table in our living room for a while before our son Andrew decided to use it for a family home evening lesson.

As he gave the lesson, Andrew used the magazine to show us pictures of temples, teach us about God's temples on earth,

and ask us temple trivia. Our favorite part was at the end of his lesson when he showed us pictures of temples and we had to guess what country the temple was in.

We will never forget this simple but meaningful lesson our nine-year-old son gave. We had a great time as a family, and the Spirit bore witness to us of the importance of temples and temple work here on earth.

Corrina Terry, Nevada, USA



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

“Qualified through Church Service,” page 38:

Summarize the article and have each family member think of the callings they hold or have held in the past. Ask each person to share what skills they have gained as a result of their Church service that might help them in other aspects of life. Consider expressing your feelings to any children in the family about the importance of accepting callings and about the blessings that come as you faithfully serve in the Church.

“A Little Heaven on Earth,” page 44: As a family, discuss what qualities are needed to create a celestial family. Share those parts of the article that are applicable to your situation. Read the paragraphs about mountain climbing and then set a goal that will allow you to “reach the summit.” As a married couple, you may wish to read and discuss the entire article together.

“The Eternal Nature of Marriage,” page 50:

After reading the article, consider asking the following

questions: What does the phrase “therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife” teach us about our Heavenly Father’s desire for our marriage? How is our family exercising faith in eternal marriage? You may consider reviewing *The Family: A Proclamation to the World* as part of the lesson.

A LITTLE Heaven ON Earth

A celestial marriage requires living a consecrated life of worthiness and celestial principles, which leads to happiness in this life and exaltation in the next.

Temple marriage describes the place you go to have a marriage performed. Celestial marriage is what you create by living up to the sacred covenants you make during the temple marriage ceremony.

After the vows are taken, a celestial marriage requires living a consecrated life of worthiness and celestial principles, which leads to happiness in this life and exaltation in the next. If we live the laws pertaining to celestial marriage, we will, with our spouses and with our family, be able to have a little heaven on earth. And when we live these laws, we are practicing the same laws that are practiced in heaven. We are practicing how to live with the Father and the Son and with our families in the eternities to come. This is to do the marriage in the world of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

By Elder Robert C. Stone of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

SEPTEMBER 2011 48

HIS PROMISE WAS FULFILLED

During a combined priesthood and Relief Society meeting in 2009, our high priests group leader explained our stake presidency's desire for every adult to take a family name to the temple within a year. He introduced stake and ward programs to help members achieve that goal. As he concluded, he gave an authoritative promise by virtue of his responsibility for the family history program that if we would try to achieve the stake's goal, we would succeed.

After the meeting my wife and I discussed the promise and agreed that it could not apply to me; we had already spent 40 years investigating every branch of my family tree. My ancestors were difficult to find, and

we had made no significant progress for several years. We believed nothing more could be done. Nevertheless, the group leader's promise echoed in my mind for the next few days. I decided to take him up on his promise. Staring at my pedigree chart, I tried to think of what I could do.

After three days of careful thought, I felt inspired to look in a specific place for information about one of the end-of-line people on my chart. In less than half a day of research on the Internet, I discovered that another man had researched that family name in an English parish. One of the most recent names he'd located was my end-of-line person. Using his data, I was able to extend my line another

five generations—back to 1650—and include the maiden names of several women in my line and the names of several brothers and sisters. My wife and I were stunned and delighted.

Some time later I started hunting for information on the Internet about a great-great-grandfather who had seemingly disappeared. After a brief search, I found him. I discovered that he had moved from Pennsylvania, USA, to Wisconsin, USA, shortly after his first wife's death. With information gathered from Wisconsin records, I added more than 400 names to my family history.

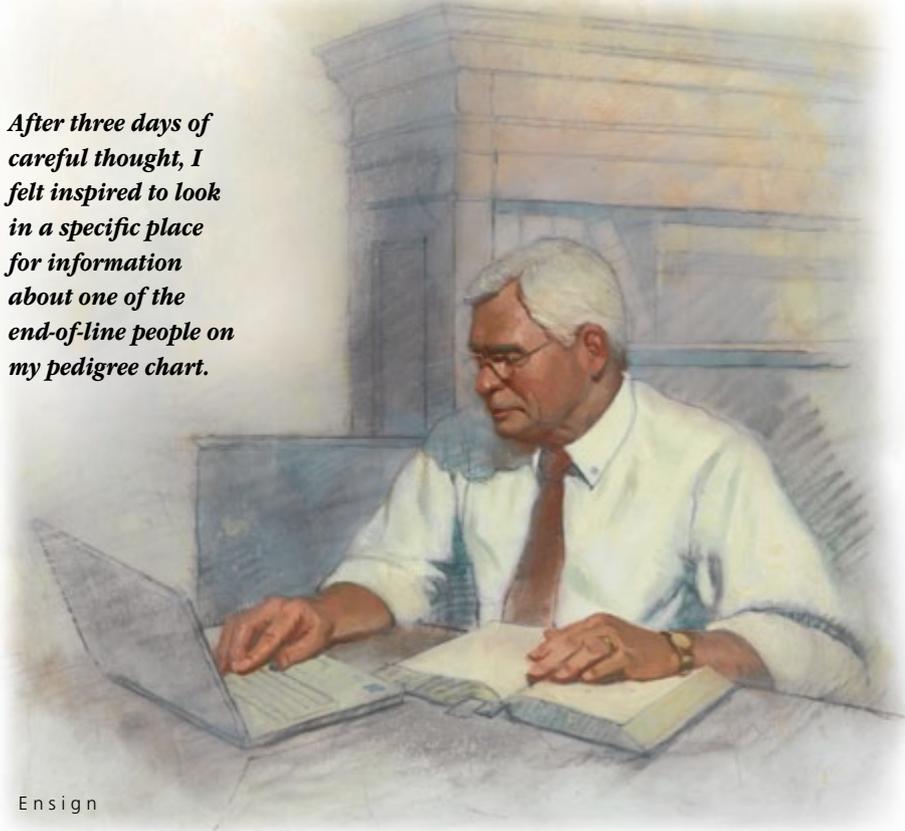
Later I discovered 100 ancestors who had fought in America's Revolutionary and Civil Wars. I traced six lines to the 1600s.

During my previous 40 years of research, I had recorded about 65 names on my pedigree chart and almost 3,000 names in my database. In the 20 months after my high priests group leader made his promise, I added more than 70 names to the chart and more than 17,000 names to the database, including two presidents of the United States!

The Lord tells us that His word "shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38). Truly, Heavenly Father's promise, given through an inspired, authorized priesthood leader, was fulfilled. ■

Ted Bainbridge, Colorado, USA

After three days of careful thought, I felt inspired to look in a specific place for information about one of the end-of-line people on my pedigree chart.



THE SPIRIT SPOKE THROUGH ME

When I received my call to serve in the France Toulouse Mission, I was excited to serve in a foreign country and learn a new language. Despite not having studied French before, I was confident I would be able to learn to speak the language easily.

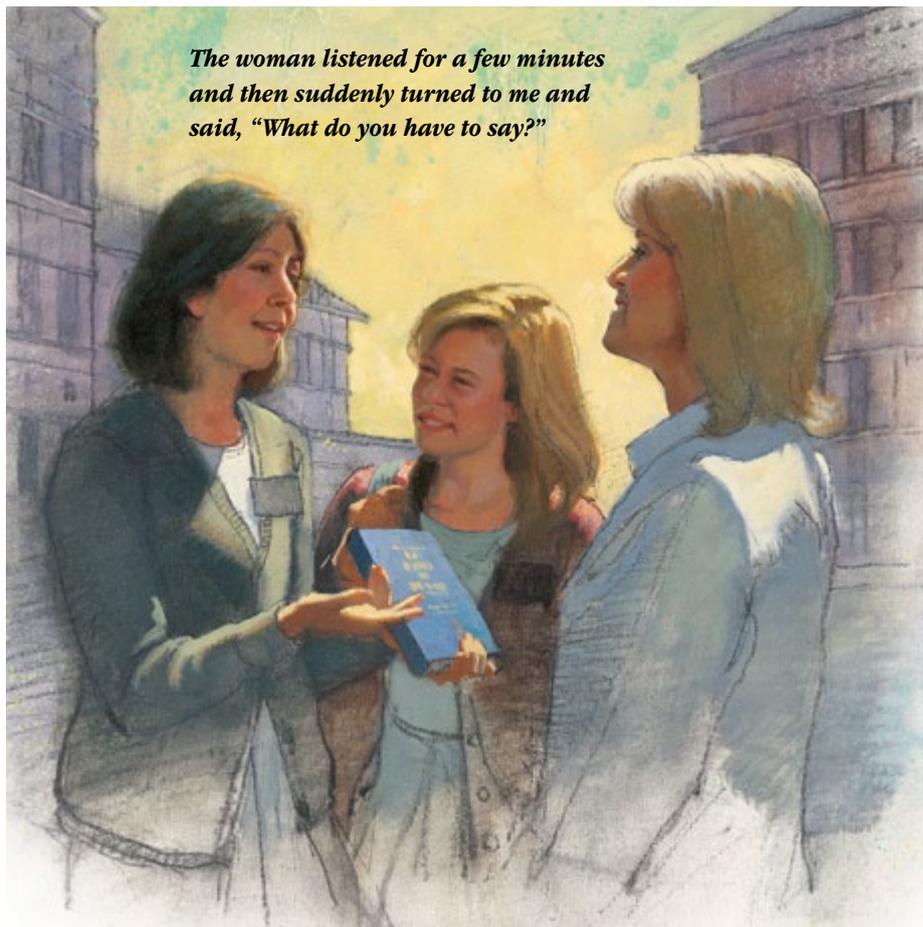
My stake president blessed me with the gift of tongues when he set me apart as a missionary. This blessing added to my confidence that I would be able to learn French quickly.

When I arrived at the missionary training center in Provo, Utah, I was eager to begin, but my time at the MTC was humbling. I was overwhelmed and struggled every day. When I left the MTC, I felt I had made few advances with French. I wondered when the gift of tongues would come.

My first assignment in the mission field was in a small town in southern France. One afternoon, just days after I had arrived, my companion and I were street contacting. I didn't say much when we spoke with people—I could hardly understand them, and they could hardly understand me.

We approached a woman, and my companion began telling her about the Church. The woman listened for a few minutes and then suddenly turned to me and said, "What do you have to say?"

The woman listened for a few minutes and then suddenly turned to me and said, "What do you have to say?"



I anxiously and desperately tried to remember something I had learned. In a trembling voice, I bore a simple testimony about Heavenly Father and the Book of Mormon. As I did so, the Spirit bore witness to me that what I had said was true. I don't know if the woman felt anything, but she smiled, turned back to my companion, and asked her to continue with her message.

This experience taught me an important lesson. I learned that even though I couldn't speak French well, the Spirit could speak through me. I learned that perhaps the blessing I had received from my stake president was actually a blessing to be able to speak the language of the Spirit.

President Thomas S. Monson taught: "There is one language . . . that is common to each missionary—the language of the Spirit. It is

not learned from textbooks written by men of letters, nor is it acquired through reading and memorization. The language of the Spirit comes to him who seeks with all his heart to know God and keep His divine commandments. Proficiency in this language permits one to breach barriers, overcome obstacles, and touch the human heart" ("The Spirit Giveth Life," *Liahona*, June 1997, 4; *Ensign*, June 1997, 2).

Years later, this experience still influences me. I am not required to preach the gospel in French anymore, but I need the help of the Spirit when I am asked to teach a lesson or give a talk in church. When I feel that I am struggling to express myself, I find comfort in remembering that the Spirit is able to speak to the hearts of all of God's children. ■

Christy Rusch Banz, Utah, USA

Our marriage is something I will always cherish and includes a story I will never forget.

THE TEMPLE WAS CLOSED!

Our marriage in the temple was set for July 7, 2009—a date that we eagerly anticipated. Having grown up near the Aba Nigeria Temple, we were pleased that even though we had moved away, many friends and family members still living in the area would be able to join us either in the temple or later at a reception.

We arrived in Aba after traveling more than six hours from Lagos and made our final preparations for our sealing and reception. But three days before our scheduled wedding date, we were told that the temple was unexpectedly closed until further notice. We were distraught and confused. No one could tell us when the temple, which had closed because of unrest in the area, might reopen. Disappointed, we told friends and family that our sealing was being postponed, and we sadly returned to Lagos without knowing when we might reschedule another sealing date at the temple.

Upon returning to Lagos, we prayed fervently for the Aba Nigeria Temple to reopen. A week passed without any news about a reopening date. This one week seemed like one year to us. We looked forward to our temple marriage and celebrating with friends and family as soon as possible.

As time passed with no news regarding a reopening date, we felt

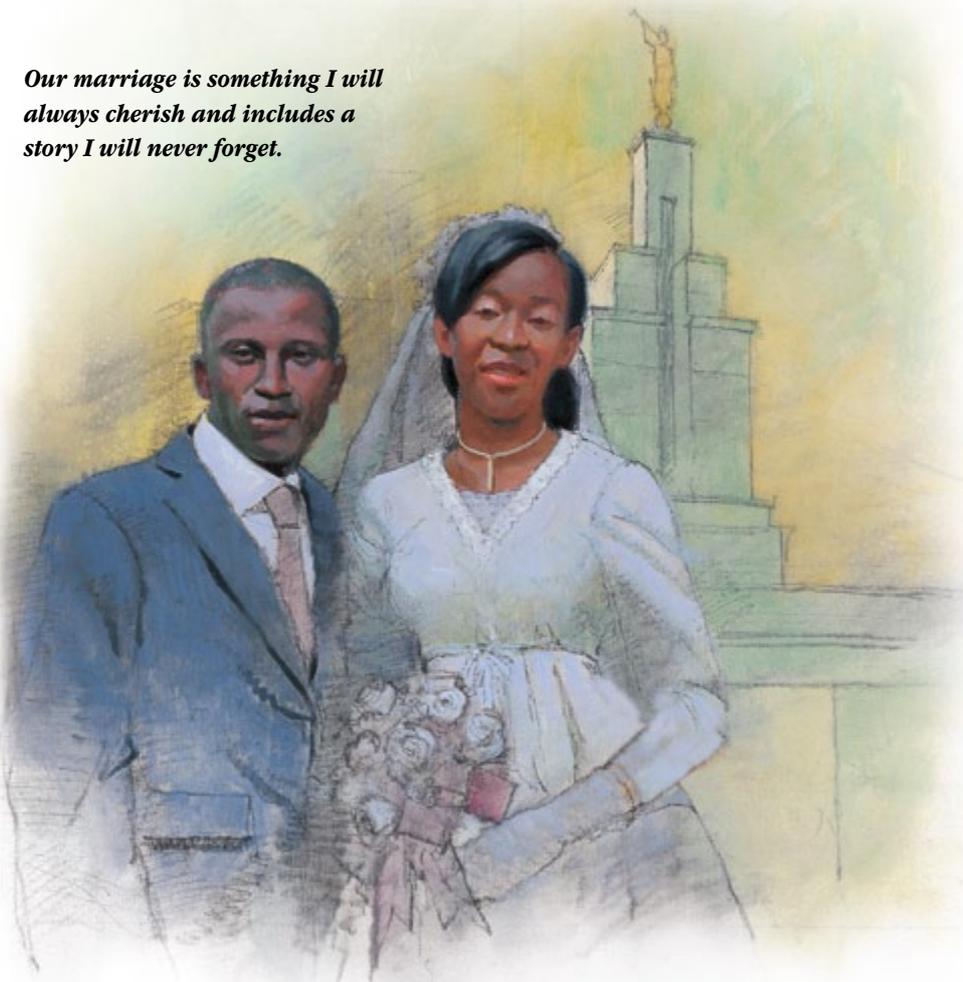
that we should consider alternatives. Because the Aba Nigeria Temple is the only temple in Nigeria, we realized that we would have to travel to the Accra Ghana Temple if we were going to be sealed anytime soon. Unfortunately, the trip would cost money we did not have. But we had always planned on a temple marriage, and we knew that we should move forward.

Borrowing money from family and friends, we arranged for an international passport, called the Accra Ghana Temple to schedule a date, and purchased airline tickets to fly to Ghana.

We arrived in Accra on August 14, 2009, and went to the temple the next day. In the sealing room, only the temple sealer and two witnesses

joined us. No friends, no family, and no one we knew was with us. But in an unfamiliar country, in an area far from our home, we knew we were where we should be, doing what we should be doing. During that moment, we felt the powers of eternity and understood more clearly the love Heavenly Father has for us and for all of His children.

Tragically, my wife died in 2010 after giving birth to our first child. I miss her deeply but take great comfort in knowing that we have been sealed in the temple. I am eternally grateful that we didn't put off our temple marriage by waiting for a convenient time. Our marriage is something I will always cherish and includes a story I will never forget. ■
Chinedu Enwereuzo, Lagos, Nigeria



COULD I FIND A JOB?

I stared at the folded bill in my hand as I realized I still needed to pay tithing on money I had earned during the last week of my summer job. I owed 90 rands in tithing, and I had one R100 bill.

I had just started my final year of medical school and had many school expenses. I sat there fiddling with the R100 bill, thinking about paying tithing. My summer job had ended, and it was unlikely I'd find a job that would fit into my busy schedule. However, my parents had taught me to pay a full tithe. This money belonged to the Lord, and I knew it. With that thought, I placed the money in the envelope and paid my tithing.

In the days following, as I searched for a job, I prayed that the windows of heaven would open for me. I needed a job that would fit my schedule, pay well for low hours, and still allow me time to study. In short, I needed a miracle.

Two weeks later a friend suggested that I apply for a job at the hospital where our medical school had just opened a new education floor. I walked to the office and knocked on the door. The woman inside, who had taught our class two years before, remembered me.

"I was wondering if you were looking to hire any tutors for your new program," I said. "If you are, I would like to be hired."

"We are indeed," she replied. "We are looking for someone to tutor a

group of second-year medical students for an hour in the afternoons. It's a flexible start time and will require you to study a different patient each day and then to teach the students. Can you do that?" she asked.

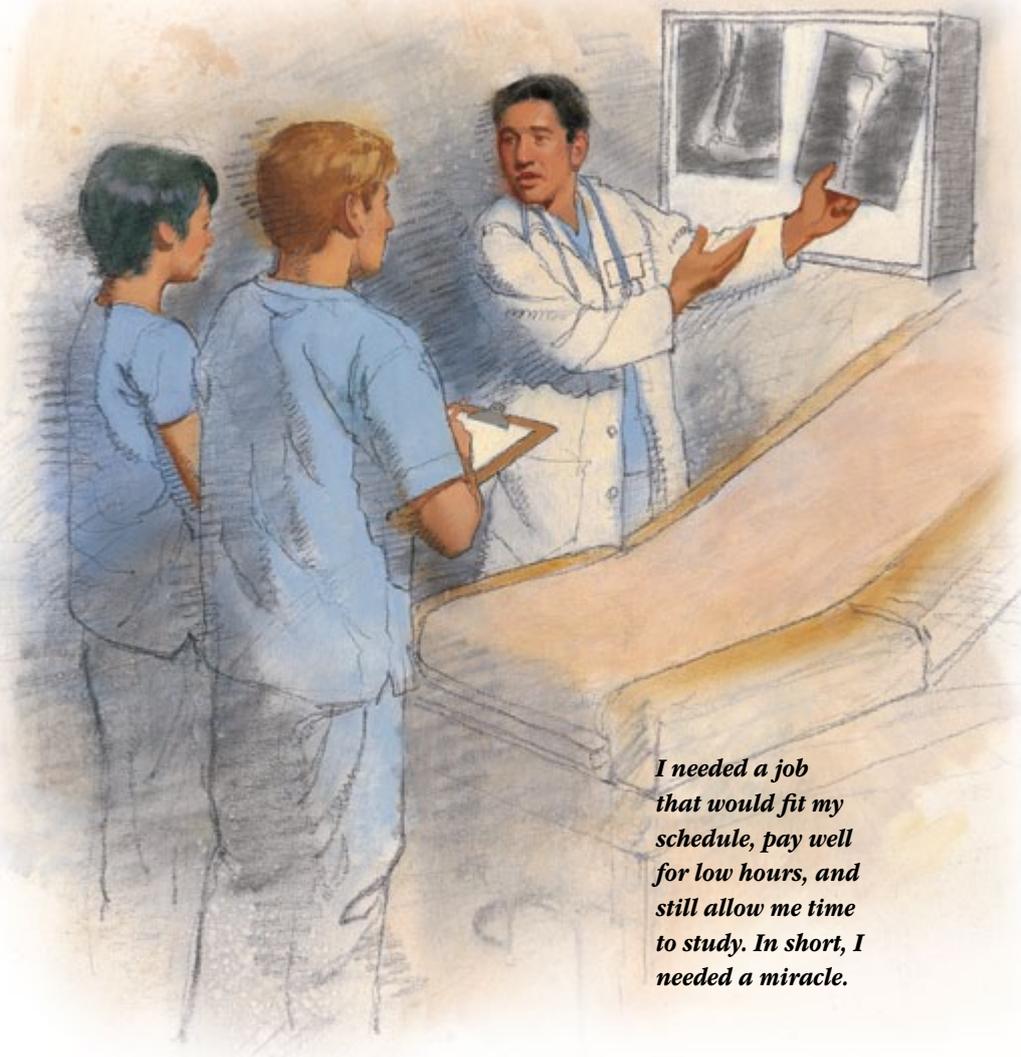
The Lord had helped me find a job that was exactly what I needed! It was the answer to my prayer.

After working a month, I found out just how much I had been blessed.

My paycheck showed that I was being paid a monthly salary three times higher than I had thought. In addition, I received vacation pay.

The Lord had opened the windows of heaven and showered me with blessings far greater than I had ever expected. As a result, my faith was strengthened in the principle of tithing. ■

Greg Burgoyne, South Africa



I needed a job that would fit my schedule, pay well for low hours, and still allow me time to study. In short, I needed a miracle.

Small & Simple Things

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

CHURCH HISTORY AROUND THE WORLD



Sierra Leone

In 1981 a native of Sierra Leone, Michael Samura, heard the gospel in Holland and was baptized there. When he returned to Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, he requested missionaries, but because the Church was not ready to send missionaries there, he was sent only Church literature. Brother Samura began teaching others and holding unofficial meetings. Members who had been baptized in other countries and had returned to Sierra Leone did the same.

The year 1988 was a milestone for the country. In January the first official meeting was presided over by a member who had been baptized in Germany.

In May two missionary couples arrived, and in June the first 14 baptisms in the country were performed.

In August the first branch—the Goderich Branch—was established.

Ground was broken in 2004 for the first Latter-day Saint meetinghouse in Sierra Leone.



THE CHURCH IN SIERRA LEONE	
Membership	8,907
Missions	1
Districts	2
Branches	23

WHOLESOME FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Families that regularly participate in wholesome activities together can feel greater love and harmony. Family activities provide an opportunity for parents to discuss the gospel with children, and children will often be more willing to listen to and obey parents when they feel close to them.

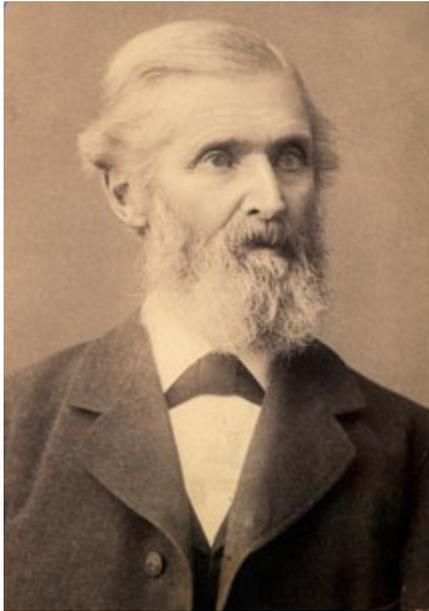
Wholesome family activities include:

- **Family home evening:** President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, “It is so important that fathers and mothers sit down with their children, pray together, instruct them in the ways of the Lord, consider their family problems, and let the children express their talents.”¹
- **Family service activities:** You could visit an elderly member of your ward or pick up trash around the neighborhood.
- **One-on-one outings with Mom or Dad:** These allow children to build individual and personal relationships with parents.

NOTE

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “To Men of the Priesthood,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 58.

Truman O. Angell



Truman Osborn Angell (1810–87) served for several decades as Church architect, planning and directing the construction of many significant buildings, including the Salt Lake Temple. Throughout his years of service to the Church, Truman was humble and obedient.

He was born on June 5, 1810, in Providence, Rhode Island, USA. When he was a teenager, a local craftsman taught him carpentry and joinery, a specialized kind of woodworking.

At age 22 he was introduced to the Church by his sister, who had received a copy of the Book of Mormon from missionary Thomas B. Marsh. In January 1833 Truman was baptized along with his mother, Phebe, and his wife, Polly.

Shortly after Truman was ordained a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, the Prophet Joseph Smith

requested that he build a store in Kirtland, Ohio. Truman declined, telling the Prophet he was preparing to leave for a mission. The next day, however, Truman saw the First Presidency in the distance and felt prompted to accept the building assignment from the Prophet. He later recorded, “Accordingly I changed my determination and yielded obedience.”¹

In 1856 President Brigham Young sent Truman on a mission to Europe, instructing him to “take drafts of valuable works of architecture” so he could “be better qualified to continue” to work on the Salt Lake Temple and other buildings.²

Truman was called as Church architect in 1867. (The Church no longer calls an official Church architect.) Although years of hard work had caused Truman’s health to suffer, he humbly accepted the call. He wrote in his journal, “I feel a

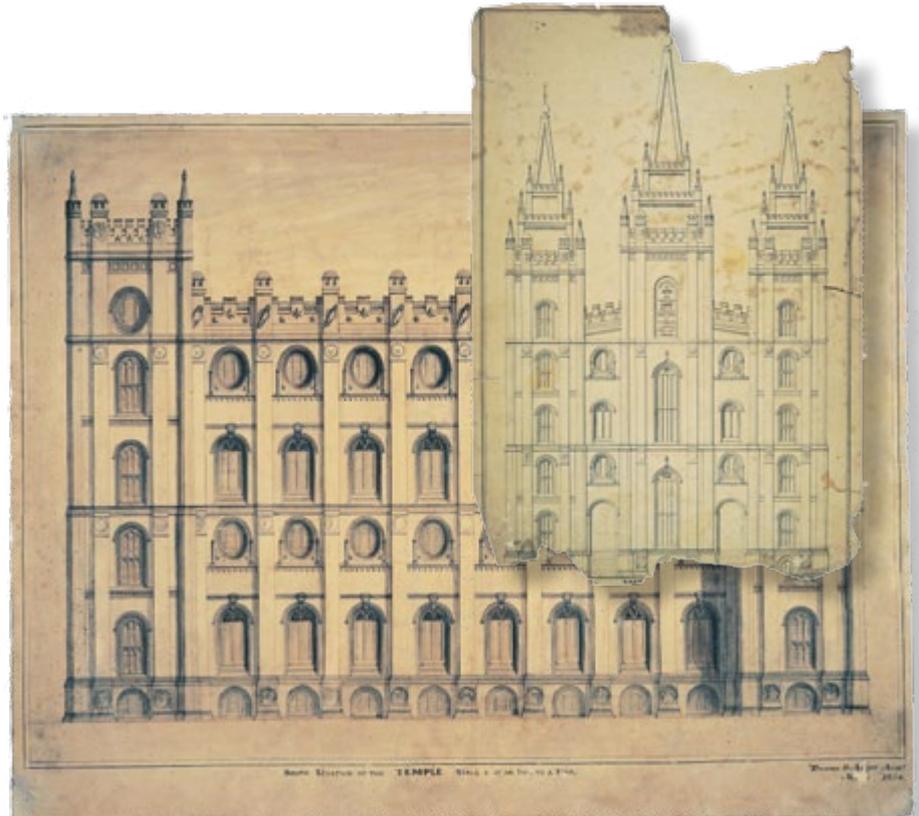
good deal worn out but if the President and my brethren feel to sustain a poor worm of dust like me to be Architect of the Church, let me strive to serve them and not disgrace myself. . . . May the Lord help me so to do.”³

Truman directed many building projects in Utah, including the Lion House, the Beehive House, the Utah Territorial Statehouse, and the St. George Utah Temple.

Truman did not live to see the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple in 1893, but he served faithfully as Church architect until his death in 1887.

NOTES

1. Truman O. Angell, in Kate B. Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 20 vols. (1958–77), 10:197.
2. See Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 10:204.
3. In Paul L. Anderson, “Truman O. Angell: Architect and Saint,” in *Supporting Saints: Life Stories of Nineteenth-Century Mormons*, ed. Donald Q. Cannon and David J. Whittaker (1985), 161; spelling standardized.



News of the Church

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

Preparation of All Kinds Blesses Saints in Joplin, Missouri

By **Melissa Merrill**

Church News and Events

Candles. Granola bars. A lantern. These emergency supplies from the storage of several Latter-day Saint families played a role in facilitating the Joplin Missouri Stake's organization and action in the initial hours after a tornado devastated Joplin on May 22.

The stake center had been destroyed, as had other major buildings in the area, and electricity was out in many other parts of the city. But a small group of area, stake, and ward leaders was able to meet together in council, by candlelight and lantern light, in the home of Joplin Second Ward bishop Dave Richins to determine what to do in recovery, relief, and rebuilding.

As that council and so many other members in the Joplin Missouri Stake discovered, physical and spiritual preparation both played crucial roles in those efforts.

Physical Preparation

Fortunately, the Joplin stake had an emergency plan in place, and members were prepared to account, assess, and report promptly in the wake of disaster.

“Our emergency plan, while there is a lot of detail to it, is quite simple: account, assess, report promptly,” said stake president Creed Jones. “You need to account for your people. Everybody goes out to find out how the missionaries are, how the members are, and

if everyone is accounted for. Then they assess. Who is missing? Who has injuries? Who is without a home? Who is without power? What are their physical situations, family needs, and so forth? And then you report promptly, communicating that information back through the priesthood line.”

The process worked well, President Jones reported, and he said that he received several accounts of people running or walking for miles (roads and other infrastructure were impassable at first because of debris) to check on family, friends, coworkers, and ward members.

“What you really learn is that the Church is not just what takes place in a chapel or classroom on Sunday,”

PHOTOGRAPH BY CARMEN BORUP



Spiritual and temporal preparation has blessed the lives of Latter-day Saints and others in Joplin, Missouri, following a devastating tornado on May 22.

Assignments Take Leaders to Their Roots

On June 25, 2011, President Thomas S. Monson dedicated a campground near Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The camp—which bears his name in honor of his service as mission president over the Canadian Mission from 1959 to 1962—will be used by local stakes.

The month of June took several other Church leaders to locations that have been significant in their lives:

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, dedicated a reconstructed meeting-house in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, also attended and spoke; he and President Eyring both attended the chapel earlier in their lives.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke in Perry, Utah, USA, on June 3, during the city's centennial celebration. Elder Perry's ancestors helped settle the area.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles organized the Moscow Russia Stake—the first stake in Russia—on June 5, 2011. He first visited Russia in 1966 to teach Russian surgeons. ■

Find more on these stories at news.lds.org and Prophets and Apostles Speak Today on LDS.org.

President Jones said. “The real test comes when there are needs and we have to look out for each other.”

Because of the nature of the destruction, food storage and other emergency supplies weren't always preserved. But those whose homes were spared were prepared to share what they had with others.

Spiritual Preparation

Mike and Becky Higginson have faithfully built their home storage over time, and while the tornado destroyed their home, their food storage shed survived the destruction.

The Higginsons are grateful for this blessing, but they are quick to point out that physical preparation alone is not enough to sustain someone through this kind of event. They know that obedience to the counsel of prophets and apostles builds another kind of storage.

“We've had hard experiences before, and the gospel is what sustains you through everything,” Sister Higginson said. “So although this was a shock and a trauma . . . it didn't change anything. You revert to your gospel roots, your spiritual roots, immediately.”

The morning after the tornado, Bishop Chris Hoffman of the Joplin First Ward met with several other priesthood holders at a central spot in town to begin accounting and assessing. With communication lines down, “it was hard to determine where to start,” said Bishop Hoffman, but they relied on prayer for direction.

“You recognize very quickly—if you

didn't already—how reliant you are on Heavenly Father for answers, because you need them, and you need them quick,” he said. “But the answers came. They always did. They always will.”

That kind of faith and reliance on the Lord has continued to buoy up members in Joplin. On the Sunday following the tornado, Elder Jonathan C. Roberts, Area Seventy, attended a joint testimony meeting of the Joplin First and Second Wards.

“People who had lost everything—their homes, their workshops, everything—stood up and said, ‘We're some of the most blessed people.’ How does that happen?” Elder Roberts asked. “How could anybody in those circumstances have the courage and the backbone to square their shoulders, lift their chins, and say, ‘We're fine’? Well, it only happens one way. They have a perspective of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“In this case, the 72-hour packs, as important as they were, the food storage, as important as it was, went away because of the calamity,” he continued. “And yet the things that were deep rooted, the foundational things of priesthood keys, of testimony, stood strong. And as the Saints gathered together, it was spectacular to watch the preparation that came from spiritual roots that had been set deep; that windstorm, tornado, or hurricane weren't going to take away; and that extends beyond mortality and to eternity.” ■

Watch a video about the Saints in Joplin at news.lds.org.



New Mission Presidents Blessed for Exercise of Faith

In June, 128 new mission presidents and their wives were invited to the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, USA, to receive instruction before leaving for their assignments.

President Thomas S. Monson opened the four-day seminar, held from June 23 to 26, 2011, saying, “You have been chosen from among the most faithful in the Church, and now you have the opportunity to go forth in the Lord’s harvest field. . . . I know of no field which produces more fragrant nor bounteous roses than the mission field to which you have been called.”

The couples come from all

over the world—22 different countries—and will serve all over the world in 18 different languages. The seminar brings them all together to learn at the feet of apostles and prophets.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles addressed those present several times. On Friday morning he expressed some of his hopes for the new mission presidents and their companions.

“May you have good physical, emotional, and spiritual health [and] success in learning, teaching, and applying the doctrine of Jesus Christ,” he said. “My hopes include your ability to

harness the power of the members; to focus on the ordinances; to be one with the Lord, the members of the Church, and those precious missionaries entrusted to your care.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described part of the miracle of missionary work. “Your own faith in Christ and the faith of your missionaries will grow wonderfully as you and they seek day by day to know and to do the will of God,” he said. “Faith, already a principle of action in you, will become also a principle of power.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, promised those at the seminar that they would succeed as Church leaders, as missionaries, and as companionships.

“Be sure that you leave this seminar with the right definition of success implanted in your heart and mind,” he said. “After all is said and done, the fruits of your labors as mission president and wife will be seen and felt in the lives of your missionaries; in the lives of those converts who accept the message; in the lives of members who are strengthened by your work, example, and testimony; and last but not least in the lives of your own family.” ■

Read more of these stories—and many others—at news.lds.org.

Newly called mission presidents attend a four-day training session at the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, shortly before they enter the mission field.

Senior Missionary Policies Changed

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently approved policy changes regarding length of senior missionary service and missionary housing to encourage more couples to serve full-time missions.

As of September 1, 2011, couples may serve for 6, 12, 18, or 23 months. In addition, a housing cap of \$1,400 (US) per month will be established.

Missions, temples, or area administration offices now will locate and secure appropriate housing and pay all housing costs (including rent, utilities, and furnishings). Missionary couples will then reimburse some or all of those housing costs up to the cap. Couples will continue to pay for food and other personal expenses.

Those who have questions about senior missions can call 1-800-453-3860, ext. 2-6741, or e-mail seniormissionaryservices@ldschurch.org. ■

Seven Sisters Let Their Light Shine in the Mission Field at the Same Time

Pleiades, or the Seven Sisters, is a constellation of seven stars that are so far away their light takes 350 years to reach the earth.

Seven sisters from the same family in Mexico, ranging in age from their early twenties to late thirties, are letting their light shine in their family and in the mission field as they share their knowledge and testimonies of the gospel with people in five countries.

Marisol (Chile Osorno), Antonia (Argentina Resistencia), Daniela (Costa Rica San Jose), Florencia (Honduras Comayaguela), Verónica (Chile Santiago East), Anai (Guatemala City North), and Balbina Nava Aguilar (Argentina Bahía Blanca) are seven sisters bound by their concurrent service as full-time missionaries.

The sisters' first contact with

LDS missionaries was when they began attending free English classes at a local chapel. In 2006, they—along with another sister and their brother—were baptized. Their parents, Albino Nava and Isidra Aguilar, who had joined the Church three decades earlier, came back into full activity at that time.

Sister Aguilar said she can see the good that has come of sending her seven daughters on missions.

“They are in the Lord’s hands, working, preaching His gospel to bring more souls [to Him],” she said. “I want them to finish their missions with honor and with the pure love of our Savior Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father.”

“I love this gospel and I know that the work changes lives,” Florencia said. “It changed mine, and it will change the lives of those I teach.” ■



These seven siblings from Mexico City are simultaneously serving full-time missions in different parts of the world.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ANAI NAVA

Quetzaltenango Temple Activities Announced

The public open house for the Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple will be held from November 11 through November 26, 2011, excluding Sundays.

A cultural celebration will be held on Saturday, December 10, 2011.

The temple will be dedicated on Sunday, December 11, 2011, in three sessions, which will be broadcast to all units in Guatemala.

Following the dedication, the temple will open to all patrons for ordinances on Tuesday, December 13, 2011.

Boise Temple Closes for Renovations

The Boise Idaho Temple closed on July 11 for renovations. The more than two dozen stakes assigned to the Boise Temple district will be able to attend the Twin Falls Idaho Temple, by appointment (call 208-736-7070) during the closure.

Following its renovation the Boise Temple will be rededicated.

Ground Broken for Phoenix Temple

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Presidency of the Seventy and other Church officials joined with community and civic leaders on June 4, 2011, to break ground for the Phoenix Arizona Temple.

The Phoenix Temple will be the fifth in Arizona. It is one of 26 announced or under construction around the world.

Church Leaders Break Ground for Fort Lauderdale Temple

Church leaders have broken ground for the Fort Lauderdale Florida Temple, the second temple in Florida. Elder Walter F. González of the Presidency of the Seventy presided over the Saturday, June 18, groundbreaking.

The temple was first announced by President Thomas S. Monson in 2009 and will serve approximately 25,000 Church members in and around the Florida Keys and the Bahamas. ■



Ground has been broken for the Fort Lauderdale Florida Temple.

New Language Pages Added to LDS.org

During recent updates to LDS.org, 48 new language home pages were added to the site. The language pages link to all Church content available in that language.

The new pages can be found on LDS.org in the languages tab (top right corner of the home page), under “See Other Languages on LDS.org.” The pages will be updated as new or additional content becomes available in a language.

Book of Mormon in American Sign Language Now Available Online

The Book of Mormon in American Sign Language, previously available only on DVD, is now accessible on LDS.org.

Because the current version of LDS.org supports only text versions of the scriptures, the newly released videos will be housed for now on the “Classic” version of LDS.org. (A link to the Classic site can be found on the lower left side of the LDS.org home page.) From the home page of the Classic site, visitors can find the videos by going to **Gospel Library**, then **Media Formats**, and then **American Sign Language (ASL)**.

New Format for Audio Scriptures Increases Accessibility

The Church has released an audio version of the LDS standard works for download on iTunes in audiobook or MP3 format. Each volume of scripture—Book of Mormon, Old Testament, New Testament, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price—is available in audiobook format (called “enhanced audio content” on iTunes). MP3 files for individual chapters of scripture are also available for free download.

Streaming Device Offers New Opportunities

Any Church content found online—such as the Mormon Channel—can now be played on a television set using the Roku player, an entertainment streaming device that connects the Internet to a television.

In addition to the Mormon Channel, which is found on the Roku Channel store under the “Spiritual” category, viewers can access Mormon Messages, conference addresses, Church Educational System firesides, and many other materials. ■

TEMPLE BLESSINGS NOW AND ETERNALLY

By Stacy Vickery

I remember seeing pictures of the temple from the time I was very small. Though too young to understand the blessings of the temple, I knew I wanted to go there someday. In Young Women, I started to understand the blessings that would come from the temple. At that time my family was less active, and I prayed each day that we could be sealed as an eternal family.

In the fall of 1993, two weeks before I turned 18, my family did go to the temple. I remember the feeling I had in the Provo Utah Temple, becoming an eternal family with my parents and siblings. As I left the temple that day, I thought I understood the blessings it brought me.

Two years later, in the summer of 1995, I was engaged to be married, so I went to the temple to receive my own endowment. How wonderful to receive another blessing of the temple! Three days after receiving my endowment, I was sealed to my husband for time and all eternity in the Manti Utah Temple. I realized another blessing that I had not previously experienced—my husband and I could be an eternal family. Again I thought I had experienced all the blessings of the temple.

Six years into marriage, we found that we were expanding our family. We were so excited to raise our son and teach him the gospel. But 24 weeks into the pregnancy, our little boy was born fighting for life. After just



My understanding of temple blessings has grown as my need for them has increased.

eight weeks he returned to Heavenly Father. As I held him for the last time, I recognized yet another wonderful blessing of the temple: our son had been born in the covenant and could be ours forever.

Eighteen months after the passing of our son, we received a phone call from LDS Family Services saying that a young woman had chosen to place her baby with us. Knowing that we could not have more biological children, we could not have been more excited.

When our little girl was six months old, we finalized her adoption and took her to the temple to be sealed to us. Four years after our little girl became part of our family, another young woman chose us to be the parents of a sweet little boy. Again we had the blessing of taking a six-month-old to the temple. I will never forget how I felt when I saw my children, all in white, in the temple with my husband and me to be sealed to us for eternity.

I now realize that I did not understand all the blessings the temple could bring when I was in Young Women or when I was sealed to my husband or even when our son passed away. And even though I recognize many more blessings than I have in years past, I now understand that the temple is a place of *eternal* blessings, blessings that will come to us in this life and in eternity. Some we may realize easily today, and others will teach us, strengthen our testimonies, and help us someday to reach our eternal home.

The temple is a place of peace and comfort, joy and newness. I am more grateful than ever for the temple and pray that as I return there, I can continue to learn and appreciate the blessings of the temple. ■



Kirtland Reflections, by Al Rounds

On Easter Sunday, April 3, 1836, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery retired to the pulpit in the newly dedicated Kirtland Temple and knelt in prayer. Afterward, Jesus Christ appeared to them and said:

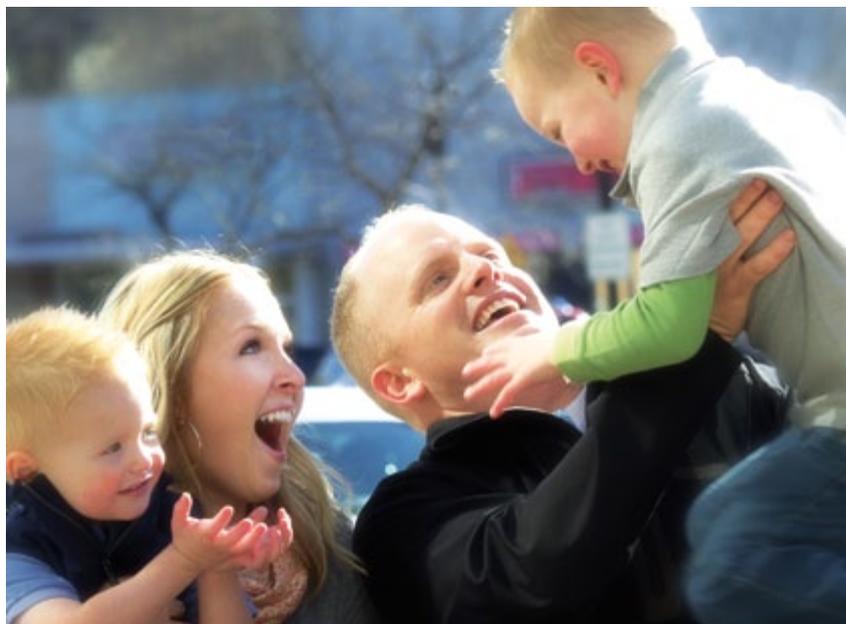
“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father.

“Behold, your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me; therefore, lift up your heads and rejoice.

“Let the hearts of your brethren rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have, with their might, built this house to my name.

“For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house. . . .

“And the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands; and this is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people. Even so. Amen” (D&C 110:4–7, 10).



“If we live the laws pertaining to celestial marriage, we will, with our spouse and with our family, be able to have a little heaven on earth,” teaches Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “And when we live those laws, we are practicing the same laws that are practiced in heaven.” See “A Little Heaven on Earth,” page 44.