

# Ensign

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A Proclamation to the World**  
*September 1995–September 2015*

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*"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?"*

*"But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."*

**Luke 12:6-7**



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## Family Home Evening Ideas

*This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening. The following are some examples.*



**“Why Was I Not Being Blessed?”**  
**page 24:** Do any of your family members ever get discouraged because they’re

comparing themselves with others? Consider sharing this story of a sister missionary who struggled as she compared her slow progress in learning a language with the faster progress of other missionaries. You may want to discuss the significance of the statement that ultimately helped her: “Just because God is smiling on someone else doesn’t mean He is frowning on you.” Ask family members what they can do to ensure that they don’t fail to recognize the many ways Heavenly Father blesses each of us.

**“The Lord Needs You Now!”** **page 26:**  
You might begin by asking family members what qualities they think make for a good soldier

in battle (for some examples, see Alma 53:20–21; 56:46–47; 57:19–21). Then explain that Elder Ballard has invited us to be soldiers in a spiritual battle—a battle that includes fighting against pornography, standing for the divine institution of marriage, and courageously spreading the gospel. To further your understanding of these important issues, you and your family may want to visit and discuss the websites highlighted in the sidebar on page 30.

### COOKIES AND CONTENTION

Concerned about the contention in our home, we had a family home evening to encourage our children to each do their part in promoting a more peaceful spirit. We read Helaman 14:30 and 2 Nephi 2:27 and discussed personal accountability for our choices. We then made cookies together, with each person adding an ingredient to the mixing bowl. The cookie dough smelled so yummy that we each took a spoonful and . . . yuck! I had mistakenly put salt in instead of sugar. I used this happy accident to teach my family that such unpleasant results occur when even one family member makes wrong choices. Now whenever the children fight, I remind them that they don’t want to make salty cookies.

**Rebekah Stanley, Utah, USA**

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**By President  
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in  
the First Presidency

# Families AND Prayer

Once, as I sat by my father’s bedside through the night, he talked about his childhood. He spoke of the love of his parents in difficult times and of the love of his Heavenly Father and the Savior. I knew he was dying of cancer, so it did not surprise me that at times he mixed up his feelings for his Heavenly Father with the love and kindness of his earthly father. My father had often said that when he prayed, he thought he could see in his mind the smile of Heavenly Father.

His parents had taught him by example to pray as if he spoke to God and that God would answer him in love. He needed that example to the end. When the pain became intense, we found him in the morning on his knees by the bed. He had been too weak to get back into bed. He told us he had been praying to ask his Heavenly Father why he had to suffer so much when he had always tried to be good. He said a kindly answer came: “God needs brave sons.”

And so he soldiered on to the end, trusting that God loved him, listened to him, and would lift him up. He was blessed to have known early and to never forget that a loving God is as close as a prayer.

That is why the Lord taught parents, “And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord” (D&C 68:28).

The gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored—with the Book of Mormon and all the priesthood keys that can bind

families—because Joseph Smith as a boy prayed in faith. He gained that faith in a loving and faithful family.

Twenty years ago the Lord gave families this counsel in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” from the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.”<sup>1</sup>

We owe an overwhelming debt of gratitude to the family of Joseph Smith the Prophet for his upbringing. His family exemplified not only faith and prayer but also repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.

The generations that come after you may call you blessed for your example of prayer in your family. You may not raise a great servant of God, but you can by your prayers and your example of faithfulness help the Lord Jesus Christ raise up good and beloved disciples.

Of all that you might choose to do to help the Lord, prayer will be at the heart of it. There are apparently ordinary people who, when they pray, inspire others to open their eyes to see who is there. You can become such a person.

Think of what that can mean to those who kneel with you in family prayer. When they feel that you speak to God in faith, their faith will increase to also speak with God. When





you pray to thank God for blessings they know have come, their faith will grow that God loves them and that He answers your prayers and will answer theirs. That can happen in family prayer only when you have had that experience in private prayer, time after time.

I am still being blessed by a father and a mother who spoke with God. Their example of the power of prayer in families is still blessing the generations who came after them.

My children and grandchildren are blessed every day by the example of

my parents. The faith that a loving God hears and answers prayers has been passed to them. You can create such a legacy in your family. I pray that you will. ■

**NOTE**

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

**CELEBRATE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION ON THE FAMILY**

**T**he Family: A Proclamation to the World" teaches principles that are just as timely today as when it was first presented on September 23, 1995. Consider inviting the individuals or families you teach to celebrate the proclamation's 20th anniversary by:

1. Listing principles it contains that have special significance for them. (See how President Eyring does this with prayer in the message above.)
2. Discussing how each principle can bless them today and in the future.
3. Setting specific goals to incorporate those principles into their lives and to share them with others.



## Working at Prayer

**P**resident Eyring teaches that your family can be blessed by your strong relationship with Heavenly Father. You can improve your relationship with Him by improving your prayers! Here are a few ideas of how to do so:

Before you begin your prayer, take a few moments to think about what you want to say. Consider questions you might have or things that have been bothering you—you can even write them down so you don't forget. Use this time too to clear your mind from the ruckus of the day so you can focus on the gentle impressions of the Holy Ghost. If your mind tends to wander while you pray, try to visualize Heavenly Father listening. Speak in specifics. Also, leave a few minutes at the end of the prayer to listen to the promptings of the Spirit. You might write down your impressions in your journal.

Remember that prayer has been called "a form of work" (Bible Dictionary, "Prayer"), so don't worry if it takes

practice or seems hard! Your effort in praying can help you forge a relationship with God that will bless generations.



Heavenly Father  
**HEARS  
 YOUR  
 PRAYERS.**

He loves you.  
 He knows  
 your name.

President Henry B. Eyring,  
 First Counselor in the First Presidency,  
 "Continuing Revelation," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 73.

## CHILDREN

### A Prayer Reminder

**P**resident Eyring teaches that it's important to pray with your family. You can be an example to your family by praying every day. You can also remind your family to pray together every day. Cut out the card on the left and put it where your whole family will see it. This way you can always remember that Heavenly Father wants to hear from you!



Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding the divine attributes of the Savior increase your faith in Him and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to [reliefsociety.lds.org](http://reliefsociety.lds.org).

## Divine Attributes of Jesus Christ: Powerful and Full of Glory

*This is part of a series of Visiting Teaching Messages featuring divine attributes of the Savior.*

The scriptures teach us that Jesus Christ “received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him” (D&C 93:17). Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that by this power our Savior created the heavens and earth, performed miracles, and endured the pain of Gethsemane and Calvary.<sup>1</sup> As we come to understand this, our faith in Christ will increase, and we will become stronger.

As we make and keep temple covenants, the Lord blesses us with His power. Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, said: “Covenant keeping strengthens, empowers, and protects. . . . I recently met a dear new friend. She testified that after she had received her temple endowment, she



felt strengthened with power to resist temptations.”<sup>2</sup>

Nephi bears testimony of covenant power: “I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended . . . upon the covenant people of the Lord, . . . and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory” (1 Nephi 14:14).

### **Additional Scriptures**

Jeremiah 51:15; Revelation 1:6; Jacob 4:6–7; Mosiah 3:17



### Faith, Family, Relief

#### **From the Scriptures**

Being filled with great compassion for Martha and Mary, Jesus Christ raised their brother Lazarus from the dead by the power of God He possessed.

Jesus arrived at Martha and Mary’s home after Lazarus had been in the grave for four days. They went to Lazarus’s tomb, and Jesus commanded that the stone covering the entrance be taken away. Jesus said to Martha, “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” He then prayed to God the Father and “cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

“And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes.” (See John 11:1–45.) The Savior uses His power to redeem and empower us. Our faith in Him will increase as we remember that He is full of power and glory.

#### **Consider This**

How does the power of God arm us with power and glory?

#### **NOTES**

1. See M. Russell Ballard, “This Is My Work and My Glory,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 18.
2. Linda K. Burton, “The Power, Joy, and Love of Covenant Keeping,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 111.



# APRIL 2015 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

*“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).*

*As you review the April 2015 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.*

## DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT



## Believing in Marriage

“No one has ever come up with a more efficient way to raise the next generation than a household of married parents with children. . . .

“We need to remind ourselves once in a while, as I was reminded in Rome, of the wonderfully reassuring and comforting fact that marriage and family are still the aspiration and ideal of most people and that we are not alone in those beliefs. It has never been more of a challenge to find a practical balance between

employment, families, and personal needs than it is in our day. As a church, we want to assist in all that we can to create and support strong marriages and families.”

**Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Why Marriage and Family Matter—Everywhere in the World,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 41, 42.**

**For more doctrinal articles on marriage from the April 2015 conference, see Boyd K. Packer, “The Plan of Happiness,” 26; Linda K. Burton, “We’ll Ascend Together,” 29; and D. Todd Christofferson, “Why Marriage, Why Family,” 50.**

## PROPHETIC PROMISE



## God’s Grace Available to All

“The grace of God is our great and everlasting hope.

“Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the plan of mercy appeases the demands of justice, ‘and [brings] about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance’ [Alma 34:15].

“Our sins, though they be as scarlet, can become white as snow. Because our beloved Savior ‘gave himself a ransom for all’ [1 Timothy 2:6], an entrance into His everlasting kingdom is provided unto us. . . .

“Today and forevermore God’s grace is available to all whose hearts are broken and whose spirits are contrite. . . .

“. . . I pray that we will show our love for God and our gratitude for the gift of God’s infinite grace by keeping His commandments and joyfully ‘walk[ing] in [a] newness of life’ [Romans 6:4].”

**President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Gift of Grace,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 108, 110.**

## ANSWERS FOR YOU

Each conference, prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your May 2015 issue or visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org) to find answers to these questions:

- I believe in the Atonement of Jesus Christ, but how can I access its power in my life? See Dale G. Renlund, "Latter-day Saints Keep on Trying," 56.
- How are missionary assignments made? What can I do to make the transition from missionary to returned

missionary? How will I be blessed by attending seminary and institute? See M. Russell Ballard, "The Greatest Generation of Young Adults," 67.

- How can I be a better father? See Larry M. Gibson, "Fatherhood—Our Eternal Destiny," 77.
- What are the unique blessings of a mortal body and earth life? See Joseph W. Sitati, "Be Fruitful, Multiply, and Subdue the Earth," 126.



## GREAT STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

What catches our attention better than a great story? Following are four of many stories shared during conference:

- Why doesn't Sister Yazzie of the Chinle Arizona Stake know how many grandchildren she has? Sister Yellowhair shares the unexpected answer. —See Carole M. Stephens, "The Family Is of God," 11.
- Drama and courage describe the story of Marie Madeline Cardon, a young woman who defended her Latter-day Saint faith in 1850 against a mob in the Alps of northern Italy. She stands as an example for us today. —See Bonnie L. Oscarson, "Defenders of the Family Proclamation," 14.
- Read how fast offerings blessed the Turay family during the 1991 civil war in Sierra Leone. —See Henry B. Eyring, "Is Not This the Fast That I Have Chosen?" 22.
- This story of courage, hope, and following the light comes from recent news headlines, but its message has eternal application for us. —See L. Whitney Clayton, "Choose to Believe," 36.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org).



# NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit [news.lds.org](https://news.lds.org) for more Church news and events.

*The reconstructed  
Smith home*



## Restoration Site Reopens

The Priesthood Restoration Site in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, reopens in September 2015 with new places to visit, including reconstructed homes, a

walking path near the place where the Aaronic Priesthood was restored, and a visitors' center. Learn more at [history.lds.org](https://history.lds.org). See also the article on pages 50–57 of this issue. ■

## LIBRARY ADDS TRANSCRIPTS

Perhaps you remember a quote from a Church video that you want to include in a lesson, but how do you find it?

The Media Library on [LDS.org](https://LDS.org) now has interactive transcripts available for all captioned videos on the

site, which will help you find what you're looking for. The transcripts make it possible to read along, better navigate through a video, and create and share customized video clips. The transcripts can also be downloaded and printed. ■

## NEW SIZING FOR WOMEN'S GARMENTS

Based on feedback regularly solicited from members, Beehive Clothing continues to update the design of women's garments to better match wearer preferences. The latest design makes use of a new sizing system based on actual body measurements in inches. Other improvements include a closer fit, consistent sizing across fabrics and styles, and more waist and cup options for a customized fit.

Because the new garments are sized differently than old styles, current garment wearers are encouraged to review sizing charts at [store.lds.org](https://store.lds.org) and bring their measurements with them when purchasing from Distribution Services. Store associates are being trained to help members understand the new sizing system so that members can make informed buying decisions.

Information is available at [store.lds.org](https://store.lds.org) in the "Help" section, and questions may be directed to your local Distribution Services store or the Global Service Center. ■



*Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy meets and talks with young adults.*

## Devotional for Young Adults

Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy will speak at a worldwide devotional for young adults on Sunday, September 13, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time. The devotional will be transmitted over the Church broadcast system.

All young single adults (ages 18–30) and students finishing high school or the equivalent are invited. So are married institute and university students. ■



*Brian K. Ashton and wife, Melinda Earl Ashton*

## Sunday School Counselor Called

The Church announced a reorganization of the Sunday School general presidency in June.

Tad R. Callister will continue as general president, Devin G. Durrant (who had been second counselor) has become first counselor, and Brian K. Ashton has been called as second counselor. John S. Tanner, released as first counselor, was appointed president of Brigham Young University–Hawaii. ■



## SAFETY SITE LAUNCHED

Thanks to a recently launched safety-and-health website, members and leaders can benefit from increased awareness and better practices during Church activities.

[Safety.lds.org](http://Safety.lds.org) employs humor and practical tips as it features fact sheets, resources, forms, links to policies and guidelines from *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, and training and video resources for various Church activities. ■



# PRAYER: A MOTHER'S GIFT

Name withheld

*In spite of my son's rebellion, I never stopped praying for him.*

I never prayed so much as when one of my sons reached the age of 17. He started having some doubts about the gospel, and at times he was rebellious and didn't want to listen. My husband and I always tried to insist that he attend church, but many times he refused. We held our family home evenings, read the scriptures, and prayed as a family, but he often chose not to participate. I can't remember how many times I knelt down to ask our Heavenly Father to touch his heart and help him continue along the right path.

Over the next two years, he had many ups and downs. Church leaders supported me and they spoke with him, but nothing seemed to be of use. Eventually he left home.

All that time I never stopped praying for him. At times my husband, tired of it, said to me, "Leave him. He has his moral agency." But my reply was always the same: "No. I will not lose hope."

After a time, our son came to our home. He asked my forgiveness and told me, "Mama, I want to come home." My husband and I were wary, but after discussing it, we yielded. After he returned home, we saw his firm determination to change. He became active in the

Church and participated in activities. He was later called to serve as a Primary teacher, an experience that was quite special for him.

One day I hung up a poster from the *Liahona* that said, "Don't let worries or doubts keep you from serving a full-time mission."<sup>1</sup> It hung in his

## HELPING YOUR CHILD

Children who stray have their agency, and they might not respond to spiritual promptings, but the gospel gives you many ways to help such a child:

- Counsel together with your spouse and other children.
- Strengthen yourself spiritually so that you can act out of faith and love, not fear.
- Be worthy of and seek personal revelation on how to help your child.
- Be a living example of a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Express love to your child in words and actions.
- Invite him or her to participate in gospel learning at home and in family activities like vacations, holidays, and projects.
- Never give up.



### THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS

“Parents who honor temple covenants are in a position to exert great spiritual influence over time on their children. Faithful members of the Church can find comfort in knowing that they can lay claim to the promises of divine guidance and power, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and the privileges of the priesthood, in their efforts to help family members receive the blessings of salvation and exaltation.

“ . . . Such an influence cannot override the moral agency of a child but nonetheless can invite and beckon. Ultimately, a child must exercise his or her moral agency and respond in faith, repent with full purpose of heart, and act in accordance with the teachings of Christ.”

**Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Faithful Parents and Wayward Children: Sustaining Hope While Overcoming Misunderstanding,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2014, 31.**

bedroom for a couple of months, when suddenly one day he said to me, “Mama, I want to go on a mission at the end of the year.” It was marvelous. My husband and I cried and cried, and of course we supported him as he prepared to go to the temple and serve a mission. I continued praying all the time, now thanking Heavenly Father for having touched the heart of my son.

After some time on his mission, in one of his letters he said to me, “Mama, I have a great testimony of prayer, thanks to you. I know that you were praying the whole time

for me, and now I am on a mission because the Lord touched my heart, not because I am all that good. Thanks, Mama. Share with the sisters this principle that changed my life.”

Now my son has served a faithful mission and participated in a marvelous work. I am very thankful to Heavenly Father for listening to my prayers all these years and for touching the heart of my son, which caused him to return to the right path. ■

*The author lives in Guatemala.*

#### NOTE

1. “Take the Next Step,” *New Era*, June 2009, 27; *Liahona*, June 2009, 31.



# I Felt the **Power** of the **Atonement** of Jesus Christ When . . .

Young adults share  
their experiences  
applying the Savior's  
Atonement.

## • THE SAVIOR HELPED ME IN GOOD AND BAD TIMES

My baptism day was like a dream. I was so happy and eager to begin life as a perfect person. However, I argued with my siblings just hours after being baptized. I remember feeling discouraged that it had not taken very long for me to mess up after being baptized and confirmed, but I also remember that when I repented, I felt completely whole again. I learned from a young age that the Atonement of Jesus Christ brings needed relief from sin.

As I continued to grow in my gospel understanding, I learned that the Atonement was not just something to use whenever I sinned. The Atonement could be part of my life in times of trial, joy, heartache, and success. When I struggled to feel accepted by my peers, I prayed to Heavenly Father and I was comforted to know that the Savior had struggled with these same feelings. When I did well on something, my joy was magnified when I thought of the Savior's rejoicing.

**Abby McKeon, Utah, USA**





## I LEARNED TO RELY ON THE LORD

For many years I felt alone and abandoned. I struggled with unrighteous desires that led me to sin, which eventually placed me in a cycle of guilt and shame. Thankfully, a loving bishop taught me about the role of the Savior's Atonement to cover weakness, pain, and sorrow as well as sin. My bishop rejoiced when I progressed and comforted me when I slipped.

I learned that having a conceptual knowledge of the Savior was not enough—I needed to pray to Heavenly Father and actively repent through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. As I did, I grew more obedient to God's commandments and closer to the Savior.

While I still struggle with temptation, I have learned that I can rely fully on my Savior and His Atonement. While I stand on the rock of my Redeemer, my weakness can be strength. With Paul I can say: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me . . . : for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9–10).

**Jacob H. Taylor, Idaho, USA**

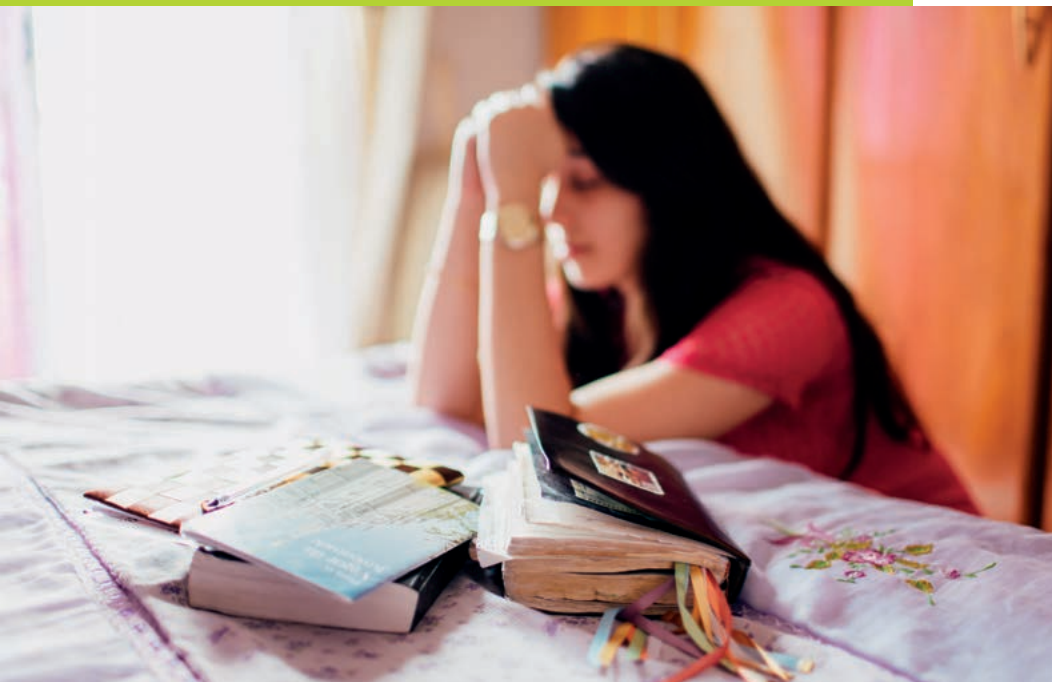
## I EXPERIENCED A CHANGE OF HEART

During high school my heart wasn't really in the gospel. In the mission field I slowly learned what a mission was really about and wanted the power and progress it could bring in my life if I were truly worthy. Finally, the guilt and sorrow from past transgressions bore me down, and I wanted freedom—to be clean and to be a better tool in the Lord's hand. After some discussion with my mission president, I went home to take time to repent.

Returning home was among the hardest times of my life. I began reading the scriptures differently, actually understanding and applying them. While I was doing everything "right," I still felt a great burden of guilt. Then I started to focus my studies on Christ and His Atonement, how He could be *my* Savior and how His infinite Atonement could redeem *my* soul. One night while meditating upon all I had learned from those prayerful studies, I felt the Spirit touch my heart, heal my soul, and comfort me. I felt secure and loved, and my guilt left.

When I first got home, I thought a change of heart was all I needed for the repentance process. Now I know that I needed time to repent—change comes line upon line, a little at a time. It requires prolonged effort to change our hearts, desires, and habits to be more like Christ. We can't make 180-degree changes instantaneously, but because of the Atonement, they can happen completely.

**Name withheld, Georgia, USA**







## I LEARNED TO FORGIVE

There was a point in my life when I was so emotionally hurt that it affected every other aspect of my life. I couldn't focus on classes or homework, my relationship with my roommates was strained, and I was constantly on the verge of tears. More than anything, I was having a hard time forgiving the person who had caused me hurt in the first place—and even madder that I was having a hard time forgiving.

Finally, I decided I was done being sad and angry. I no longer wanted to carry that burden. I pleaded with Heavenly Father to help me forgive. Before I knew it, the pain was bearable. It wasn't gone, but I could bear it. Through this experience I learned that the Savior's Atonement does not just allow us to repent; it also helps us heal. When I approached Heavenly Father with my burdens, in humility and with a sincere heart, He helped me carry the hurt, pain, and heartache I held.

**Dani Lauricella, California, USA**

## I FELT HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

When my parents got divorced, I felt that all my hope of having an eternal family had ended. It was a very hard moment in my life. However, even though it wasn't easy for me to recognize, that trial brought unforeseen blessings to my family. For one, my mom got baptized!

I also was able to get to know my Savior better. To get over my sadness, I chose to visit an aunt in Peru, where I met a new friend who strengthened me greatly. That friend and I often studied the scriptures together and during one special occasion while we were discussing gospel topics, I felt the love of my Savior for me very strongly. The feeling was like the voice of my Savior telling me, "I have always been with you; you just couldn't tell."

Now I know that our Savior wants to help us and that He is always with us. Sometimes we allow our sadness to be higher than our faith and we think that He has forgotten us, but in reality, His Atonement can always help us.

**Liliane Soares Moreira, Bahia, Brazil**



## HIS PERFECT ATONEMENT

*I used to believe  
That there was a hole  
In Christ's Atonement—  
That He could save everyone—  
Except me.*

*But I was wrong.  
There is not one hole,  
But seven.*

*Two holes in  
His Hands  
Where they nailed Him  
To a cross  
At the behest of those  
He would die  
To save,*

*Two holes in  
His wrists  
Where they ensured  
The weight of His body  
Would not cause  
His hands  
To rip through  
Before His penance  
Was complete,*

*Two holes in  
His feet  
Where He stood  
As a witness to all  
Of God's unyielding love  
For each  
Of His children,*



*And one hole in  
His side  
Where they pierced Him  
To prove His work  
Was done.*

*Seven.  
Perfection.  
Seven perfect holes  
In earth's only  
Perfect Man.*

*The perfect Atonement  
To patch the holes in our lives.  
His holes make us  
Whole.*

*I was wrong.  
There is a  
Whole  
In Christ's Atonement  
For me  
After all.*

**Kasey Hammer, Utah, USA**

## I FOUND COMFORT IN HIS RESURRECTION

When I was 23, my grandmother passed away. Though she had lived a beautiful life, she was still relatively young, and her death came sooner than expected. I knew that many had lost much more than I had and that my grandma was at peace, but I still felt pain knowing I would never see her again in this life.

Through this sadness, however, I felt Heavenly Father and the Savior reaching out to me. Kind visiting teachers and friends brought sweet notes and treats, and a dear neighbor stopped by my family's house with a book she said she felt inspired to purchase for us. The book contained quotes from apostles and prophets on the plan of salvation and the reality of life after death.

As I read the words of the prophets out loud with my sister that evening, I felt the sweetest peace settle on my heart. I knew that because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all of us could be made clean and able to dwell with Him in the next life. I knew that "he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead" and that all things—and people—would be restored to their proper place (Alma 40:3; see also Alma 41:2). I knew that because of the Atonement, all the members of my family, including those who have passed on, can be together forever, and for that I will be forever grateful.

**Amanda Seeley, Utah, USA**



# A Culture of Faith in Guatemala

By Lisa López

Church Magazines

In the 68 years since the Church was first introduced in Guatemala, membership has flourished. Guatemala is a country rich with rainforests and a diverse Mayan culture. Despite its beauty, Guatemala is often characterized by its poverty and political strife. This does not mean, however, that it is a country poor in spirit. Merci Arens, a 25-year-old from Guatemala City, personally feels blessed to live in a country where people, in large part, tolerate and accept different religions. “One of the key characteristics of Guatemalan culture is that, by nature, we are a religious people,” she says. “The culture and the environment are very hospitable and lively.” That being said, finding peers that share her same beliefs has not always been easy.

“My standards seem radical to the people at work and school who have never heard of Mormonism,” she says. This is not discouraging for Merci, who emphasizes the importance

of being active in Church callings and activities. “When I go to these activities, I am socializing to create relationships with people who fundamentally have my same goals and principles.” She has found that having friends to share spiritual experiences with has helped her testimony to grow. Because of these friendships, Merci has also found an unexpected blessing. “I have found dating easier because I date friends. I’ve seen them in different situations, which allows me to get to know them in a more natural way.”

On occasions Merci admits to feeling pressure to marry; however, she holds to the security that she has in her heart that everything is and will turn out fine. “I look forward to meeting a companion who, through our relationship, helps draw me nearer to God and together we build an eternal family.”

Out of all the blessings that Merci has received, there is one in

**Merci Arens finds that defending her standards is easier when she has the support of friends who share those standards.**

particular that stands out to her: “I lost my mother at 15. With her passing came a lot of questions. However, these questions and the subsequent answers to them have completely shaped my life.” Through honest prayer, Merci has been able to receive comfort that she will be able to one day give her mother the same type of hugs her mother gave her as a little girl. “The truth of the gospel illuminates my everyday life and activities,” she says. “I know I am connected to the divine love of God, and that fulfills me in every way.” ■



## MORE ABOUT MERCI

*What is your favorite Guatemalan dish?*

It's called "Hilachas"—a stew comprised of red potatoes and long strips of beef. Some people add green beans or carrots, but I prefer mine with just potatoes.

*What are some of your favorite sites?*

Guatemala is a place of natural beauty. One of my favorite places to visit is Lake Atitlan and the surrounding town, Panajachel, which exudes Mayan culture. The natives have worked hard to preserve their traditional language, and I love to admire the colors and intricacies of their hand-woven clothing.

*What is higher education like in Guatemala?*

In my country the issue of education is a complex one. Illiteracy is a problem that much of the population faces. After graduating high school, most young adults are faced with economic responsibilities that force them to choose between attending a university and working full-time. But the Church has been a wonderful tool for helping members access higher education.

## FACTS ABOUT GUATEMALA

Capital: Guatemala City

Language: Spanish

## BY THE NUMBERS

14,647,083 people (estimate as of July 2014)

21 national parks

3 active volcanoes

## THE CHURCH IN GUATEMALA

247,708 Latter-day Saints

417 wards and branches

2 temples

6 missions



# Don't Run Away

**By Jennifer Grace Fallon**

Church Publishing Services

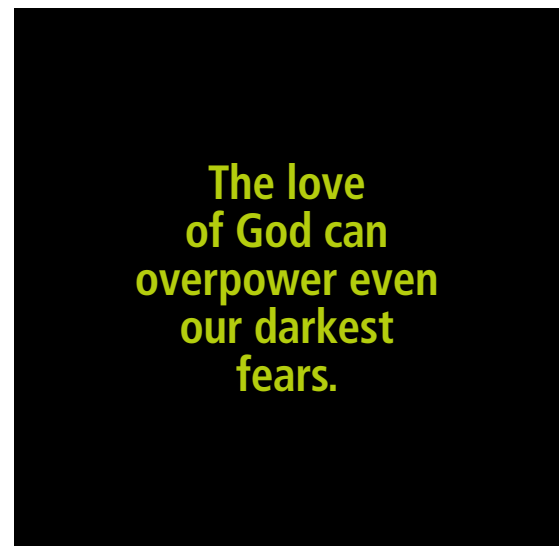
One of my vivid memories from early childhood is of my teenage brother on a white hospital bed, his cheekbones casting deep shadows down his face. I remember feeling terror and shock. He didn't look like the cheerful brother who sat on the curb with me eating cucumbers. His face personified death.

Nine years later, my sister closest to me in age succumbed to the same heart disease that made my brother ill. Though not a toddler anymore, I was still a child, and I watched as her life faded from her cheeks and she became increasingly frail.

I am grateful every day that my brother and sister received the heart transplants they needed so their time in this life could be extended. I have been immensely blessed by my brother's hardworking example and my sister's unbounded generosity.

I've also been running away—literally—for a long time. I have the same heart problem that afflicted my brother and sister, and my father woke me up at dawn every day before elementary school so that I could go running with him to keep my heart healthy. I grew up dreading the day when I would lie on a hospital bed while my heart stopped.

But I wasn't afraid of death; I was afraid I would not accomplish all the good I was sent to do while alive. When I received my patriarchal blessing as a teenager, I received many reassuring promises. My blessing spoke of the "great work" Heavenly Father has for me, but it never gave specific details about what that great work entailed. Mormon taught his son that we all "have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay" (Moroni 9:6), and I often agonized that I didn't have enough faith to fulfill my "labor" during what I assumed would



be my limited life span. I searched for years to discover my specific work so that I could be sure to have it finished before my time in mortality was through. I was so worried about disappointing Heavenly Father.

## **Love Casts Out Fear**

These fears weren't resolved when I was a youth, but I found

many comforting scriptures during my study as a full-time missionary. Particularly, I found inspiration in the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who also faced the threat of his life being shortened. The Lord's words to him also comforted me: "Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not . . . , for God shall be with you forever and ever" (D&C 122:9).

As I continued to study my scriptures diligently, a line from the Bible Dictionary inspired me. It suggested that my fear was "unworthy of a child of God."<sup>1</sup> Through the scriptures I also learned that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear" (2 Timothy 1:7) and that "perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18). These teachings became very real to me on my mission. Whenever I saw someone

walking down the street and felt the need to share my testimony with him or her, I also felt a stab of fear. But I learned to identify the source of my fear, and I knew that I wanted to choose to follow Christ instead of coddle my anxiety. Time after time, I watched as God took my imperfect efforts to share the gospel and worked miracles through my words and actions.



***No amount of running will ever make my heart normal. But I don't have to run away from my fear anymore.***



## BLESSED TO HUSH OUR FEARS

“The peace Christ gives allows us to view mortality through

the precious perspective of eternity and supplies a spiritual settledness (see Colossians 1:23) that helps us maintain a consistent focus on our heavenly destination. Thus, we can be blessed to hush our fears because His doctrine provides purpose and direction in all aspects of our lives. His ordinances and covenants fortify and comfort in times both good and bad. And His priesthood authority gives assurance that the things that matter most can endure both in time and in eternity.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Therefore They Hushed Their Fears,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 47.

I grew to understand more about the plan of salvation and that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16). I do not have perfect love for Heavenly Father, but He has shown that He has perfect love for me and that His love has power to drive out fear—even when I visit the doctor’s office and find my heart condition has worsened. Heavenly Father does not want me to live my life in fear, nor does He want me to doubt His loving plan.

### The Atonement of Jesus Christ in My Life

As a teenager, I worried that my “great work” was a grandiose task that I needed to intuit and execute perfectly. Now I take comfort in what the Savior taught Hyrum Smith: “Behold, this is your work, to keep

my commandments, yea, with all your might, mind and strength” (D&C 11:20). By observing these “small and simple things”—namely, keeping the commandments—I find that truly “great things [are] brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).

The more I try to keep the commandments, the more I witness the miracle of the Atonement of Jesus Christ in my life. I try to remember each day that “now is the time and the day of [my] salvation” and that insofar as I “repent and harden not [my heart], immediately [is] the great plan of redemption” made real in my life (Alma 34:31). My continued repentance prepares me to meet my Heavenly Father and Savior when my time is finished. Elder F. Enzo Busche, emeritus member of the Seventy, taught, “Thus, we prepare all the days of our lives, and, as we grow, death loses its sting, hell loses its power, and we look forward to that day with anticipation and joy when [Christ] will come in his glory.”<sup>2</sup>

No amount of running will ever make my heart normal. But I don’t have to run away from my fear anymore. Rather, I can conquer my fear through Christ and say, “In God I have put my trust; I will not fear” (Psalm 56:4). ■

#### NOTES

1. Bible Dictionary, “Fear.”
2. F. Enzo Busche, “Unleashing the Dormant Spirit,” in *Brigham Young University 1995–96 Speeches* (1996), 228.





# BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

MOSIAH 3:19

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**Kelly L. Barfield**

*The natural man comes easily—  
so much effort  
to do and be otherwise.*

*The yielding stretches me  
beyond myself—  
and is painful.*

*Drawing out the saint within  
requires submission  
to a Greater Power.*

*The enticings are subtle;  
and though I fall,*

*His grace puts off the enemy—  
and I become His child.*



# Why Was I Not Being Blessed?

By Becky Young Fawcett

Having been called to serve in the Thailand Bangkok Mission, I entered the Provo Missionary Training Center (MTC), where I really struggled to learn the Thai language. I didn't understand how the tones worked or how to pronounce the glottal vowels. As the only sister missionary going to Thailand in my MTC district, I felt I was at a disadvantage because, unlike the elders, I didn't have a companion learning Thai with whom I could constantly practice the language. As the weeks passed I became frustrated. I felt that the rest of my district was progressing more quickly than I was.

To make up for not having a companion who was learning the language, I started studying vocabulary early in the mornings before class started, determined to keep up with the elders. However, this extra study time didn't

move me ahead as I thought it would, which increased my frustration. I felt that the other missionaries speaking Thai were being blessed to learn the language but that for some reason I wasn't experiencing this blessing.

During this time my sister-in-law sent me a letter with a saying that read, "Just because God is smiling on someone else doesn't mean He is frowning on you." I realized my mistake. I had been so focused on comparing myself with the rest of my district that I failed to see how Heavenly Father had helped me. I thought back to my first week in the MTC and realized that I *had* improved. I also realized that just because others seemed to be learning the language faster than I was didn't mean I wasn't making any progress. Heavenly Father *was* helping me understand the tones and

foreign pronunciation. He *was* helping me remember the vocabulary words I spent hours studying. And despite what I had thought, He *was* helping me learn the language.

I also realized that we were all part of the work of our Heavenly Father and so it didn't matter who was the

**I felt that the other missionaries were being blessed to learn the language but that for some reason I wasn't experiencing this blessing.**

best. What mattered was that I was working hard and that I recognized and acknowledged the help Heavenly Father was giving me.

At different times during my missionary service I heard the success of other missionaries and wondered why, despite my best efforts, I wasn't seeing the same kind of results—why I wasn't being blessed the same way they were. At these moments when

I began to compare my results and progress with that of others, I would remember the saying my sister-in-law sent me, and it would remind me that there were good things about my area and the work there. I'd remember that God was blessing me as I served Him the best I was able to, even if it wasn't

the same way He was blessing the other missionaries.

Years later, President Thomas S. Monson taught something that gave me further insight into seeing the blessings in my life. He said:

“We have all experienced times when our focus is on what we lack



## ANOTHER'S GOOD FORTUNE

“Brothers and sisters, there are going to be times in our lives when

someone else gets an unexpected blessing or receives some special recognition. May I plead with us not to be hurt—and certainly not to feel envious—when good fortune comes to another person? We are not diminished when someone else is added upon. We are not in a race against each other to see who is the wealthiest or the most talented or the most beautiful or even the most blessed. The race we are *really* in is the race against sin, and surely envy is one of the most universal of those.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Laborers in the Vineyard,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 31.

rather than on our blessings. Said the Greek philosopher Epictetus, ‘He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.’ . . .

“Regardless of our circumstances, each of us has much for which to be grateful if we will but pause and contemplate our blessings.”<sup>1</sup> ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

### NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “The Divine Gift of Gratitude,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 88.







**By Elder  
M. Russell Ballard**  
Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

# THE LORD NEEDS YOU Now!

*As an Apostle of  
the Lord Jesus Christ,  
I invite you to “put  
on the whole armour  
of God” and join  
the battle today.*

**T**he world in which we now live is moving rapidly away from the teachings of Christ in its laws and its customs. As a result, Satan is working overtime to confuse God’s sons and daughters and to divert the very elect from fulfilling their duty and receiving a fulness of the Lord’s blessings.

Satan wants you to stop practicing good habits you learned at home, in seminary and institute, and on your missions—such as having daily scripture study, praying daily, worthily partaking of the sacrament weekly, and giving genuine, heartfelt service. He also wants you to stand on the sidelines in today’s important and crucial battles.

Remember, we are at war—but not a war of guns and bullets. Nevertheless, the war is real, with countless human casualties. The war is in fact a continuation of the one that began in the premortal world.

Paul invited us to “put on the whole armour of God.” He said, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:11–12).

As an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I invite you to “put on the whole armour of God” and join the battle today, as the sons of Helaman did so many years ago.

Don’t wait until you get married or start your lifelong career or get older. The Church needs our youth now. The Lord needs you now!

You will recall that 2,000 stripling warriors “entered into a covenant to fight for the liberty of the Nephites” (Alma 53:17). The Church needs modern stripling warriors who have made a covenant “to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9).

Young women and young men are the modern daughters and sons of Helaman. May it be said of you as it was said of them: “They became now at this period of time . . . a great support” (Alma 53:19).

## **Combating Pornography**

We need you to join with us in the fight against pornography. It’s a terrible plague that is spreading across the world.

More than 180 years ago, the Lord revealed His law of health, including a warning about the use of tobacco (see D&C 89). Many people listened to the Lord’s warning, but many more did not. No one knew at that time or even when I was your age the long-term effects of smoking. Today, after decades of scientific research, we now know smoking’s contribution to lung cancer and other deadly diseases. The Lord’s Word of Wisdom was a protective blessing.



In similar ways the Lord in our day has warned us about the effects of pornography. Millions of people faithfully follow the Lord's counsel, whereas countless others do not. We don't have to wait, my dear friends, for 180 years or even for 10 years to discover the devastating effects of pornography. Current scientific research has revealed that pornography cripples young adults in several ways and poisons their chances of one day having a loving and lasting marriage relationship.

Research has shown that frequent use of pornography can lead to obsessive behaviors and can rewire the brain to capture a person in the prison of addiction. Research has also verified that pornography fosters unrealistic expectations and delivers dangerous miseducation about healthy human intimacy.

Most insidious, pornography conditions you to see people as objects that you can disregard and disrespect both emotionally and physically.

Another aspect of pornography is that it is generally a secret activity. Users often hide their use or at least minimize their use from everyone, including their romantic partners or spouses. Studies have found that when people engage in this type of self-concealment—when they do things they are not proud of and keep those things a secret from their family members and friends—it not only hurts their relationships and leaves them feeling lonely, but it also makes them more vulnerable to depression, anxiety, and poor self-esteem. Keeping secrets damages trust.

Initially, we must avoid pornography ourselves because it is deadly. It kills genuine, tender human relationships—destroying marriages and families. It destroys the spirit of the person who consumes it as surely as the most deadly poison kills the body and the mind.

Do not be deceived. Do not think that once you go on your mission or once you get married you can stop this addictive behavior. If you are involved in it now, if you are entrapped in this practice, get spiritual help now. You can overcome pornography with the Savior's assistance. Do not wait! I plead with you to leave it alone! There are many

resources on LDS.org that will help you override the darkness of pornographic images.

These are challenging days—but no more challenging than the days of Helaman and his stripling warriors when they stood to defend their families and the Church. This is your time to step forward and join the ranks of other righteous and dedicated young men and young women to fight the battle against pornography.

### **The Doctrine of Marriage**

I want you to understand the position of the Church on marriage as given us by our Heavenly Father through the scriptures and “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” That inspired document states: “The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.”<sup>1</sup>

Apostles are charged to be watchmen on the tower, to see “the enemy while he [is] yet afar off” (D&C 101:54), and to teach the doctrines of Christ. All of you know that the traditional definition of marriage is under attack today. There are those who are framing the discussion focused in terms of civil rights. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have explained the Church's position and doctrine of God's purpose and plan for His spirit children to experience mortal life, which is essential to our everlasting and eternal life.

I quote from a statement issued to Church leaders in 2014 and ask you to read carefully:

“Changes in the civil law do not, indeed cannot, change the moral law that God has established. God expects us to uphold and keep His commandments regardless of divergent opinions or trends in society. His law of chastity is clear: sexual relations are proper only between a man and a woman who are legally and lawfully wedded as husband and wife. We urge you to review and teach Church members the doctrine contained in ‘The Family: A Proclamation to the World.’”





The statement continues:

“Just as those who promote same-sex marriage are entitled to civility, the same is true for those who oppose it. . . .

“As members of the Church, we are responsible to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to illuminate the great blessings that flow from heeding God’s commandments as well as the inevitable consequences of ignoring them. We invite you to pray that people everywhere will have their hearts softened to the truths of the gospel, and that wisdom will be granted to those who are called upon to decide issues critical to society’s future.”<sup>2</sup>

I know you love and support the Lord and sustain His prophets, but I also know that some of you may be confused regarding the many implications of the Church’s decision to sustain God’s revealed plan for His children.

I also know that some of our youth struggle to understand how to explain the doctrine surrounding family and marriage and still remain kind, gentle, and loving toward those who do not agree. You may be afraid

that you will be labeled as a bigot and as being intolerant.

You may know someone who struggles with same-sex attraction or has made a decision to live in a same-sex relationship. Your love for that person as a son or daughter of God can create an inward struggle as you try to love and support him or her and still stand for the Lord’s eternal plan of happiness.

Let us be clear: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes that “the experience of same-sex attraction is a complex reality for many people. The attraction itself is not a sin, but acting on it is. Even though individuals do not choose to have such attractions, they do choose how to respond to them. With love and understanding, the Church reaches out to all God’s children, including [those with same-sex attraction].”<sup>3</sup>

The Church does not teach or advocate shunning or other unchristianlike actions. We must love and strive to help others to understand that no one should ignore or discount the commandments of God.

***Our Father in Heaven knew the consequences of living in a fallen world and, therefore, provided a Savior, a “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” for His children.***

## HELP AND UNDERSTANDING

The Church offers help and understanding for those battling pornography or wrestling with same-sex attraction. It also offers resources for Church members wanting to deepen their understanding of the divine institution of marriage or to share the gospel online. Consider visiting the following online resources:

- “Overcoming Pornography through the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” [lds.org/go/overcomeE915](https://www.lds.org/go/overcomeE915).
- “God Loveth His Children,” [lds.org/go/bookletE915](https://www.lds.org/go/bookletE915).
- “The Divine Institution of Marriage,” [lds.org/go/marriageE915](https://www.lds.org/go/marriageE915).
- “Sharing the Gospel Online,” [lds.org/church/share](https://www.lds.org/church/share).

## A Witness and a Warning

In “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated: “We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.”<sup>4</sup>

I am one who joined in that warning. As one of the watchmen on the tower, I am responsible to “blow the trumpet, and warn the people” (see Ezekiel 33:1–9). I do so because I love you and want you to understand that we must face the Lord and keep His commandments. That is my duty.

The Lord’s warning also comes with an invitation to come unto Him. Our Father in Heaven knew the consequences of living in a fallen world and, therefore, provided a Savior, a “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” for His children (Revelation 13:8).

In the Gospel of John we learn, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Please remember that the gospel is the “good news.”<sup>5</sup> It is a message of hope. If you are in trouble now, get help. The Lord is merciful and forgiving.

The Apostle Paul taught:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . .

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35, 37–39).

Because of Jesus Christ, peace can replace guilt. Healthy relationships can be restored. Addictions can be overcome.

We need to let our family and our friends know this truth: God is love, “and he inviteth [us] all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him” (2 Nephi 26:33).

We need you to be engaged in the work of salvation before, during, and after your missions.

## Using Technology to Bless Lives

The Lord invites you to get involved and use the social media platforms you prefer to share the gospel and stand as modern sons and daughters of Helaman in the great battles of the last days. He wants you to become the modern stripling warriors who stand strong and united to the truth. He wants you to be courageous and stalwart in the face of the enemy’s advances. We know that in the end the Lord will win the day and Satan will be defeated.

Now, you have the opportunity to use social media wisely. Remember that there is a proper time and place for you to use social media, and sharing your thoughts and testimony of the things you are learning and feeling is one of those times. Through various



***I know some of you worry about being misjudged, ridiculed, and even harassed if you stand up for Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Church. My dear beloved young friends, don't worry about those in the large and spacious building.***

social media platforms, you can have gospel conversations with family, with friends, and, for returned missionaries, even with former investigators and new members. You can stand as witnesses to the truth and defend the kingdom.

### **Defending the Kingdom**

I know some of you worry about being misjudged, ridiculed, and even harassed if you stand up for Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Church. I understand your concerns.

I served in the British Mission after the end of World War II as a young missionary. At that time Mormons were “a hiss and a byword” (3 Nephi 16:9), and missionaries were laughed at and ridiculed. People even threw things at us, and some would spit at us. However, we did not retreat, but we continued to bear our testimonies and share the gospel. Like Abinadi, we did not shrink; like Paul, we did not shrink; and like the Savior, we did not shrink. At the time we could not have imagined the impact of our labors. We had 14 districts and no stakes. Today, 46 stakes of Zion are found in the British Isles.

My dear beloved young friends, don't worry about those in the large and spacious building. Nephi saw that they would mock and point “their fingers towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit.” Don't

be like those who “after they had tasted of the fruit . . . were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost” (1 Nephi 8:27, 28).

You are a great and important generation, and this is a great time to be alive! The future is bright. Say to yourself, “I am helping the Lord as I reach out to share my testimony and to teach the truths God has revealed in these last days.”

May the Lord bless you with wisdom beyond your years, that you will wisely realize that we are in this battle and that we must stand together, young and old. May you never forget, in this journey you are on, that you are precious to the future of preparing the world for that day when Jesus Christ will say, “It is enough,” and will return to rule and reign as the Savior, the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Redeemer of the world, who I testify lives. ■

*From a CES devotional for young adults, “Be Still and Know That I Am God,” delivered in California, USA, on May 4, 2014.*

### **NOTES**

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. Letter from the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, dated Jan. 10, 2014 (United States) and Mar. 6, 2014 (outside the United States).
3. “Love One Another: A Discussion on Same-Sex Attraction,” [mormonsandgays.org](http://mormonsandgays.org).
4. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 129.
5. See Guide to the Scriptures, “Gospels,” [scriptures.lds.org](http://scriptures.lds.org).



By Travis Searle

Seminaries and Institutes

In five simple words to his mother, “I have learned for myself” (Joseph Smith—History 1:20), the Prophet Joseph Smith taught a powerful lesson. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that this “simple scriptural phrase is something that should be embedded in each of our minds and hearts.”<sup>1</sup> Because a central purpose of Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness is to learn,<sup>2</sup> seminaries and institutes of religion have invited students to elevate their learning to learn for themselves the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So what are students being invited to do to elevate their learning?

Previously, students could graduate from seminary or institute by meeting the attendance requirement and receiving an endorsement from their bishop or branch president. Students now must meet two additional requirements: for each course, read the assigned scriptures and pass two learning assessments.

#### **“I have learned for myself” by reading the assigned scriptures for the course**

Seminary teachers have been asked to help the “youth do more on their own to understand the doctrines of Christ” and to “expect them to come to classes prepared and ready to engage in testifying and learning.”<sup>3</sup>

As students read the assigned scriptures for the course, they are seeking learning by faith. In doing so, they come to understand more clearly Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation. They develop “more confidence in the word of God and in their ability to feel the influence of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>4</sup> And they begin to feel the stirrings of the Spirit that lead to deeper conversion.

#### **“I have learned for myself” by passing two learning assessments during each course**

In a vision, Nephi was asked by an angel, “What beholdest thou?” (1 Nephi 11:14). This question prompted Nephi

*Seminary students have some new requirements for graduation. Here’s how the change is leading to greater spiritual growth.*

# HOW SEMINARY IS Elevating LEARNING







## FOR MORE INFORMATION

See an article on the same topic for youth on page 26 of this month's *New Era*.



about and turned it into something great and a positive experience. . . . It brought such a great spirit of learning.”

Students are encouraged to retake learning assessments if necessary. One mother said that her son did not pass one of the assessments the first time, but the seminary teacher had provided a study guide, so she asked her son if they could review the guide together. She said, “We did it as our family home evening. Going through the study guide together was a neat experience and brought us closer together. It was a spiritual experience. . . . I am glad he didn’t succeed the first time.”

### “I have learned for myself” by participating in institute

When students graduate from seminary, they are invited to continue learning for themselves by participating in an institute of religion program or religion classes at a Church university. There, students will participate in four new cornerstone courses: Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel, Foundations of the Restoration, the Teachings and Doctrine of the Book of Mormon, and the Eternal Family, which are being introduced in 2015 and 2016. These courses will help young adults apply gospel principles to their current circumstances. Institute teachers are also beginning to implement the new graduation requirements, which will provide even greater opportunities for students to learn about the Lord and His gospel.

By accepting the invitation to elevate their learning, students will find that “learning for [themselves] that the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is true can be one of the greatest and most joyful experiences in life.”<sup>5</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, “A Discussion with Elder David A. Bednar” (video, Seminaries and Institutes of Religion satellite broadcast, Aug. 2, 2011).
2. See David A. Bednar, “Learning to Love Learning,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2010, 26.
3. Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Greater Expectations” (Seminaries and Institutes of Religion satellite broadcast, Aug. 5, 2014), [lds.org/broadcasts](http://lds.org/broadcasts).
4. Paul V. Johnson, in “A Panel Discussion with Elder Dallin H. Oaks” (Seminaries and Institutes of Religion global faculty meeting, May 2014), [si.lds.org](http://si.lds.org).
5. Craig C. Christensen, “I Know These Things of Myself,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 50.

to evaluate what he had learned. Similarly, the learning assessments in seminary help students evaluate what they have learned. After taking a learning assessment, one student said, “I was looking forward to it because I wanted to see what I had taken out of seminary.”

The learning assessments have resulted in something of a culture shift. Teachers are learning to implement the learning assessments in ways that deepen conversion. And students are learning to work more closely with their teachers in ways that are blessing the lives of both. Teachers are also learning to accommodate students with specific needs or disabilities so that all students who desire may meet this new requirement.

Teachers are discovering that a great way to use the learning assessments is to review them with students after they have completed them. In the words of one student, “The review [after the learning assessment] . . . took something that a lot of people were thinking negative

# Blessing Our Children

BY IMPROVING OUR MARRIAGES

**By Lori Cluff Schade**

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

One day I was conducting a therapy session with an adolescent who had recently put her own life at risk by engaging in dangerous behavior. I had previously worked with her parents and was trying to assess her perception and understanding of her family's relationships. When I asked about her parents' marriage, she looked me in the eye and without hesitation replied, "My parents don't like each other."

I asked how she knew that, since her parents had repeatedly told me that they never had conflict and had expressed certainty that their children were unaware of their marital distress. It was an assertion I heard regularly from many couples as a marriage and family therapist.

"You can just tell," she answered. She explained that she never stopped worrying about the potential collapse of her family. She tearfully revealed that it was making her physically sick and that she was struggling to sleep and to attend school. "I think about it all the time," she said.

*The quality of your marriage is influencing your children, whether you realize it or not. As you and your spouse work to improve your relationship, your children will be blessed.*







My heart broke as I sat across from her and considered the all-too-familiar scenario. I knew her parents both loved her and wanted to do anything to help her, and yet I worried that they underestimated the degree to which their difficult marriage was hurting her and their other children.

The family proclamation states that “husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.”<sup>1</sup> Sometimes I worry that the “for their children” part crowds out the “for each other” part.

In my profession, I observe members of the Church making enormous sacrifices for their children to help them succeed. These parents foster positive religious practices in their children, such as prayer, scripture study, and church attendance. They encourage educational pursuits and the acquisition of skills that will prepare children for bright futures. However, I fear that some may undervalue the valuable resource that high-quality marriages offer in preparing youth for eternal purposes.

Many couples devote their attention to causes that are worthwhile but that do little to strengthen their marriages. Some diligently adjust their schedules to attend children’s

performances but can’t seem to find time for a date with a spouse. In the whirlwind of child rearing, career building, and fulfilling Church callings, marriages are easily neglected and can sometimes even become colored with conflict, resentment, and betrayal.

As couples become more aware of the powerful influence their marriages have on their children, it becomes clear just how far-reaching the benefits can be when couples actively seek to nourish and strengthen their marriages.

### **Marital Quality Influences Children**

I believe most Latter-day Saint couples want their marriages to succeed, and I’m impressed with the levels of marital commitment most of them display. In general, Latter-day Saints who enter into the everlasting covenant of marriage (see D&C 131:2) take that covenant seriously and will often endure enormous amounts of distress to keep their marriages intact.

However, I sometimes encounter marriages that offer more stability than quality. Some couples mistakenly think

that if they simply refrain from arguing in front of their children, their children will be unaware of the disconnection in the marriage. Children are extremely intuitive and usually have a sense that something isn't going well, which can lead to deep feelings of insecurity. Absence of conflict in a marriage is a cheap substitute for secure connection.

Research on marital quality and children suggests that a high-quality marriage promotes a sense of emotional security, enhancing children's general well-being.<sup>2</sup> In my clinical practice, I am a witness to the reality that children are deeply affected by parents' marital quality. This principle is reflected in the words of President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): "Marriage . . . has to do not only with immediate happiness, but also with eternal joys. It affects not only the two people involved, but also their families and particularly their children and their children's children down through the many generations."<sup>3</sup> I often explain to people that they aren't just creating their own marriages but in essence their children's and grandchildren's marriages as well.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles additionally stated: "The weakening of the concept that marriages are permanent and precious has far-reaching consequences. Influenced by their own parents' divorce or by popular notions that marriage is a ball and chain that prevents personal fulfillment, some young people shun marriage. Many who marry withhold full commitment, poised to flee at the first serious challenge."<sup>4</sup>

As a marriage clinician, I can affirm that adults whose parents divorced or had low-quality marriages often report insecurity in their own abilities to sustain and endure successful long-term relationships. They are often hypersensitive to any disagreement in the marriage and go to great lengths to avoid conflict, which can sometimes limit marital closeness. It is not uncommon for me to see adults weeping as they recall the emotional pain they experienced in watching the decline and fall of their own parents' marriages. Confidence in marriage is diminished in households with poor marital quality.

## **Choosing to Improve Marital Quality**

Improving marital quality has much to do with choice. President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, affirmed that "a couple in love can choose a marriage of the highest quality or a lesser type that will not endure."<sup>5</sup>

Popular marriage clinician and researcher William J. Doherty has written about the importance of combining commitment with intentionality, or active efforts to improve the marriage relationship: "Even if we have an unbending commitment to our mates, most of us are blind to how we lose our marriages by slow erosion if we do not keep replenishing the soil. . . . Commitment without intentionality leads to stable but stale marriages."<sup>6</sup> Numerous couples express deep commitment and stability but do little, if anything, to try to actively benefit the marriage. It is disheartening to see valuable marital capital go underutilized.

## **Loving Your Spouse**

When former Young Women general president Elaine S. Dalton gave a talk suggesting that the most important thing a father could do for his daughter was to "love her mother,"<sup>7</sup> I was pierced with the recognition that it was I and not my husband who needed to hear the talk; he had been far more conscientious about communicating to my children how much he loved me than I had in the reverse. I thought of the multiple times I had walked into a room and my husband had asked one of my children, "Guess what?" to which one would respond, "I know . . . you love Mom," or, "I know . . . Mom's your best friend," or "I know . . . Mom's your dream girl," or any number of similar declarations he had reinforced over the years. I realized that the immense security I felt in my marriage, and that I had taken for granted, was a direct result of my husband's generosity in expressing his love, admiration, and respect for me to our children.

The importance of Sister Dalton's instruction is underscored by the prophet Jacob in the Book of Mormon. As he chastised the Nephites for their wickedness, he pointed out





## THE POTENTIAL OF MARRIAGE

“Marriage brings greater possibilities for happiness than does any other human relationship. Yet some married couples fall short of their full potential. They let their romance become rusty, take each other for granted, allow other interests or clouds of neglect to obscure the vision of what their marriage really could be. Marriages would be happier if nurtured more carefully.”

President Russell M. Nelson,  
President of the Quorum  
of the Twelve Apostles,  
“Nurturing Marriage,” *Ensign*,  
May 2006, 36.

that, in contrast, the Lamanite “husbands love their wives, and their wives love their husbands; and their husbands and their wives love their children” (Jacob 3:7), reinforcing the idea that the Lord considers this of great significance.

*Homefront*, a public service announcement series aired by the Church, has a popular TV spot called “By the Hour,” in which a little boy is trying to get his working father’s attention. At one point the father says, “[If] Daddy doesn’t work, Daddy doesn’t get paid,” to which the mother adds, “People like Daddy’s work so much they pay him for it.”<sup>8</sup> This is one of my favorite ads, because the mother avoids a common and ineffective triangulation in which a parent steps in and supports a child by scolding the withdrawn parent. This typically results in defensiveness in the other parent and insecure feelings in the child. With a positive and strategic statement, the mother in the ad supports both father and child. I am convinced that if more parents altered their conversations to be more like this one, overall marital and family quality would improve.

## Suggestions for Improving Marital Quality

The good news about improving marital quality is that shifts can be potentially immediate by incorporating small changes. Following are some suggestions:

*Articulate and share what you want your marriage to look like in 5, 10, or 20 years.* I’m always surprised by how many couples don’t talk about the kind of marriage they want to have. Having this conversation places the marriage on center stage and

sets couples on a course for active marital improvement and commitment for the future.

*Write down and share a positive memory in the marriage.* Negative emotions tend to be so absorbing that they often crowd out hope. When people think about and share positive memories, they make space for feeling hope again.

*Share a memory of a time that you were able to overcome a challenge together.*

Recalling these circumstances is a way to access unity as a married couple.

*Create small but meaningful rituals for when you part and come together again.*

This seems intuitive, but couples often forget the importance that a predictable kiss, hug, or verbal expression can have in generating positivity in the marriage over time.

*Introduce an element of novelty into your dating.* There is research suggesting that couples who intentionally date by seeking new experiences often achieve improved relationship quality. This requires creativity and effort, not money.

*Tell your children regularly what you admire about your spouse.* This is my favorite. When I have had couples in therapy follow through on this directive, they have reported immediate and positive results.

*Actively seek uplifting marital improvement resources.* This includes books and articles (print or audio), games, lectures, fire-sides, workshops, conferences, and more.

*Ask each other regularly if you are more or less connected as a couple than before and discuss what you can do bridge the gap.* This can be done daily, weekly, or even monthly and provides a way to refocus attention on the marriage.



*Counsel with your bishop to access professional resources if necessary.* For a variety of reasons, people often delay seeking help. I can't count the number of times I wish a couple had sought help years earlier, before so much resentment had poisoned the marriage.

*Pray.* President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, counseled: "Pray for the love which allows you to see the good in your companion. Pray for the love that makes weaknesses and mistakes seem small. Pray for the love to make your companion's joy your own. Pray for the love to want to lessen the load and soften the sorrows of your companion."<sup>9</sup> If this seems too difficult, spouses can pray to *want* to desire those things.

### **Heavenly Father Wants Us to Have Happy Marriages**

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) declared that "whatever Jesus lays his hands upon lives. If Jesus lays

his hands upon a marriage, it lives. If he is allowed to lay his hands on the family, it lives."<sup>10</sup> I have a conviction that Heavenly Father wants us to have excellent marriages of the highest quality and that He will guide us in our efforts to improve those relationships for the benefit of our families. Happy marriages supply profound blessings for us and for our children. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

#### **NOTES**

1. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. See E. Mark Cummings and Patrick T. Davies, *Marital Conflict and Children: An Emotional Security Perspective* (2010).
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 193.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, "Divorce," *Ensign*, May 2007, 70.
5. Russell M. Nelson, "Celestial Marriage," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 92.
6. William J. Doherty, *Take Back Your Marriage: Sticking Together in a World That Pulls Us Apart*, 2nd ed. (2013), 8, 9.
7. Elaine S. Dalton, "Love Her Mother," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 77.
8. See "By the Hour" (video), *Homefront* TV spots, [lds.org/media-library/video/homefronts](https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/homefronts).
9. Henry B. Eyring, "Our Perfect Example," *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 71.
10. Howard W. Hunter, "Reading the Scriptures," *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 65.





**By Elder Bruce C. Hafen**  
Served as a member of the  
Seventy from 1996 to 2010

# THE Temple AND THE NATURAL ORDER OF Marriage





This is the second of two articles by Elder Hafen that help commemorate the 20th anniversary of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” The first article was published in the August 2015 issue of the Ensign.

When a confused culture confuses us about what marriage means, we may give up on ourselves and each other much too soon. But there is hope. The temple’s eternal pattern can help us overcome the modern chaos.

Every time we go to the temple, the ordinances reorient us to the natural order of the universe, including the natural order of marriage. Like the ancient mariner, we look to the heavens to get our bearings—and we do that through the temple. Latter-day Saint scholar Hugh Nibley wrote:

“The temple is built so as to represent the organizing principles of the universe. It is the school where mortals learn about these things. . . .

“ . . . The earth temple [is] in the middle of everything, . . . around which all heavenly motions revolve, the knot that ties earth and heaven together.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the temple has the power to etch God’s natural laws of marriage and family life into our hearts.

### The Marriage of Adam and Eve

We first learn the temple’s teachings about marriage in the story of Adam and Eve—the primal story of the temple. A friend once asked me, “If Christ is at the center of the gospel and the temple, why doesn’t the temple

*The temple is the knot that ties heaven and earth together.*



endowment teach the story of Christ’s life? What’s all this about Adam and Eve?”

I have come to feel that the life of Christ is the story of *giving* the Atonement. The story of Adam and Eve is the story of *receiving* the Atonement, amid the sometimes-formidable oppositions of mortality.

Adam and Eve were the first people to receive the Atonement of Jesus Christ. They were also the first parents to know the love a new child brings, the soul-stretching sacrifices of raising a child, and the agony of watching children use their agency unwisely.

Father Lehi gives us the doctrinal context for understanding their experience—and ours. He tells us that if Adam and Eve had not eaten from the tree of knowledge, they “would have remained in the garden of Eden. . . .

“And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin. . . .





“Adam fell that men might be [mortal]; and men are [mortal], that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:22–23, 25).

So, paradoxically, sin, misery, and children help create the context for learning what joy means—a process made possible by the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Because of the Atonement, we can learn from our experiences without being condemned by them. And receiving the Atonement, as Adam and Eve did, is not just a doctrine about erasing black marks; it is the core doctrine that allows human development. Thus, Christ’s sacrifice didn’t just return them to an Eden of innocence. That would be a story with no plot and no character growth. Rather, they left the garden holding on to each other and moving forward, together, into the world in which we now live.

The temple’s primal story is quite consciously the story of a married couple who help one another face continuous mortal opposition. For only in confronting that sometimes-miserable opposition could they learn to comprehend true joy.

Let us consider two implications from the Adam and Eve story about our understanding of marriage. First is the

Restoration’s positive view about the Fall. We know that Adam and Eve chose wisely in the garden because only mortality could provide the experience needed to fulfill God’s plan for them—and for us. In contrast, traditional Christianity teaches that Eve’s choice was a tragic mistake, bringing down the wrath of God on all mankind. Some Christian churches still teach that because women are the daughters of foolish Eve, wives should be *dependent* on their husbands.

Reacting strongly against this idea, most people today would say that a wife should be *independent* of her husband. And, in fairness, they would add, a husband should also be independent of his wife. But when both spouses are independent of each other, they accept only today’s “nonbinding commitments,” and people leave their marriage when the fun stops—or when the trouble starts.

Which is correct: dependence or independence? Neither one. The restored gospel—unlike the rest of Christianity—teaches that Eve and Adam’s choice in the garden was not a mistake or an accident; rather, it was a deliberate, even glorious, part of the plan of salvation. Thus the Restoration sees Eve—and all women—as noble beings who are the complete equals of men.

So, Eve is not dependent on Adam; nor is she independent from him. Rather, Eve and Adam are *interdependent* with each other. They are “equal partners” who “help one another” in everything they do.<sup>2</sup>

### Bringing a Broken Heart to the Altar

Second, when Adam and Eve left the garden, the Lord directed them to build an altar and offer animal sacrifices. After many days an angel asked Adam why he offered sacrifices. He answered, “I know not, save

***Eve and Adam are interdependent,  
equal partners who help one  
another in everything  
they do.***

the Lord commanded me.” Then the angel told him, “This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten” (Moses 5:6–7).

Thus, the animals Adam and Eve sacrificed were symbols that pointed them toward the Father’s future redemptive sacrifice of His Son. The angel then taught them that Christ’s sacrifice and the plan of redemption would give meaning and purpose to all of their opposition—indeed, to all of their mortal experience.

Some of us go to the temple today the way Adam and Eve first offered sacrifices—simply because we are commanded, without knowing why. Simple obedience is certainly better than not performing the ordinances at all. But the Lord, who sent the angel, must have wanted them to know why—and I believe He wants *us* to know why.

Are today’s temple ordinances also “a similitude . . . of the Only Begotten”? Think of how the temple’s altars, like the altar of Adam and Eve, are altars of prayer, sacrifice, and covenants. Think of the dimensions of sacrifice in all the covenants of the endowment.

Since the time that Christ completed His atoning mission, we no longer offer animal sacrifices, but we do covenant to sacrifice. In what way? Christ taught the Nephites, “Ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (3 Nephi 9:20; see also 2 Nephi 2:7).

Animal sacrifices symbolized the Father’s sacrifice of the Son, but the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit symbolizes the Son’s sacrifice of Himself. Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote that “Jesus died of a broken heart.”<sup>3</sup> In similitude, we now offer ourselves—our own broken hearts—as a personal sacrifice.<sup>4</sup> As Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Real, personal sacrifice never was placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal *in us* upon the altar and letting it be consumed!”<sup>5</sup>

While serving recently as president of the St. George Utah Temple, I was about to seal a young couple. As I invited them to the altar and the groom took his bride by the hand, I realized that they were about to place upon





that altar of sacrifice their own broken hearts and contrite spirits—a selfless offering of themselves to each other and to God in emulation of Christ’s sacrifice for them. And for what purpose? So that through a lifetime of sacrificing for each other—that is, trying to live as He did—they might become ever more as He is.

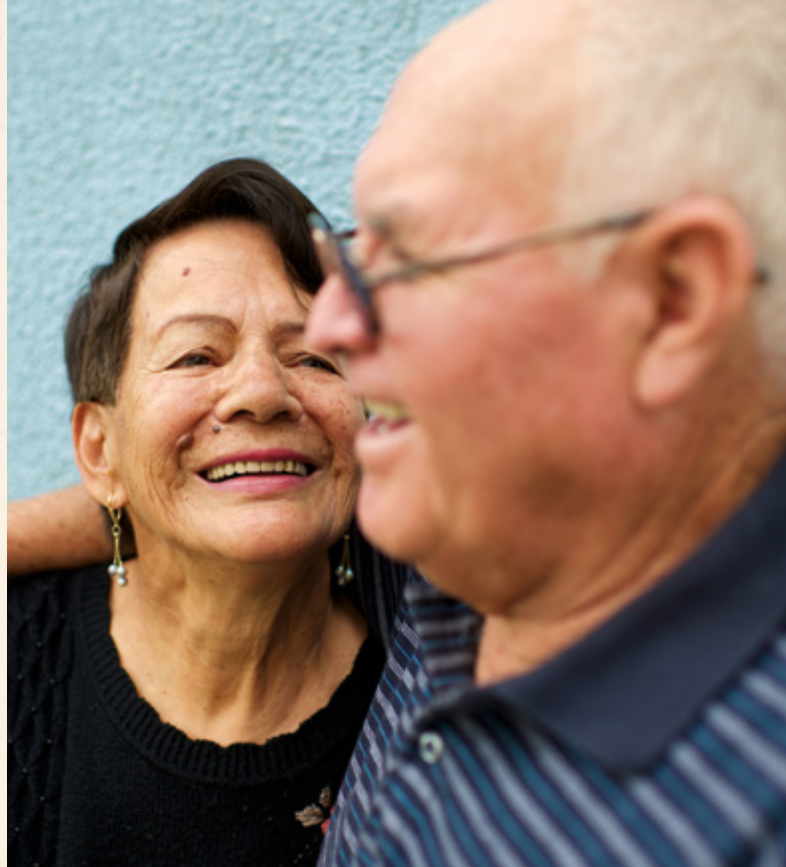
By living that way every day, they would each come closer to God, which would also bring them closer to each other. Thus, living the covenants of the sealing ordinance would sanctify not only their marriage but also their hearts and their very lives.

This understanding of marriage differs starkly and powerfully from the prevailing view of marriage today. In His parable of the good shepherd, Jesus described a hireling—someone who is paid to care for the sheep. When the wolf comes, He said, the hireling “leaveth the sheep, and fleeth.” Why does the hireling run away? Because “his own the sheep are not,” said Jesus. By contrast, He said of Himself, “I am the good shepherd. . . . I lay down my life for the sheep.” (See John 10:11–15.)

Many people today think of marriage as an informal arrangement between two hirelings. When a hireling feels threatened by some wolf of trouble, he or she simply flees. Why should a mere hireling risk comfort or convenience, let alone life?

But when we offer in our marriage a broken heart and a contrite spirit in similitude of the Good Shepherd, we promise to give our lives for the sheep of our covenant, a day or even an hour at a time. This process invites us to take selflessly upon ourselves both the afflictions and the joys of our companion and children, emulating in our own limited way how the Savior takes upon Himself our afflictions.

“Be you afflicted in all his afflictions” (D&C 30:6), said the Lord to Peter Whitmer about his missionary companion Oliver Cowdery. Isaiah echoed that phrase in describing Christ and those He redeems: “In all their affliction he was afflicted, . . . and he . . . carried them all the days of old” (Isaiah 63:9; see also D&C 133:53).



A temple worker whose wife passed away after she had suffered a debilitating illness for several years told me, “I thought I knew what love was—we’d had over 50 blessed years together. But only in trying to care for her in these last few years did I discover what love really is.”

By sharing in his wife’s afflictions, this man discovered deep wellsprings of compassion in his heart that a hireling will never know. The accumulation of such discoveries produces the sanctifying process of becoming like the Good Shepherd—by living and giving as He does. Not incidentally, that kind of living breathes irreplaceable strength into the social interests of our culture.

### **Marriage and Authentic Joy**

A friend asked recently, “How close to perfection must we live to receive the exalted promises of a temple sealing?” Husbands and wives know each other so well, especially those who seek for eternal blessings, that on some days they can honestly wonder if they are living close enough to perfection—or if their spouse is.

I like the answer given in Moroni’s farewell words: “If ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all *your* might, mind and strength, *then* is his grace sufficient for you, that . . . ye may be perfect[ed] in Christ” (Moroni 10:32; emphasis added). One way to rid

ourselves of *ungodliness* is to stay close to the temple, because in its ordinances “the power of *godliness* is manifest” (D&C 84:20; emphasis added). Further, loving “God with all [our] might” means loving to the extent of our own unique personal capacity, not to the extent of some abstract and unreachable scale of perfection.

As we deny ourselves of ungodliness and honestly love God as fully as we are able, Christ’s perfecting grace can complete the process of making us whole. A First Presidency letter written in 1902 suggests what Christ’s total sacrifice combined with our own total sacrifice will look like: “After reaching the perfected state of life people will have no other desire than to live in harmony with [righteousness], including that which united them as husband and wife. . . . Those who attain to the first or celestial resurrection must necessarily be pure and holy, and they will be perfect in body as well. . . . Every man and woman that reaches this unspeakable condition of life will be as beautiful as the angels that surround the throne of God; . . . for the weaknesses of the flesh will then have been overcome and forgotten; and both [will] be in harmony with the law that united them.”<sup>6</sup>

A woman I know was married about 50 years ago in the temple. After she and her husband had had several children, his turbulent life led to their divorce and to his excommunication from the Church. Then she gave up her own Church membership and chose some thorny paths. Later her former husband passed away. I met her when her daughter brought her to my office to explore whether the mother could ever return to the temple.

After a peaceful conversation about how we can learn from experience without being condemned by it, we discussed the processes of repentance, rebaptism, and the restoration of temple blessings. Then I told her that the restoration ordinance would also restore her temple sealing. Was she ready for that?

The daughter spoke first. “I have bipolar disorder,” she said. “My son is bipolar. We know far more about that disorder than we used to, and we take medications that help. Looking back, I believe my father was bipolar, and that probably influenced many of the hard things in our family’s life. I don’t judge him now.”

The mother answered softly, “If I really can return to the temple someday, I will be ready for my sealing to be restored.”

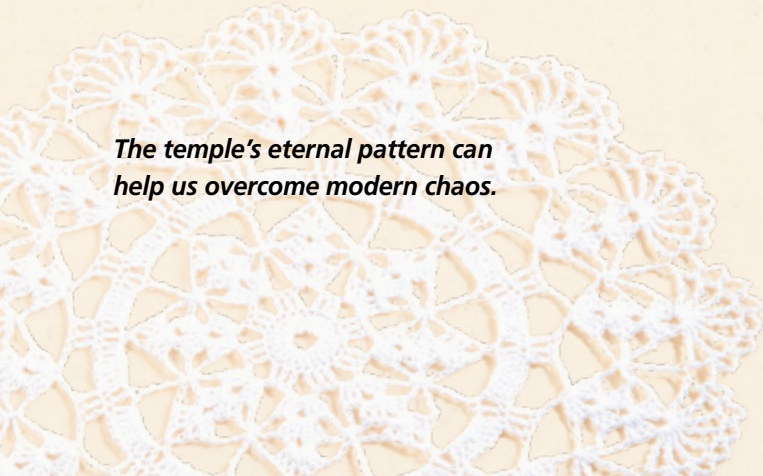
As I watched them walk down the hall, I realized that the temple and Elijah’s sealing power are sources of reconciliation, turning not only the hearts of children and parents toward one another but also turning the hearts of wives and husbands toward one another. I later received a message that the mother was being rebaptized.

I bear witness that the order of marriage God gave to Adam and Eve is worth whatever it takes—to find it, to build it, and to keep it in our lives. I also testify that husbands and wives who try to live like the Good Shepherd will discover, and will give to each other, a more abundant life of authentic joy. ■

*Adapted from an address, “Marriage, Family Law, and the Temple,” delivered at the J. Reuben Clark Law Society Annual Fireside in Salt Lake City on Jan. 31, 2014.*

#### NOTES

1. Hugh Nibley, *Eloquent Witness: Nibley on Himself, Others, and the Temple*, in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, 19 vols. (2008), 17:312, 313; see also *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), “Meanings and Functions of Temples,” 4:1458–59.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 669.
4. “And there were gathered together . . . an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality; and who had offered sacrifice in the similitude of the great sacrifice of the Son of God, and had suffered tribulation in their Redeemer’s name” (D&C 138:12–13).
5. Neal A. Maxwell, “Deny Yourselves of All Ungodliness,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 68; emphasis added.
6. Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund letter to Christine Eggleston, Jan. 28, 1902, LDS Church History Library.



***The temple’s eternal pattern can help us overcome modern chaos.***



# NEVER ALONE

**By Norman C. Hill**

President, Ghana Accra West Mission (2013 to present)  
and Sierra Leone Freetown Mission (2014 to 2015)

**H**ow would the Church survive if your country, still recovering from civil war, became infected with a deadly virus and then was isolated from other nations because of that disease? What would you do if missionaries, other than local missionaries, were withdrawn, not just once but repeatedly?

If you lived in the West African nation of Sierra Leone, you would rely on the Lord and watch the Church flourish anyway. You would see local leaders magnifying their callings. You would see members strengthening each other, missionary work continuing, and faith overcoming fear.

## **Steady Growth**

Despite civil war from 1991 to 2002, Sierra Leone has seen steady growth in Church membership. Full-time missionaries first arrived in this sub-Saharan country in May 1988. Two years later a district was created. At various times in the 1990s, missionaries were withdrawn because of the war, but local members kept the Church going and growing. In 2007 the Sierra Leone Freetown Mission, which included Liberia, was created. Then in December 2012, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles organized a stake in Sierra Leone's capital city, Freetown. It was the 3,000th stake of the Church.

## **Battling Ebola**

Then came Ebola. The outbreak of hemorrhagic fever caused by the virus originated in Guinea in March 2014. It entered Sierra Leone in May and spread rapidly. Full-time missionaries were reassigned, and the mission president in Ghana was asked to also serve as the mission president of Sierra Leone—while remaining in Accra.

“When the missionaries were gone, we worried about being left to find our own way,” said Kenema District president Jonathan Cobinah. “However, that same week we received a letter from the Africa West Area Presidency reassuring us that would not be the case.” From that time forward, the 13,000 members in Sierra Leone received area support, and as international organizations geared up to provide relief, Church Welfare Services and emergency response worked with implementing partners in various international organizations to meet community needs. (See sidebar.)

“Within a few days, we had a videoconference with the newly assigned mission president,” President Cobinah said. “He told us Church meetings and activities would require caution in order to avoid contracting the disease, but otherwise we would continue just as we had in the past.”

To prevent the further spread of the disease, in September 2014 the president of Sierra Leone announced a nationwide lockdown to begin in just a few days. During the lockdown, all citizens would be required to remain



# IN SIERRA LEONE

*Despite disease, isolation, and the lingering aftermath of war, Latter-day Saints in this African nation know that Heavenly Father remembers them.*



Latter-day Saints remained faithful in studying and sharing the gospel, conducting meetings at home when necessary to avoid spreading Ebola. Right: Cleaning supplies, provided in plastic buckets, helped fight the spread of the deadly virus.





## WORKING TOGETHER

**B**eyond giving timely help to its members, the Church reached out to battle Ebola in many communities where there were no Latter-day Saints. Through its humanitarian organization, the Church partnered with various groups to provide relief

through seven community projects. Thanks to these cooperative efforts, communities hit hard by Ebola in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Mali received food, bedding, hygiene supplies and instruction, medical and sanitation supplies, and protective clothing for Ebola workers.

indoors. Most people would have to make do with whatever food they had in their homes.

### Just in Time

Fortunately, just weeks before the lockdown was announced, the Africa West Area had begun working with Church headquarters to authorize delivery of cleaning supplies for all 7,800 Latter-day Saint families in Sierra Leone and to provide a 110-pound (50 kg) bag of rice and several liters of cooking oil to more than 2,500 LDS families on an as-needed basis. Unaware of the impending lockdown, local Church leaders still raced to deliver these supplies.

“It is hard to explain the urgency that we felt at the time,” recalled Sahr Doe, a special assistant to the mission president. “The weekend when distribution of the supplies was approved, we learned that a particular area might be quarantined. That would make it very difficult to deliver supplies, so we worked around the clock to load trucks and get them on their way to branches throughout the country. In one city, supplies arrived only hours before access restrictions were imposed. Throughout the country, we were able to deliver supplies just prior to the lockdown. It was a blessing to all of us and a modern-day miracle.”

The Ebola outbreak also brought widespread unemployment. “I was almost without hope,” said Sister Sai Kamaia of the Allentown Branch, a mother of three children who makes her living trading small goods. “All of my money was gone in September, even before the lockdown. People were afraid to trade. I did not know what I was going to do.” Like others, she shed tears of joy when she received Church supplies.

“As a widow and the head of our family, I feel so good that the Church was able to help us,” said Sister Mary Margay of the Kissy Second Branch. “We were wondering where to stay during lockdown. We felt overjoyed that we could remain at home with food to eat.”

Like Church members everywhere, the Saints in Sierra Leone strive to be self-reliant. But in this unanticipated period of need, supplies arrived just in time for many who had nowhere else to turn. “These timely interventions let the Saints here know they will never be left alone,” said Mariatu Browne, the Church’s public affairs director for Sierra Leone. During the quarantine, Latter-day Saints also shared their supplies with their neighbors, blessing many who otherwise would have had little or nothing.

### In the Lord’s Hands

Unfortunately, avoiding hunger was not the only concern. Some Latter-day Saints contracted the disease. Simon Kamara of the Teko Road Branch, who had been a member of the Church for only a year, saw his wife and son pass away from Ebola. Then he too became infected.

“My life is in the Lord’s hands,” he said while in a treatment center. “Like any father, I want the best for my children. But now that I have found the gospel and understand the plan of salvation, I have great hope for myself and my family no matter what happens.” Despite initial signs of recovery, Brother Kamara passed away. His surviving children miss their parents very much, although they are now being cared for by members and friends and are doing fine.





**Left: Rice, oil, and cleaning supplies arrived just in time for many who had nowhere else to turn. During the quarantine Latter-day Saints shared their supplies with neighbors, blessing many who otherwise would have had little or nothing. Above: Baptisms in the Naije Town Branch.**

### A Personal Miracle

Sister Haju Julloh of the Waterloo Branch is a nurse. Caring for the sick, she was exposed daily to the virus. As patient loads increased, protective gowns at the hospital where she worked were sometimes not thoroughly washed and cleaned. Shortly after she joined the Church in August 2014, Sister Julloh tested positive for Ebola and was quarantined in her home.

“I could not attend church, so branch members called and encouraged me,” she said. “Confined to my room, I decided to concentrate on studying the Book of Mormon. I read about many spiritual experiences, including miracles that happened to ordinary people like me. I wanted a miracle but did not know if I should even ask. I kept reading and talking to friends on the phone about the things I was reading. After some weeks at home, I was retested for the virus and the test results came back negative. I had to remain quarantined for another week and was then retested. Again, the results were negative. So I was allowed to leave my house and attend church as well as return to work. That was a miracle to me.”

### Hastening the Work

During stressful times, should missionary work go on? The Saints in Sierra Leone have a tradition. They continue to share the gospel no matter what.

“Rather than bemoaning our lot or remaining stagnant, we were encouraged to rally the Saints by calling branch missionaries to replace the full-time missionaries,” explained President Bai Seasy of the Kossoh Town District. “We had no time to feel sorry for ourselves; we had the work of salvation to do. We paired returned

missionaries with prospective missionaries and organized them into zones.”

“Each branch mission leader was authorized to have a phone card for proselyting purposes. They must account for its usage, but it has helped the branch missionaries remain in contact with new investigators and recent converts alike, and staying in touch has made a huge difference,” said Brian Robbin-Taylor, another special assistant to the mission president.

“We have ‘phone lessons’ with investigators and new converts,” he continued. “That supplements weekly missionary lessons held at church. We have adapted to the needs of members and investigators who otherwise might have no contact, due either to quarantine restrictions or apprehensions about getting the disease.”

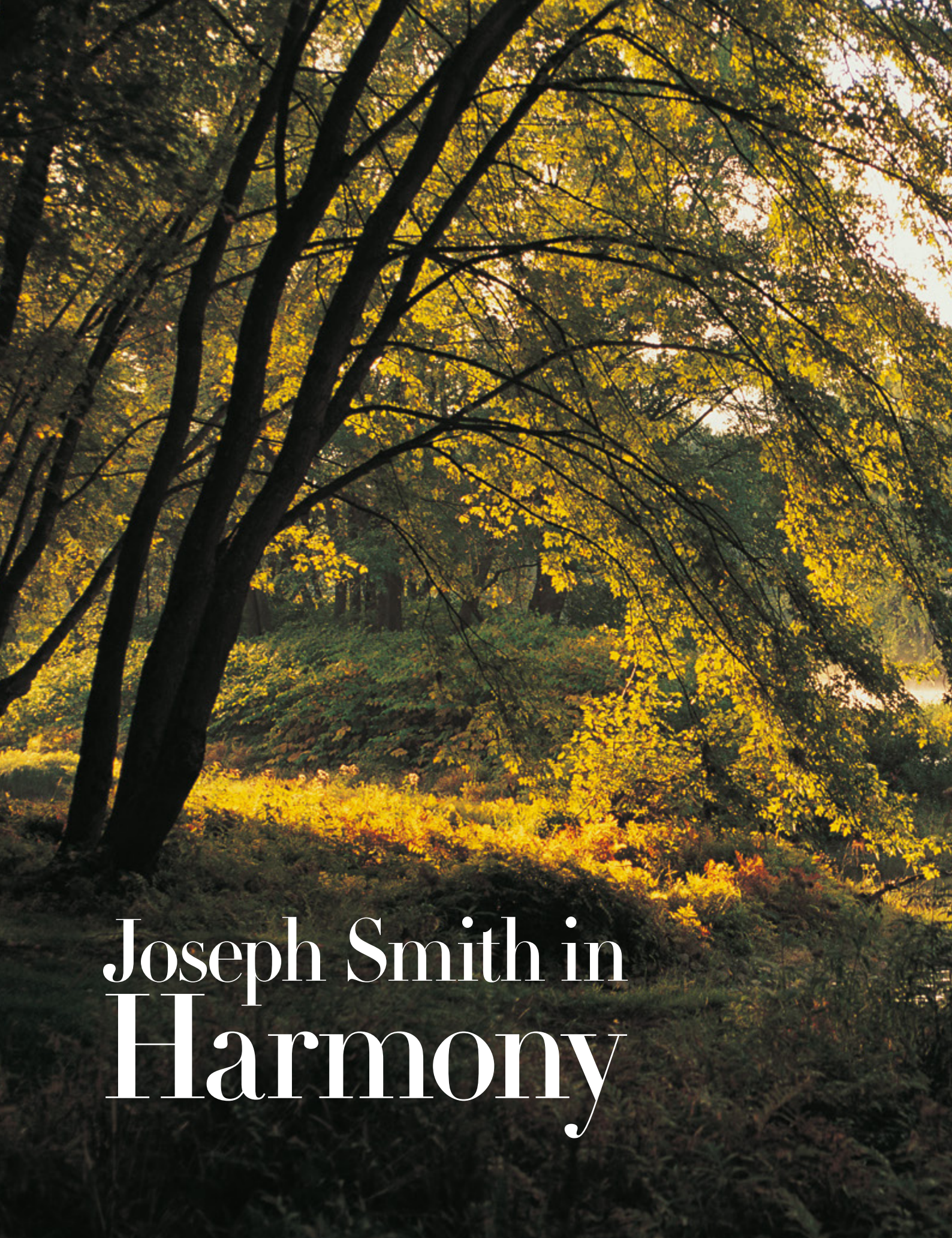
Today convert baptisms in Sierra Leone are only slightly lower than when full-time missionaries were there, many less-active members have returned to activity, and growth of the Church is steady.

### Great Reason to Hope

During the outbreak, unemployment exceeded 60 percent. Crops could not be delivered to market because of quarantine restrictions. Many loved ones perished. No doubt there are many more challenges ahead in Sierra Leone.

However, despite such challenges, the Saints are faithful and the Church is thriving. As Mariatu Browne said, “We know that Heavenly Father is mindful of us. And when the Lord is with you, the Church sustains you, and you work together side by side, there is great reason for hope. As Saints in Sierra Leone, we are never alone.” ■



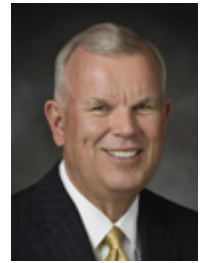


# Joseph Smith in Harmony





**By Elder  
Steven E. Snow**  
Of the Seventy  
Church Historian  
and Recorder



*The time Joseph Smith spent around Harmony, Pennsylvania, was eventful and inspiring, and a newly restored historic site helps capture it all.*

**I**n December 1827, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma, moved from Palmyra, New York, to northeastern Pennsylvania, taking with them the golden plates, which Joseph had recently obtained from the angel Moroni. In Pennsylvania, Joseph embarked on the translation of the Book of Mormon, and he also received several revelations and angelic visitations during this period. Paramount among these sacred events was the restoration of priesthood authority and keys that prepared and enabled Joseph to organize The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

On September 19, President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, will dedicate the Priesthood Restoration Site in northeastern Pennsylvania, USA. Located along the Susquehanna River, the restored setting, known in scripture as Harmony, re-creates Joseph and Emma's first home, as well as the nearby home of Emma's parents. It also features a visitors' center, which is incorporated into a new meetinghouse, and walking paths in the woods and down to the riverbank. Visitors to this historic site will learn the compelling story of the young Prophet Joseph, who was seeking to do God's will and struggling in the face of challenges and opposition. At Harmony, Joseph learned line upon line what it would mean to be a prophet of God in the latter days.

### **Emma Hale and Harmony**

Joseph Smith first arrived in Harmony in the autumn of 1825. Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, wrote that earlier that year "a man by the name of Josiah Stool [Stowell] came



*Joseph and Emma's home  
as it appeared circa 1880*

from Chenango County, New York, to get Joseph to assist him in digging for a silver mine. He came for Joseph from having heard, that [Joseph] was in possession of certain means, by which he could discern things, that could not be seen by the natural eye.”<sup>1</sup>

Stowell was a prominent resident of South Bainbridge, New York, and for a man of his standing to be searching for buried treasure was not at all unusual, since it was a common folk practice of the time. By 1825, young Joseph had a reputation in Manchester and Palmyra for his activities as a treasure seer, or someone who used a seer stone to locate gold or other valuable objects buried in the earth.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it was no surprise that Stowell specifically sought out Joseph’s services.

In November of 1825, Joseph the Prophet, his father (Joseph Sr.), and other men signed an agreement with Stowell, and the crew boarded at the farm of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale.<sup>3</sup> There Joseph first met the Hales’ 21-year-old daughter, Emma. Joseph eventually convinced Stowell to abandon his search for the mine, but rather than returning home, Joseph moved to South Bainbridge to work on Stowell’s farm. Despite the demands of his work and the 28-mile distance from South Bainbridge to Harmony, the young suitor made time to call on Emma as often as possible. He also faced the disdain and outright rejection of Emma’s father, who said Joseph “was a stranger [perhaps because he came from New York], and followed a business that I could not approve,” apparently a reference to Joseph’s involvement with the search for the mine.<sup>4</sup>

Emma Hale, 17 months older than Joseph, had been born on July 10, 1804, the seventh of nine children of Isaac and Elizabeth Lewis Hale, on their 130-acre (53 ha) farm in Harmony Township. The farm consisted of a large orchard of apples and pears, a substantial garden, and groves of maple trees used for producing sugar. Isaac also owned a herd of sheep and hunted large game, tanning hides and smoking meat, which he exported downriver.<sup>5</sup>

As a young woman, Emma learned to work hard. She was attractive, tall, intelligent, and well educated. She had a quick mind with “uncommon ability . . . and judgement.”<sup>6</sup> She was also devoutly religious. It was no wonder that Joseph Smith became smitten with her.<sup>7</sup>



**Joseph and Emma Elope**

When Emma visited her sister in Colesville and the Stowell family in South Bainbridge in January 1827, Joseph, then living nearby with the Joseph Knight family, called on her and convinced her to marry him despite her father’s objections. Years later she said, “I had no intention of marrying when I left home.” However, “preferring to marry him to any other man I knew, I consented.”<sup>8</sup>

Emma and Joseph went to the home of Zechariah Tarble, justice of the peace in South Bainbridge, and were married on January 18, 1827. Afterward, Stowell took them to Manchester, where they lived with Joseph’s family while Joseph helped on the Smith farm and awaited his fourth and final prearranged appointment with the angel Moroni.

Shortly after midnight on September 22, hoping to acquire the golden plates without arousing the notice of thieves and ruffians who had previously threatened them, Joseph and Emma borrowed a wagon and drove to the Hill Cumorah, where the plates were hidden. While Joseph proceeded to the designated location and received the plates from Moroni, Emma knelt in prayer and waited. Joseph hid the plates in the woods and then returned home with Emma. Joseph later retrieved the plates when he felt it was safe to do so.<sup>9</sup>

News that Joseph had the plates spread quickly. Although he wanted to begin translating them right away, the persistent attempts by mobs to find the plates and the constant threats against Joseph made this impossible. Earlier that summer, Isaac Hale had invited Joseph and Emma to move to Harmony, which they had planned to do. The threats led them to make the move soon after retrieving the plates so the Prophet could work without interference.<sup>10</sup>



**1. Joseph and Emma Smith Home:** Joseph and Emma moved into a small frame home on 13½ acres, which they eventually purchased from Emma's father, Isaac Hale. Here Joseph translated most of the Book of Mormon, including the lost 116 manuscript pages, received a number of early revelations, and may have worked on his revision of the Bible.

**2. Isaac and Elizabeth Hale Home:** Isaac and Elizabeth Hale built a large frame home on their 130-acre farm between 1809 and 1812. Isaac settled the property in 1788, and Emma was born here in 1804 in the family's earlier log home. Joseph and Emma lived briefly in this frame home before settling into a home built by Emma's brother Jesse and his family.

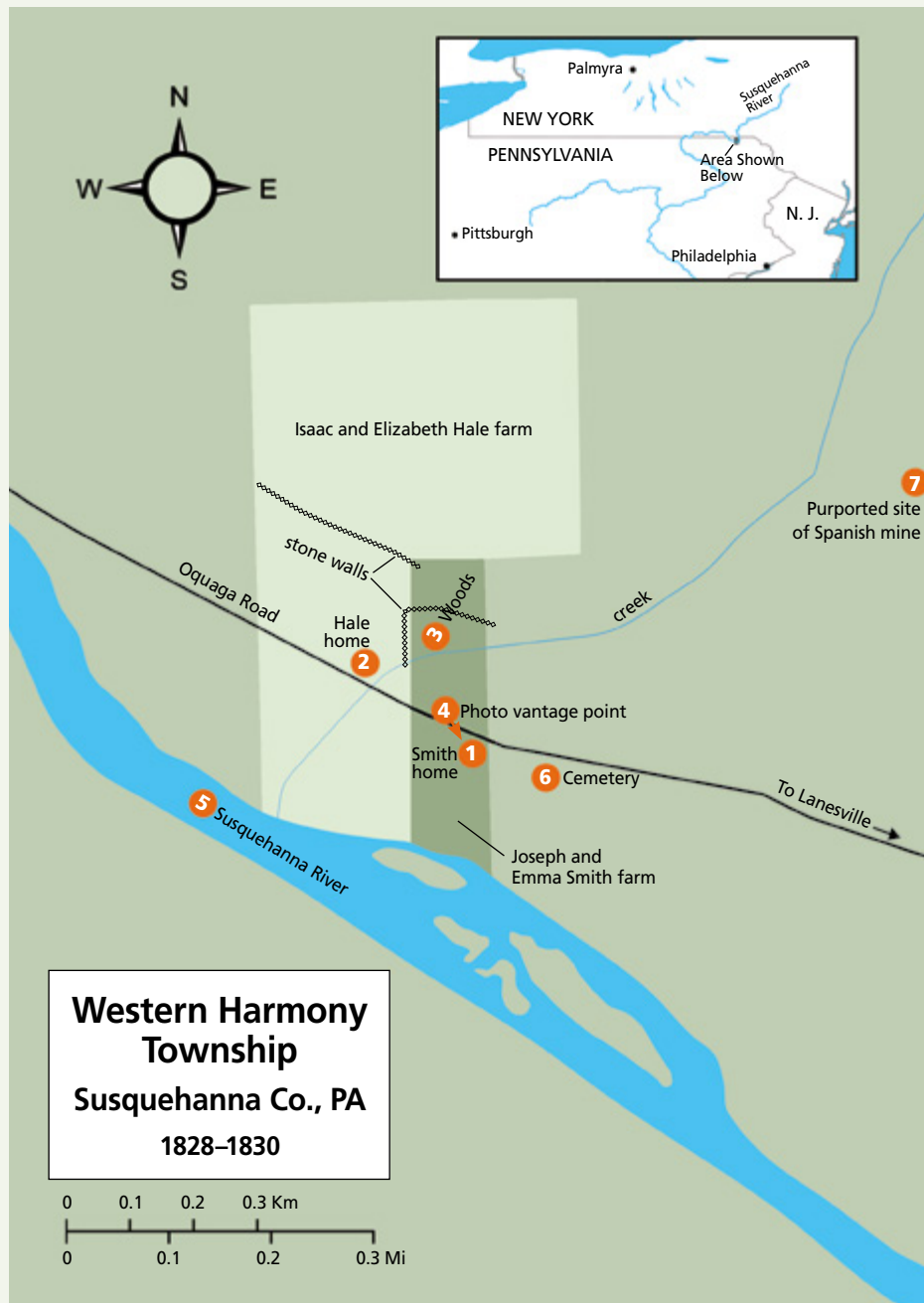
**3. Woods:** The Smiths had a large sugar maple grove on the northern end of their property where Joseph kept the golden plates safely hidden and could find seclusion. On May 15, 1829, Joseph and Oliver Cowdery "repaired to the woods" to pray and received the visitation of John the Baptist, who restored priesthood keys.

**4. Historic Photo (see p. 52):** This photograph taken circa 1880 shows the southeastern view from Oquaga Road. (Arrow on map shows photographer's vantage point.)

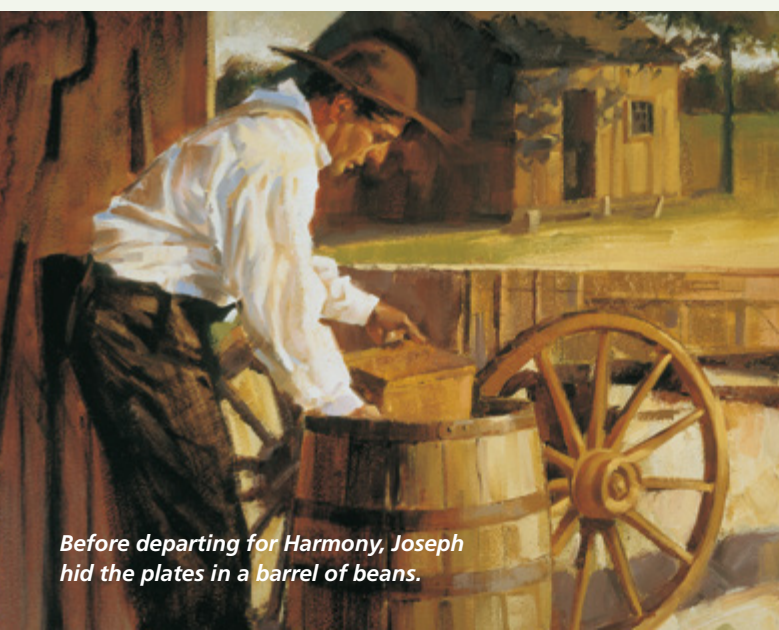
**5. Susquehanna River:** The Hale and Smith farms were located on the banks of the Susquehanna River. Joseph and Oliver Cowdery baptized each other here on May 15, 1829, in fulfillment of John the Baptist's command "to go and be baptized" (Joseph Smith—History 1:70).

**6. Cemetery:** Joseph and Emma could look out their window and see the stone marking the grave of their infant son in the small cemetery on the McKune property next door. Emma's parents were later buried here, as well as other Hale relatives.

**7. Purported Site of Spanish Mine:** Joseph and his father, Joseph Smith Sr., came to Harmony in 1825 to work for Josiah Stowell Sr., excavating what he believed was a lost Spanish silver mine. The Smiths and the other workmen boarded on the Hale farm nearby for a few weeks, during which time young Joseph began courting Emma Hale.



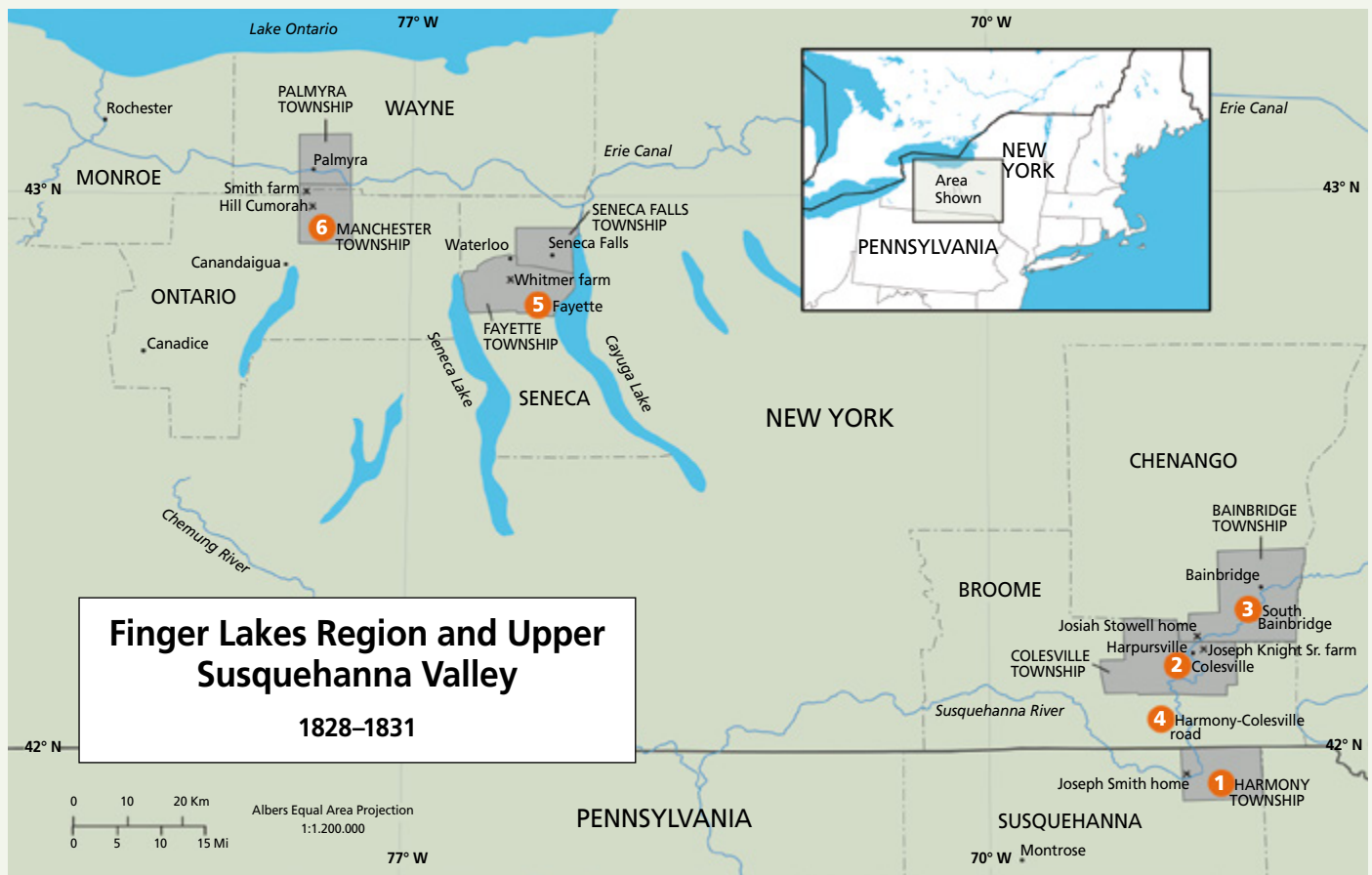
LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY. MAP COURTESY OF THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPERS (RESEARCH BY MARK L. STAKER, JENNIFER L. LUND, AND BENJAMIN PYKLES); CARTOGRAPHY BY JONATHAN WEST); JOSEPH SMITH HIDING THE GOLD PLATES (M.A. BARREL, BY SAMI LAWLOR)



*Before departing for Harmony, Joseph hid the plates in a barrel of beans.*

### Return to Harmony

In November 1827, Emma's brother Alva arrived in Manchester with a wagon to take the couple to Harmony. Joseph later wrote that he and Emma were "very poor and the persecution so heavy upon us that there was no probability that we would ever be otherwise." But the hand of the Lord was soon evident. "We found a friend in a Gentleman by the name of Martin Harris, who came to us and gave me fifty dollars to assist us in our affliction." As Joseph and Emma prepared to leave with Alva, Joseph and Alva each placed a heavy club in the wagon for defense,



**1. Harmony:** Joseph and Emma Smith made their home in Harmony Township from December 1827 until early September 1830, when they left permanently and moved to Fayette Township, New York, because of increasing opposition in Harmony.

**2. Colesville:** Joseph first came to Colesville in 1826 when he took a job as a day laborer working for Joseph Knight Sr. The Knight family were among his earliest supporters and converts. Joseph preached

here often, and a large branch was established in the area. Many were baptized on the Knight farm, including Emma. The Colesville Branch moved to Ohio together in April 1831.

**3. South Bainbridge:** Joseph Smith continued working for Josiah Stowell Sr. on his farm at South Bainbridge in 1825–26. Joseph and Emma married here in 1827.

**4. Road between Harmony and Colesville:** While traveling between Colesville and Harmony,

Joseph and Oliver Cowdery received a visitation from Peter, James, and John, who restored priesthood keys, including “the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times” (D&C 128:20; see also D&C 27:12). Neither the exact location nor the exact date of this event is known.

**5. Fayette:** Joseph and Emma, accompanied by Oliver Cowdery, moved temporarily to the home of Peter and Mary Whitmer in June 1829 to finish the translation of the Book of Mormon.

**6. Manchester:** Immediately after their marriage, Joseph and Emma moved to the Smith family farm. After Joseph obtained the golden plates from the angel Moroni and pressures began to mount, they returned to Harmony to begin the translation. Family members often traveled the 130 miles between Manchester and Harmony.

and they hid the box containing the plates in a barrel, filled the barrel one-third full of beans, and sealed the lid. They arrived in Harmony in December.<sup>11</sup>

Not long after, Emma’s father had the opportunity to hold the box containing the plates. However, when Joseph told him he could not open it to look at the plates, Isaac became frustrated and said that if he couldn’t see the plates, Joseph would have to take them away. Joseph then hid the plates in a nearby hillside. In February 1828, Joseph and Emma moved into a small home built by Emma’s brother Jesse on a modest farm divided from Isaac’s land.<sup>12</sup>

## Book of Mormon Translation

After the couple settled into their new home, Joseph resumed translating, with Emma as his scribe. To Emma, the translation process was “a marvel and a wonder,” especially because her husband was so unlearned. Indeed, she related that Joseph “could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictat[e] a book like the Book of Mormon.”<sup>13</sup> Further, she said that Joseph “had such a limited knowledge of history at that time that he did not even know that Jerusalem was surrounded by walls.”<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, as Joseph labored diligently, he found that the Lord blessed him



with extraordinary capabilities. After returning from meals or other interruptions, for instance, Joseph would begin at once where he had left off “without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him.”<sup>15</sup>

Not all the details about the translation of the Book of Mormon are known, but Joseph and his scribes did mention his use of two instruments. One was the Urim and Thummim (called the “interpreters” in the Book of Mormon), which Joseph received with the plates and “which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow.” The other instrument was a seer stone that Joseph had found some years before. Both of these instruments helped him translate the plates “by the gift, and power of God.”<sup>16</sup>

Emma served as Joseph’s scribe for more than four months. She received a reprieve with the arrival of Martin Harris on April 12, 1828. By June 14, at least 116 pages had been translated. The work then paused because Joseph and Emma were expecting the birth of their first child any day, and Martin returned home, taking with him a portion of the manuscript to show his family in New York.

### Joseph and Emma’s First Child Dies

Emma gave birth to their first child—a boy—on June 15, but the baby died shortly after birth.<sup>17</sup> Emma herself became gravely ill. For two weeks she lay near death while Joseph cared for her. At last Emma began to recover, and she urged Joseph to check on the manuscript. Nearly three weeks had passed since Martin had left, but he had not returned or sent word. Leaving Emma in the care of her mother, Joseph went to New York to inquire about the manuscript.<sup>18</sup>

Joseph discovered to his horror that Martin Harris had lost the manuscript. The young prophet, awash in his anguish, returned to Harmony empty-handed. These were some of his darkest days. Severely chastised by the Lord (see D&C 3), Joseph was required to return the golden plates to Moroni even though he had not finished the translation.

### Book of Mormon Translation Resumes

Joseph humbled himself before the Lord and learned an important truth: even though he had “transgressed the commandments and the laws of God” and “feared man

more than God,” God was merciful. If Joseph repented, he was “still chosen” and “again called to the work.”<sup>19</sup> Moroni returned the ancient record on September 22, 1828. Over the next several months, however, the work progressed slowly until the Lord provided a new scribe in the form of Oliver Cowdery. Oliver, a schoolteacher, had been boarding with Joseph’s parents when he learned of Joseph’s work. After receiving a heavenly manifestation of the truthfulness of Joseph’s visions, Oliver set out for Harmony in the company of Joseph’s brother Samuel. Oliver arrived at the Prophet’s home on April 5, 1829.<sup>20</sup> Two days later, Oliver began his role as scribe while Joseph translated.

## SCRIPTURES IN HARMONY, PENNSYLVANIA

The Lord blessed Joseph Smith with a rich outpouring of the gifts of translation and revelation while he lived at Harmony. Joseph translated most of the Book of Mormon here and received 15 revelations now included in the Doctrine and Covenants. He may have also begun his first efforts at a new translation, or revision, of the Old Testament. Joseph’s brief stay at Harmony resulted in more scripture than any other period of his life.

### Book of Mormon

- 116 Lost Manuscript Pages
- Probably Mosiah–Moroni

### Doctrine and Covenants

- Section 3, July 1828
- Section 4, February 1829
- Section 5, March 1829
- Section 6, April 1829
- Section 7, April 1829
- Section 8, April 1829
- Section 9, April 1829
- Section 10, April 1829

### Pearl of Great Price

- Probably Moses 1<sup>1</sup>
- Section 11, May 1829
- Section 12, May 1829
- Section 13, May 1829<sup>2</sup>
- Section 24, July 1830
- Section 25, July 1830
- Section 26, July 1830
- Section 27, August and September 1830

### NOTES

1. A location is not identified in the manuscript heading for the visions of Moses. The Prophet was living in Harmony in June 1830 when this revelation was received, but he also visited at Manchester, Fayette, and Colesville. See *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, vol. 1 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* (2013), 152.
2. This account of Joseph and Oliver’s ordination to the Aaronic Priesthood was included for the first time in the 1876 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. It presents the words of John the Baptist as included in Joseph’s history (see Joseph Smith—History 1:69).



***On May 15, 1829, Joseph and Oliver received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist.***

### **Aaronic Priesthood Restoration**

By May, Joseph and Oliver reached a passage in the Book of Mormon that prompted them to pray regarding the authority to baptize. On May 15, as Oliver later noted, they “repaired to the woods . . . and called upon the name of the Lord.”<sup>21</sup>

Their prayer was answered by a glorious angelic visitation from John the Baptist, who conferred upon them the Priesthood of Aaron and commanded them to be baptized (see D&C 13). The two men subsequently “repaired to the water, even to the Susquehanna River, and were baptized.”<sup>22</sup> Joseph and Oliver later received keys associated with the Melchizedek Priesthood somewhere along the Susquehanna River between Harmony and Colesville. We know little about this most sacred event other than the reference in scripture to the general location (see D&C 128:20).

At least initially, persecution forced Joseph and Oliver “to keep secret the circumstances” of their having received the priesthood and been baptized.<sup>23</sup>

### **Leaving Harmony**

Joseph and Oliver continued their work in Harmony, but opposition in the area had become quite intense, and Oliver wrote to David Whitmer (whom he had met in Palmyra in the autumn of 1828), asking if the Whitmer family could help them. Peter Whitmer Sr., David’s father, agreed to help, and early in June, David arrived in a wagon to move Joseph and Oliver to the Whitmer home in Fayette

Township, New York, where they could finish the translation. Uprooted once again, Joseph and Oliver left with David, and Emma followed shortly thereafter.<sup>24</sup>

In those more supportive circumstances, Joseph was able to finish the translation. Joseph and others then arranged for the Book of Mormon to be printed, and he and Emma returned quietly to Harmony on Sunday morning, October 4, 1829. Fortunately, they found that opposition in the area had quieted considerably.<sup>25</sup> For the next 10 months, Joseph and Emma resided in their home at Harmony with only brief excursions away. The most memorable of these trips was to Fayette, where the Church was officially organized on April 6, 1830. Two months later, Joseph was arrested for “setting the country in an uproar by preaching the Book of Mormon.”<sup>26</sup> Although Joseph was acquitted at a trial in South Bainbridge, it was clear that opposition to Joseph’s work would only increase.

Around the time of the trial in July 1830, Joseph recorded, someone told Isaac Hale “falsehoods concerning me, of the most shameful nature, which turned the Old gentleman and his family so much against us, that they would no longer promise us protection, nor believe our doctrines.”<sup>27</sup> But Joseph also encountered opposition in Colesville, Fayette, and Manchester. He added to his home that summer as though he planned to stay in Harmony. The Lord, however, had something different for him.

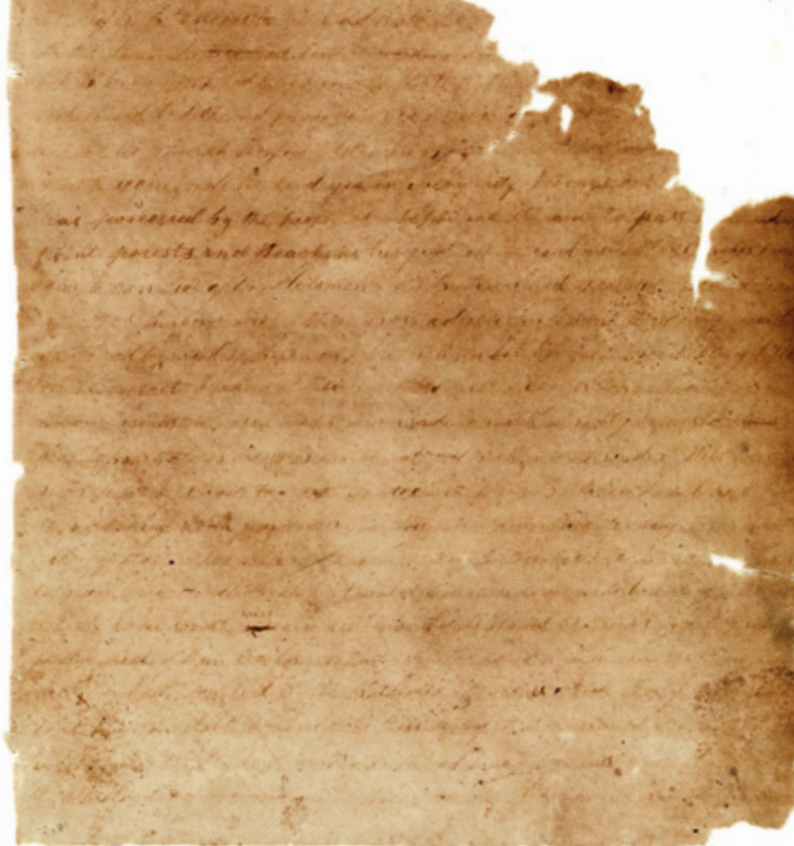
Only weeks later, around mid-September, Joseph and Emma left Harmony to take care of Church responsibilities in New York. While there, Joseph Smith received a series of revelations calling missionaries to preach to the Lamanites on the western frontier (see D&C 28, 30, and 32), and Emma, expecting twins, directed all of her efforts toward helping make clothing for the missionaries. She became ill, and by the time she recovered, the Lord had called them to gather in Ohio. In January 1831, Joseph and Emma left for Ohio, never to return to Harmony.

While Joseph and Emma lived at Harmony for only a brief time (about three years), their experiences in this valley were crucial to God’s plan for the unfolding restoration of His gospel. Here Joseph found the spiritual solitude and protection necessary to focus on his calling to translate



**Photograph of a page of the original handwritten manuscript of the Book of Mormon (covering Alma 45:17–46:6)**

the Book of Mormon. Through this period, the Lord helped Joseph further understand his divine role as prophet, seer, and revelator. Through revelation he came to understand that the Church of Christ would administer the gospel and its ordinances, gather Israel, and establish Zion in the latter days, preparatory to the Savior's Second Coming. None of these lessons came easily but involved struggle, sacrifice, and personal tragedy. Nevertheless, through these experiences the Lord revealed that a restoration of scripture, authority, and the Church was necessary to bring about the salvation of men. And Joseph Smith came to understand what it would mean to be the instrument by which God would restore the plan of salvation to earth and lay the foundations for the fulfillment of His latter-day work. ■



**NOTES**

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# The Harmless Little Fern

*The strange plant continued to spread, but I left it alone.  
After all, what harm could a delicate little plant do?*

By Kathleen Ryan

My garden is situated in the back left corner of our property. On the other side of our yard we have a fruit orchard, pecan trees, dogwoods, beautiful azaleas, and 100-year-old camellia bushes.

One day I noticed a strange plant growing around the base of the oak tree just outside our fenced yard. It was tiny, feathery-fine, and looked like a fern. It intrigued me, so I decided to leave it.

A few weeks later, I noticed that the fern had spread itself evenly around the base of the oak tree. I smiled and thought how nice it looked.

Days later I caught a glimpse of how fast it was growing and thought I should cut it back, but that's when I noticed tiny pink flowers starting to bloom all over it. These enchanting flowers made the plant all the more desirable to me. I decided to leave it alone. After all, what harm could such a delicate little fern do?

Meanwhile, my vegetable garden was taking root beautifully. Tender green shoots grew strong in the rich earth under bright sunlight. I watered, weeded, hoed, and even sang in my garden. Most important, I prayed over my

garden as instructed by Amulek in the Book of Mormon: "Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them" (Alma 34:24).

## Invading the Yard

Then one day I noticed my little fern had filled up the entire area between the oak tree and the fence. In fact, it had climbed up the fence and looked very pretty, but I knew I would have to pull it down. I meant to do it, but other demands took away my spare time.

A couple more weeks passed before I noticed hundreds of pink flowers making their way up through the grass. Sure enough, it was my ferocious little fern. It had jumped the fence. I decided immediately that, pretty as it was, it had to go. I grabbed it and tried to pull some out, but the wiry vines clung tightly in place.

Then I noticed it had overtaken my azaleas, had completely entwined itself around the camellias, and was choking my dogwoods and young fruit trees. I panicked. How could this have happened? I was obeying all the rules of gardening and was watching and praying over my garden. It was just a harmless little fern. Now it was killing everything in my yard.



## Destruction

I realized too late that what had appealed to me as a harmless fern was really a noxious, fast-growing weed that was heading straight for my vegetable garden. I began the painful process of weed eradication and, in the process, lost many treasured plants and tender fruit trees.

As the invader slowly died, I pulled it from the fence, trees, and bushes. How I regretted ever letting it grow in my safe, protected environment. I should have plucked it out the instant I first noticed it lurking under my oak tree.

Sadly, while I was battling this evil weed, grass took a stronghold in my beautiful vegetable garden. Eventually my vegetable garden that had held so much promise stood knee-deep in grass and had to be mowed down.

## Weeding Out Evil

Most of us are good people. We obey the commandments as faithfully as we can. Yet sometimes, while we're doing the right things, we let our guard down and allow some tiny seed of evil to slip into our lives.

Satan finds clever ways to make these things seem acceptable, giving deadly sins attractive guises, just like my little fern with its appealing pink flowers. He convinces us to ignore these sins as they spread.

We can't sit idly by as I did with my garden while some evil grasps hold of us and takes root in our lives. We must not think it is just a little thought or a small act. We must be ever watchful of such invaders of our peace and happiness and protect the security of our families. ■

*The author lives in Alabama, USA.*



## THERE IS HOPE

"Sin appears occasionally attractive but hides its destructive nature until it is too late and harm is already done.

We need to understand how to recognize and avoid the evil and be prepared to detour around it in time. If we do fail, however, there is hope and relief made possible through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Sincere repentance brings us forgiveness and peace in this life and puts us back on course to live again with our Heavenly Father."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, *Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Happy Landing," New Era, Mar. 1995, 7.*









# Church Handbooks

## THE WRITTEN ORDER OF THINGS

*As we follow the handbooks and use the collective wisdom they offer, the Lord will help us and those we serve to become “complete in him.”*

As a returned missionary, busy with a young family and my own company, I was called to be the president of a good-sized branch with many faithful and mature members. Did I feel prepared, trained, and educated to start serving? No! I had good counselors with whom I could discuss issues. But was their help enough? No!

The Lord expects “every man [to] learn his duty” (D&C 107:99), and He expects us to “treasure up in [our] minds . . . the words of [God]” (D&C 84:85). Then He expects us to trust the inspiration of the Holy Ghost—that special gift given to all members with the promise of continued guidance and revelation.

Thinking back on that calling and on other callings, I realize that in addition to the Holy Ghost and the scriptures, what really helped me were the Church handbooks! They were a treasure of information—as a guide to my initial learning and as a valuable reference along the way.

### Why Do We Need the Church Handbooks?

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught,

“While [the] handbooks do not have the same standing as the scriptures, they do represent the most current interpretations and procedural directions of the Church’s highest authorities.”<sup>1</sup> President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, added that those authorities—the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—are men of “seasoned maturity, experience, and extensive preparation.”<sup>2</sup>

**Thinking back on my calling as a branch president, I realize that in addition to the Holy Ghost and the scriptures, what really helped me were the Church handbooks!**



By Elder  
Per G. Malm  
Of the Seventy



## SAFETY IN HANDBOOKS

“Whether you’ve been a lifelong member of the Church or are a relatively new member, consult the handbook when you are uncertain about a policy or procedure. You may think you know how to handle the situation when, in fact, you may be on the wrong track. There is safety in the handbooks.”

**President Thomas S. Monson, “Opening Remarks,” 2010 Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting.**

Thus, the Church handbooks reflect the collective wisdom—derived from tested, proven experiences—of prophets and apostles. That wisdom teaches us the best way to achieve good results in carrying out the mission of the Church over time. The Lord has counseled, “Seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom” (D&C 88:118; 109:7). Certainly, the wisdom in the handbooks qualifies them as “best books.”

### The Handbooks Help Us Maintain Policies, Procedures, and Programs

President Thomas S. Monson has declared that without the handbooks, “it would be nearly impossible to maintain the integrity of the policies, procedures, and programs of the Church.” He added, “Over the years, we’ve had to correct many attempts by well-meaning leaders to change some of the programs of the Church.”

President Monson said that when leaders do not correctly follow procedures, “the First

Presidency must ratify the action or have it redone.” In other words, if we ignore the handbooks, we may end up adding to the workload of the First Presidency.

“In almost all cases,” he said, “if the leaders would only read, understand, and follow the handbook, such problems would not occur. . . . There is safety in the handbooks.”<sup>3</sup>

President Monson added that whatever our leadership calling is, the handbooks contain a treasure of information and guidance that help us minister effectively, understand the proper functioning of the Church, learn and fulfill our duties (see D&C 107:99), and prepare for future leadership positions.

### The Handbooks Teach What Is Essential

The handbooks teach that while “parents have the vital responsibility to help their children prepare to return to Heavenly Father,” the Savior’s “Church provides the organization and means for teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to all of God’s children.” The handbooks also teach that the Church “provides the priesthood authority to administer the ordinances of salvation and exaltation to all who are worthy and willing to accept them.”<sup>4</sup>

The doctrinal framework for administering the Church is found in the first three chapters of *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*:

1. Families and the Church in God’s Plan
2. Priesthood Principles
3. Leadership in the Church of Jesus Christ

We should study these three chapters carefully. They remind us that the Church “was organized by God to assist in His work to bring to pass the salvation and exaltation of His children.”<sup>5</sup> It does this through activities,



opportunities, and programs for service, blessing, and personal growth that focus on divinely appointed responsibilities which support and strengthen individuals and families.

These responsibilities “include helping members live the gospel of Jesus Christ, gathering Israel through missionary work, caring for the poor and needy, and enabling salvation for the dead by building temples and performing vicarious ordinances.”<sup>6</sup>

As we understand this doctrinal framework, the purpose and role of all callings in the Church becomes clear: “Priesthood and auxiliary leaders and teachers strive to help others become true followers of Jesus Christ.” Further, “Church organizations and programs exist to bless individuals and families and are not ends in themselves.”<sup>7</sup>

The handbooks are doctrinally based in the scriptures, including the Savior’s admonition to Peter: “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).

### The Handbooks Facilitate Revelation

While helping a less-active member return to the Church, the member’s bishop reviewed the chapter on Church discipline in *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops*. Then, after speaking with his stake presidency, the bishop decided to hold a disciplinary council.

“We met beforehand as a bishopric and reviewed the handbook to remind ourselves of proper procedures and to identify points relevant to the case at hand,” the bishop said. “We felt strongly the Spirit of the Lord assisting us as we conversed with the member.”

Later, after the bishopric had prayed for the Lord’s help, one of the counselors felt

**The handbooks are doctrinally based in the scriptures, including the Savior’s admonition to Peter: “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).**

impressed that they should again read aloud the relevant portions of *Handbook 1*. When they had finished, the bishop asked each counselor what he recommended.

“Bishop, you might be surprised, but this is what I feel,” said the first counselor in making his recommendation. The second counselor felt the same, as did the bishop.

“Reading the handbook to each other allowed the Spirit to enlighten our minds,” the bishop recalled. “The principles became clearer as to how they related to this situation, and each of us was guided to the same answer. We were well prepared to provide appropriate counsel to help our dear brother come back to Christ.”

As this bishopric discovered, the instructions found in the Church handbooks “can facilitate revelation *if they are used to provide an understanding of principles, policies, and procedures to apply while seeking the guidance of the Spirit.*”<sup>8</sup>



The collective wisdom found in the handbooks is organized in such a way that it can be easily accessed and used to create a true service culture that should exist in all wards and stakes of the Savior's Church.

### The Handbooks Help Us Bless Those We Serve

As we read, understand, and follow the handbooks, they become a blessing to those we serve.<sup>9</sup> A policy change outlined in *Handbook 2*, for example, helped a bishop bless and strengthen one father who thought he would be unable to ordain his 12-year-old son to the Aaronic Priesthood.

Chapter 20 states, “Bishops and stake presidents have discretion to allow priesthood holders who are not fully temple worthy to perform or participate in some ordinances and blessings,” including baptisms and Aaronic Priesthood ordinations.<sup>10</sup>

Without a temple recommend, this father thought he would be unable to ordain his son. But his bishop, “as guided by the Spirit,”<sup>11</sup> granted permission following an interview.

“That experience became a turning point in his life,” his current bishop noted. “It was part of the process of his becoming temple worthy, of being sealed with his wife in the temple, and of having their children sealed to them.”

### Flexibility and Adaptation—within Proper Boundaries

Maintaining uniformity in Church principles, policies, and procedures “will bring the influence of the Holy Ghost into the

lives of leaders and members,” said Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>12</sup> But in a worldwide Church where members face a variety of political, social, and economic conditions, some branches and wards may lack sufficient membership, leadership, and resources to carry out the full program of the Church. Other units may face issues related to security, transportation, communication, and family economic circumstances.

Chapter 17 in *Handbook 2* clarifies “where uniformity is required” as well as the “circumstances that may permit local adaptation” in the staffing and programs of auxiliaries and in the format and frequency of leadership meetings and activities. Adaptation should be done, of course, only after leaders seek guidance from the Holy Ghost.<sup>13</sup>





As they do so, “all wards and branches, regardless of their size or circumstances, can experience the same abundance of the Spirit of the Lord.”<sup>14</sup>

### The Written Order of Things

The handbooks provide us with what could be called a “written order of things.”

*Handbook 1*, available to bishops and stake presidents, outlines “the general responsibilities of stake presidents and bishops” and provides “detailed information about policies and procedures,”<sup>15</sup> ranging from temples, marriage, and missionary service to welfare, Church discipline, and finances.

*Handbook 2*, available (including on [LDS.org](http://LDS.org)) to all Church leaders, reduces the complexity of Church programs while allowing, as noted above, for flexibility and some local adaptation. It “is a guide for members of ward and stake councils”<sup>16</sup> and their auxiliaries in administering the Church and its work of salvation.

The collective wisdom found in the handbooks is organized in such a way that it can be easily accessed and used to create a true service culture that should exist in all wards and stakes of the Savior’s Church. But to access that wisdom, we must study the handbooks, learn from them, internalize their principles, and put those principles into practice! The result will be light, understanding, and the long-term blessing of discovering the best way to serve our brothers and sisters.

Regarding our service in the Church, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has observed: “As we extend our hands and hearts toward others in Christlike love, something wonderful happens to us. Our own spirits become healed, more refined, and stronger. We become happier, more peaceful, and more receptive to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>17</sup>

### The Handbooks Help Us See the Complete Picture

During general conference in April 2015, Elder Rafael E. Pino of the Seventy related the story of how one of his sons

became frustrated while putting together a jigsaw puzzle. “He finally learned to do the puzzle,” Elder Pino recalled, “when he understood that each small piece had its place in the final picture.”<sup>18</sup>

In whatever capacity we serve in the Church, the handbooks, like the image on the box of a jigsaw puzzle, give us a vision—the final picture. That picture will guide us and give us a better understanding of what the Lord wants us to accomplish in His service. As we follow the handbooks and use the collective wisdom they offer, the Lord will help us and those we serve to become “complete in him” (Colossians 2:10).

The handbooks will remain an integral part of administering the Church and blessing its members and leaders regardless of future changes in format and content. As President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has declared, the handbooks “will become a treasure to you as you use [them] to help you lead others to choose the way of eternal life. That is [their] purpose.”<sup>19</sup> ■

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18. See Rafael E. Pino, “The Eternal Perspective of the Gospel,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 117–18.
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# THE Apostle Paul AS MASTER TEACHER

*Gospel teachers today can benefit from applying principles of teaching that Paul followed anciently.*

**By Frank F. Judd Jr.**, associate professor of ancient scripture, and **John Hilton III**, assistant professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University

**I**n latter-day revelation, the Lord has declared, “Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you” (D&C 88:78). Our beloved prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has reminded us, “We are all teachers. We should ever remember that we not only teach with words; we teach also by who we are and how we live our lives.”<sup>1</sup>

We can learn much about teaching from the life of the Apostle Paul, a disciple of the Master Teacher, Jesus Christ. As any teacher called of God must do, Paul followed the Spirit in his teaching. In addition, during his ministry as “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13), Paul demonstrated how to successfully interact with people in a variety of teaching situations. Consider the following principles of teaching that are illustrated by Paul’s ministry.

## Knowing Your Audience

Paul was a teacher who knew his audience. For instance, he would adjust his approach depending whether he was teaching Jews or Gentiles.

At Antioch of Pisidia, Paul preached at the local synagogue to those who were generally familiar with scriptural stories and the doctrine of a Messiah. He taught them a basic gospel message—an overview of Israelite history and prophecies about the Messiah (see Acts 13:17–35). These ideas would have been comprehended and appreciated only by those who were familiar with Jewish scripture, history, and tradition. The overall reaction to Paul’s teachings was positive (see Acts 13:42–44), and though there was some opposition, he had success (see verses 48–49).

Paul and Barnabas later traveled to Lystra, where the audience was primarily non-Jewish. When Paul healed





a crippled man, the people decided that Barnabas was Jupiter (Zeus) and Paul was Mercury (Hermes) (see Acts 14:12). To keep the people from offering sacrifice to them, Paul taught a basic gospel message, saying, “Ye should turn from these vanities [idols] unto the living God” (Acts 14:15). This was Paul’s primary message to Gentiles, who practiced polytheism (the worship of many gods).

Thus, knowing his audience helped Paul modify his message for each group. He was following the example of the Savior, who, in the words of Elder Neal A. Maxwell, “tailored His tutoring, depending upon the spiritual readiness of His pupils.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Redirecting the Conversation When Necessary**

In his considerable travels, Paul needed to interact with those who agreed with him and those who did not. He demonstrated how to avoid potentially difficult situations by redirecting a discussion in a better direction.

When Paul was in Jerusalem for the last time, he was taken before the Sanhedrin (see Acts 22:30). He understood that his life was in danger and that the Roman officials would likely take action against him if the Sanhedrin could make the accusations sound like a political offense. Instead of allowing the discussion to focus on false charges (see

Acts 21:27–30), Paul moved it toward religious differences between Pharisees and Sadducees and was then moved to a safer location (see Acts 23:6–10).

Paul employed a similar strategy during his defense before the Roman governor Felix. He was called dangerous and was accused of trying to desecrate the temple in Jerusalem (see Acts 24:6). A riot could have ensued, but Paul explained that he came to Jerusalem “to bring alms to my nation” (verse 17) and said, “Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day” (verse 21). Paul knew if Felix thought the dispute was about Jewish religious issues, he would not take it seriously. Felix told a centurion “to let [Paul] have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him” (verse 23).

Gospel teachers can follow Paul’s example and find ways to creatively redirect the conversation to better achieve their teaching objectives. While most gospel teachers will not find themselves in the tricky predicaments that Paul faced, they can nevertheless apply this principle in their teaching by listening to people and actively seeking for ways to relate their comments to gospel principles that are more relevant or applicable and less tangential.

**The Apostle Paul knew how to match his message to his audience. With a group of Jews, he reviewed Israelite history and prophecies about the Messiah.**



## Communicating with Those You Teach

Paul demonstrated how to speak so that people from different backgrounds could understand him. As “an Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Philippians 3:5), Paul was from a Jewish family, was trained in Jerusalem, and knew Hebrew and Aramaic, the languages of the Jewish people. But Paul grew up in Tarsus, which was a major Gentile city in the Roman Empire. As a Roman citizen and resident of Tarsus, Paul also knew Greek, the international language of the Roman Empire during his day. Because Paul possessed these multilingual skills, he was able to speak to others in a language they could understand and therefore establish better relationships of trust and understanding. (See Acts 21:27–22:3 for an example of Paul’s facility with different languages.)

While teachers today may not be required to learn a foreign language, they can apply this principle. For example, teachers of youth can make the effort to know what kinds of activities, topics, or learning methods are of interest to those they teach, and they can find ways to connect with their students by knowing how to communicate with them in ways they will understand and respond to.

## Seeking for Common Ground

After arriving in Athens, Paul was impressed with the people’s devotion to their religion. Some of the local philosophers took Paul to the Areopagus (Mars Hill) to hear more of his “new doctrine” (Acts 17:19). Paul declared, “Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are [most religious]” (Acts 17:22; see footnote *a*).

The Apostle told them he observed their frequent objects of worship, including an altar with the inscription “To the unknown god”—concerning which Paul proclaimed, “Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you” (Acts 17:23). Paul’s description of the true God, however, highlighted similarities rather than differences and was inclusive. God “made the world and all things therein” (verse 24), including “all nations” (verse 26), so that everyone could “feel after him, and find him” (verse 27).

Paul reassured them that God was “not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27). Paul’s teaching strategy demonstrated his ability to find common ground with people of various backgrounds to facilitate understanding. Instead of just citing the Hebrew scriptures, Paul quoted Greek writers with whom the Gentile crowd would have been familiar: “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own





poets have said, For we are also his offspring” (verse 28).

The first reaction of the crowd was mixed, but in the end some people believed Paul’s message (see Acts 17:34).

This applies to us today in simple ways. For example, a teacher once found a very simple way to connect with a student named Patrick who was struggling in his class. The teacher noticed that although Patrick did not pay attention, he was always excited about soccer. Although the teacher was not particularly interested in soccer, he expressed an interest in watching Patrick demonstrate his soccer skills. Later Patrick loaned the teacher some soccer movies. Simply seeking common ground helped a friendship develop and improved Patrick’s experience in learning the gospel.<sup>3</sup>

### Reaching Out to Those Who Struggle

While teaching excellent students is often easier and more enjoyable, striving to reach out to those who struggle makes the difference between a good teacher and a master teacher.

Paul taught people to show compassion toward those who struggled. For instance, Paul told the leaders of the Corinthian Saints to discipline a person who had committed serious moral transgressions (see 1 Corinthians 5:1–8) but then later counseled them to make sure they forgave

and encouraged him so he would not be overcome with sorrow (see 2 Corinthians 2:6–7; see also Galatians 6:1).

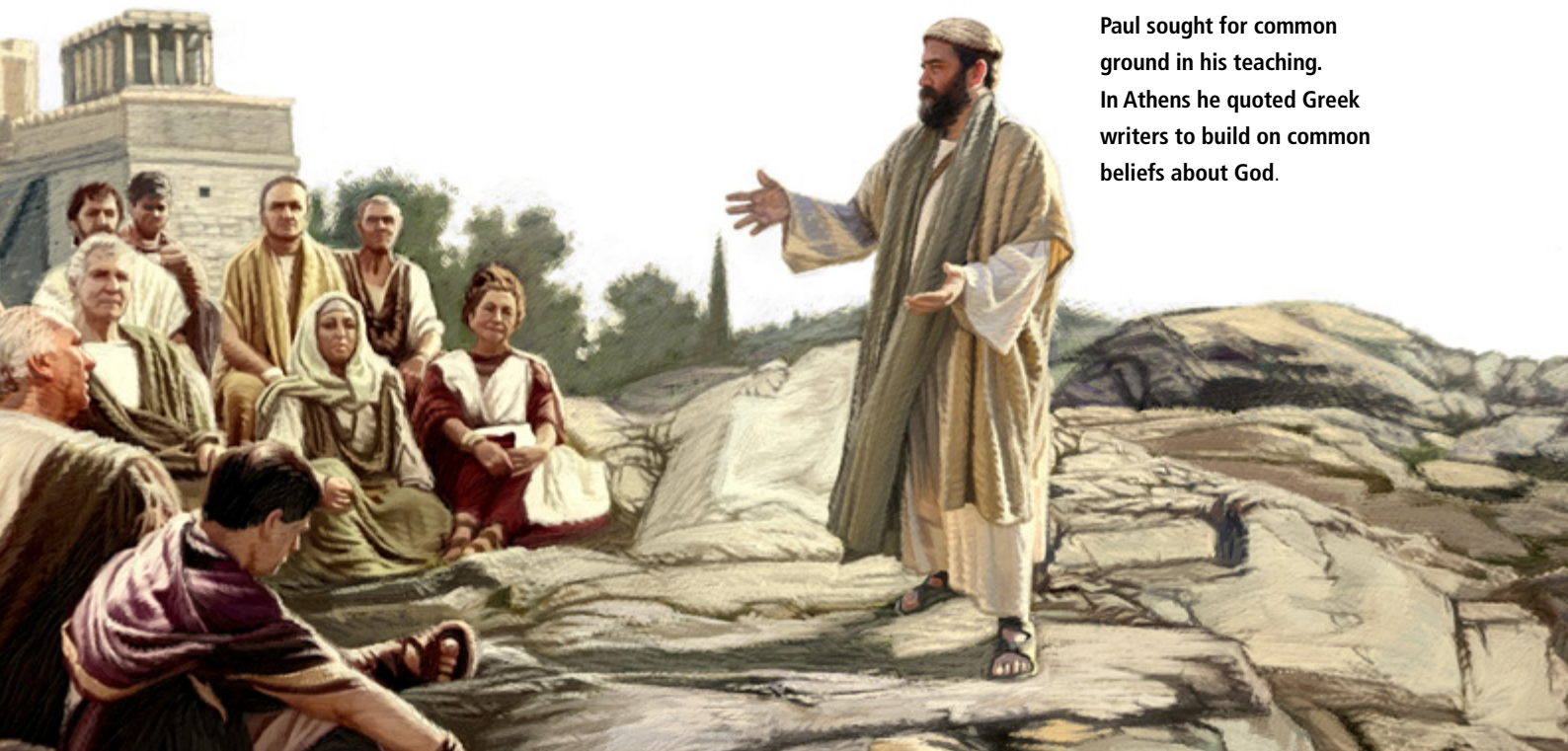
### Conclusion

Not only was Paul a gospel scholar, but he was also a talented and empathetic teacher. We can follow his teaching strategies to teach by example, know our audiences, redirect conversations when necessary, communicate effectively with those we teach, seek for common ground, and reach out to those who struggle.

Paul urged his converts to “walk worthy of the Lord . . . , being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:10). As he helped others progress toward this goal, Paul found success as well as challenges. Even a master teacher like Paul was not able to reach all the people he taught, but he never gave up. Paul wrote to Timothy that servants of the Lord should be “apt to teach” (2 Timothy 2:24). Paul provided a model of this by his words and actions. ■

### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Examples of Great Teachers,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 112.
2. Neal A. Maxwell, “Irony: The Crust on the Bread of Adversity,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 63.
3. See Chad H. Webb, “Deepening Conversion” (Church Educational System satellite broadcast, Aug. 7, 2007 [transcript]), 2.



**Paul sought for common ground in his teaching. In Athens he quoted Greek writers to build on common beliefs about God.**

# FRAGILE INSTRUMENTS PLAYED WITH POWER

*One sister's frail voice and abilities  
grew stronger as she relied on the Lord.*

By Janell H. Johnson

I sat in stake conference only half listening to the speaker. When he was done, it would be our turn. I was directing the choir and was filled with anxiety. I wanted the hymn we sang, “My Shepherd Will Supply My Need,” to mean something to the hundreds of members who filled the chapel. I wanted people to know that Heavenly Father understood their feelings. My hope was that the song would communicate the peace and comfort I received through relying on Jesus Christ. My reasons for this music selection were significant on a personal level.

Not long after I turned 14, I was involved in a car accident. My neck was broken, and my spinal cord was severed. The doctors’ prognosis was simple: I would always have to use a wheelchair. I could not move my legs and had very little movement in my arms. I couldn’t talk above a whisper due to lack of muscle function in my abdomen, and I couldn’t even speak

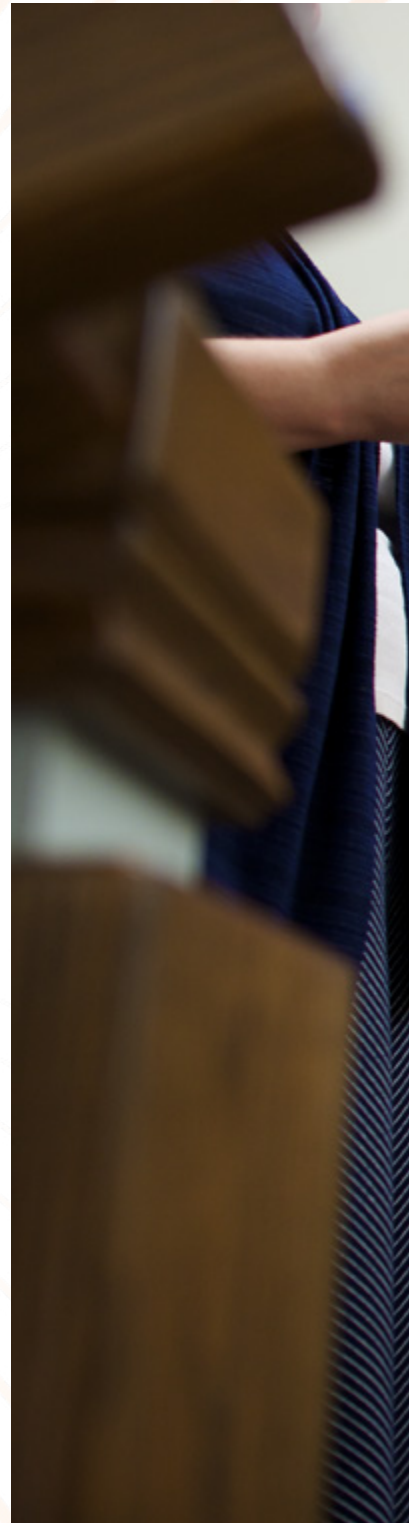
a sentence without stopping to take several breaths between words. Family and visitors had to lean over my bed and listen very carefully to hear me speak.

I set a goal to talk loud enough to be heard outside my hospital room door. My mom would leave the room and I would try to push out enough sound to be heard. After several months, I reached my goal.

One day my voice teacher visited me at the hospital and encouraged me to start practicing again. Outwardly I agreed with no hesitation, but inwardly I was embarrassed by my new inability. My vocal range at that point was no more than two or three notes, and speaking made me light-headed.

After four months in the hospital, I was allowed to go home. I began a rigorous schedule of therapy. My parents, with kind members of the ward, helped me perform a variety of exercises more than eight hours a day, six days a week. A member of my ward tutored me throughout my high school years so that

PHOTOGRAPH OF AUTHOR AND CHOIR BY LESLIE NILSSON









## RELYING ON HIS STRENGTH

“The Lord often places His servants in situations with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. In this manner He pushes us to humble ourselves and to rely solely on His strength. He makes us instruments of His miracles and the manifestations of His power and compassion. That is perhaps . . . the reason why so many members receive callings and responsibilities that often appear to them to be beyond their strength and abilities.”

**Bishop Gérald Caussé, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, “For When I Am Weak, Then Am I Strong” (Brigham Young University Devotional, Dec. 3, 2013), 5, [speeches.byu.edu](https://speeches.byu.edu).**

I could graduate with my class. And of course my diligent voice teacher came to my house to start my lessons again.

After high school graduation, I continued my musical studies at a local junior college and eventually transferred to Brigham Young University, where I received a degree in vocal performance.

Years later, I still use a wheelchair, have limited movement in my arms and hands, and am unable to move my fingers. But I have found great joy in being able to share my testimony through music. Participating as a member of the ward choir of my local singles ward has been a wonderful gift. Throughout the week, I enjoy pondering the meaning of the inspired lyrics that we sing.

One Sunday I was asked to meet with a counselor in the bishopric. Not knowing the extent of my physical limitations, he clearly felt awkward as he asked, “How do you feel about directing the ward choir?”

Strangely enough, I realized that lately I’d been thinking of ways to improve the choir, but now I didn’t know if I’d be able to do an adequate job at directing, given my disability. I’d led music in meetings before, but in those experiences my arms became tired quickly. I wondered how I’d be able to successfully communicate cutoffs and crescendos when I



was unable to move my fingers.

Despite my fears and doubts, I accepted the calling.

Over the course of my calling and as further evidence of God’s mercy in my life, He gave me the strength and energy to conduct the 30-minute rehearsals. Throughout my experience as ward choir director I saw the Lord make up the difference for what I lack. Doctrine and Covenants 64:34 says, “The Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind.” Those are two things I can offer Him.

The speaker finally finished his remarks and we assembled to sing. We may not have been perfect, but I had never heard the song performed as well as my faithful choir members performed it at that moment. We used all of our strength and abilities, and Heavenly Father sanctified and magnified our offering.

It was difficult to have an audience watching me. I felt vulnerable with my imperfections on display, but I recognized that my limitations may have added to the significance of the song. The song invites us to recognize that the Savior gives us that which we are lacking. We are imperfect instruments in His hands. But ultimately, the Lord uses imperfect instruments to orchestrate his perfect plans. ■

*The author (pictured on page 71) lives in Utah, USA.*



# MY SHEPHERD WILL SUPPLY MY NEED

*Calmly* ♩ = 72-80

*Text:* Psalm 23, paraphrased by Isaac Watts (1674-1748)  
*Music:* American folk hymn, from *Southern Harmony*, 1835

1. My Shep - herd will sup - ply my need; Je - ho - vah is His name; In  
2. When I walk thru the shades of death, Thy pres - ence is my stay; A  
3. The sure pro - vi - sions of my God At - tend me all my days; O

pas - tures fresh He makes me feed Be - side the liv - ing stream. He  
word of Thy sup - port - ing breath Drives all my fears a - way. Thy  
may Thy house be mine a - bode, And all my work be praise! There

brings my wan - d'ring spir - it back When I for - sake His ways, And  
hand, in sight of all my foes, Doth still my ta - ble spread; My  
would I find a set - tled rest (While oth - ers go and come), No

leads me, for His mer - cy's sake, In paths of truth and grace.  
cup with bless - ings o - ver - flows; Thine oil an - noints my head.  
more a strang - er or a guest, But like a child at home.

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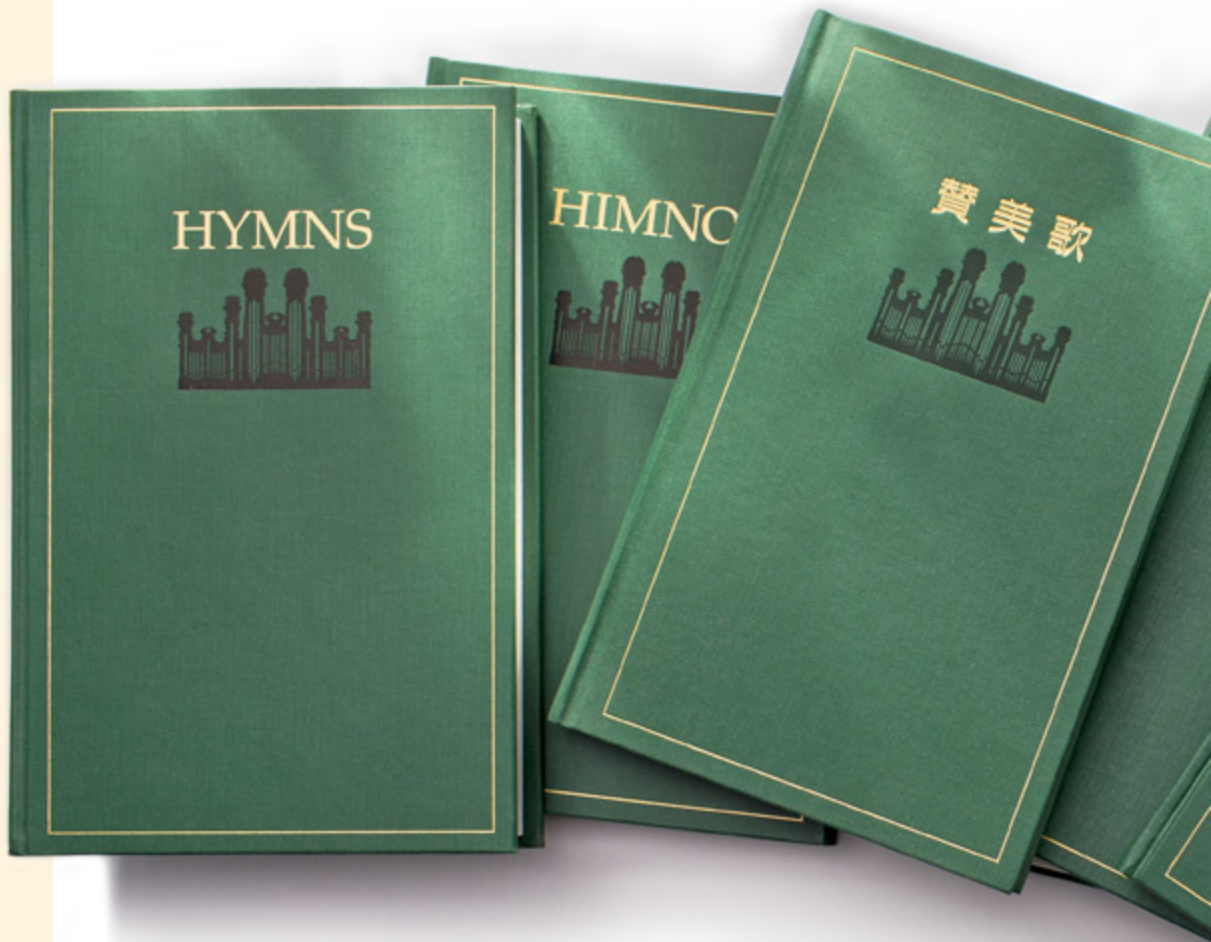
This notice must be included on each copy made.

# THE HYMNBOOK TURNS

# 30

## TRANSLATION GOES ON

The Church's 1985 hymnbook in English is 30 years old this month, but the work of producing hymnbooks for Saints who speak—and sing—in other languages goes on. Each language version of the hymnbook is carefully crafted, containing core hymns familiar to members worldwide as well as other hymns that are meaningful to those who speak that particular language. The selection and translation process can be long, but the aim is to ensure that every hymnbook in every language is the most beautiful, doctrinally sound, and unifying collection possible.



To access the hymns and other music resources online, go to [music.lds.org](https://music.lds.org).



By **Garrett H. Garff**

Church Magazines

When the current Church hymnbook was first released back in 1985, the chairman of the General Music Committee, Michael F. Moody, said that those charged with producing the book had “tried to select music that people would want to hum as they walk down the street and go about their daily work.”<sup>1</sup> You need only think of such hummable hymns as “Called to Serve,” “Our Savior’s Love,” “Press Forward, Saints,” and “I Am a Child of God” to know that those well-worn green books in our meetinghouses and homes are indeed a rich source of memorable and inspiring music.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the 1985 hymnbook, which is part of a legacy of Church hymnals dating back to 1835, when Emma Smith, with the help of William W. Phelps, published the first Latter-day Saint collection of hymns. In celebration of this anniversary year, a

special event will be held on September 11 in the Temple Square Assembly Hall in Salt Lake City and will include guest singers, musicians, and speakers.

Looking back at the efforts of those who worked on the 1985 hymnbook, Brother Moody has recently said, “As a committee, we tried to project the future, knowing that each hymn would become part of a canon of hymns that would serve the Saints in all cultures and climes of the world.”<sup>2</sup> In keeping with this worldwide reach, the hymnbook is now available in 31 language versions, with several more in process.

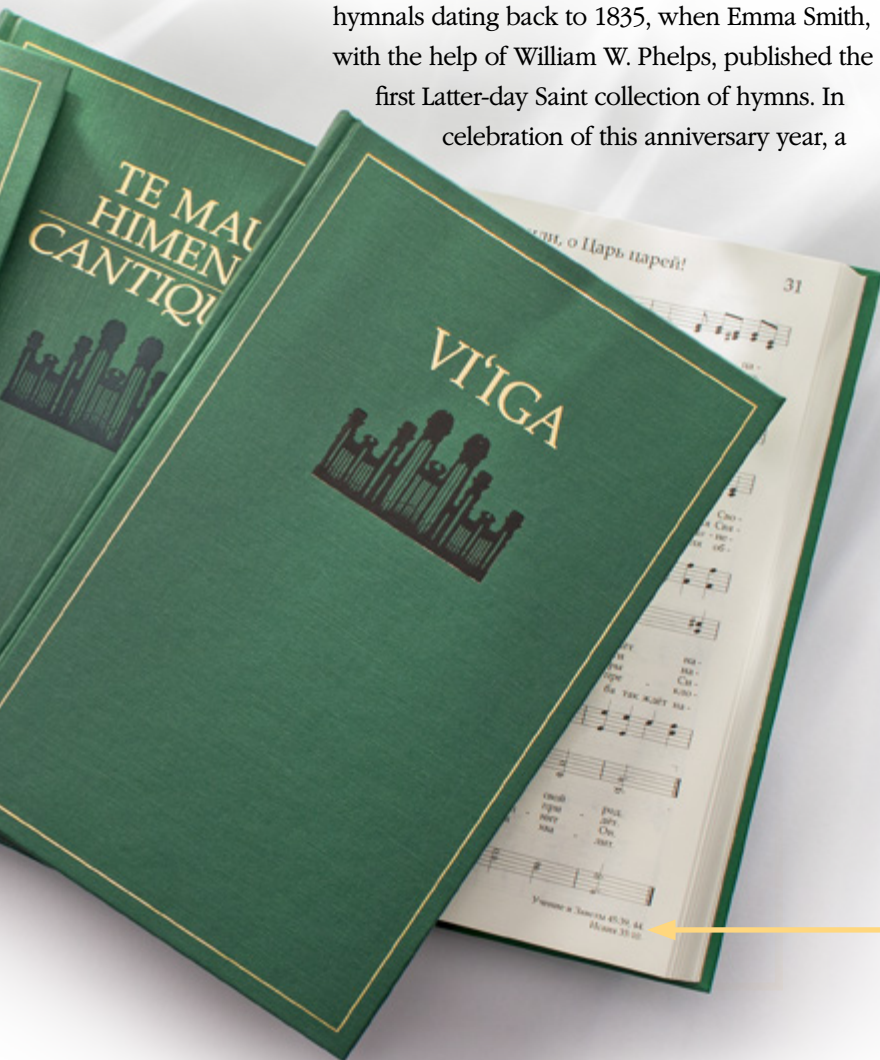
Because translation work is ongoing, and given the quality and continued usefulness of the current hymnbook, there are no plans at this time for a new edition. The 300-plus selections in the 1985 hymnbook—some of which to this day remain “undiscovered”—will continue to bless lives as members accept the First Presidency’s invitation: “Let us use the hymns to invite the Spirit of the Lord into our congregations, our homes, and our personal lives. Let us memorize and ponder them, recite and sing them, and partake of their spiritual nourishment.”<sup>3</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. Michael F. Moody, in Kathleen Lubeck, “The New Hymnbook: The Saints Are Singing!” *Ensign*, Sept. 1985, 9.
2. Michael F. Moody, fireside remarks, Pleasant Grove, Utah, Mar. 8, 2015.
3. “First Presidency Preface,” *Hymns*, x.

#### SCRIPTURE CONNECTIONS

A seemingly small but significant feature of the hymnbooks produced by the Church since 1985 is the inclusion of scripture references at the end of each hymn. These not only establish the underlying doctrines of the hymn texts but can also yield additional gospel insights.



## STRANDED IN LIMON

During a trip to see our extended family one summer, our 12-year-old, high-mileage minivan died and coasted to a stop. We were stuck. Fortunately, we were only five miles (8 km) from the small town of Limon, Colorado, USA.

The local mechanic gave us bad news. Our transmission needed to be replaced, and we would need to wait at least five days for parts. We were short on cash but did have our tent and some camping gear, so we opted to stay in the local campground.

Hundreds of miles from family and friends, we contemplated how we might get to a store to buy the groceries we'd need to survive. We decided to look up the local branch president in hopes of finding transportation. We

called President Dawson, and within half an hour we received two calls from members of the small branch's Relief Society. We happily discovered that one family lived within a block of the campground; they came to meet us within a few hours of our call.

Over the next week, the love and care we received from that small branch on the windy plains of Colorado overwhelmed us. The family who lived close by invited us to their home for dinner that first day, and we enjoyed a great evening of conversation with the parents while our children played with their daughter. The next morning we hitched a ride with another member to go shopping for food and supplies for our stay.

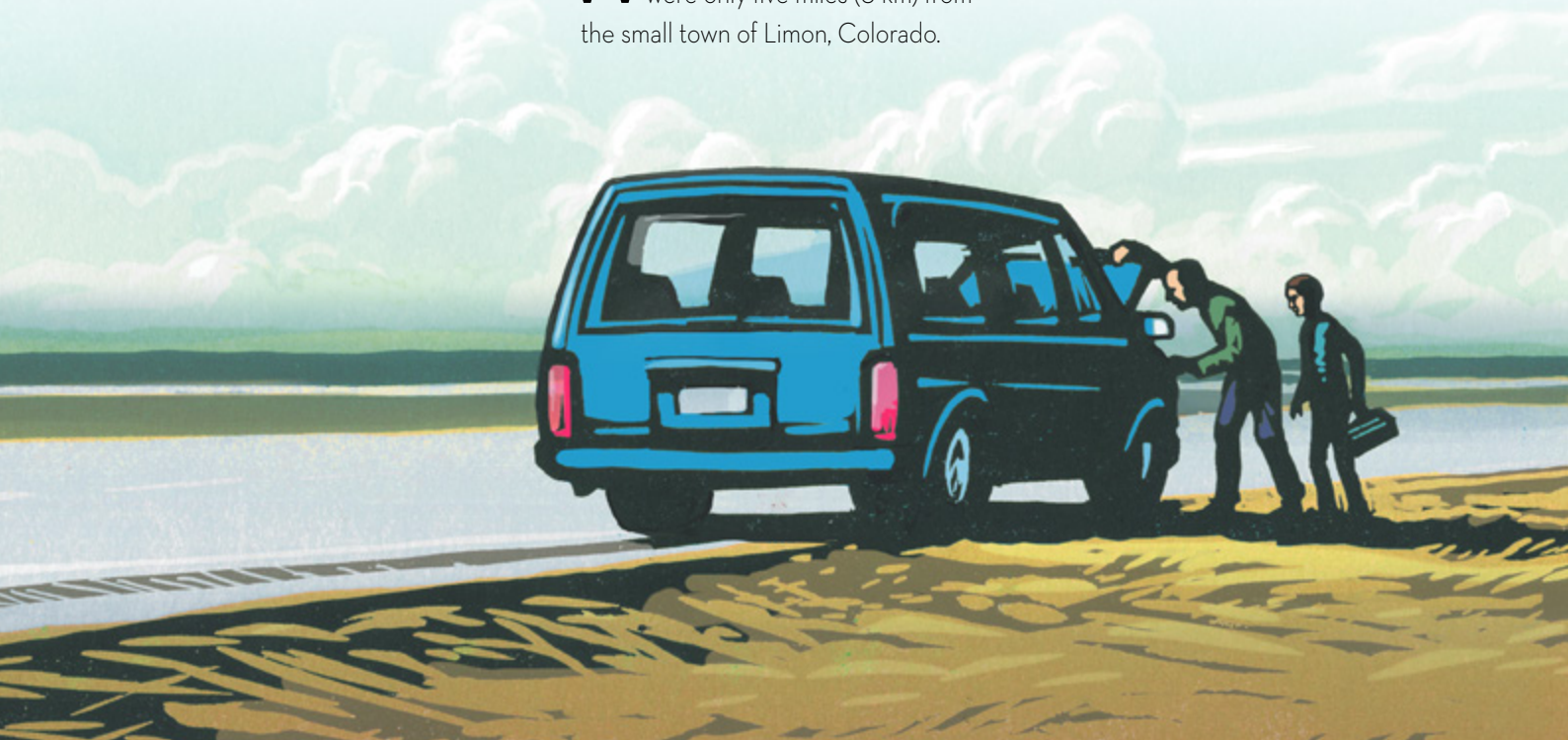
The generosity of branch members

continued beyond our original request. They picked us up for church on Sunday. They helped us make memories at the town's historic train museum. Our children took shelter in their homes during a passing hailstorm. One of the members even employed my husband for a few days to help us pay for car repairs.

Every evening, members of the small branch fed us and entertained our children in their homes. Toward the end of our stay, another family took us to their ranch, where our children learned to ride horses.

When we left Limon a week later, we left with prayers of thanks for a new group of dear friends who took us in and made us feel at home in Limon. ■  
Christina Wadley, Missouri, USA

We were stuck. Fortunately, we were only five miles (8 km) from the small town of Limon, Colorado.





## WHAT I NEEDED TO LEARN

After my first year of university studies, I began a project to better understand the Bible. I decided to study the teachings of a few religious groups I had heard were not Christian and then compare them to the teachings of the Bible.

As the next semester began, I started studying The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One of my classes required laboratory work with a partner, and I prayed for someone with whom I could learn what I needed to learn.

I chose a lab bench, and soon a student approached and asked if I had a partner. He introduced himself as Lincoln. I didn't remember seeing him at school the year before and asked if he had transferred.

"Actually," he said, "I just returned from serving as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

I told Lincoln I had begun studying his church and had some questions. He happily agreed to answer them.

During the next three months, I asked questions about the Book of Mormon, temples, latter-day prophets, and modern revelation. Although I learned a great deal during this time, I still thought that Mormons weren't Christians.

One weekend our school lost a big game. Some teachers in the lab vigorously discussed the loss, repeatedly using the Lord's name in vain. Lincoln approached the teachers and asked them if they would please stop speaking about Jesus Christ that way.

"Does that really bother you?" they asked with some doubt.

"Yes," Lincoln replied. "Jesus Christ is my best friend."

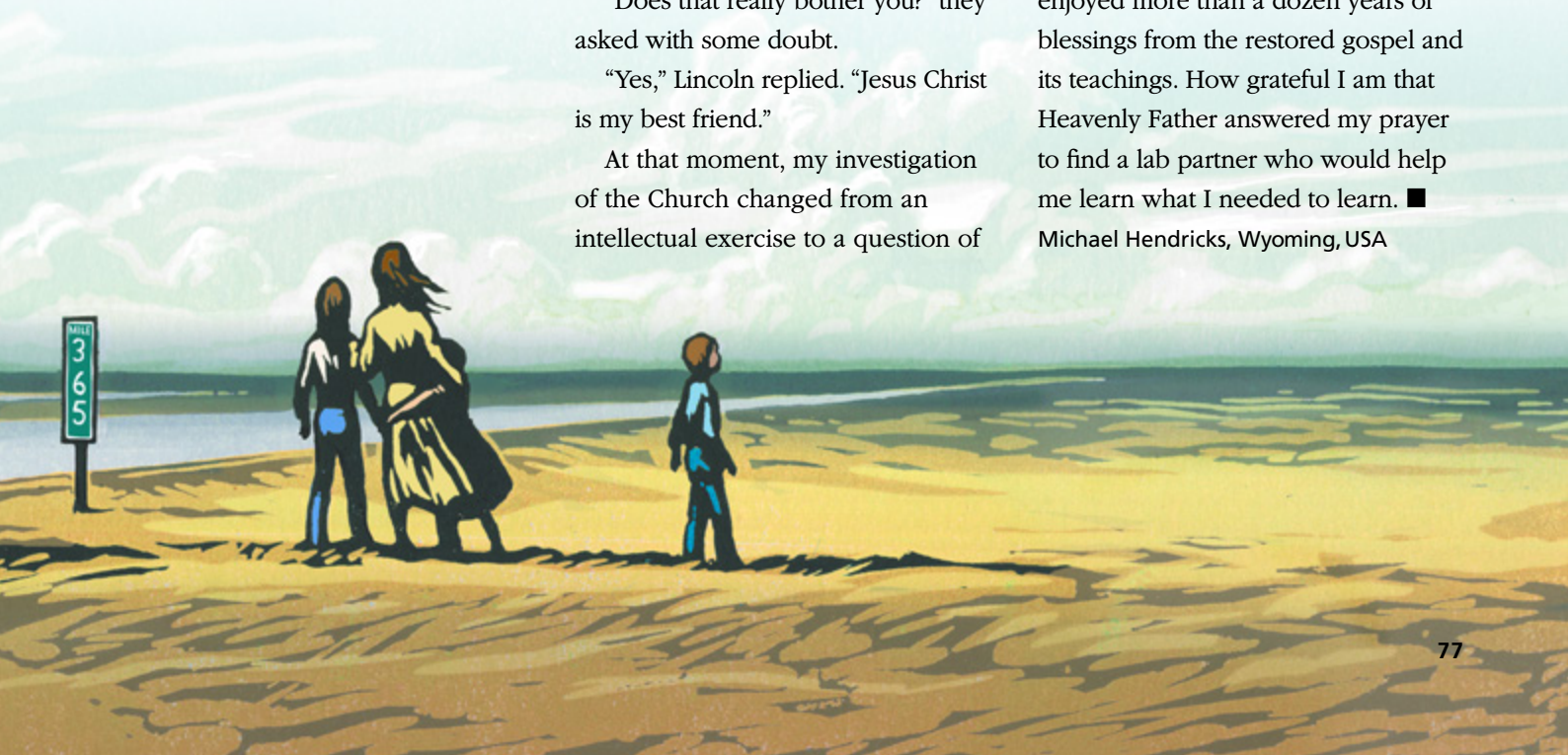
At that moment, my investigation of the Church changed from an intellectual exercise to a question of

faith. If this religion produced men like this, it was Christian in every way that mattered.

As Lincoln and I left that night, I asked if I could attend church with him sometime. After going to church, I asked him if I could have a copy of the Book of Mormon and if I could meet with the missionaries.

For two years I investigated the Church and spent time with its members. I saw a consistent pattern of sincere men and women diligently striving to be disciples of the Master. On numerous occasions the Holy Ghost confirmed to me that Jesus Christ, whom I had always tried my best to serve, really had restored His Church in our day. It was overseen by prophets and apostles and led directly by Him.

I was baptized and have now enjoyed more than a dozen years of blessings from the restored gospel and its teachings. How grateful I am that Heavenly Father answered my prayer to find a lab partner who would help me learn what I needed to learn. ■  
Michael Hendricks, Wyoming, USA





I hadn't kept the Sabbath day holy that Easter Sunday, and I tripped over a clump of weeds to remind me that I hadn't.

## SUNDAY SOWING

A few years ago, just before Easter weekend, it rained all week long. I had been in Benin, West Africa, but was coming home to spend Easter in Togo. It didn't rain on Saturday, the day I arrived, but that night it began raining again.

I knew that church started at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, but because it had been raining so much and I'd only just arrived, I decided that was too early for me.

I thought to myself, "I'll go a little bit late to church and get there at 10:00 a.m." Then I went to see my brother. "Instead of going to church at 9:00," I told him, "let's go over to that patch of land on the side of my house."

When we arrived, we noticed that the

ground was nice and wet from all the rain. I thought, "It's Sunday, and we're waiting until 10:00 to go to church. Why not plant some beans before we go?"

So my brother and I planted a little patch of land that was about 65 square feet (6 m<sup>2</sup>). Then we went to church, an hour late. The next day we went to a nearby town where I had another plot of land. There we planted corn and more beans.

Two months later when I returned home again, I went to check that little patch of land next to my house. It was empty except for a little clump of weeds that I tripped over as I walked into the field. "Oh, yeah," I said to myself, "we planted beans here on Easter Sunday!"

Out of all the seeds we sowed, the only thing that grew was a clump of weeds. The beans and corn we planted in the other field the Monday after Easter, however, grew just fine. Since that time everything we have planted in the patch of land next to my house has grown normally.

I hadn't kept the Sabbath day holy that Easter Sunday, and I tripped over a clump of weeds to remind me that I hadn't. Since then, I have remembered that I can't just do whatever I feel like doing on the Lord's day. Instead, I always remember to keep the Sabbath day holy. ■

Desire Koami Gbedjangni, Togo,  
West Africa



# I STARTED PRAYING FOR RUTH

After experiencing some unexpected financial obligations as a single woman, I knew I needed to find a second job. Soon afterward, Marty, a sister in my ward, approached me and asked for my help. She and her husband were going on a mission, so she had to give up her job. She explained that every Saturday she helped an elderly woman, Ruth, who lived in an assisted-living complex. Marty offered me her job and told me that Ruth would pay me for my work.

The following Monday, Marty and Ruth explained my tasks, and I began my work a few days later. I started by

gathering Ruth's laundry and carrying it upstairs to the laundry room. Soon after I began, Ruth rushed in and shouted at me. She told me that I was never to wash her clothes without first asking.

I was doing only what she and Marty had asked me to do. Frustrated and hurt, I fought back the tears. I told myself that I didn't need any more stress or problems in my life. I would have walked out that very moment had I not promised Marty that I would care for Ruth while she was away.

Week after week Ruth shouted angrily at me over everything I did. It seemed that I could never please

her no matter how hard I tried.

I started praying for strength to endure Ruth and her harsh words, but nothing changed. I continued to resent having to help her.

Then one day I changed my prayers. I stopped praying for myself and started praying for Ruth. I asked Heavenly Father to help me understand her needs and how I could help her.

From that day forward everything changed. My heart softened, and my love for Ruth grew. Ruth changed as well. She opened up and shared her life, her joys, and her sorrows. She told me she missed her family. She told me of the wonderful things she had done in her past but could no longer do. She told me she was lonely and sad.

I began to look forward to seeing Ruth each week, and she looked forward to seeing me.

My experience with Ruth taught me a valuable lesson. When I truly served with my whole heart, I came to understand President Spencer W. Kimball's (1895–1985) teaching that "in the midst of the miracle of serving, there is the promise of Jesus, that by losing ourselves, we find ourselves" ("Small Acts of Service," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 2). ■

June Foss, Utah, USA

I started by gathering Ruth's laundry and carrying it upstairs to the laundry room. Soon after I began, Ruth rushed in and shouted at me.





**By President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901)**

Fifth President of the Church

## A VISIT FROM THE SAVIOR

*It was right here that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to me.*

*Editor’s Note: The following account was shared by LeRoi C. Snow, the son of President Lorenzo Snow. Brother Snow tells how, at age 85, his father was concerned he would be asked to succeed President Wilford Woodruff, who was ailing, as President of the Church. Following President Woodruff’s death on September 2, 1898, President Snow knelt at an altar in the Salt Lake Temple and pleaded with the Lord for guidance.*

After finishing his prayer, [my father] expected a reply, some special manifestation from the Lord. So he waited—and waited—and waited. There was no reply, no voice, no visitation, no manifestation. He left the altar and the room in great disappointment. Passing through the celestial room and out into the large corridor, a glorious manifestation was given President Snow which I relate in the words of his granddaughter, Allie Young Pond. . . .

“One evening while I was visiting Grandpa Snow in his room in the Salt Lake Temple, I remained until the door keepers had gone and the night watchmen had not yet come in, so grandpa said he would take me to the main front entrance and



let me out that way. . . . After we left his room and while we were still in the large corridor leading into the celestial room, I was walking several steps ahead of Grandpa when he stopped me and said: ‘Wait a moment, Allie, I want to tell you something. It was right here that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to me at the time of the death of President Woodruff. He instructed me to go right ahead and reorganize the First Presidency of the Church at once and not wait as had been done after the death of the previous presidents, and that I was to succeed President Woodruff.’

“Then Grandpa came a step nearer and held out his left hand and said: ‘He stood right here, about three feet above the floor. It looked as though He stood on a plate of solid gold.’

“Grandpa told what a glorious personage the Savior is and described His hands, feet, countenance, and beautiful white robes, all of which were of such a glory of whiteness and brightness that he could hardly gaze upon Him.

“Then he came another step nearer and put his right hand on my head and said: ‘Now, Granddaughter, I want you to remember that this is the testimony of your grandfather, that he told you with his own lips that he actually saw the Savior, here in the temple, and talked with Him face to face.’”

. . . I related this experience in the Eighteenth Ward sacramental service. After the meeting Elder Arthur Winter told me he also had heard my father tell of the Savior’s appearance to him in the temple instructing him not only to reorganize the First Presidency at once but also to select the same counselors that President Woodruff had, Presidents George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith. ■

*From “An Experience of My Father’s,” Improvement Era, Sept. 1933, 677, 679; punctuation and capitalization modernized.*



# INSIGHTS



## **How do we judge whether worldly philosophies about the family are true?**

“The proclamation on the family has become our benchmark for judging the philosophies of the world, and I testify that the principles set forth within this statement are as true today as they were when they were given to us by a prophet of God nearly 20 years ago.”

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**Bonnie L. Oscarson**, Young Women general president, “Defenders of the Family Proclamation,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 14–15.



## In Church Magazines

**Ensign:** Meet some young adults who have learned that the Savior's Atonement expands beyond just repentance. See "I Felt the Power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ When . . ." (page 14).

**New Era:** This month, seminary students can read articles that help them gear up for the Old Testament year (pages 22–27). Also, President Henry B. Eyring reminds youth about what we learn from "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (page 2).

**Friend:** Creating a strong family is a team effort! Even your little ones can help make your family strong. Look through pages 22–39 of this month's *Friend* for activities and stories about strengthening family ties.



THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS