

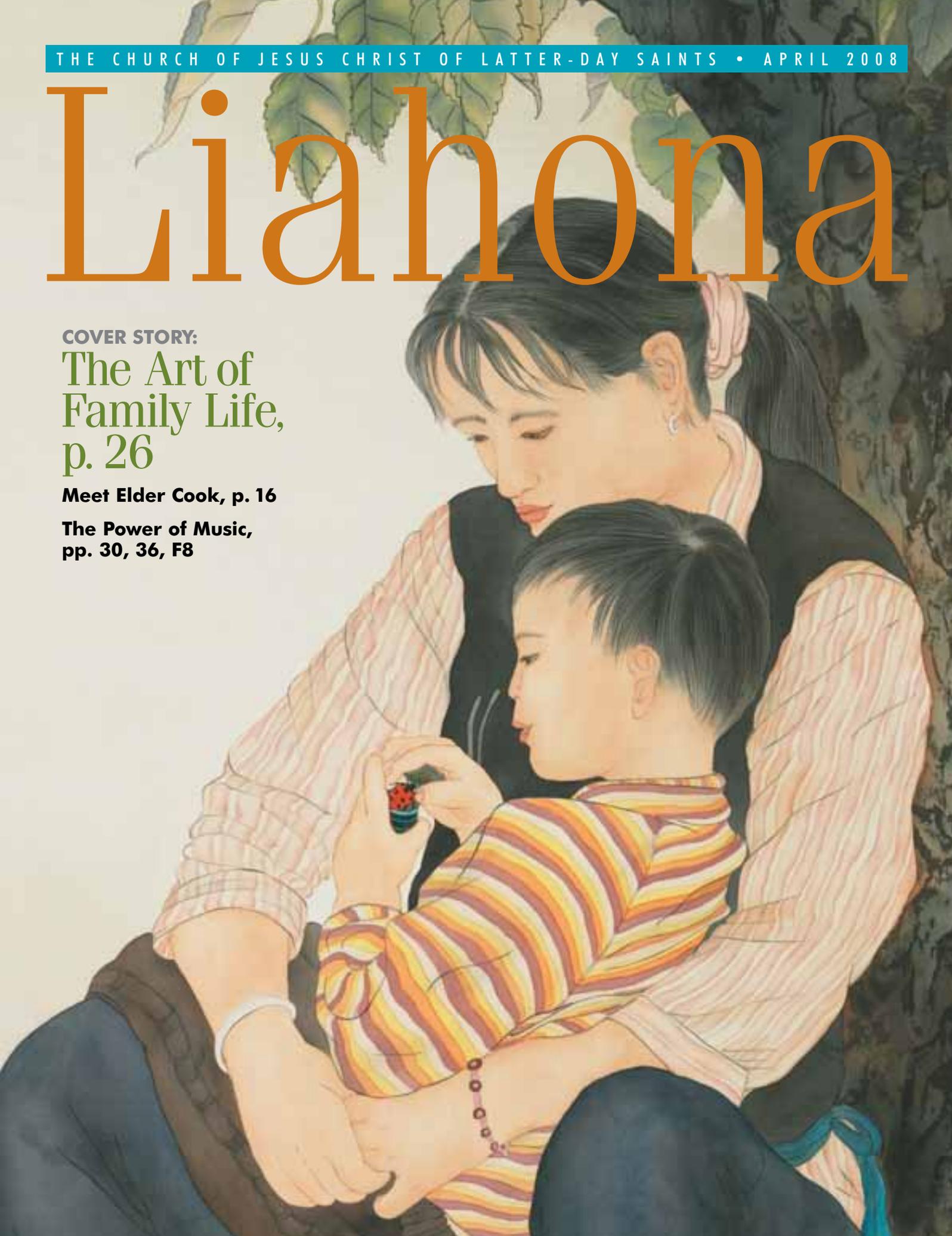
Liahona

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**The Art of
Family Life,
p. 26**

Meet Elder Cook, p. 16

**The Power of Music,
pp. 30, 36, F8**



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THE FRIEND COVER

Illustration by Dilleen Marsh.



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FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

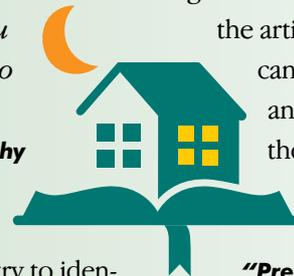
*These teaching suggestions can
be used in the classroom as
well as in the home. You
may tailor these ideas to
your family or class.*

**"Worthy Music, Worthy
Thoughts,"** p. 30: Begin

by playing a game in
which family members try to iden-
tify a hymn or Primary song by
hearing one or two notes, then
three or four notes. If they still can't
guess it, give a small hint about
the hymn. Discuss how music is

important in our lives and how
good music can inspire us. Using
the article, explain how music
can influence our thoughts
and be used to control
them. Set a goal to memo-
rize the words to a
favorite hymn.

**"Preparing to Receive the
Ordinances of the Temple,"** p. 40:
Write Brother Dahlquist's eight rec-
ommendations on slips of paper,
and have each person select one.
Invite each to share how following

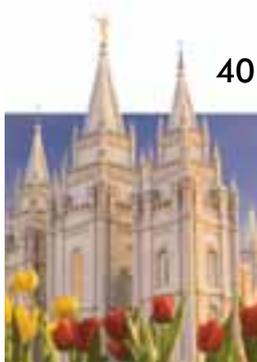


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30 Worthy Music, Worthy Thoughts



40 Preparing to Receive the Ordinances of the Temple

As you look for the Finnish CTR ring hidden in this issue, think of how following the prophet can help you choose the right.



the counsel can help us stand in holy places and prepare to receive the ordinances of the temple. Use excerpts from the article to support your discussion. As a family, choose one principle to work on during the coming weeks.

“Her Mother’s Song,” p. F8: After reading the story, invite family members to share times when they have been frightened. Ask them what they did to overcome their fears. Discuss how singing a hymn or Primary song can help us. As a

family or individually, choose a song to remember when comfort or strength is needed.

“Being Content,” p. F12: Share the lesson that Elder Odume’s father wanted his family to learn. To help children recognize their blessings, consider creating a “gratitude jar.” Have family members write or draw things for which they are thankful and place the papers in the jar. Encourage your children to think of nonmaterial blessings as well.

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- F2 Come Listen to a Prophet’s Voice: Three Bridges
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- F4 Sharing Time: Heed the Prophets— Follow What They Say
Linda Christensen
- F6 From the Life of the Prophet Joseph Smith: The First Vision
- F8 Her Mother’s Song
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- F12 Friend to Friend: Being Content
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Treasure of Eternal Value



The Master spoke of riches within the grasp of all—even joy unspeakable here and eternal happiness hereafter.

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

When I was a boy, I enjoyed reading *Treasure Island*, by Robert Louis Stevenson. I also saw adventure movies where several individuals had separate pieces of a well-worn map which led the way to buried treasure if only the pieces could be found and put together.

I recall listening to a 15-minute radio program each weekday afternoon—*Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy*. As it began, a voice filled with mystery would emanate from the radio: “We now join Jack and Betty as they approach the fabulous secret entry to the elephants’ burial ground, where a treasure is concealed. But wait; danger lurks on the path ahead.” Nothing could tear me away from this program. It was as though I were leading the search for the hidden treasure of precious ivory.

At another time and in a different setting, the Savior of the world spoke of treasure. In His Sermon on the Mount, He declared:

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth

corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”¹

The promised reward was not a treasure of ivory, gold, or silver. Neither did it consist of acres of land or a portfolio of stocks and bonds. The Master spoke of riches within the grasp of all—even joy unspeakable here and eternal happiness hereafter.

I wish to provide the three pieces of your treasure map to guide you to your eternal happiness. They are:

1. Learn from the past.
2. Prepare for the future.
3. Live in the present.

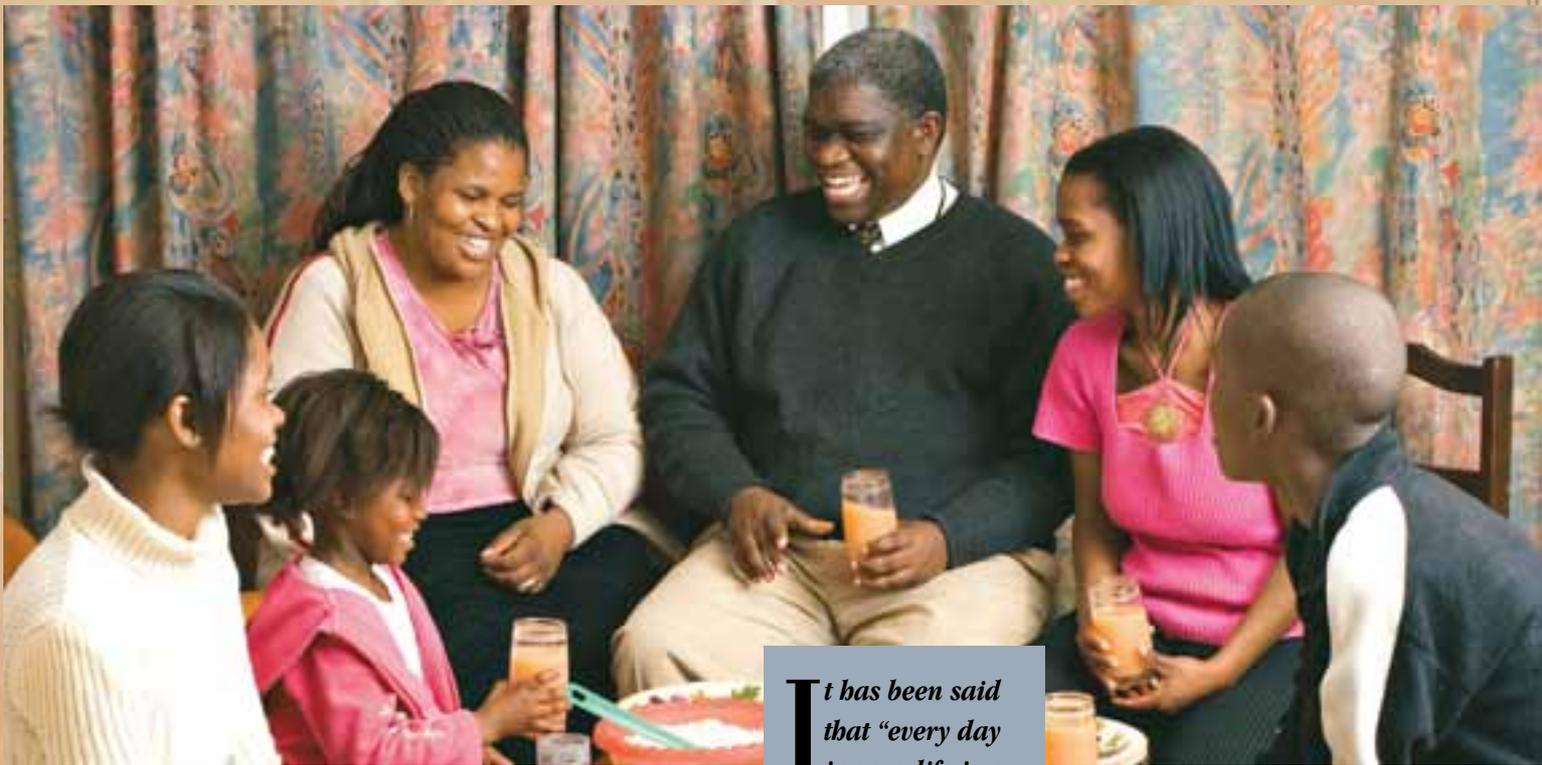
Let us consider each segment of this map.

Learn from the Past

Each of us has a heritage—whether from pioneer forebears, later converts, or others who helped shape our lives. This heritage provides a foundation built of sacrifice and faith. Ours is the privilege and responsibility to build on such firm and stable footings.

A story written by Karen Nolen, which appeared in the *New Era* in 1974, tells of a





Benjamin Landart who, in 1888, was 15 years old and an accomplished violinist. Living on a farm in northern Utah with his mother and seven brothers and sisters was sometimes a challenge to Benjamin, as he had less time than he would have liked to play his violin. Occasionally his mother would lock up the violin until he had his farm chores done, so great was the temptation for Benjamin to play it.

In late 1892 Benjamin was asked to travel to Salt Lake to audition for a place with the territorial orchestra. For him, this was a dream come true. After several weeks of practicing and prayers, he went to Salt Lake in March of 1893 for the much-anticipated audition. When he heard Benjamin play, the conductor, a Mr. Dean, said Benjamin was the most accomplished violinist he had heard west of Denver. Benjamin was told to report to Denver for rehearsals in the fall and learned that he would be earning enough to keep himself, with some left over to send home.

A week after Benjamin received this good news, however, his bishop called him into his office and asked if Benjamin couldn't put off playing with the orchestra for a couple of years. The bishop told Benjamin that before he started earning money, there was something he owed the Lord. The bishop then asked Benjamin to accept a mission call.

Benjamin felt that giving up his chance to play in the territorial orchestra would be almost more than he could

It has been said that "every day in your life is a special occasion. . . . Each day, each hour, each minute is special."

bear, but he also knew what his decision should be. He promised the bishop that if there were any way to raise the money for him to serve, he would accept the call.

When Benjamin told his mother about the call, she was overjoyed. She told him that his father had always

wanted to serve a mission but had been killed before that opportunity had come to him. However, when they discussed the financing of the mission, her face clouded over. Benjamin told her he would not allow her to sell any more of their land. She studied his face for a moment and then said, "Ben, there is a way we can raise the money. This family [has] one thing that is of great enough value to send you on your mission. You will have to sell your violin."

Six days later, on March 23, 1893, Benjamin wrote in his journal: "I awoke this morning and took my violin from its case. All day long I played the music I love. In the evening when the light grew dim and I could see to play no longer, I placed the instrument in its case. It will be enough. Tomorrow I leave [for my mission]."

Forty-five years later, on June 23, 1938, Benjamin wrote in his journal: "The greatest decision I ever made in my life was to give up something I dearly loved to

the God I loved even more. He has never forgotten me for it.”²

Learn from the past.

Prepare for the Future

We live in a changing world. Technology has altered nearly every aspect of our lives. We must cope with these advances—even these cataclysmic changes—in a world of which our forebears never dreamed.

Remember the promise of the Lord: “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear.”³ Fear is a deadly enemy of progress.

It is necessary to prepare and to plan so that we don’t fritter away our lives. Without a goal, there can be no real success. One of the best definitions of success I have ever heard goes something like this: success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal. Someone has said the trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never cross the goal line.

Years ago there was a romantic and fanciful ballad that contained the words, “Wishing will make it so / Just keep on wishing and care will go.”⁴ I want to state here and now that wishing will not replace thorough preparation to meet the trials of life. Preparation is hard work but absolutely essential for our progress.

Our journey into the future will not be a smooth highway stretching from here to eternity. Rather, there will be forks and turnings in the road, to say nothing of the unanticipated bumps. We must pray daily to a loving Heavenly Father, who wants each of us to succeed in life.

Prepare for the future.

Live in the Present

Sometimes we let our thoughts of tomorrow take up too much of today. Daydreaming of the past and longing for the future may provide comfort but will not take the place of living in the present. This is the day of our opportunity, and we must grasp it.

Professor Harold Hill, in Meredith Willson’s *The Music Man*, cautioned, “You pile up enough tomorrows, and you’ll find you’ve collected a lot of empty yesterdays.”

There is no tomorrow to remember if we don’t do something today, and to live most fully today, we must do that which is of greatest importance. Let us not procrastinate those things which matter most.

I remember reading the account of a man who, just after the passing of his wife, opened her dresser drawer and found there an item of clothing she had purchased when they visited the eastern part of the United States nine years earlier. She had not worn it but was saving it for a special occasion. Now, of course, that occasion would never come.

In relating the experience to a friend, the husband of the deceased wife said, “Don’t save something only for a special occasion. Every day in your life is a special occasion.”

That friend later said those words changed her life. They helped her cease putting off the things most important to her. Said she: “Now I spend more time with my family. I use crystal glasses every day. I’ll wear new clothes to go to the supermarket if I feel like it. The words ‘some-day’ and ‘one day’ are fading from my vocabulary. Now I take the time to call my relatives and closest friends. I’ve called old friends to make peace over past quarrels. I tell my family members how much I love them. I try not to delay or postpone anything that could bring laughter and joy into our lives. And each morning, I say to myself that this could be a special day. Each day, each hour, each minute is special.”

A wonderful example of this philosophy was shared by Arthur Gordon many years ago in a national magazine. He wrote:

“When I was around thirteen and my brother ten, Father had promised to take us to the circus. But at lunchtime there was a phone call; some urgent business required his attention downtown. We braced ourselves for disappointment. Then we heard him say [into the phone], ‘No, I won’t be down. It’ll have to wait.’

“When he came back to the table, Mother smiled. ‘The circus keeps coming back, you know.’

“‘I know,’ said Father. ‘But childhood doesn’t.’”⁵



The old adage
*“Never put off
 until tomorrow
 what you can do
 today” is doubly
 important when it
 comes to expressing
 our affection to
 family members
 and friends.*

Elder Monte J. Brough, formerly of the Seventy, tells of a summer at his childhood home in Randolph, Utah, when he and his younger brother, Max, decided to build a tree house in a large tree in the backyard. They made plans for the most wonderful creation of their lives. They gathered building materials from all over the neighborhood and carried them up to a part of the tree where two branches provided an ideal location for the house. It was difficult, and they were anxious to complete their work. The vision of the finished tree house provided tremendous motivation for them to complete the project.

They worked all summer, and finally in the fall just before school began, their house was completed. Elder Brough

said he will never forget the feelings of joy and satisfaction which were theirs when they finally were able to enjoy the fruit of their work. They sat in the tree house, looked around for a few minutes, climbed down from the tree—and never returned. The completed project, as wonderful as it was, could not hold their interest for even one day. In other words, the process of planning, gathering, building, and working—not the completed project—provided the enduring satisfaction and pleasure they had experienced.

Let us relish life as we live it and, as did Elder Brough and his brother, Max, find joy in the journey.

Do Not Delay

The old adage “Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today” is doubly important when it comes to expressing our love and affection—in word and in deed—to family members and friends. Said author Harriet

Beecher Stowe, “The bitterest tears shed over graves are for words left unsaid and deeds left undone.”⁶

A poet set to verse the sorrow of opportunities forever lost. I quote a portion:

*Around the corner I have a friend,
 In this great city that has no end;
 Yet days go by, and weeks rush on,
 And before I know it, a year is gone.
 And I never see my old friend's face,
 For Life is a swift and terrible race. . . .
 But tomorrow comes—and tomorrow goes,
 And the distance between us grows and grows.*

Around the corner!—yet miles away. . . .

“Here’s a telegram, sir. . . .”

“Jim died today.”

And that’s what we get, and deserve in the end:

Around the corner, a vanished friend.⁷

In the spirit of the thought in that verse, I determined a few years ago that I would no longer put off a visit with a dear friend whom I hadn't seen for many years. I had been meaning to visit him in California but just had not gotten around to it.

Bob Biggers and I met when we were both in the Classification Division at the United States Naval Training Center in San Diego, California, toward the close of World War II. We were good friends from the beginning. He visited Salt Lake once before he married, and we remained friends through correspondence from the time I was discharged in 1946. My wife, Frances, and I exchanged Christmas cards every year with Bob and his wife, Grace.

Finally, at the beginning of January 2002, I was scheduled to visit a stake conference in Whittier, California, where the Biggers live. I telephoned my friend Bob, now 80 years old, and arranged for Frances and me to meet him and Grace, that we might reminisce concerning former days.

We had a delightful visit. I took with me a number of photographs which had been taken when we were in the navy together over 55 years earlier. We identified the men we knew and provided each other an update on their whereabouts as best we could. Although not a member of our Church, Bob remembered going to a sacrament meeting with me those long years before when we were stationed in San Diego.

As Frances and I said our good-byes to Bob and Grace, I felt an overwhelming sense of peace and joy at having finally made the effort to see once again a friend who had been cherished from afar throughout the years.

One day each of us will run out of tomorrows. Let us not put off what is most important.

Live in the present.

Your treasure map is now in place: **Learn from the past. Prepare for the future. Live in the present.**

I conclude where I began. From our Lord and Savior:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. Ask family members how they prepare for an event. How far in advance do they prepare? Explain that we need to prepare for eternal life by laying up treasures in heaven. Read Matthew 6:19–21, and invite family members to take turns reading sections of the message.

2. Read the first paragraph under the heading "Learn from the Past," and invite family members to tell about a person or experience that has positively influenced their lives. Testify that learning from our past is one way to guide us to eternal happiness.

3. Share one or two of the accounts under the heading "Live in the Present." Ask family members to each set a goal to do one important task they have been putting off. Next month, you could invite family members to tell about their experience.

moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

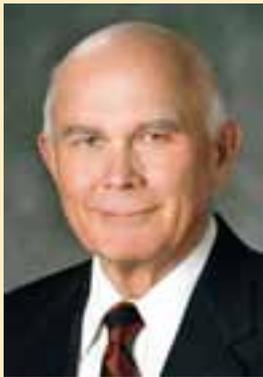
"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."⁸ ■

NOTES

1. Matthew 6:19–21.
2. See "Benjamin: Son of the Right Hand," *New Era*, May 1974, 34–37.
3. D&C 38:30.
4. "Wishing (Will Make It So)," lyrics by B. G. DeSylva.
5. *A Touch of Wonder* (1974), 77–78.
6. In Gorton Carruth and Eugene Ehrlich, comp., *The Harper Book of American Quotations* (1988), 173.
7. Charles Hanson Towne, "Around the Corner," in *Poems That Touch the Heart*, comp. A. L. Alexander (1941), 1.
8. Matthew 6:19–21.

The Atonement and Faith

BY ELDER DALLIN H. OAKS
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



To be admitted to God's presence, we must be more than clean. We must also be changed from a morally weak person who has sinned into a strong person with the spiritual stature to dwell in the presence of God.

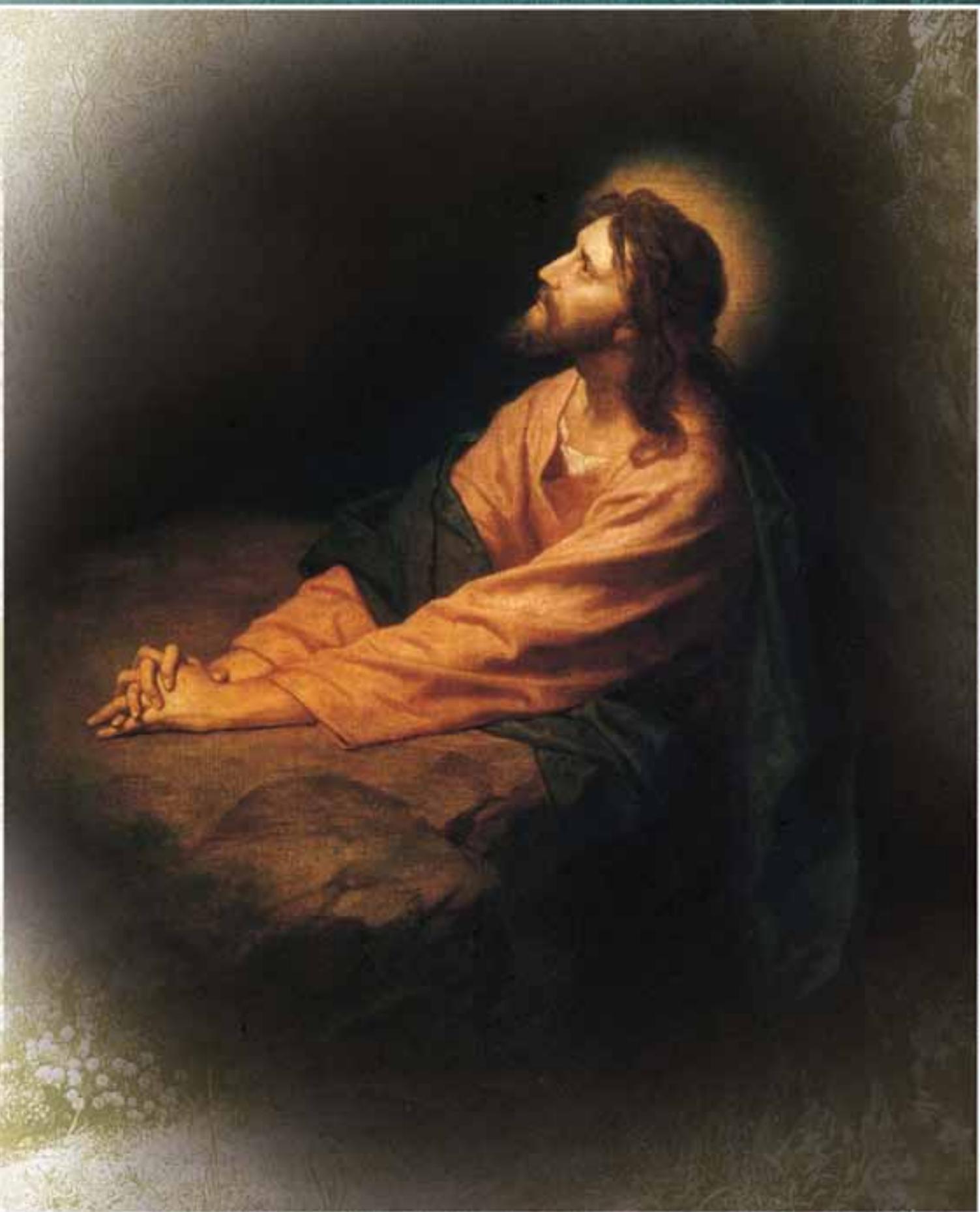
The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Without this faith, the prophet Mormon said, we are not fit to be numbered among the people of the Lord's Church (see Moroni 7:39). The first commandment Jehovah gave to the children of Israel was "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). We should always put the Savior first. This powerful idea—that we must have faith and put the Lord first in our lives—seems simple, but in practice many find it difficult.

The scriptures teach us that faith comes by hearing the word of God (see Romans 10:17). The word of God, which comes to us by scripture, by prophetic teaching, and by personal revelation, teaches us that we are children of God the Eternal Father. It teaches us about the identity and mission of His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. Founded on our knowledge of those truths, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a conviction and trust that God knows us and

loves us and will hear our prayers and answer them with what is best for us.

Faith in the Lord is trust in the Lord. We cannot have true faith in the Lord without also having complete trust in the Lord's will and in the Lord's timing. As a result, no matter how strong our faith is, it cannot produce a result contrary to the will of Him in whom we have faith. Remember this when your prayers do not seem to be answered in the way or at the time you desire. The exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is always subject to the order of heaven, to the goodness and will and wisdom and timing of the Lord. When we have that kind of faith and trust in the Lord, we have true security and serenity in our lives.

We look first to our Savior, Jesus Christ. He is our model. Our model is not the latest popular hero of sports or entertainment. Similarly, our most precious possessions are not the expensive toys and diversions that encourage us to concentrate on what is temporary and to forget what is eternal. Our



King Benjamin's congregation described their mighty change by saying that they had "no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually." Persons who have had that kind of change in their hearts have attained the strength and stature to dwell with God.

model—our first priority—is Jesus Christ. We must testify of Him and teach one another how we can apply His teachings and His example in our lives.

The Savior Builds Us Up

President Brigham Young (1801–77) gave us some practical advice on how to recognize Him whom we follow. "The difference between God and the Devil," he said, "is that God creates and organizes, while the whole study of the Devil is to destroy."¹ In that contrast we have an important example

of the reality of "opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11).

Remember that our Savior, Jesus Christ, always builds us up and never tears us down. We should apply the power of that example in the ways we use our time, including our recreation and our diversions. Consider the themes of the books, magazines, movies, television, and music we in the world have made popular by our patronage. Do the things portrayed in our chosen entertainment build up or tear down the children of God?



During my lifetime I have seen a strong trend to set aside entertainment that builds up and dignifies the children of God and to replace it with portrayals and performances that are depressing, demeaning, and destructive. The powerful idea in this contrast is that whatever builds people up serves the cause of the Master and whatever tears people down serves the cause of the adversary. We support one cause or the other every day by our patronage and by our thoughts and desires. This should remind us of our responsibility to support what is good and motivate us toward doing this in a way that will be pleasing to Him whose suffering offers us hope and whose example gives us direction.



Suffering Is Part of Repentance

The central idea in the gospel of Jesus Christ—its most powerful idea, along with the universal Resurrection—is the Atonement of our Savior. We are His servants, and it is critical that we understand the role of the Atonement in our own lives and in the lives of those we teach. Essential to that understanding is an understanding of the relationship between justice and mercy and the Atonement, and the role of suffering and repentance in this divine process.

The awful demands of justice upon those who have violated the laws of God—the state of misery and endless torment described in the scriptures—can be intercepted and swept away by the Atonement of Jesus Christ. This relationship between justice on the one hand and mercy and the Atonement on the other is the core idea of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Book of Mormon teaches that the Savior does not redeem men *in* their sins: “The wicked remain as though there had been no redemption made, except it be the loosing of the bands of death” (Alma 11:41). The Savior came to redeem men *from* their sins upon

the conditions of repentance (see Helaman 5:11).

One of those conditions of repentance is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, including faith in and reliance upon His atoning sacrifice. As Amulek taught, “He that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption” (Alma 34:16). This obviously means that the unrepentant transgressor must suffer for his own sins. Does it also mean that a person who repents does not need to suffer at all because the entire punishment is borne by the Savior? That cannot be the meaning because it would be inconsistent with the Savior’s other teachings.

Alma 34:16 means that the person who repents does not need to suffer even as the Savior suffered for that sin. Sinners who are repenting will experience some suffering, but because of their repentance and the Atonement, they will not experience the full, exquisite extent of eternal torment the Savior suffered for those sins.

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), who gave such comprehensive teachings on repentance and forgiveness, said that personal suffering is a very important part of repentance. “One has not begun to repent until he has suffered intensely for his sins. . . . If a person hasn’t suffered,” he said, “he hasn’t repented.”²

The Savior taught this principle when He said His atoning sacrifice was for “all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered” (2 Nephi 2:7). The truly repentant sinner who comes to Christ with a broken heart and a contrite spirit has been through a process of personal pain and suffering for sin. He or she understands the meaning of

President Brigham Young taught, “The difference between God and the Devil is that God creates and organizes, while the whole study of the Devil is to destroy.”

Repentance has been the message in every dispensation.



sorrow Mormon described as “the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin” (Mormon 2:13).

How comforting is the promise in Isaiah 1:18 that “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.”

Alma’s statement that none but the truly penitent are saved. Alma the Younger certainly understood this. Read his accounts in Mosiah 27 and in Alma 36.

President Kimball said, “Very frequently people think they have repented and are worthy of forgiveness when all they have done is to express sorrow or regret at the unfortunate happening.”³

There is a big difference between the godly sorrow that worketh repentance (see 2 Corinthians 7:10), which involves personal suffering, and the easy and relatively painless sorrow for being caught or the misplaced

We Must Make a Mighty Change

Why is it necessary for us to suffer on the way to repentance for serious transgressions? We tend to think of the results of repentance as simply cleansing us from sin, but that is an incomplete view.

A person who sins is like a tree that bends easily in the wind. On a windy and rainy day, the tree bends so deeply against the ground that the leaves become soiled with mud, like sin. If we focus only on cleaning the leaves, the weakness in the tree that allowed it to bend and soil its leaves may remain. Similarly, a person who is merely sorry to be soiled by sin will sin again in the next high wind. The susceptibility to repetition continues until the tree has been strengthened.

When a person has gone through the process that results in what the scriptures call “a broken heart and a contrite spirit,” the Savior does more than cleanse that person

from sin. He gives him or her new strength. That strengthening is essential for us to realize the purpose of the cleansing, which is to return to our Heavenly Father. To be admitted to His presence, we must be more than clean. We must also be changed from a morally weak person who has sinned into a strong person with the spiritual stature to dwell in the presence of God. We must, as the scripture says, become “a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19). This is what the scripture means in its explanation that a person who has repented of his or her sins will forsake them (see D&C 58:43). Forsaking sins is more than resolving not to repeat them. Forsaking involves a fundamental change in the individual.

King Benjamin’s congregation described that mighty change by saying that they had “no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2). Persons who have had that kind of change in their hearts have attained the strength and stature to dwell with God. That is what we call being saved.

Repentance has been the message in every dispensation. The risen Lord emphasized this to the Nephites in explaining what He called “the gospel which I have given unto you” (3 Nephi 27:13): “Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day” (3 Nephi 27:20).

In modern revelation, the Lord explained, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, they who believe not on your words, and are not baptized in water in my name, for the remission of their sins, that they may receive the Holy Ghost, are damned, and shall not come into my Father’s kingdom where my Father and I am” (D&C 84:74).

Forgiveness Is Certain

I conclude with a message of hope that is true for all but especially needed by those who think that repentance

is too hard. Repentance is a continuing process needed by all because “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Repentance is possible, and then forgiveness is certain.

President Kimball said: “Sometimes . . . when a repentant one looks back and sees the ugliness, the loathsomeness of the transgression, he is almost overwhelmed and wonders, ‘Can the Lord ever forgive me? Can I ever forgive myself?’ But when one reaches the depths of despondency and feels the hopelessness of his position, and when he cries out to God for mercy in helplessness but in faith, there comes a still, small, but penetrating voice whispering to his soul, ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee.’”⁴

God will take away the guilt from our hearts through the merits of His Son.

When this happens, we have the fulfillment of the precious promise that God will take away the guilt from our hearts through the merits of His Son (see Alma 24:10). How comforting is the promise in Isaiah 1:18 that “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.”

How glorious God’s own promise that “he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more” (D&C 58:42).

I testify to you, my beloved brothers and sisters, that these words are true, that this message is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, the plan of God our Eternal Father, of which our Savior, Jesus Christ, is the author and finisher. I testify of Jesus Christ and of His prophet and of the Restoration of the gospel in these latter days through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith. ■

From an address given at the June 2001 mission presidents’ seminar in Provo, Utah.

NOTES

1. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 69.
2. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 88, 99.
3. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 87.
4. *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 344.

Through New Eyes

BY ANGIE BERGSTROM MILLER

*Somehow
having a black
eye helped
me see more
clearly.*

I look ugly,” I said, staring into the mirror in disbelief.

Gazing back at me was the same right eye as always. However, covering my left eye was the worst black eye I had ever seen.

“It’s not that bad. Really,” my friend Emily said unconvincingly.

I rolled my good eye at her and put the ice pack back on.

Only five minutes earlier my left eye had received an accidental but well-placed whack from my friend Janna’s elbow. Immediately my hands flew to my face, and I tried to stop myself from falling. Janna apologized. I could hear my friends surrounding me to find out if I was OK.

Though I was in pain, I didn’t realize what had actually happened until I moved my hands and heard every person in the room gasp.

“What?” I asked. No one answered.

I ran to the mirror. Within seconds of the contact, the skin around my eye had swelled to four times its normal size. Bright red blood filled the bruise.

“How am I going to face everyone?” I said, grabbing an ice pack from Janna’s hand. She bit her lip and apologized for about the hundredth time. I held the ice firmly to my eye,

hoping the bruise would go away by the next morning.

Unfortunately, while some of the swelling did go down and the redness disappeared by the next morning, the puffy bruise had turned to a deep rose color. I looked ugly, and I felt even uglier.

I tried to cover my eye with makeup, but it just made the bruise look purplish. And nothing could help the swelling. I finally threw a hat on and wore it so I could just barely see from under it.

That day at school, I felt as though everyone were staring. I refused to look anyone in the eye. For days I couldn’t think about anything else, despite my friends’ attempts to cheer me up.

On Sunday I was grouchy because I couldn’t wear my hat to church. But everything changed during a lesson in Sunday School.

“Pray to see yourself as He sees you,” the teacher said, speaking about the Atonement and individual worth.

I touched my bruise, thinking to myself, “He sees me as a girl with an ugly black eye.” Then, as I stopped pitying myself, my perspective changed, and I wondered, “How does Heavenly Father see me?”



Tears filled my eyes as I reflected on the love He has not only for others but for me. “He sees me as His daughter, who is worth the life of His Son,” I realized.

I felt the Spirit testify of the great worth of my soul as a daughter of God. I remembered a scripture I had learned in seminary. I opened my scriptures and found it in 1 Samuel 16:7: “Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; . . . for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” What I looked like on the outside was not as important as who I was on the inside.

My mind-set changed again as I looked around the room and felt an immense amount of love for the people I saw around me. The warmth of Heavenly Father’s love filled me, and for a moment I think I saw my classmates, in a small way, as Heavenly Father sees them—as His children.

I felt peace and comfort the rest of the Sabbath day, now not caring what others were thinking. I loved them, and I looked them all in the eye—with both of my eyes. ■



A TRUTH FIXED DEEP IN YOUR SOUL

“You are literally a spirit daughter of heavenly parents with a divine nature and an eternal destiny. That surpassing truth should be fixed deep in your soul

and be fundamental to every decision you make as you grow into mature womanhood. There could never be a greater authentication of your dignity, your worth, your privileges, and your promise. Your Father in Heaven knows your name and knows your circumstance. He hears your prayers. He knows your hopes and dreams, including your fears and frustrations. And He knows what you can become through faith in Him.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “To Young Women,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 28.

Elder Quentin L. Cook

A Willing Heart and Mind

BY ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

It was fire drill day at a Logan, Utah, elementary school, and fire drill captain Joe Cook, a stalwart sixth-grade student leader, was determined to post a good time. He was pleased when, at the ringing of the alarm, students began to evacuate the building rapidly. “This will be record-setting time,” young Joe thought. “We’re going to go down in history.” Then just as fame seemed within his grasp, Joe heard the announcement: “Someone is still in the building. The building *is not* clear.”

As record-breaking time ebbed away, Joe Cook finally saw one lone first-grader emerge from the building. It was his little brother, Quentin! Joe had been denied his rightful place in Cache Valley history by his own flesh and blood!

Fuming, Joe barked, “What on earth were you doing?”

Quentin held up a pair of large, worn boots and said, “Joe, you know that [and he mentioned a friend’s name] sometimes has to wear hand-me-down shoes that are too big for him.



When the fire drill rang, he took off running and ran right out of these. He didn’t want to ruin the drill, so he left them and ran outside barefoot. I went back to get his boots for him because I didn’t want his feet to be cold in the snow.”

Such a tender story reveals how committed Elder Quentin La Mar Cook has been from his youth onward to matters of the heart and to the principles taught by the Savior. “I have known Quentin all my life,” says childhood friend and future missionary companion



Lee Burke, “and he has never done anything that would dishonor himself, his family, or his Church.” That the Lord knew the destiny of this young man was obvious to his beloved mother, Bernice, when her patriarchal blessing revealed that her sons “would bring

honor” to the family and “be mighty in forwarding the work of the Lord.” So those sons have done, and so Elder Quentin L. Cook will continue to do in his call as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.





Right: With Elder Jeffrey R. Holland and Elder Marion D. Hanks, their former mission president and former member of the Seventy. Opposite page, from top: Eight-year-old Quentin Cook (at left with his family) and at ages 19 and 3.

Learning from Others

Born on September 8, 1940, in Logan, Utah, to J. Vernon and Bernice Kimball Cook, Quentin learned from his father at a young age the importance of setting goals and working toward them.

“My father had three rules,” Elder Cook says. “First, we had to have worthwhile goals. Second, we could change our goals at any time. But third, *whatever* goal we chose, we had to work diligently toward it.”

His frequent talks with his father taught him to observe

those around him and apply the best in them to himself. “People have so much to offer us if we are willing to learn from them,” Elder Cook says. “That is why it is important to surround yourself with good people.”

Growing up in Logan, he had that opportunity. For example, he recalls listening intently as Elder L. Tom Perry, now of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, then a young man recently returned from World War II, spoke in sacrament meeting about his experiences. That inspiring moment remains one of his earliest and strongest childhood memories.

As a young man, Elder Cook loved sports, helping his high school teams win statewide recognition in basketball and football. His interests also included debate and politics. As a 16-year-old, he was one of two young men elected to represent the state at a national event. There he had the opportunity to meet current and future U.S. presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, and Gerald R. Ford. Seeing them at work in the law-making process impressed him deeply and helped influence his decision to study law.

Before his mission Elder Cook attended Utah State University, where he was elected to a student-body office with his friend W. Rolfe Kerr, who would later be called to the First Quorum of the Seventy and now serves as Commissioner of the Church Educational System.

From 1960 to 1962 Elder Cook served in the British Mission, the same mission to which I would be called.

We were profoundly affected by our mission president, Elder Marion D. Hanks, then of the

First Council of the Seventy. To all of his missionaries, he emphasized discipleship and determination. He taught us to love the Savior, to cherish the Book of Mormon, to be true to the Church and the gospel for the rest of our lives.





Now, more than 45 years later, it is a rare occasion to have two former missionary companions serving together in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

The list of good men and women from whom he had the opportunity to learn goes on, but Elder Cook points out that many of them didn't hold lofty positions at the time. They were just good people.

"We can learn from doctrine, and we can learn from good examples," Elder Cook says. "But when you find people who have put those two together, whose lives are consistent with what they have learned in the gospel of Jesus Christ, that is a wonderful combination. And these people don't have to be General Authorities or have some high occupation. All walks of life produce that kind of people."

The Influence of Family

Though Elder Cook has been blessed to find good associations throughout his life, those with the greatest influence have been members of his own family.

He is grateful for a loving, involved father and a mother who "loved the Savior. They did everything they could to raise us the right way." He appreciates the love and support of his brother, Joe, and sister, Susan.

One of the pivotal experiences of his life happened when he was 15 years old. His brother, Joe, wanted to serve a mission, but his father—a good man who had lost interest in Church activity—felt Joe should instead attend medical school. Joe and Quentin respected their father highly, so they sequestered themselves to consider his counsel.

They talked well into the night, balancing

Logan Student Is Elected To Boys Nation

An outstanding Logan High school student, Quentin Cook, was today elected one of the "E. S. Senators" at Boys Nation, a result of events at Camp W. G. Williams.

This selection is the top honor bestowed at the annual youth conference of the nation.

The other Senator is William McDonald of West Jordan High. The victory was the result of a speech by Quentin, who gave thanks to his parents, D. C. and Susan, and to his school.

They were set to a dinner banquet that celebrated the 100th anniversary of the discovery of gold in California. The dinner was held at the Elks Club of San Francisco.



STATE SENATOR Quentin Cook, one of the "E. S. Senators" at Boys Nation.

the pros and cons of each option. The bottom line, they decided, was this: If the Church is just another good institution, Joe could help people better by going to medical school. However, if the Savior truly lived, if Joseph Smith truly was a prophet, if the Church he organized under God's direction truly is the Church of Jesus

Christ, if the Book of Mormon is true,

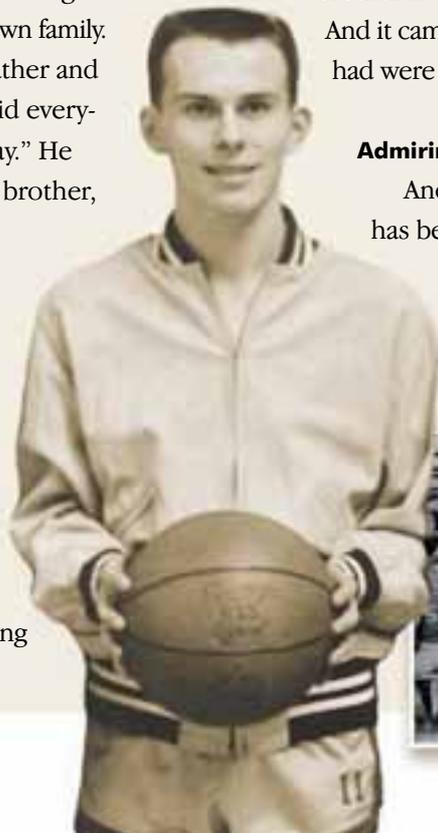
then Joe's obligation was clear. The next morning Joe approached his father with that reasoning and bore his testimony. He left for his mission soon after, with his father's support and his mother's joyful blessing.

That conversation profoundly affected young Quentin. He had always had a testimony of the Savior. However, Joseph Smith, the Church, the Book of Mormon—these were another matter to a 15-year-old. He believed, but he had yet to receive a spiritual witness that confirmed their certain reality.

After he and Joe parted that night, Quentin went to his room, knelt in prayer, and asked for the same witness his brother had, a witness he desired with all his heart. And it came in a way so powerful that any doubts he had were swept away forever.

Admiring Mary

Another of the great influences in his life has been his wife, Mary. "It would be hard to find anybody in the whole world who is as good and righteous and bright as she is," her husband says. "She has a wonderful sense of humor."



The Cooks' daughter, Kathryn Cook Knight, reinforces that assessment. "Dad was a perfect father," she says. "I adore everything about him. But my mother is a saint."



Sister Cook is very gifted musically, having taught music and filling her home with music. In fact, Elder Cook first became acquainted with Mary at a seventh-grade talent assembly. He remembers, "This little towheaded girl gets up and sings 'On the Sunny Side of the Street.' Even in junior high school she had a remarkably mature, deep voice. I was absolutely amazed. And that song could have been the theme for the rest of her life. She has a wonderfully bright, sunny disposition."

During their schooling, the two had numerous opportunities to work together. In junior high he was elected student-body president, and she was elected student-body vice president. They were in debate together. And as senior-class president in high school, he worked with her as a student-body officer.

"We were friends long before we were anything else," Elder Cook recalls. "I admired her before I fell in love with her, and marrying her was the best decision I have ever made."

Elder and Sister Cook were married in the Logan Utah Temple on November 30, 1962.

Loving People from All Walks of Life

After he graduated from Utah State University in 1963 with a degree in political science, Quentin and Mary moved to California, where he earned his Juris Doctor degree from Stanford University in 1966. Elder Cook then joined the San Francisco Bay Area law firm of Carr, McClellan, Ingersoll, Thompson and Horn.

It was there that he decided that "what I believed and who I was had to be visible." In his work in business law and health care, Elder Cook associated with well-educated and affluent people. The Cooks' son Larry remembers being touched that his father was so deeply respected among his business and civic associates. "I attended the retirement dinners honoring Dad when he left his law firm and later when he stepped down from the leadership of a health-care system," Larry recalls. "I was in awe that colleague after colleague, none of whom were members of the Church, spoke—often with tears—about what Dad meant to them, how he had mentored and nurtured them, how he had selflessly fostered their careers without any sense that it was taking time or energy away from his own."

Elder and Sister Cook raised their family (left and below) in California, where he worked in business law and health care. Above: With Sutter Health business associate Van Johnson. Opposite page: In high school Elder Cook was elected to Boys Nation, where he helped place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He also starred on his school's basketball and football teams.



At the same time, his Church service led to treasured associations with members whose cultural backgrounds were diverse and whose economic status stretched between broad extremes. Through both professional and Church experience, he developed the ability to understand and relate to people from all walks of life, and his love grew for all people.

He was called to serve as a bishop, then as a counselor in the stake presidency (to his beloved older brother, Joe!), and later as stake president. During that time he worked with not only English-speaking wards but congregations that spoke Spanish, Tongan, Samoan, Tagalog, Mandarin, and Cantonese.

Some of the members had little education and less money. But they had much to give. He remembers fondly “one of the great men I knew” who delivered bread for a living and was called into a bishopric. The man had seen ward leaders taking briefcases to their meetings, and so he decided to take one too. But since he had nothing to put in it yet, he filled it with sourdough bread to share. This humble man’s willingness to serve was surpassed only by love for others.

“Specific occupations or levels of education aren’t what I’m talking about when I say learn from good people,” Elder Cook says. “You can find good people everywhere and learn from them all.”

Being Prepared at Home

Raising their three children in the San Francisco area with his wife, Elder Cook was careful to develop a close relationship with each of his children in

spite of the demands of work and Church callings.

“It is important,” he says, “particularly for those who have leadership positions in the Church, that they have a relationship with their children where the children

can see the virtues they have been applied in an entirely different setting than church—whether it’s working in the yard or playing sports or doing something together outdoors.”

Remembering an example of love demonstrated, not simply taught, the Cooks’ second son, Joe, recalls that his father was uneasy about Joe’s driving back to San Francisco after finishing his first-semester exams at Brigham Young University. It would be late December, the roads might be snow-bound, and he would be tired. At the end of the semester Joe answered a knock on the door of his dormitory to

see his father standing there, having flown up from the Bay Area to be his son’s driving companion for the trip home. Joe says that was not only a powerful manifestation of his dad’s love for him but the talk time they had on the trip home—filled with discussions of various gospel principles and repeated testimonies of the Savior—became one of the truly formative

moments in young Joe’s vision of what he wanted by way of testimony and for his own future fatherhood.

As his father had done, Elder Cook taught his children to set goals and evaluate how their actions and activities affected reaching those goals. The Cooks also set goals as a family that were focused first on the gospel. Elder Cook believes that if a family observes appropriate



religious practices, such as family prayer, family scripture study, and regular family home evenings, children can be raised righteously anywhere.

The key, Elder Cook says, is private, individual religious observance. "Walking by my children's doors and seeing them studying the scriptures or on their knees praying was the single most important thing to me as a father," he says.

But individual religious observance is more likely to develop "when your family religious observance makes it clear to your children that all other life goals, such as occupation and education, are secondary to having a testimony of the Savior and living righteously."

Preparing to Serve

During three decades in California, Elder Cook moved from one responsible position to another, both in his career and in the Church. He moved from associate to partner to managing partner in his law firm and then was hired as president and CEO of California Healthcare System, which subsequently merged with Sutter Health, where he became vice chairman.

During that time he served as a regional representative and Area Authority before being called as a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy in 1996. He was called to the First Quorum in 1998.

As a General Authority, Elder Cook served in the Philippines/Micronesia Area Presidency and as President of the Pacific Islands and the North America Northwest Areas of the Church. His love for the faithful Saints around the world continued to grow.

As Executive Director of the Church's Missionary Department, he played an important



role in developing the new missionary guide, *Preach My Gospel*. But Elder Cook takes no credit for it. "The hand of the Lord was in it right from day one," he says. "Every single member of the First Presidency and the Twelve made incredible contributions."

Ready and Willing

Elder Cook is well prepared to serve in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. His willingness to learn from others and his lifetime of selfless service enable him to offer the Lord his heart and willing mind.

"I have revered, sustained, and honored all of those who have been Apostles," he says. "Their influence on me has been profound. I don't know what my contribution will be, but I do know that Jesus Christ is the Savior, that God is our Father in Heaven, that Joseph Smith is the prophet of this dispensation, and that we have a prophet today. That knowledge is the center of my life."

We can be certain that knowledge will continue as the center of Elder Quentin L. Cook's apostolic ministry. ■

For more information about Elder Cook, see www.quentinlcook.lds.org.

Of his wife, Mary, Elder Cook says, "Marrying her was the best decision I have ever made." Below: After the October 2007 general conference session when he was sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Opposite page: Elder and Sister Cook's children and grandchildren.



Questions & Answers

“How should I respond when my friends say that Jesus Christ was a great moral teacher but not the Savior or the Son of God?”

L I A H O N A

You could begin by sharing your own brief testimony of Jesus Christ. Let your friends know that you agree that the Lord was a great moral teacher but that you also believe the scriptures, which testify that He is the Savior and Son of God. Explain that your testimony brings you peace and confidence. Let your friends know that they can have that same knowledge if they want to. If they are not interested, there is little you can say that will convince them. Just cheerfully move on to another subject.

If they want to know the truth, your testimony may catch their interest and give you a chance to teach them how to gain a testimony of their own. They will need to study the scriptures, hear the testimonies of others, and pray sincerely about what they have learned so the Holy Ghost can reveal the truth to them. You can help them get started by sharing these testimonies:

1. Heavenly Father Himself testified that Jesus Christ is His Son (see Matthew 3:17; 17:5; 3 Nephi 11:7; Moses 6:52, 57). The most

Encourage your friends to gain a testimony by studying the scriptures, praying with faith, and trying to live the Lord’s teachings.

Refer your friends to scriptures that teach and testify of the Savior.

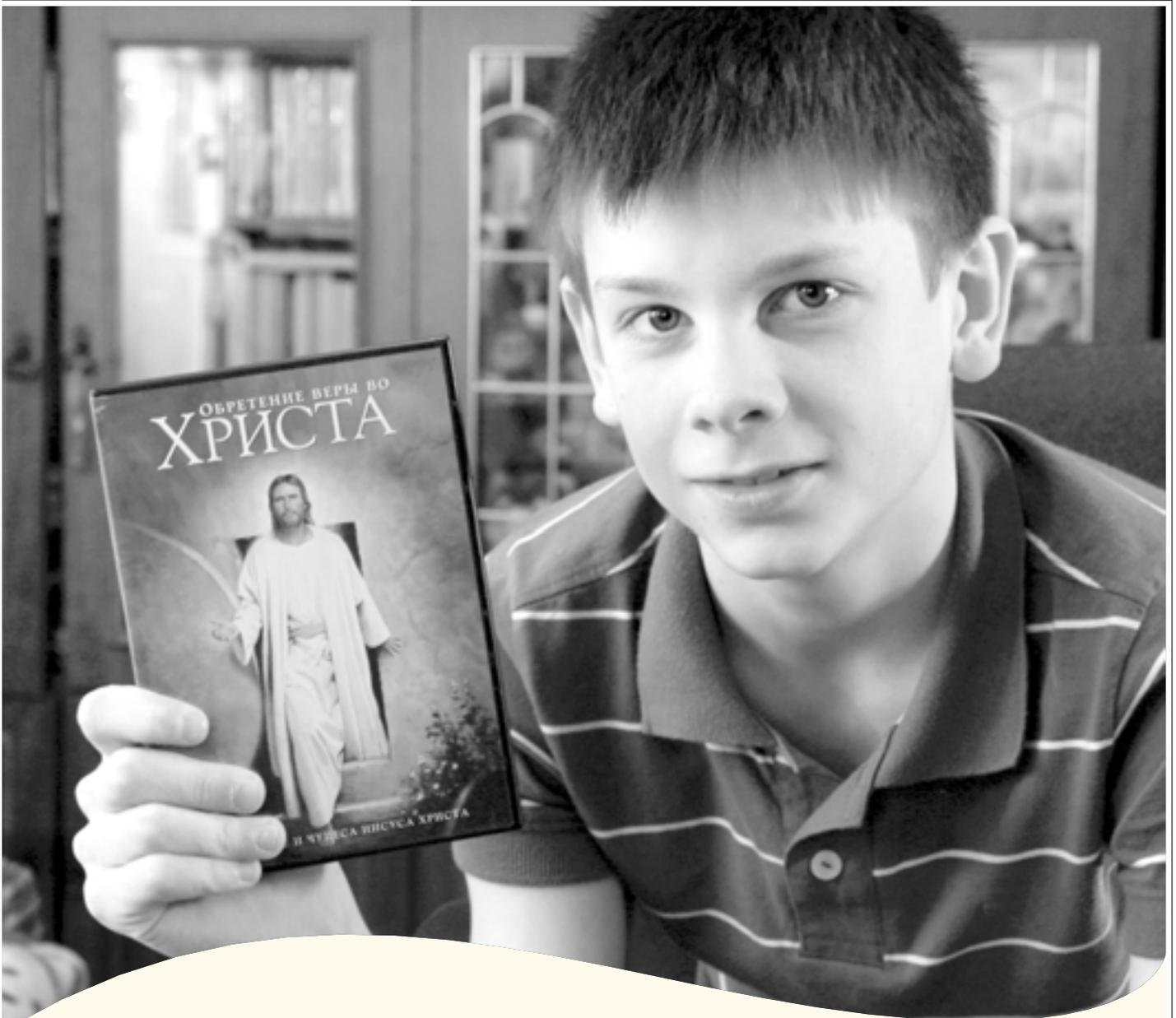
Respect their opinions—“let them worship how, where, or what they may” (Articles of Faith 1:11)—but also let them know of your testimony of Jesus Christ.

The Church DVD Finding Faith in Christ (item no. 54041) is available through your local distribution center or from www.ldscatalog.com.

recent experience came in 1820 when Joseph Smith heard Heavenly Father say, pointing to the Savior, “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

2. If your friends believe that Jesus was a great moral teacher, then invite them to look at His teachings and testimony. He said things that only the Savior could say, such as, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). To be a moral teacher, He must teach the truth, and the Lord Himself testified, “I am Jesus Christ the Son of God” (3 Nephi 9:15).

3. Prophets also testify of the Savior. For instance, the Apostle Peter testified: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). Invite your friends to listen to general conference, or give them a copy of the March 2008 issue of the *Liabona*. In that issue and in conference, living apostles and prophets—special witnesses of Jesus Christ—bear testimony that He is the Savior and Son of God.



Finally, you could tell your friends why we need a Savior. Explain that sin and death keep us from returning to Heavenly Father. Only the Son of God could perform the Atonement, making forgiveness and the Resurrection possible. Testify that without the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we couldn't enjoy peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

READERS



I would tell my friends that Jesus truly was a great moral teacher. One of the most important things He taught was that He was the promised Savior and Son of God. I do not think a person who would lie and make up such a story could be a great moral teacher. My friends must decide if He was a man of honesty. I believe Jesus was who He claimed to be, the Son of

God. I have learned that for myself through prayer and scripture study, and I would invite my friends to do the same.
Jacob J., 13, Arizona, USA

One time I was with my friends, and one of them said he didn't believe Jesus Christ was everything people said He was and that the Bible could have been written by anyone. I never felt the Spirit so strongly as when I said, "I know it's true. I know it." Everyone was quiet. My friend said he wished he could have that

same knowledge. It was the perfect chance to share with him how to obtain a testimony. Pray for Heavenly Father to guide you so you can be an instrument in His hands. Don't be afraid to share your testimony.

Laura R., 20, Asunción, Paraguay



Let him or her view the Church DVD Finding Faith in Christ. I've seen lots of people who came to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He carried out the infinite Atonement. Also, share your testimony because it will give spiritual witness through the Holy Ghost.

Elder Mahunray Ada, 22, Philippines Manila Mission

In this situation, it is not worth trying to fight and insist that Jesus Christ truly was the Savior. I would try to explain by sharing facts and, at the same time, by testifying that Jesus is the Savior and the Son of God. I am certain that God will give you support, and the Spirit will definitely help you find thoughts and necessary words (see Hebrews 10:15-16; 3 Nephi 28:11).

Elena F., 19, Ulianovsk, Russia



You can share your testimony about Christ. You can tell them what you believe and share passages from the Bible. If they're not interested, you just have to let it go and not let it dampen your testimony.

Cortney C., 16, Arizona, USA

I wouldn't argue, but I would share my testimony of the Savior and in this way help them understand that not only did He die and was



I testify that He is a teacher of truth—but He is more than a teacher. He is the Exemplar of the perfect life—but He is more than an exemplar. He is the Great Physician—but He is more than a physician. He is the literal Savior of the world, the Son of God, the Prince of Peace, the Holy One of Israel, even the risen Lord.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Your Personal Influence,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 23.

resurrected, but He also suffered for us so we could repent. He gave us the example of how we could make it back to where He is and live eternally with Him. Also help them know that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ.

Cristopher F., 18, Talagante, Chile

Never be afraid to share your testimony of the Savior. Testify to them that you know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He truly did die for our sins. The Spirit will testify to them that He is the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. It just might be your testimony that convinces them of who He really is.

Chelsea N., 18, Nevada, USA

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

NEXT QUESTION

“My parents aren't active in the Church. How do I stay strong without their support?”

Send your answer by May 15, 2008, to:

Liahona, Questions & Answers 5/08

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: liahona@ldschurch.org

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter:

FULL NAME

BIRTH DATE

WARD (or branch)

STAKE (or district)

I grant permission to print response and photo:

SIGNATURE

PARENT'S SIGNATURE (if you are under 18)

Marriage between a Man and a Woman Is Ordained of God



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

Why Is Marriage between a Man and a Woman Ordained of God?

D&C 49:16–17: “They twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation; and that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made.”

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president: “We believe in the formation of eternal families. That means we believe in getting married. . . . We know that in the great premortal conflict we sided with our Savior, Jesus Christ, to preserve our potential to belong to eternal families” (“What Latter-day Saint Women Do Best: Stand Strong and Immovable,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 110).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Two compelling doctrinal reasons help us to understand why eternal marriage is essential to the Father’s plan.

“Reason 1: *The natures of male and female spirits complete and perfect each other, and therefore men*

and women are intended to progress together toward exaltation. . . .

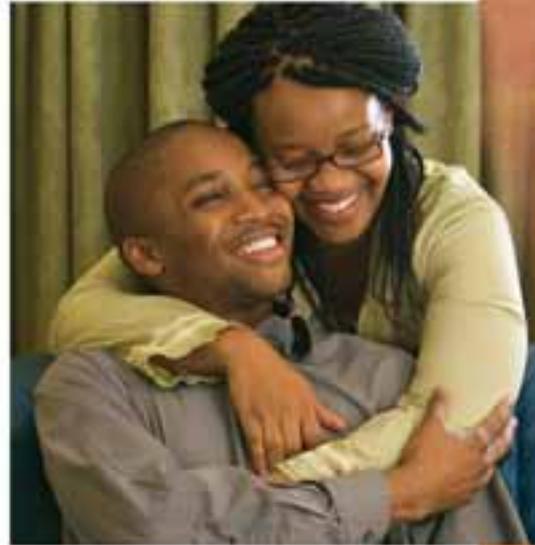
“Reason 2: *By divine design, both a man and a woman are needed to bring children into mortality and to provide the best setting for the rearing and nurturing of children. . . .*

“As men and women, as husbands and wives, and as Church leaders, one of our paramount responsibilities is to help young men and women learn about and prepare for righteous marriage through our personal example. As young women and men observe worthiness, loyalty, sacrifice, and the honoring of covenants in our marriages, then those youth will seek to emulate the same principles. . . . As we consider the importance of our personal example, do you and I discern areas where we need to improve?” (“Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” *Liabona*, June 2006, 51–52, 54; *Ensign*, June 2006, 83–84, 86).

What Is My Responsibility Because I Know That Marriage Is Ordained of God?

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Let us consider . . . actions that would strengthen a marriage. . . .

“To *appreciate*. . . . Look for the good in each other and sincerely pay compliments to one another. . . .



“Suggestion number two—to *communicate*. . . . Couples need private time to observe, to talk, and really listen to each other. They need to cooperate—helping each other as equal partners. . . .

“My third suggestion is to *contemplate*. . . . Frequent participation in temple service and regular family scripture study nourish a marriage and strengthen faith within a family” (“Nurturing Marriage,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 37–38).

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Through your obedience and continuing faith in Jesus Christ and your understanding of the whole plan of happiness, even if important parts of it aren’t fulfilled in your life now, they will be yours in the Lord’s due time. I also promise you that you can have significant growth and happiness now in your present circumstances. As a daughter or son of God, live whatever portion of the plan you can to the best of your ability” (“The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 75). ■

By Divine Design

ASIA

Japan

South Korea

Taiwan

We believe the family is ordained of God. Our understanding of the family is declared in the prophetic guide “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”

With so much of sophistry that is passed off as truth, with so much of deception concerning standards and values, with so much of allurements and enticement to take on the slow stain of the world, we have felt to warn and forewarn. In furtherance of this we of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles now issue a proclamation to the Church and to the world as a declaration and reaffirmation of the standards, doctrines, and practices relative to the family which the prophets, seers, and revelators of this church have repeatedly stated throughout its history.”¹

With these words, President Gordon B. Hinckley introduced “The Family: A Proclamation to the World”² at the general Relief Society meeting held on September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

“We commend to all a careful, thoughtful, and prayerful reading of this proclamation,” he urged. “The strength of any nation is rooted within the walls of its homes. We urge our people everywhere to strengthen their families in conformity with these time-honored values.”³



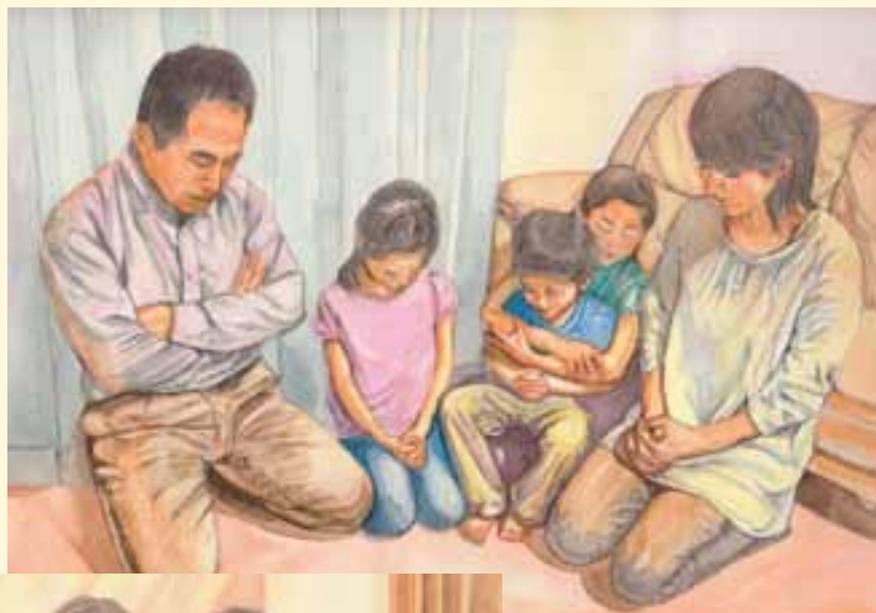
“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Following are images of Asian people, whose culture is known for their “intense and devoted family relationships,” which include “respect for elders and high standards for children.”⁴ These images are representative of Latter-day Saints worldwide and depict important teachings found in the family proclamation.



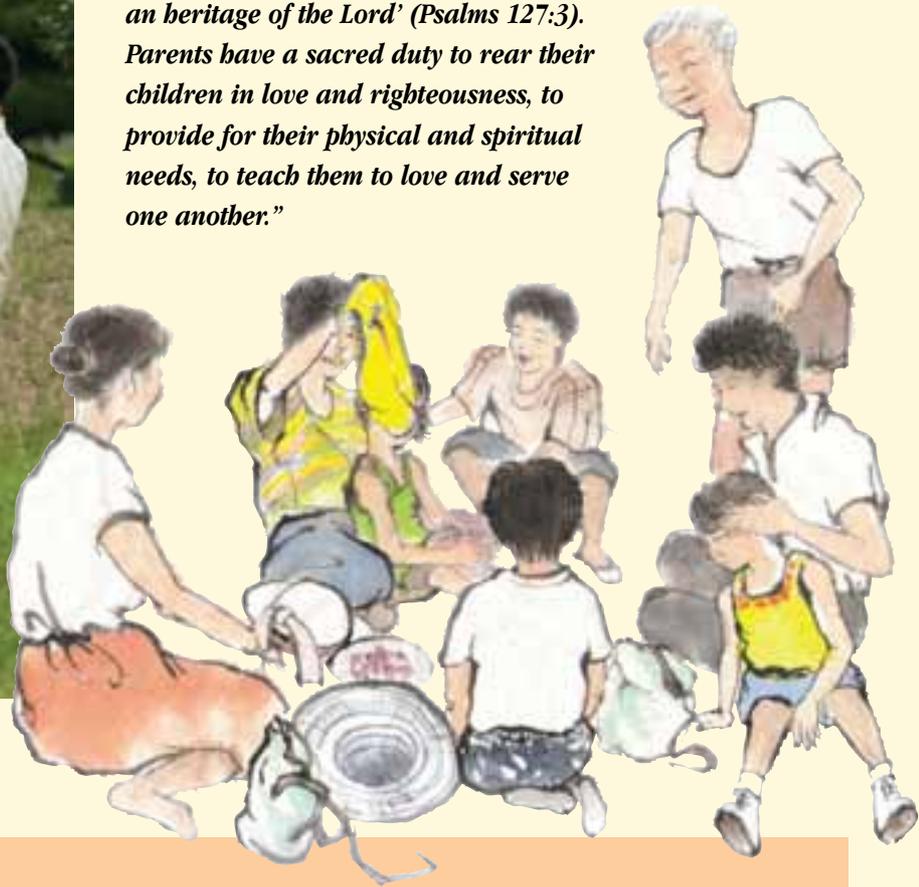
“The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.”

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





“Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. ‘Children are an heritage of the Lord’ (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another.”



FAMILY BLESSINGS FROM FAMILY HOME EVENING

“Six years ago I moved to Tokyo as a young single Latter-day Saint woman. Family home evenings have helped me feel a part of my gospel family. At first I held family home evening with my two roommates. Then, when I began living alone, I held family home evening every Monday by myself. I read the scriptures, prepared my Sunday lesson, or watched a Church video.

“Now our ward holds a monthly family home evening group for single members after our Sunday meetings, and I really look forward to it. I am able to spend time talking to brothers and sisters who, because of their Church callings, I would otherwise

not have the opportunity to get to know.

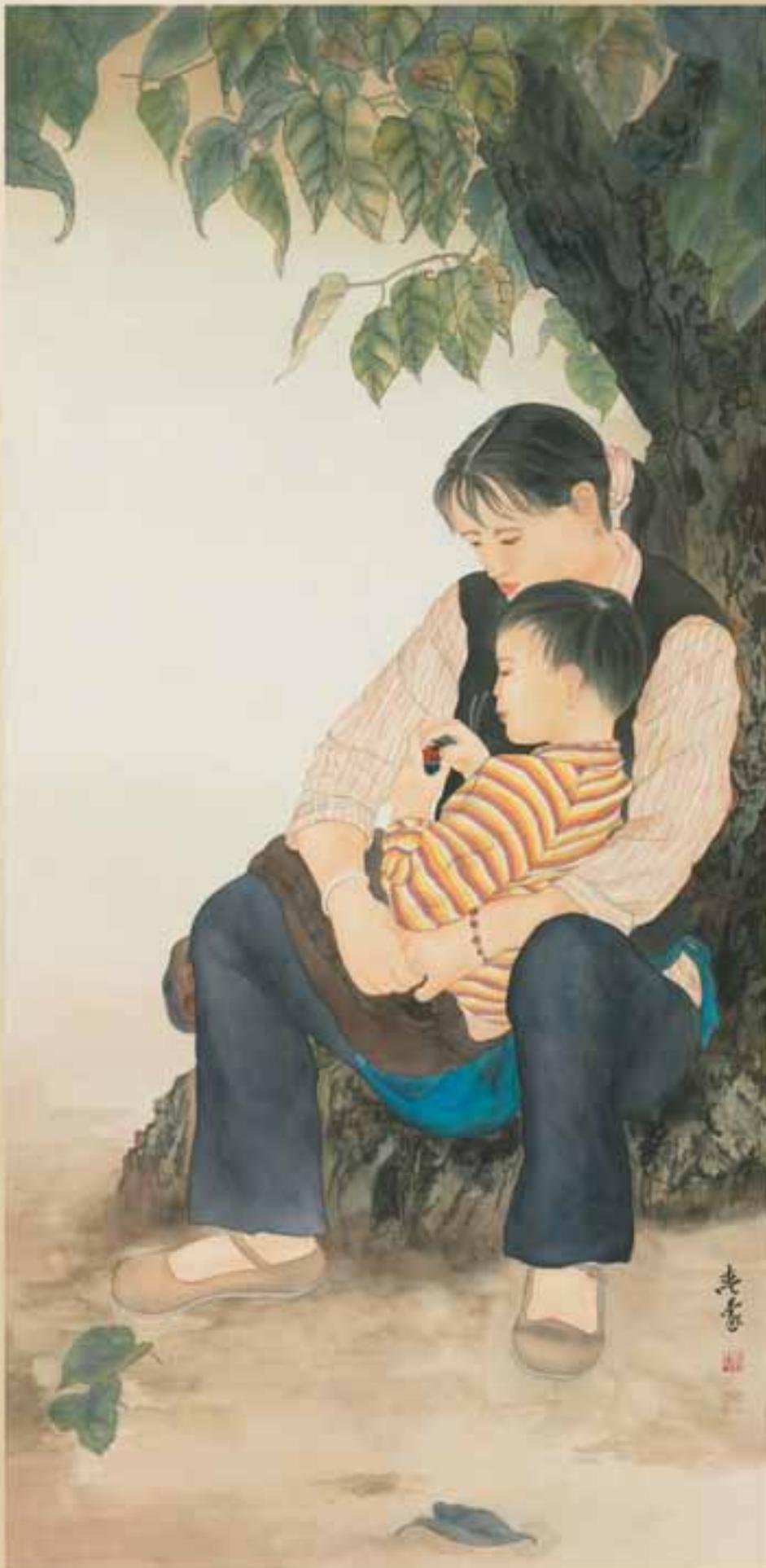
“Within our stake, another ward holds a family home evening group every week for single members. I have recently started attending it. Sometimes the missionaries and their investigators attend. The lessons each week are well-prepared, spiritual, and I learn a lot. Often I think of something I learned and say, ‘OK! I’ll give it a try!’ While refreshments are being served, it’s fun to talk with everyone.

“Spending time with friends who share the same faith is important to me. Just as it says in Moses 7:18, ‘And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in

righteousness; and there was no poor among them.’ When our hearts and minds are one, many blessings are poured out upon us. And through that, the faith and testimonies of each person in attendance are strengthened.

“I know the Lord loves us. I am grateful for our prophets and continuing revelation. I am thankful that the Lord has given us family home evening through His prophets. The experiences I am having and the things I am learning through family home evening as a single Latter-day Saint will also be a blessing to me when I have my own family.”

Mieko Takahashi, Tokyo, Japan



“By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.”

NOTES

1. “Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 100.
2. *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
3. *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 101.
4. “The Asians at Berkeley,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 30, 1995, p. A14, quoted in *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 99.



Worthy Music, Worthy Thoughts

BY PRESIDENT BOYD K. PACKER
President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

When I was a boy, we lived in a home surrounded by an orchard. There never seemed to be enough water for the trees. The ditches, always freshly plowed in the spring, would soon fill with weeds. One day, in charge of the irrigation turn, I found myself in trouble. As the water moved down the rows choked with weeds, it would flood in every direction. I worked in the puddles trying to build up the bank. As



soon as I had one break patched up, there would be another. A neighbor came through the orchard. He watched for a moment, and then with a few vigorous strokes of the shovel, he cleared the ditch and allowed the water to course through the channel he had made. He said, “If you want the water to stay in its course, you’ll have to make a place for it to go.”

I have come to know that thoughts, like water, will stay on course if we make a place for them to go. Otherwise, our thoughts follow the course of least resistance, always seeking the lower levels. Probably the greatest challenge and the most difficult thing you will face in mortal life is to learn to control your thoughts. In the Bible it says, as a man “thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). Those who can control their thoughts have conquered themselves.

The Mind Is like a Stage

As you learn to control your thoughts, you can overcome habits, even degrading personal habits. You can gain courage, conquer fear, and have a happy life. I had been told a hundred times or more as I grew up



Thoughts, like water, will stay on course if we make a place for them to go. As you learn to control your thoughts, you can gain courage, conquer fear, and have a happy life.

You cannot afford to fill your minds with the unworthy music of our day. It is not harmless. It can welcome onto the stage of your mind unworthy thoughts.

that thoughts must be controlled, but no one told me how. I've thought about this over the years and have decided that the mind is like a stage. During every waking moment the curtain is up. There is always some act being performed on that stage. It may be a comedy, a tragedy, interesting or dull, good or bad; but always there is some act playing on the stage of your mind.

Have you noticed that shady little thoughts may creep in from the wings and attract your attention in the middle of almost

any performance and without any real intent on your part? These delinquent thoughts will try to upstage everybody. If you permit them to go on, all thoughts of any virtue will leave the stage. You will be left, because you consented to it, to the influence of unrighteous thoughts. If you yield to them, they will enact for you on the stage of your mind anything to the limits of your toleration. They may enact themes of bitterness, jealousy, or hatred. They may be vulgar, immoral, even depraved. When they have the stage, if you let them, they will devise the most clever persuasions to hold your attention. They can make it

interesting all right, even convince you that they are innocent, for they are but thoughts. What do you do at a time like that, when the stage of your mind is commandeered by the imps of unclean thinking, whether they be the gray ones that seem almost clean or the filthy ones that leave no room for doubt? If you can fill your mind with clean and constructive thoughts, then there will be no room for these persistent imps, and they will leave.

How Do You Control Your Thoughts?

I realize that in today's world it's often difficult to keep your mind filled with worthy thoughts. This takes careful control. However, it can be done when you make a safe place for your thoughts to go. I've found a way to make such a place, and I'd like to share it



with you. It has to do with music—worthy music. A wise man once said, “Music is one of the most forceful instruments for governing the mind.” Whether it governs in a



positive way or a negative way is determined by what it brings onto the stage of your mind. If you can say that a song is spiritually inspiring

or that it urges you to see yourself in a more noble perspective, the music is worthwhile. If it merely entertains or lifts your spirits, then it also has a useful place. But if it makes you want to respond in a carnal, sensual way or to consider unrighteous desires, then that music should be avoided. It is not worthy.

There have always been those who take the beautiful things and corrupt them. It’s happened with nature; it’s happened with literature, drama, art; and it certainly has happened with music. For centuries it has been obvious that when the wrong kind of

words are set to appealing music, songs can lead men astray. And music itself, by the way it is played, by its beat, by its intensity, can dull the spiritual sensitivity.

We are living at a time when society is undergoing a subtle, but powerful, change. It is becoming more and more permissive in what it will accept in its entertainment. As a result, much of the music being performed by popular entertainers today seems to be more intended to agitate than to pacify, more to excite than to calm. Some musicians appear to openly promote unrighteous thoughts and action.

Young people, you cannot afford to fill your minds with the unworthy music of our day. It is not harmless. It can

welcome onto the stage of your mind unworthy thoughts and set a tempo to which they dance and to which you may act. You degrade yourself when you identify with those things that at times surround extremes in music—the shabbiness, the irreverence, the immorality, the addictions. Such music is not worthy of you.

Be selective in what you listen to and produce. It becomes part of you. It controls your thoughts and influences the lives of others as well. I would recommend that you go through your music and throw away that which promotes degrading thoughts. Such music ought not to belong

to young people concerned with spiritual development.

I don’t mean by this that all of today’s music produces unworthy thoughts. There is music today that builds understanding of people; music that inspires courage; music that awakens feelings of spirituality, reverence, happiness, and awareness of beauty.

Choose Inspiring Music

The Lord has said, “For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be

answered with a blessing upon their heads” (D&C 25:12). The First Presidency of the Church, commenting on the influence of music in our lives, has said: “Through music, man’s ability to express himself extends beyond the limits of the spoken language in both subtlety and power. Music can be used to exalt and inspire or to carry messages of degradation and destruction. It is therefore important that as Latter-day Saints we at all times apply the principles of the gospel and seek the guidance of the Spirit in selecting the music with which we surround ourselves.”¹¹

Let me say to you young leaders, pay careful attention to the music you plan for your activities. Consult with your advisers as selections are made. You need the benefit of



their wisdom,
for the breach
between the Church and
the world, with the extremes
of its music, is wider in our day than
ever in generations past.

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961),
one of our great Church leaders, explained it this
way: “We may not, under our duty, provide or tolerate
an unwholesome amusement on the theory that if we do
not provide it the youth will go elsewhere to get it. We
could hardly set up a roulette table in
the Church amusement hall for gam-
bling purposes, with the excuse that
if we do not provide it the youth
would go to a gambling hall to gam-
ble. We can never really hold our
youth thus.”

Nor is it proper to provide the
kind of music and atmosphere that
attracts youth in the world. You must
stand firm and not compromise with
what you know is right and good;
you must have the courage to turn
the lights up and the music down
when they don’t contribute to the
kind of atmosphere that produces
worthy thoughts; and you must insist
on high standards of dress and per-
formance from those who entertain
as well as those who attend.

I would counsel you to develop
your talents, and if you have musical
talent, think of this: There is much
music yet to be created, much to be
performed. Yours can be the worthy music that will be
uplifting, that will spread the gospel, touch hearts, give
comfort and strength to troubled minds.

There are many examples, both ancient and mod-
ern, that attest to the influence of righteous music.

Discouragement disappeared and minds were filled with
peace as the words to “Come, Come, Ye Saints” gave the
pioneers courage to face their trials. This same song has
been an inspiration
to many over the
years. At one time
I was talking to a
pilot who had just
returned from a
hazardous flight. We
spoke of courage



and of fear, and I asked how he had
held himself together in the face of
what he had endured. He said, “I
have a favorite hymn, and when it
was desperate, when there was little
hope that we would return, I would
keep it on my mind, and it was as
though the engines of the aircraft
would sing back to me.”

*Come, come, ye Saints,
No toil nor labor fear;
But with joy wend your way.
Though hard to you
This journey may appear,
Grace shall be as your day.²*

From this he clung to faith, the
one essential ingredient to courage.

The Lord Himself was prepared
for His greatest test through the
influence of music, for the scripture
records, “And when they had sung
an hymn, they went out into the
mount of Olives” (Mark 14:26).



Choose a Favorite Hymn

Remember, young people, I want each of you to
remember that this is your Church, and He is your Lord
and your Savior who stands at the helm. His constant

guidance and inspiration are available to you when you keep your mind filled to overflowing with the good, the beautiful, the inspiring. And this is one way to do it. Choose a favorite hymn or song, just as my pilot friend did, one with words that are uplifting and music that is reverent, one that makes you feel something akin to inspiration. There are many beautiful songs to choose from. Seek the guidance of the Spirit in making your selection. Go over the song in your mind carefully. Memorize it. Even though you have had no musical training, you can think through a simple song. Now use this as the course for your thoughts to follow. Make it your emergency channel.

Whenever you find shady actors slipping from the sidelines of your thinking onto the stage of your mind, put on this CD, as it were. It will change your whole mood.

Because the music is uplifting and clean, the baser thoughts will slip shamefully away. For while virtue, by choice, will not associate with filth, evil cannot tolerate the presence of light. In due time you will find yourself humming the music inwardly, almost automatically, to drive out unworthy thoughts. As you young people involve yourselves with righteous and worthwhile things, keep your minds filled with worthy thoughts, for as a man thinketh so is he, and you will have the ability to accomplish those things that will bring fulfillment to your lives.

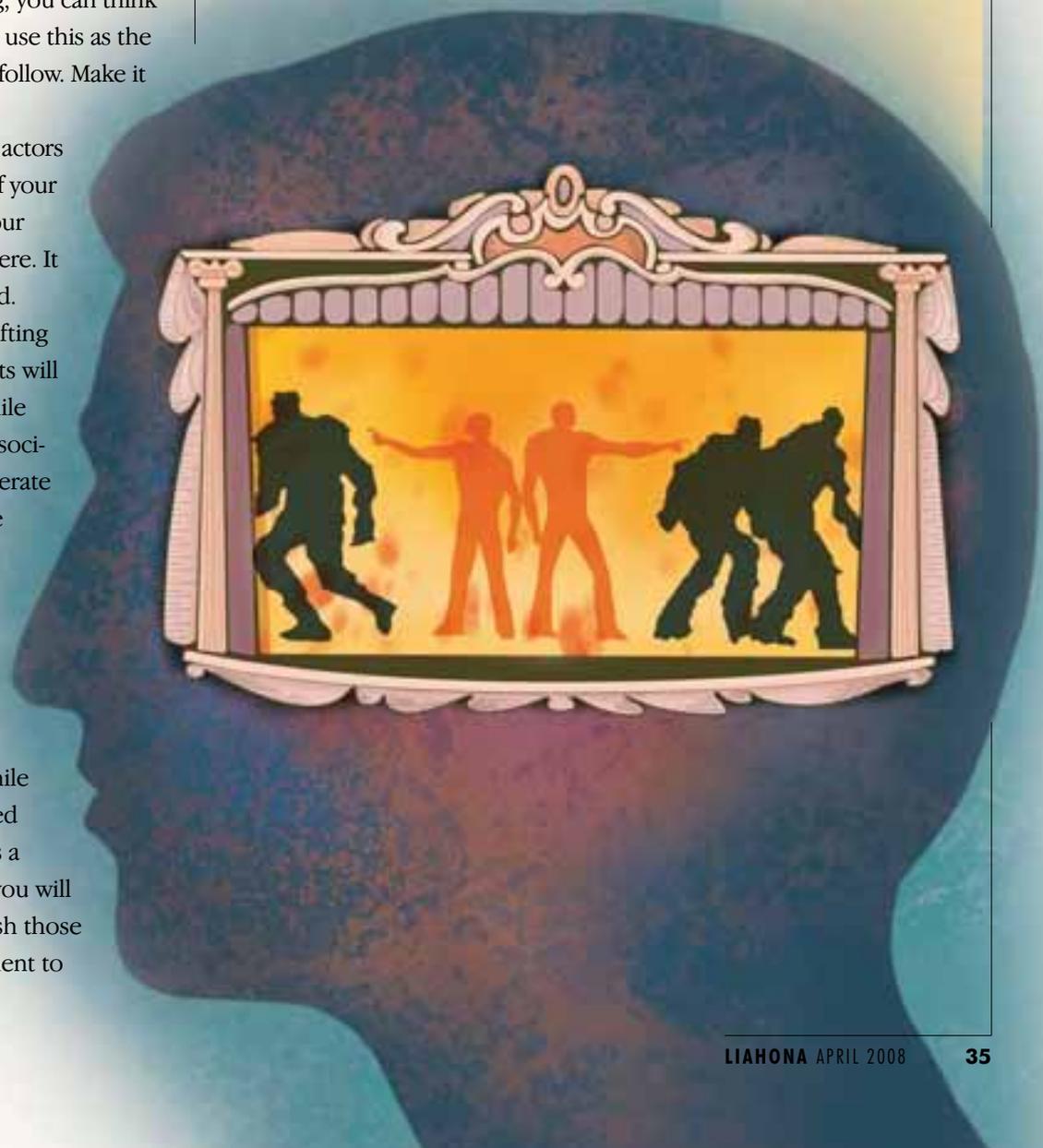
You are a son or a daughter of Almighty God. I bear witness that God is our Father, that we are His children, that He loves us and has provided great and glorious things in this life. I know this, and I thank Him for the uplifting influence of good music, which has influenced my thoughts and uplifted my soul. ■

Adapted from an October 1973 general conference address.

NOTES

1. *Priesthood Bulletin*, Aug. 1973, 3.
2. *Hymns*, no. 30.

As you involve yourself with righteous and worthwhile things, keep your mind filled with worthy thoughts, and you will have the ability to accomplish those things that will bring fulfillment to your life.



The Healing Power of Hymns

Church members share ways the hymns of Zion have blessed their lives.

I Understood His Love

There was a time in my life when I strayed far from the principles I knew to be true. Because of this, I felt terribly unhappy. Although I believed that the Atonement worked for other people, in my mind I was too far gone for it to apply to me. I thought I wasn't worth saving.

One Sunday morning I heard the bells of a nearby Christian church sounding the hymn "Did You Think to Pray?" (*Hymns*, no. 140). The music struck me, and for the first time in many months, I felt the Spirit. I cried as I realized Heavenly Father was using this hymn to let me feel His love and know that He would help me.

The repentance process was not easy, and many times I felt discouraged. But the feelings I felt that Sunday morning stayed with me, and after a time I returned to full activity and received my endowment in the Dallas Texas Temple.

Now when I hear that hymn, I am reminded of that tender moment when the One I thought had forgotten

me showed His love in a way He knew I would receive it.

Jessica Blakely, New Mexico, USA

We Invited the Spirit

My husband and I wanted to help our family feel the Spirit more in our family scripture study. We had heard Elder Gene R. Cook, then of the Seventy, suggest singing a hymn before family scripture study, so we decided to implement this counsel. Although our teenage sons were somewhat resistant to the idea, they agreed to give it a try.

The following day I played hymns on our stereo about 30 minutes before our scheduled reading time. What happened next changed everything for us. This music had touched our then 13-year-old son (who had been the most resistant to our initial proposal) to the extent that he wanted to sing all the verses of the hymn, and he even wanted to sing more than one hymn! This same son now relies on the hymns when he is discouraged or tempted.

We use the hymns not only for

family scripture study but also at family home evening and on Sundays.

Marci Owen, Utah, USA

Losing Mother

My 86-year-old mother's health had been declining for several months, and I feared that she would not be with us much longer. My husband and I had planned to travel to Lille, which was 80 miles (130 km) away, for stake conference, but I worried about leaving my sister alone to care for our mother.

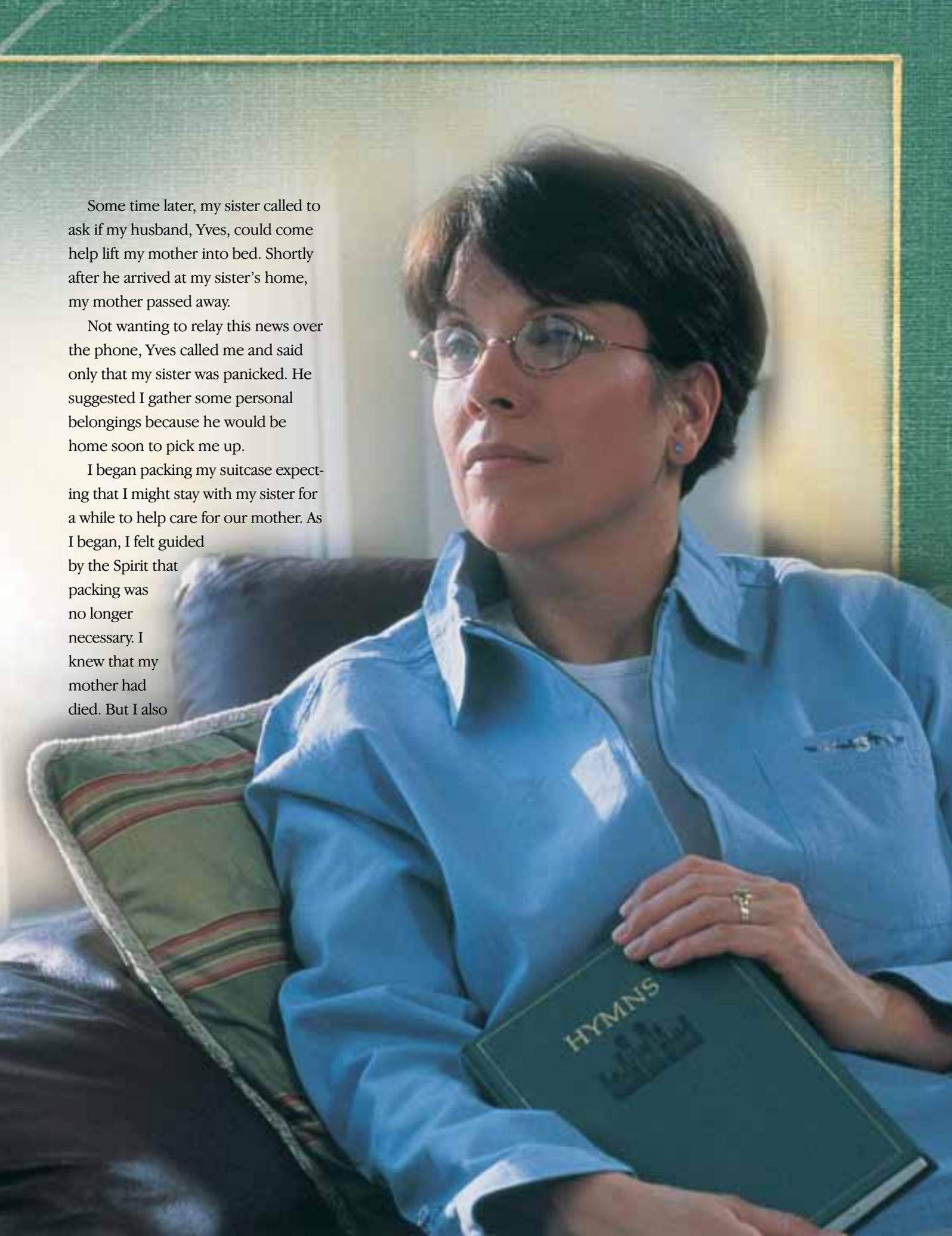
I pleaded to Heavenly Father that all would be well while we were gone. Immediately the lyrics "Peace, be still" ("Master, the Tempest Is Raging," *Hymns*, no. 105) came to mind, and my fears diminished. We left for the conference feeling calm and reassured that the Lord had heard my prayer and was watching over my mother.

Everything did go well while we were gone.

Some time later, my sister called to ask if my husband, Yves, could come help lift my mother into bed. Shortly after he arrived at my sister's home, my mother passed away.

Not wanting to relay this news over the phone, Yves called me and said only that my sister was panicked. He suggested I gather some personal belongings because he would be home soon to pick me up.

I began packing my suitcase expecting that I might stay with my sister for a while to help care for our mother. As I began, I felt guided by the Spirit that packing was no longer necessary. I knew that my mother had died. But I also



felt peace, just like I had before leaving for stake conference.

Yves arrived home, and he struggled to explain what had happened. To ease his burden, I told him I already knew that Mother was gone.

Knowledge of the gospel continued to support me, and I was able to comfort my sister as we grieved for our mother. Many times I prayed for peace, and each time I felt reassured that Heavenly Father and my Savior Jesus Christ were helping me through my sorrow and pain. Through our faith and prayers we found what the sacred hymn invokes: "Peace, be still."

Nicole Germe, Pas-de-Calais, France

Singing Soothed Our Hearts

Many years ago I was planning to spend Christmas Eve with my family, and I was apprehensive about it. I had recently joined

the Church, and my family was critical of my new religion. The situation worsened when I gave my mother a ride to my grandmother's house. My mother had been drinking heavily, and I felt tempted to snap at her. The excitement I usually felt during the holiday season was replaced with despair. Silently, I prayed for help.

I tuned the car radio to the popular music station I usually listened to, hoping that would lift my spirits. But then I felt impressed to turn off the radio and sing Christmas hymns. I did so, and my mother—though surprised—seemed calmer. She even



NOURISHING HYMNS

"Hymns play an essential role in spirituality, revelation,

and conversion. . . .

Nourishing hymns create an atmosphere that invites the Spirit, which leads us to conversion."

Elder Jay E. Jensen of the Seventy, "The Nourishing Power of Hymns," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2007, 11, 12.

O My Father

Each Life That Touches Ours for Good 293

joined in singing some of the carols.

My mood changed immediately, and I was reminded of the true meaning of Christmas. When I thought of how the Savior unselfishly gave His life for us, my own problems seemed small and manageable. I realized that I had many blessings in my life and many reasons to rejoice. I felt assured that the Holy Ghost was with me, and I was confident that I could respond peacefully to any criticism I received about the Church.

Singing didn't take away my problems, but it enabled me to approach my troubles with a positive attitude—and that made all the difference.

Kimberley Hirschi, California, USA

My Burden Was Lifted

In 1988 I was struggling in my business. After I consulted with my stake president, my wife and I decided to sell the business and find other work. I followed numerous leads in pursuit of employment, but each one left my wife and me frustrated, heartbroken, and without a steady income.

After a year our funds were running low, and I felt weighed down by a burden that seemed unbearable. We had a son on a mission and six more children at home, and I felt that I was failing them.

One day while feeling this burden, I realized that I had been repeating a tune in my mind for several days. I soon realized that it was a hymn, and the Spirit comforted me as I recalled the lyrics:

*Be thou humble in thy weakness,
and the Lord thy God shall lead
thee,
Shall lead thee by the hand and
give thee answer to thy prayers.*
("Be Thou Humble," *Hymns*,
no. 130)

Instantly my burden seemed lifted, and I realized that Heavenly Father knew my situation. Although we struggled financially for several years, I felt comfort knowing that He would guide our decisions if we sought to do His will.

We moved to a new town and eventually acquired a new business. With the help of others, our family was able to buy a home and make the business successful.

Even though that financial challenge is now gone, I continue trying to listen when hymns come to mind. I have learned that Heavenly Father often answers my prayers through sacred music.

Warren C. Wassom, Idaho, USA

How Could I Sing?

Years ago my mother was killed in a car accident involving a drunk driver. In shock I flew to my parents' home and helped plan the funeral with my siblings and injured father.

Soon after returning home I was called to serve as the Primary music leader. While I prepared, my emotions seemed blocked, and I began to doubt my abilities. "A Primary music leader needs to be enthusiastic and

cheerful," I thought to myself. I felt only sorrow. I wanted to encourage the children, but I felt I would let them down. My heart ached with grief. I wondered if I would ever be happy again—let alone want to sing.

The day before I began serving in my new calling, my husband and I attended a temple session with friends who were being sealed. Before the session began, we were invited to the temple's chapel for an opening hymn, prayer, and remarks by a temple official. As we sang "How Gentle God's Commands" (*Hymns*, no. 125), I couldn't help noticing the hymn's lyrics:

*Why should this anxious load
Press down your weary mind?
Haste to your Heav'nly Father's
throne
And sweet refreshment find.*

I felt that I had an "anxious load" and realized that there, in His holy temple, I was finding "sweet refreshment." In the fourth verse I heard a direct message for me:

*His goodness stands approved,
Unchanged from day to day;
I'll drop my burden at his feet
And bear a song away.*

At that moment I knew that I could fulfill any calling and that I could feel joy, even though I missed my mother. And because I knew that my Savior carried my burden, I could sing!

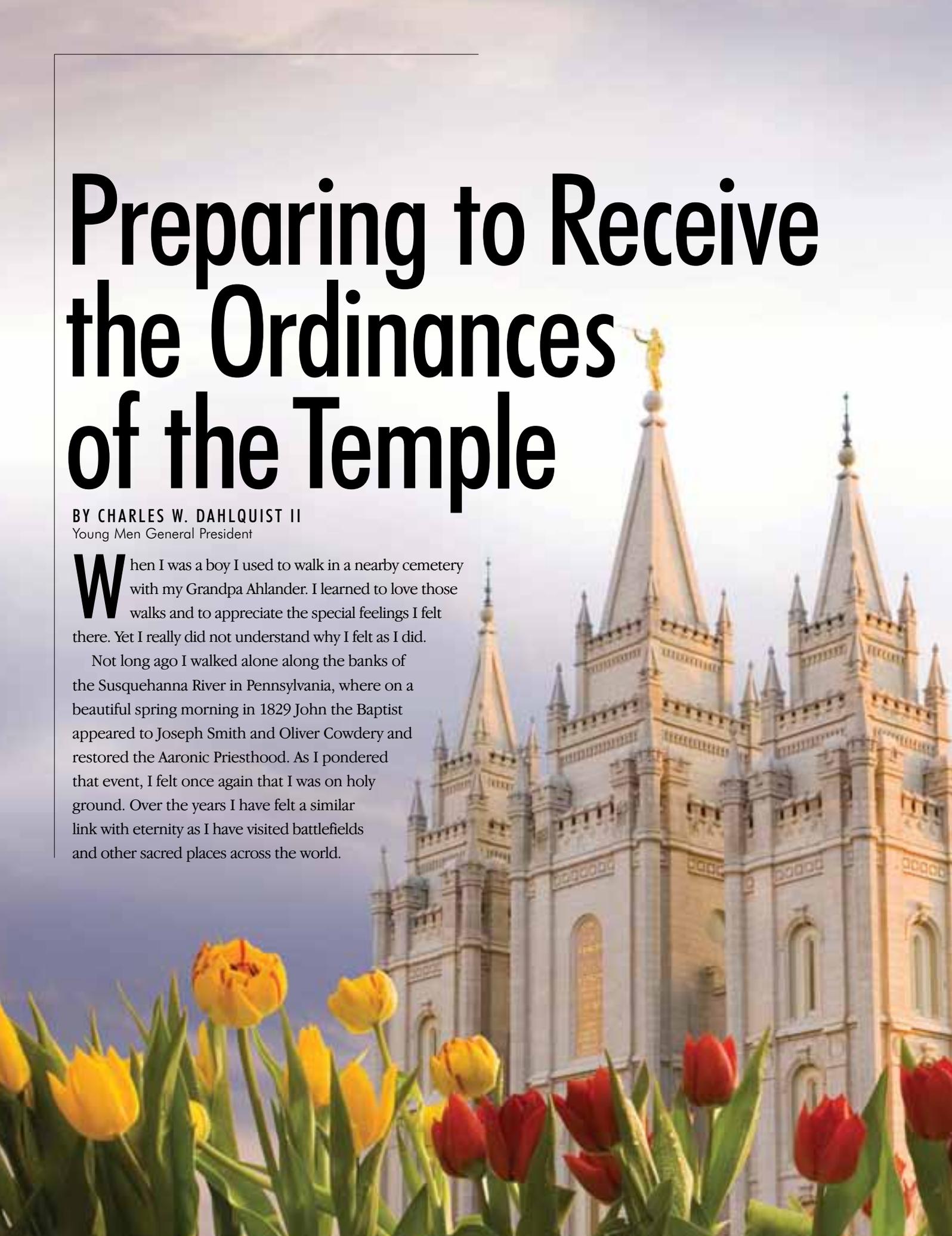
Sberi Stratford Erickson, Idaho, USA ■

Preparing to Receive the Ordinances of the Temple

BY CHARLES W. DAHLQUIST II
Young Men General President

When I was a boy I used to walk in a nearby cemetery with my Grandpa Ahlander. I learned to love those walks and to appreciate the special feelings I felt there. Yet I really did not understand why I felt as I did.

Not long ago I walked alone along the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania, where on a beautiful spring morning in 1829 John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and restored the Aaronic Priesthood. As I pondered that event, I felt once again that I was on holy ground. Over the years I have felt a similar link with eternity as I have visited battlefields and other sacred places across the world.



In each of these places, it seemed that the veil between mortality and eternity was very thin. In each was the lingering reassurance that life does not begin with the cry of a baby or end with mortal death, but it continues on.

Today I again stood on holy ground in one of God’s holy temples, and once again the feelings of eternity were very near. I had the same feeling as I entered temples recently in Finland, Switzerland, Hong Kong, and Costa Rica. Each temple is a sacred haven, a sanctuary from the storm of the world, a place of peace where we can participate in sacred ordinances for ourselves and others and personally be strengthened and prepared to stand for truth and righteousness.

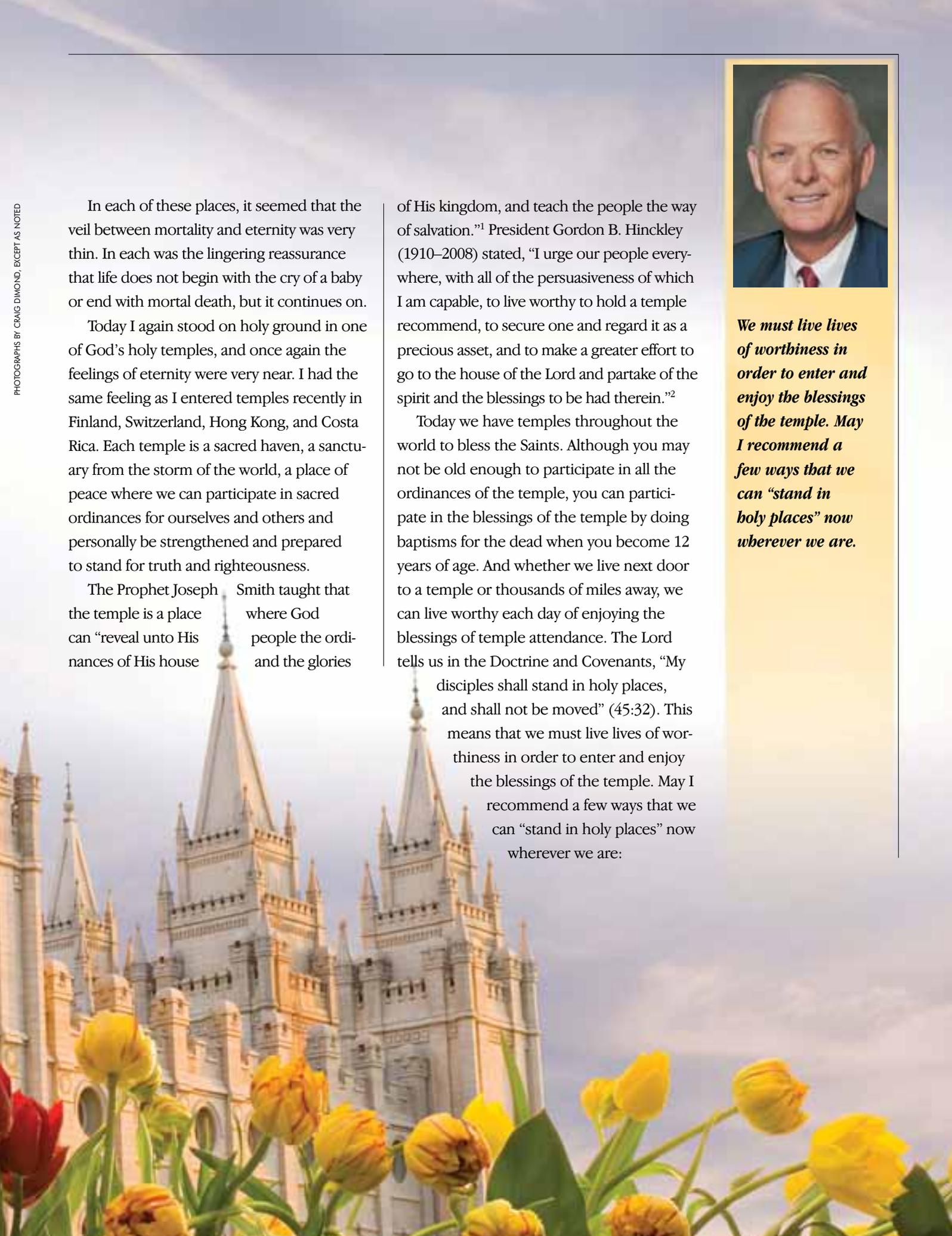
The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the temple is a place where God can “reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories

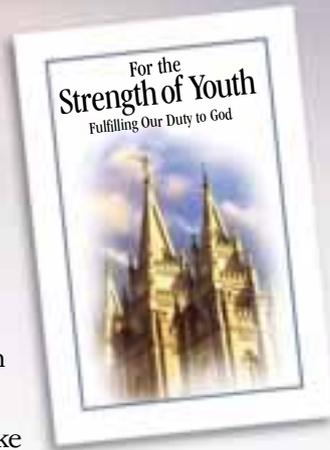
of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation.”¹ President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) stated, “I urge our people everywhere, with all of the persuasiveness of which I am capable, to live worthy to hold a temple recommend, to secure one and regard it as a precious asset, and to make a greater effort to go to the house of the Lord and partake of the spirit and the blessings to be had therein.”²

Today we have temples throughout the world to bless the Saints. Although you may not be old enough to participate in all the ordinances of the temple, you can participate in the blessings of the temple by doing baptisms for the dead when you become 12 years of age. And whether we live next door to a temple or thousands of miles away, we can live worthy each day of enjoying the blessings of temple attendance. The Lord tells us in the Doctrine and Covenants, “My disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved” (45:32). This means that we must live lives of worthiness in order to enter and enjoy the blessings of the temple. May I recommend a few ways that we can “stand in holy places” now wherever we are:



We must live lives of worthiness in order to enter and enjoy the blessings of the temple. May I recommend a few ways that we can “stand in holy places” now wherever we are.





1 **Always live the standards in the For the Strength of Youth pamphlet, and avoid “unholy places.”** To enter the temple, we must be worthy. It helps when we stand in holy places now. That means avoiding places and times when we would be tempted to make wrong choices. I recall a story by President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), a counselor in the First Presidency, about his teenage daughter. She was leaving for a dance, and he said, “Have fun, my dear. Be back by midnight.” She replied, “Daddy, this is the night of the prom. We go to the dance and are not back until early morning.” President Clark responded, “Yes, I know that is what many will be doing. But you must be back before midnight.” She, then, in desperation said, “Daddy, you just don’t trust me!” To which he replied, “My dear, in the wrong place, at the wrong time, I don’t even trust myself. Be back by midnight.”³

You make similar decisions everywhere you go. Wherever you are, ask yourself, “Is this a place where the Spirit can dwell?” If not, have the courage to leave. If your room (including the pictures on the wall) is not someplace the Spirit can dwell, change it so it is. Learn early to stand in holy places, to associate with good friends, so that you will be supported in your quest to always be worthy to enter the Lord’s house.

2 **Stay close to and help strengthen your family.** The message of the temple is a message about families—eternal families. Our homes can be places of holiness and strength. The



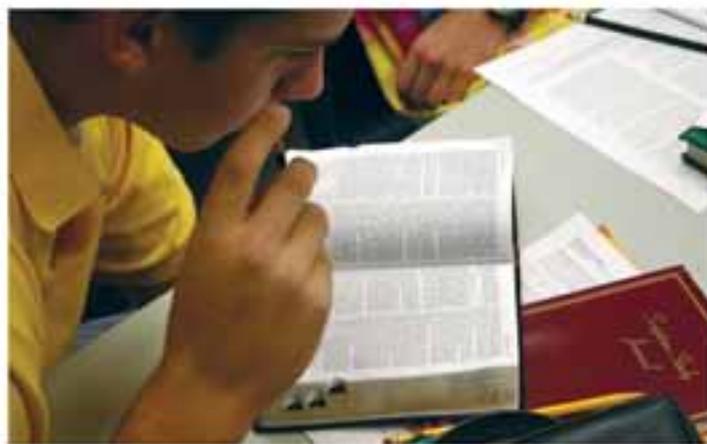
For the Strength of Youth pamphlet teaches: “Being part of a family is a great blessing. Your family can provide you with companionship and happiness, help you learn correct principles in a loving atmosphere, and help you prepare for eternal life. Not all families are

the same, but each is important in Heavenly Father’s plan.

“Do your part to build a happy home. Be cheerful, helpful, and considerate of others. . . . Seek to be a peacemaker rather than to tease, fight, and quarrel. Remember that the family is the most sacred unit of the Church.”⁴

3 **Make scripture study a part of your life**—not only by reading regularly but also by relying on the scriptures to help you make important decisions.

When I was a mission president in northern Germany, I had a very difficult problem. I had searched in vain for an answer for many weeks. One morning I was reading in the Book of Mormon where Nephi was commanded to build a



ship: “And I, Nephi, did go into the mount oft, and I did pray oft unto the Lord; wherefore the Lord showed unto me great things” (1 Nephi 18:3). As I read that small passage, the impression came to me, “That is what I need to do.” I pondered and prayed, and finally the answer came, and I knew what I needed to do. I am grateful for that little window of inspiration that came—as I was searching the scriptures. As I received my answer, I felt that I was “standing in a holy place.” I know that you too can have similar experiences as you search, ponder, and pray about the scriptures.

4 **Attend seminary when you are old enough.** I have found that regular attendance in seminary helps youth remember that they are indeed sons and daughters of God, that they can always ask Him for help in making choices, and that He answers their prayers. It is also a place where they are reminded that they are not alone and that there are many others around the world who are striving to stand in holy places and live worthy lives.

5 **Fill your mind with positive, clean, and uplifting thoughts.** My patriarchal blessing promises, “Look to the light above, and those who go with you will know that you seek for something higher.” I have found that the best way to keep my sights on the light above is to control my thoughts by memorizing scriptures, poetry, hymns, and other uplifting material. Then when we are tempted by unclean or negative thoughts, we can substitute those positive thoughts and drive out the unclean and impure ones.

6 **Have a picture of a temple in your room.** When our children were young, we asked each of them to select a temple that had particular meaning to them. We then purchased pictures of the selected temples for their rooms to help them remember the importance of the temple and of always being worthy to enter the temple. There is something powerful about seeing a picture of the temple day after day and using that to recommit ourselves to remain worthy to attend the temple. You might even want to put your own picture next to the temple to remind yourself that you belong in the temple!

7 **Spend time developing your talents and becoming what our Heavenly Father expects you to become.** We are blessed to have the Young Women Personal Progress program and the Aaronic Priesthood Duty to God program. The purpose of each is to help us become like the Savior by setting and accomplishing worthy goals, developing character and life skills, strengthening our families, and helping us develop faith in Jesus Christ.

8 **When you become 12 years of age, attend the temple to do baptisms for the dead whenever you can.** We live in a blessed day when 124 temples dot the earth. Many of you can attend the temple as youth groups and as families. But even if you do not have a temple near you, you can enjoy the blessings of the temple by learning more about the temple and always being worthy to hold a temple recommend. When I was a mission president, our mission did not have a temple, so our missionaries were not able to attend the temple during their missions. At first I did not think to encourage them to keep a current temple recommend. Then in late 1994 President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) counseled adult members of the Church to have a current temple recommend—even if they did not live near a temple.⁵ During the next interviews with our missionaries, I taught this principle and conducted a temple recommend interview for each of our missionaries. What a blessing that was

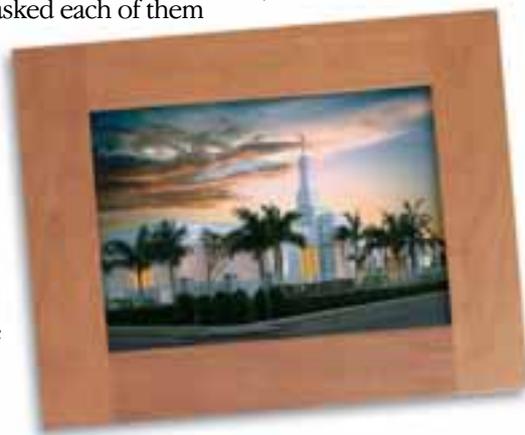
for our mission and our missionaries!

May our Heavenly Father bless you that you might continually prepare, with each decision you make, to stand in holy places now so that you will always be worthy to enter the Lord’s holy temple. You are the “youth of the noble birthright”⁶ of whom we sing. You are the “hope of Israel.”⁷ You must be prepared to accomplish the great works of

righteousness that the Lord has sent you here to do. May God bless you, my dear young friends, to prepare diligently to be worthy to enter the temple and partake of the sacred ordinances our Heavenly Father has for each of us. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 416.
2. “Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 53.
3. See *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 629.
4. (2001), 10.
5. See “The Great Symbol of Our Membership,” *Tambuli*, Nov. 1994, 6; *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 5.
6. “Carry On,” *Hymns*, no. 255.
7. “Hope of Israel,” *Hymns*, no. 259.



Finally My Mother Wanted to Know

By Treasure Elder Barfuss

As the funeral procession of cars turned onto the small road leading to the cemetery, memories ran through my mind. In my sadness over the untimely death of my father, I sought comfort in the gospel and the scriptures. Ecclesiastes 3:1 came to mind: “To every thing there is a season.”

My family did not attend a church regularly when I was young, but my parents manifested their faith in the Christlike way they helped those in need and in the way they let each of us children know we were loved. My parents had been a part of every season of my life except one, and that season brought great sorrow to them because they did not understand and would not listen to my testimony of what I had found.

When I was 17, some good friends introduced me to the Church. The restored gospel answered questions I had had for years, but my parents would have nothing to do with it. When I joined the Church at 18, only my grandmother attended my baptism. She was not a Latter-day Saint, but she seemed to understand my spiritual need, and she assured me

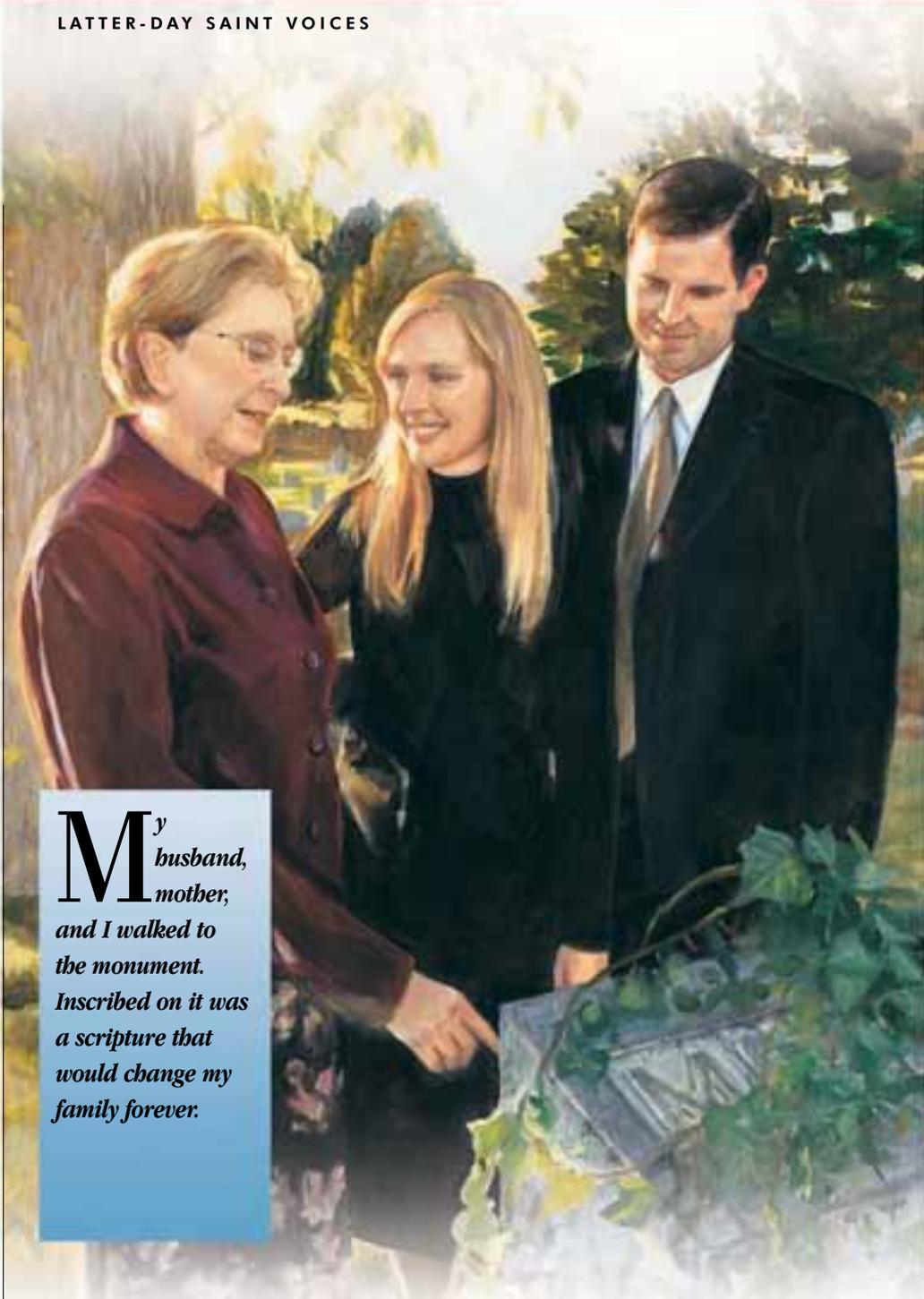
My husband, mother, and I walked to the monument. Inscribed on it was a scripture that would change my family forever.

that someday my parents would accept my decision.

I married shortly after my baptism and moved away with my husband. I shared news of my temple sealing a few years later in a letter to my parents, telling them of my joy and newfound faith. But I was unable to interest them in the gospel. Now my

father was gone, and my mother and little sister were left alone.

My thoughts were interrupted as the cars came to a stop. Immediately to our left I noticed a monument covered with foliage. An engraving on the stone seemed to beckon us, but we went to the graveside service without inspecting it.



After the service had ended, we expressed our gratitude to friends and relatives and said our good-byes. My husband, mother, and I then walked to the monument. Inscribed on it was a scripture that would change my family forever: “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

For the first time, 14 years after my baptism and confirmation, my mother asked questions. Because of the restored gospel, I could provide answers. She and my sister were baptized and confirmed shortly thereafter. A little more than a year later, my father’s temple work was completed.

More than 30 years have passed since that day at the cemetery. During that time, members of our extended family have been sealed together in the temple. My mother became a Relief Society president and gave several years of devoted service. My sister married, had children, and served many years as a Laurel leader, president of the Young Women, and worker for LDS Family Services.

To everything there is a season—including a time of joy and a time of sorrow. I am thankful for the knowledge that prayers are answered in God’s own season and that the scriptures offer us words of life as we search, ponder, and share them with one another. ■

How Could She Forgive Him?

By Thomas E. Horlacher

One day in 1961 while Elder Roger Slagowski and I were knocking on doors in Wilhelmshaven, West Germany, an elderly widow graciously welcomed us into her humble apartment. I was so surprised that I asked if she really understood who we were. She assured us that she did and that she had been waiting for us.

She told us that two Latter-day Saint elders had knocked on her door decades before, when she was a young mother. Because she was busy at the time, she had turned them away. Afterward she felt terrible about it and vowed that if Latter-day Saint missionaries ever knocked again, she would invite them in.

Emma Henke had a keen mind, and she listened to our message intently, but she often seemed to have a distant, far-off look. She was kind to us and was always eager to share her meager fare, but we wondered if she truly comprehended the importance



Emma Henke listened to our message intently, but she often seemed to have a distant, far-off look.



of our message. Finally we decided to put her on our callback list and just drop by from time to time when we were in the neighborhood.

A few weeks later we stopped in again. As we visited, Emma suddenly announced, to our surprise, her determination to be baptized!

It was only then that she began sharing details from her difficult life. During the last days of World War I, her infant daughter had died. In 1924 a nine-year-old daughter had succumbed to diphtheria. During the winter of 1941–42 she had received her last letter from her 21-year-old son, who was fighting on the Russian front during World War II. She learned of his death a short time later.

Emma's husband, Hugo, had despised the policies of the Nazi government. She often pleaded with him to be more cautious. Early one day in 1944, after a government radio-beam locator tracked a British Broadcasting Corporation signal to the Henkes' home, the Gestapo broke down the door and arrested him. He was sent to a concentration camp near Hamburg, and Emma and their last surviving child, a young son, were left to fend for themselves.

Emma went to the local Nazi official responsible for her husband's imprisonment and pleaded on her knees for his life but to no avail. She learned of Hugo's death in March 1945. The official himself was subsequently sentenced to life in prison but had been released shortly before we knocked on Emma's door. She said she often saw him speeding along the streets of the city in an expensive new car. On the day she requested baptism, Emma said she had finally found the strength to forgive him for taking away her husband and rejecting her pleas for mercy. She had resolved to leave judgment in the hands of the Lord.

Emma became a faithful member of the Church and found great joy and comfort in discovering the truths of the restored gospel. In November 1966, while hurrying across a public square in Wilhelmshaven on her way to a Relief Society meeting, she collapsed and died of a heart attack.

Sister Henke refused to become embittered by the trials of her life, and she died free of the rancor of revenge. Surely this dear sister enjoyed a marvelous reunion with those she had loved and lost. ■

How I Found Christ in Capernaum

By Jason Jones

Following years of planning and preparation, I finally made my way to the Holy Land with family and close friends. As we approached the Sea of Galilee, we looked forward to seeing Capernaum.

The book of Matthew tells us that after the people had rejected Christ in His hometown of Nazareth, the Savior made Capernaum "his own city" (Matthew 9:1). It was in Capernaum and on the shores of the Sea of Galilee that Christ called Peter, James, John, Andrew, and later Matthew as disciples (see Matthew 4:18–22; 9:9).

Capernaum means "village of Nahum," or village of comfort or consolation. Christ indeed had compassion on the people of this city and comforted them by casting out devils, healing "all that were sick," and even raising the dead (see Matthew 8:16; Mark 5:35–42). Although He later rebuked the people of Capernaum for rejecting Him, Christ probably performed more miracles here than anywhere else.

In Capernaum we explored ruins and wandered down old city roads in awe of what this little village had witnessed (see Matthew 11:23). Later, I stopped and sat under a tree,

pondering and gazing out on the Sea of Galilee. My great expectations to feel the events of the scriptures come to life, however, remained unfulfilled. Despite my preparation for the trip, sincerity in seeking Christ, and determination that had brought us here at last, I felt an emptiness that weighed on my heart.

Why wouldn't this place where Christ blessed so many people also bless our lives? As I grappled with my feelings, I longed to read the scriptures. I checked with each member of our group, but sadly, no one had brought a Bible.

Fortunately, one member of our group had a personal digital assistant with an electronic version of the scriptures on it. We soon gathered around, listening as someone read verses in Matthew 4 and Mark 5 about the Savior in Capernaum.

As soon as our focus shifted to the scriptures, the emptiness that I had been feeling was replaced with a comforting witness of the love of the Savior and of the reality of the events of which the scriptures testify. We had come to Capernaum searching for Christ, but we didn't find Him until we searched the scriptures. It was not the physical

surroundings that bore witness to us but the Holy Ghost.

Scripture study can be supplemented by history, commentaries, linguistic insights, and occasional travel, but there is no substitute for learning directly from the Spirit as we immerse ourselves in the scriptures. The sons of Mosiah, who "had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God" (Alma 17:2), exemplified this principle.

May daily scripture study be central to our search for Christ, for the scriptures truly are the best place to find Him. ■



W^e gathered around, listening as a member of our group read verses about the Savior in Capernaum.

Healing Balm

The *Liabona* is truly a compass in my life. It is healing balm for my wounds and gives me hope when I am discouraged. The articles contain answers to my questions and shine light on my doubts. As I read the testimonies, the conference addresses, and the comments, my faith in the Creator grows, and I feel

closer to the members of the Church, who radiate their light through the magazine.

Carmen Moscoso, Switzerland

Issues Dedicated to One Topic

I've noticed that there are sometimes special issues of the *Liabona*. Two examples are the issue for new converts (Oct. 2006), which I deeply treasure, and the issue for those preparing to go on missions (Mar. 2007).

Could you publish an issue for investigators and family members of new converts? It's hard for me to share the gospel with my family because they feel that we don't believe in God or Jesus Christ. I would like some

material that would open their eyes, dispel their doubts, and help them respect the decision I have made.

Héctor Leal Reyes, Mexico

Editors' note: We hope the March 2008 issue helped your family and many others better understand what members of the Church believe about the Savior.

More Valuable Than Gold

I first discovered the *Liabona* when I joined the Church several years ago. In the beginning I didn't think much of it, but as time went by it became one of the most wonderful things in my life and a key to my success. It strengthened my testimony of the restored gospel and helped me stay strong in the Church. Because of this strength, I was able to resist temptations and set a good example for a co-worker, who was eventually baptized and confirmed.

It is so wonderful to study and share the *Liabona*. It will help me for the rest of my life. I'm so thankful to receive the messages from the Lord's prophet and apostles every month. The *Liabona* is sweeter to me than honey and more valuable than gold.

Aldemir Guanacoma Ave, Bolivia

Young Missionaries

The article "CTR Rings in the Principal's Office" (Mar. 2007), which tells of a girl who told her school

principal about the Church when the principal asked about the girl's CTR ring, inspired my five-year-old son and other Primary children in our branch to always wear their CTR rings.

My son and another child had their first missionary experience when their schoolteachers asked about the rings and the children were able to tell them about the Church.

Aleksey Dobrovolsky, Ukraine

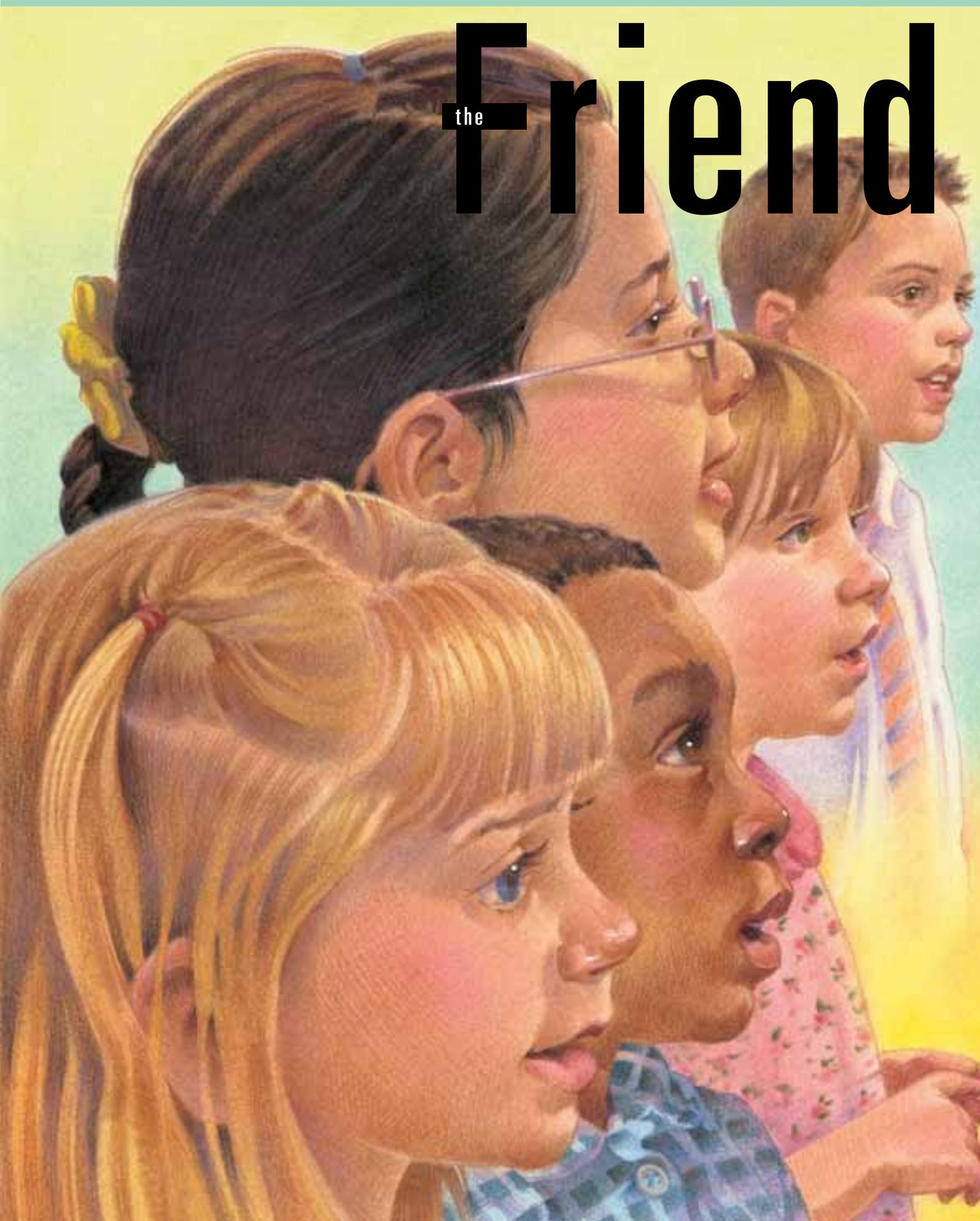
A Treasure for the Soul

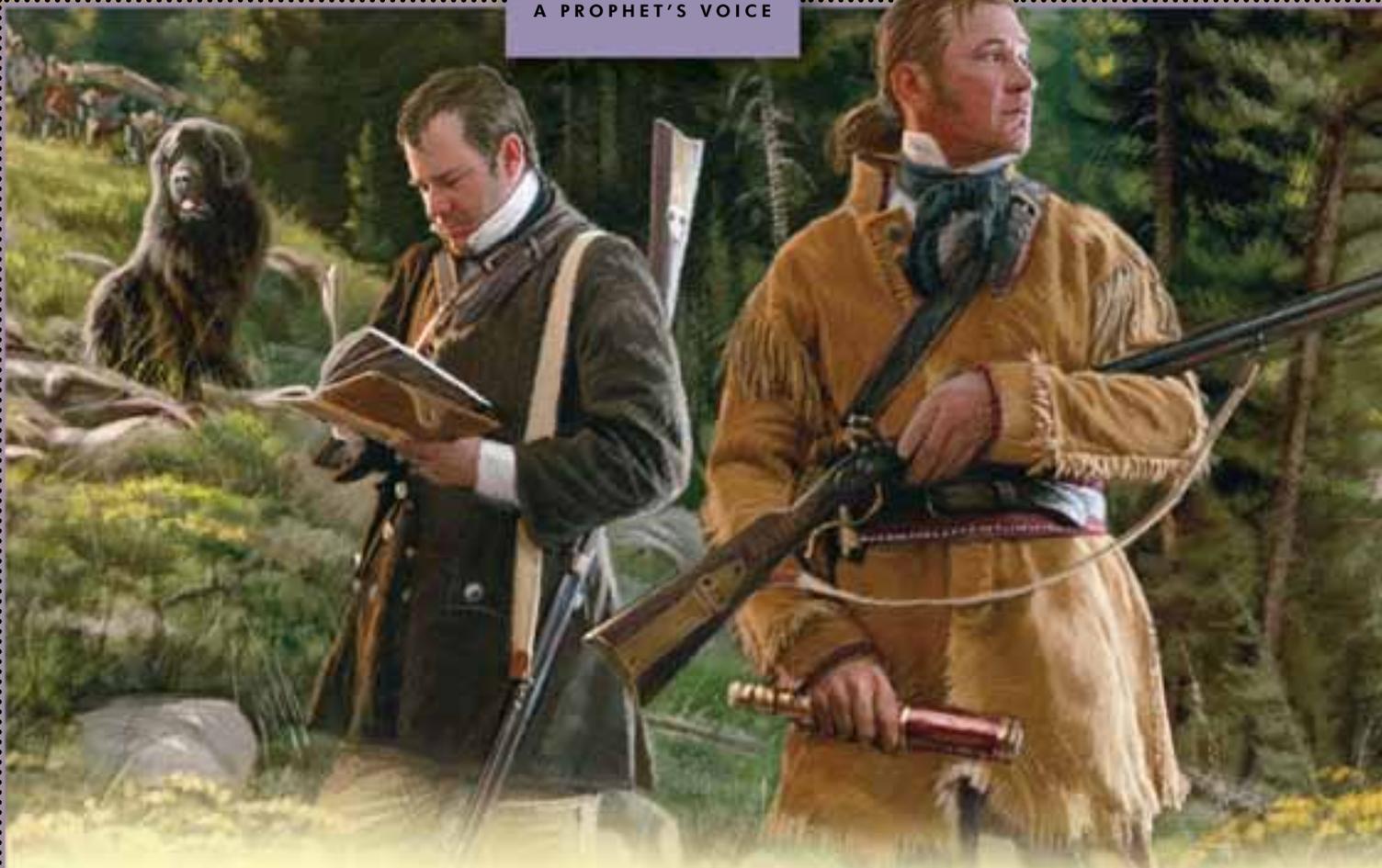
When I was newly baptized, a sister invited me to subscribe to the *Liabona*. I didn't read it much at first, but as time went by I realized the immense value of this magazine. Its messages have strengthened my spirit and answered my prayers. The first things I read are the First Presidency Message and the Visiting Teaching Message. I have also shared the children's section with my son Ricardo. I am so glad I have the magazine today.

Through the *Liabona* I have learned and grown in many ways, emotionally as well as spiritually. Without a doubt, searching it is worth the effort. It is a treasure for the soul and a guide in moments of darkness, just as the scriptures are. I know better how to face the world in these latter days. I am thankful to have been able to enjoy it for 14 years.

Sylvia Figueroa-Ostolaza, Puerto Rico

the Friend





President Monson teaches us about the bridges we need to cross.

Three Bridges

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

Many years ago I read a book titled *The Way to the Western Sea* by David S. Lavender. It provides a fascinating account of the journey of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark as they led their expedition across the North American continent to discover an overland route to the Pacific Ocean.

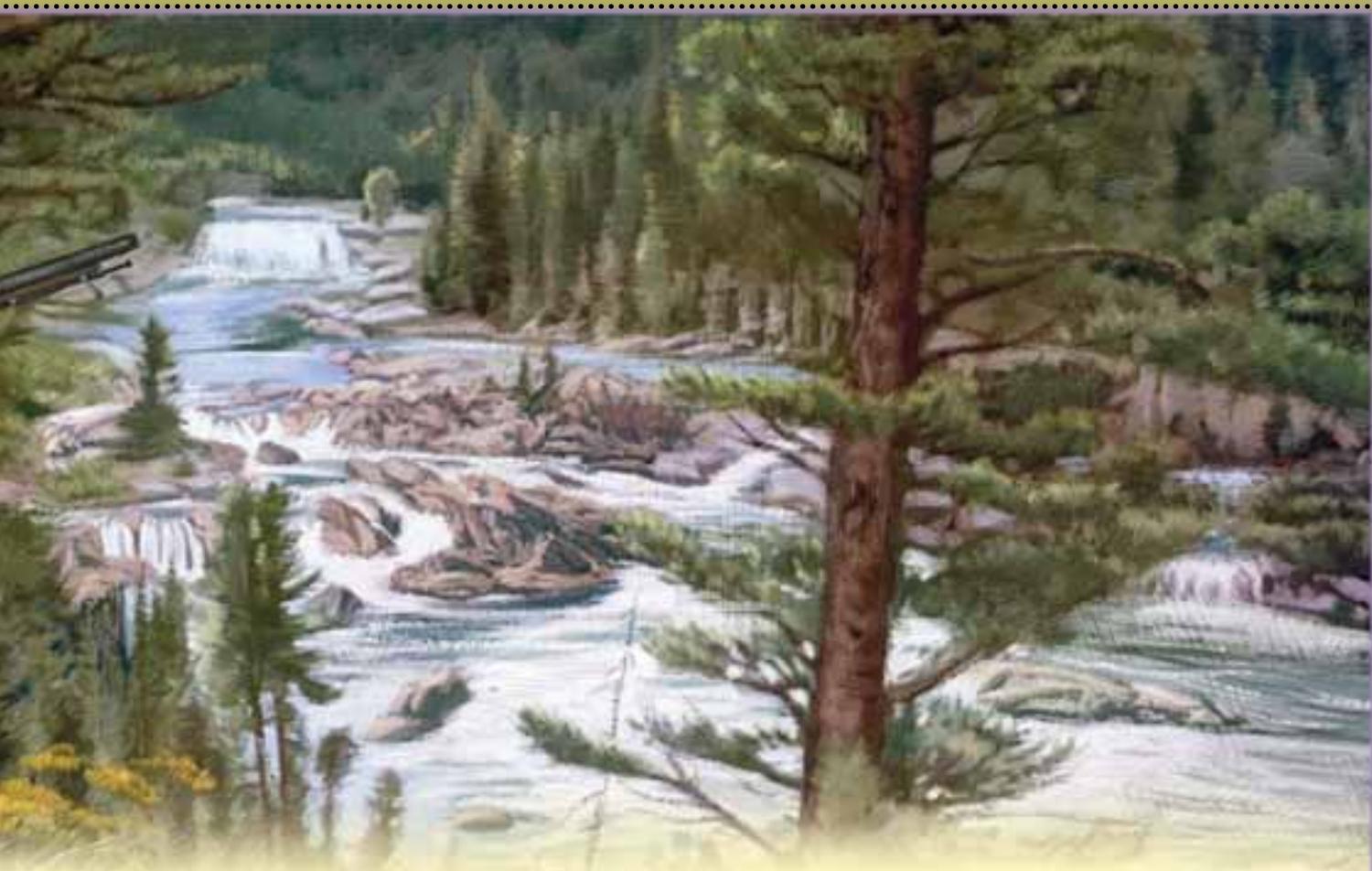
Their trek was a nightmare of back-breaking toil, deep gorges which had to be crossed, and extensive travel by foot, carrying with them their supply-laden boats to find the next stream on which to make their way.

As I read of their experiences, I mused, “If only there were modern bridges to span

the gorges or the raging waters.” There came to my mind thoughts of magnificent bridges of our time which accomplish this task with ease: beautiful Golden Gate Bridge of San Francisco fame; sturdy Sydney, Australia, Harbour Bridge; and others in many lands.

In reality, we are all travelers—even explorers of mortality. We do not have the benefit of previous personal experience. We must pass over steep cliffs and turbulent waters in our own journey here on earth.

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, was the supreme builder of bridges for you, for me, for all humankind. He has built the bridges over which we



must cross if we are to reach our heavenly home.

Jesus provided the Bridge of Obedience. He was an unflinching example of personal obedience as He kept the commandments of His Father.

The second bridge provided by the Master for us to cross is the Bridge of Service. We look to the Savior as our example of service. Although He came to earth as the Son of God, He humbly served those around Him. He blessed the sick; He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even raised the dead to life.

Finally, the Lord provided us the Bridge of Prayer. He directed, “Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing” (D&C 19:38).

Jesus, the Bridge Builder, spanned that vast chasm we call death. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). He did for us what we could not do for ourselves; hence, humankind can cross the bridges He built—into life eternal. ●

From an October 2003 general conference address.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- 1. What is a commandment to which you would like to be more obedient? How can Jesus Christ’s example help you?**
- 2. Whom do you know that you can serve? Where can you get good ideas of how to help and serve that person?**
- 3. What do you think the Lord meant when He directed us to “pray always”? What does it mean to pray in your heart?**
- 4. How can knowing that Jesus Christ made eternal life possible for us help you feel closer to Him and Heavenly Father?**



I CAN FOLLOW THE PROPHET

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Heed the Prophets—Follow What They Say

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

BY LINDA CHRISTENSEN



Now we have a world where people are confused.

If you don't believe it, go and watch the news.

*We can get direction all along our way,
If we heed the prophets—follow what they say.*

These words from “Follow the Prophet” (*Children’s Songbook*, 110–11) teach you to heed and follow the prophet. The words *heed* and *follow* mean to listen and obey. Can you think of a time when you listened to the prophet? Can you think of a time when you or your family chose to obey and do what the prophet asked you to do? How did you feel when you obeyed?

Listen to some Primary children share what it means to follow the prophet: Austin said, “When I do what he says, it makes me happy.” Lindsay said, “The prophet has asked me to wear modest clothes, attend church, read my scriptures, and pray. He wants me to be baptized, choose the right, and follow the examples of my mom and dad.”

Doctrine and Covenants 21:5 states, “For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth.” This scripture teaches you that the prophet will always say what Heavenly Father wants you to know. The prophet will always show you the way to live so that you can return to Heavenly Father someday.

Activity

Remove page F4, and mount it on heavy paper. Listen to the prophet speak at general conference, and choose

three things he asks you to do. Write them on the poster. Hang the poster where you can see it to remind you to follow the prophet.

Sharing Time Ideas

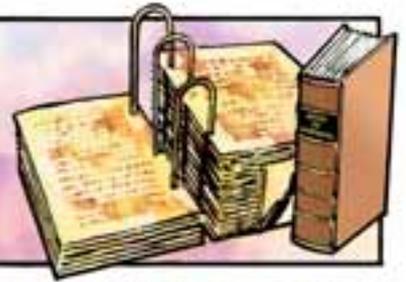
1. Briefly share how John the Baptist came to Joseph Smith to restore the Aaronic Priesthood and how Peter, James, and John restored the Melchizedek Priesthood. Explain how Heavenly Father can bless Church members through the priesthood. Invite a priesthood leader approved by the bishop or branch president to talk to the Primary about how the priesthood blesses us. Provide paper and pencils, crayons, or markers. Invite the children to draw examples of how the priesthood has blessed their lives. Invite a child to read Doctrine and Covenants 107:64–67. Ask: “Who is the ‘Presiding High Priest over the High Priesthood of the Church?’” Teach the children that our prophet holds all priesthood keys; that is, he has the authority to preside over the whole Church. Sing “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” (Hymns, no. 19). Share your testimony of the prophet and of the priesthood.

2. Show Gospel Art Picture Kit 520 (Gordon B. Hinckley), and share the story told by President Hinckley (1910–2008) of a woman who forgave a teenager for making a wrong choice that changed her life forever (see “Be More Forgiving,” Liahona, Mar. 2007, F2–F3). Explain that prophets have taught us to be forgiving. Use dramatizations to involve the children in learning scripture stories about forgiveness (see “Dramatizations,” Teaching, No Greater Call [1999], 165–66). For example: Genesis 42–45—Joseph forgives his brothers; 1 Nephi 7—Nephi forgives his brothers. Share your testimony of the Savior’s Atonement. Help the children understand how He made it possible for us to repent and be forgiven so that we can return to live with Heavenly Father again. ●

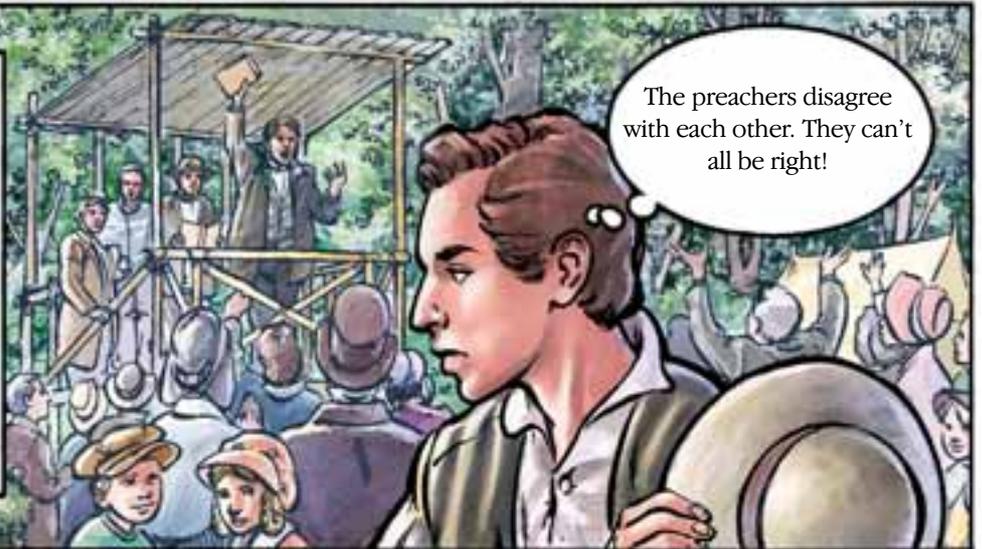


FROM THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

The First Vision



When Joseph was 14 years old, many people in his hometown were excited about religion. Preachers gave sermons to try to get people to join their churches. Joseph learned about the different churches, but he couldn't decide which one to join.



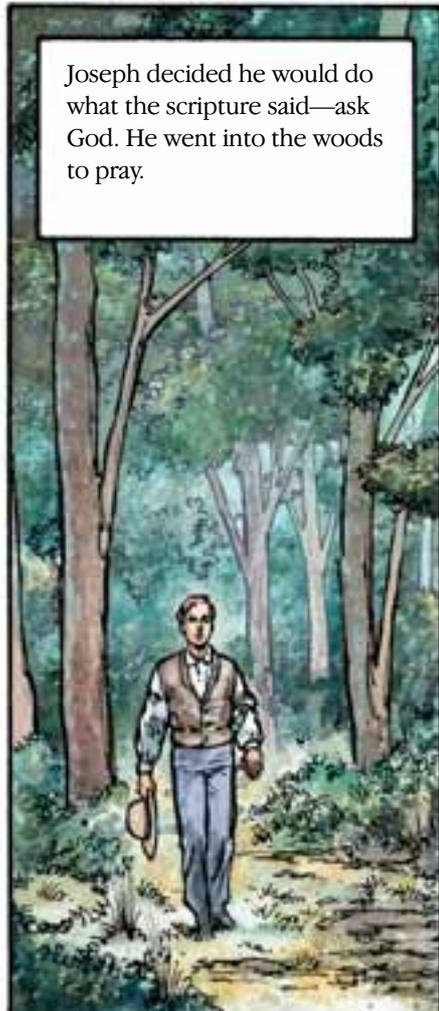
The preachers disagree with each other. They can't all be right!

One day, as he was studying the Bible, he read James 1:5. Then he knew what to do.



"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Joseph decided he would do what the scripture said—ask God. He went into the woods to pray.



He had never prayed out loud before. He looked around to make sure he was alone, then knelt down.

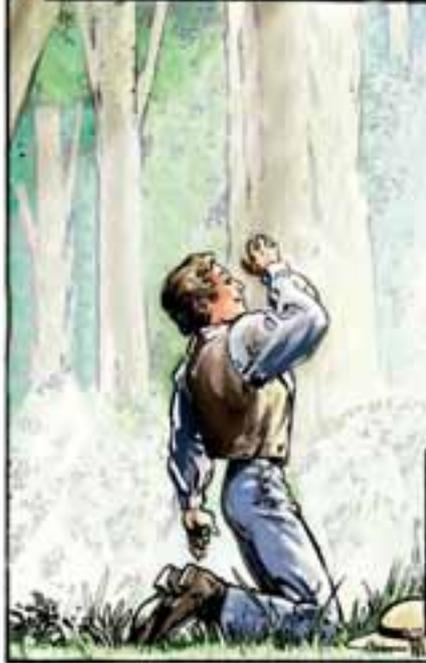


ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAL VELLUTO AND EUGENIO MATTOZZI

As soon as he tried to speak, he was surrounded by thick darkness and he was afraid he would be destroyed. He prayed to be saved from this evil power.



Joseph later said: “Just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. . . . I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air.



“One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*”

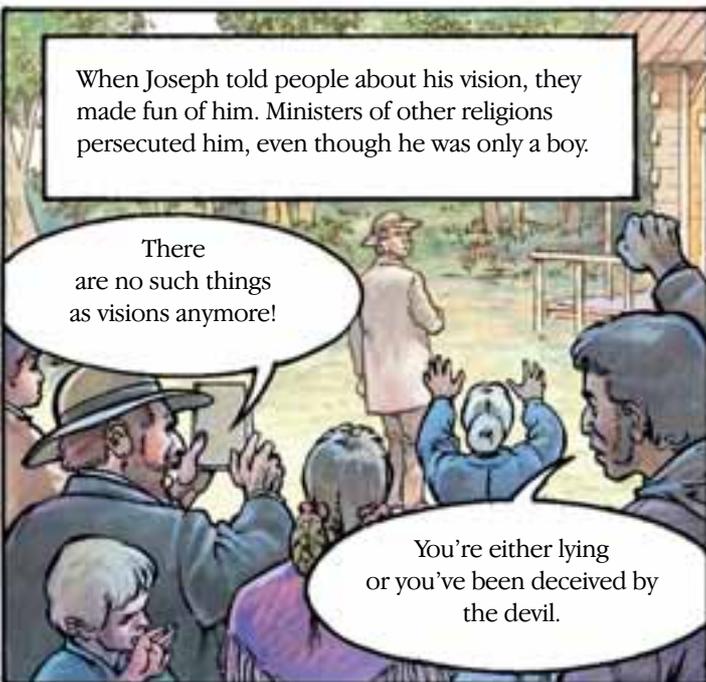


Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph. They told him not to join any of the churches because they were all wrong.

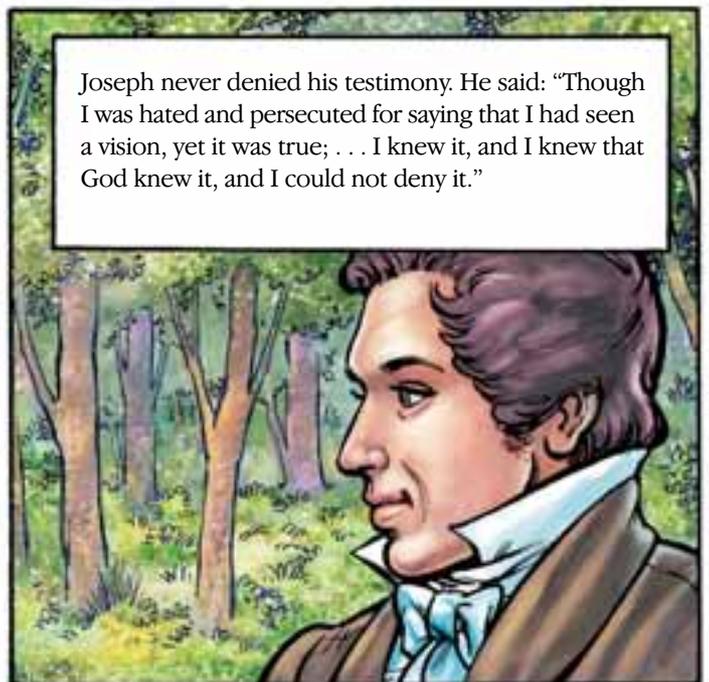
When Joseph told people about his vision, they made fun of him. Ministers of other religions persecuted him, even though he was only a boy.

There are no such things as visions anymore!

You're either lying or you've been deceived by the devil.



Joseph never denied his testimony. He said: “Though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; . . . I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it.”



“Praise the Lord with singing” (D&C 136:28).

Her Mother’s Song

BY SHEILA KINDRED
Based on a true story

Susan woke with a start. What was that noise? She listened carefully. The wind howled through the eucalyptus trees and knocked seedpods onto the roof above her bedroom. The noise of their falling sounded like heavy rain, and it had awakened her.

Susan sighed. Her family had just moved into this house, and she wasn’t used to all the new sounds. It didn’t help that Susan now slept alone. In their old house she had shared a bedroom with her older sister.

She pulled her blankets up under her chin as another shower of pods hit the roof. She was scared, lonely, and, she realized, missing her dad. Susan’s dad was an officer in the military. He was away on training. Although he wasn’t in danger, Susan suddenly grew frightened. What if someday her dad was sent to war and got killed? She didn’t want to grow up without her father. She needed him.

Tears pricked her eyes, and Susan knew she needed help to calm her growing fears. Her sister wasn’t nearby, but she knew that Jesus and Heavenly Father were always close.

Gathering her courage, Susan slipped out from under her blankets and knelt by the side of her bed. She prayed to Heavenly Father to help her, to take away her fear.

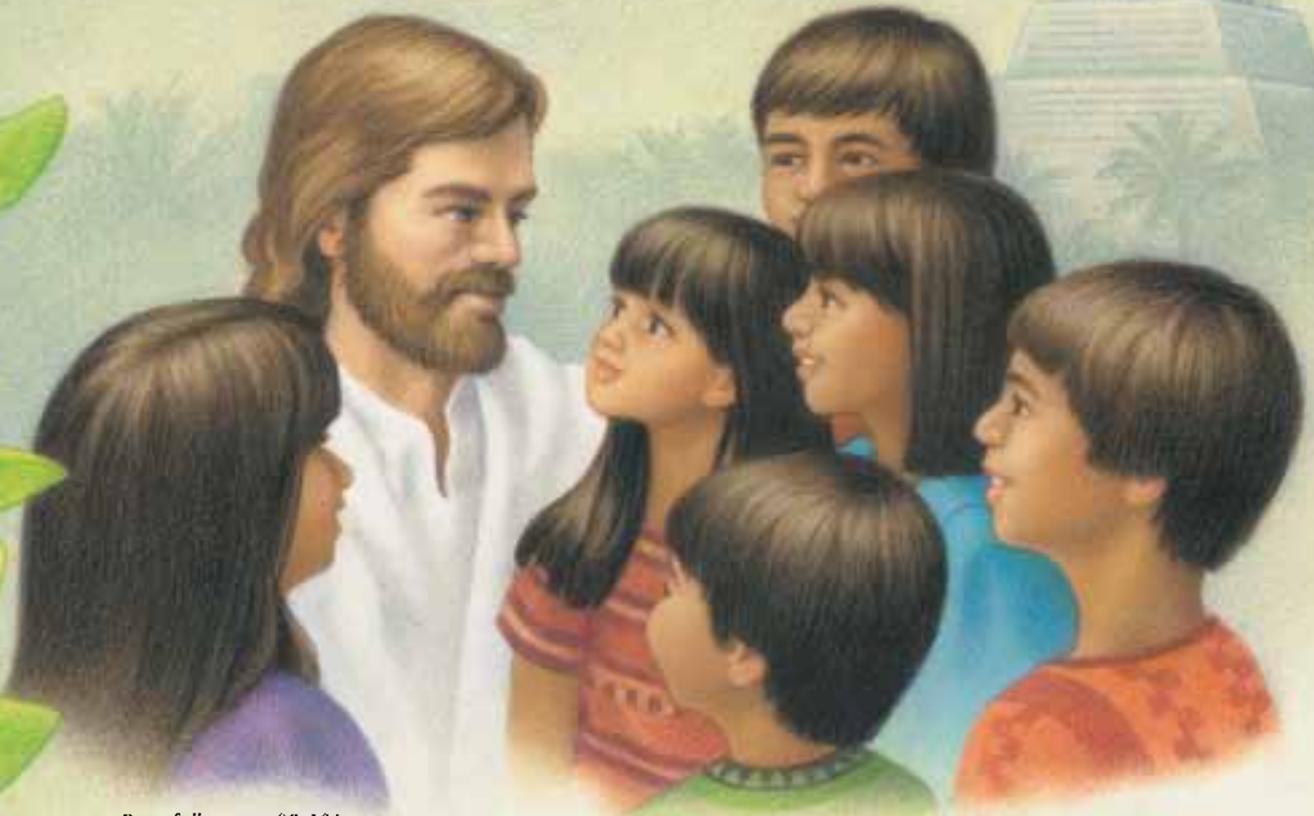
And then Susan heard something. It was softer than the clatter on the roof. It was her mother’s voice, and she was singing. As her mother walked through the house, finishing up her chores and getting ready for bed, she sang.

Susan’s mother had a beautiful voice and sang often, but this was the most wonderful song Susan had ever heard her sing. Though Susan didn’t recognize the tune, the words were about Jesus. The song filled her with peace.

Susan thanked Heavenly Father, then climbed back into bed, and listened to her mother’s song. Tears came to her eyes again, this time tears of gratitude and relief. She felt that all was well. She knew she had a loving family. She knew that Heavenly Father cared about her. She believed that no matter what happened, there would always be a reason to hope. Susan knew that whenever fears threatened to overcome her, she could find peace by remembering the night her mother’s song was stronger than fear. ●



Had I Been a Child



Peacefully ♩ = 96-104

F B⁷ F B^bm F

This system of musical notation is for the piano accompaniment. It consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The time signature is 3/4. The music begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The first measure has a finger number '2' above the treble staff. The second measure has a finger number '1' below the bass staff. The third measure has finger numbers '3' and '4' above the treble staff. The fourth measure has a treble clef change to a bass clef. The fifth measure has a treble clef change to a bass clef.

G^m C⁷ F B⁷ F

This system of musical notation includes the piano accompaniment and the vocal line. The piano part continues with the same grand staff. The vocal line is in the treble clef. The lyrics are:

1. Had I been a child when Je - sus
 (2. Then) He might have held me safe in His
 (3. Some) - day, when the Sav - ior comes a -

The piano part has finger numbers '1' and '5' below the bass staff in the first and fifth measures respectively.

C⁷ F D Gm

came arms; gain, Un - to the Ne - phites that bless - ed
He might have looked in my my eyes — and
Oh, how I hope that my heart — will

Gm⁷ B[♭]m C⁷ F

day said be And A word, with His bless - ing His hands and His
As pure as the hearts of the chil - dren that

Dm Gm C⁷ 1. 2. F

feet And knelt — with them to pray, 2. Then
love, His hands placed up - on my head. 3. Some
day Who gath - ered a - round His

3. F B[♭]m F

knee. *pp*

Words: Mabel Jones Gabbott, 1910–2004
Music: Darwin Wolford, b. 1936

3 Nephi 17:11–13, 21–24

From "Song of Cumorah," a children's cantata about the Book of Mormon.
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Being Content

“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11).



From an interview with Elder Alexander A. Odume, Area Seventy in the Africa West Area; by F. Onyebueze Nmeribe

I grew up in a village in southern Nigeria. My father made a living as a farmer, growing yams, maize, cassava, plantain, and other crops to sell. My parents taught me by their example to work hard. We all worked on the farm, and we had enough food to eat. My father believed that if a man worked hard and lived a decent life, he would succeed.

My parents were not members of the Church, but they believed in God. They taught me that God lives and that Jesus Christ is the Savior.

My father also taught me the principle of respect for my elders—being obedient to those in authority. It is a tradition in my community to give honor to one’s elders.

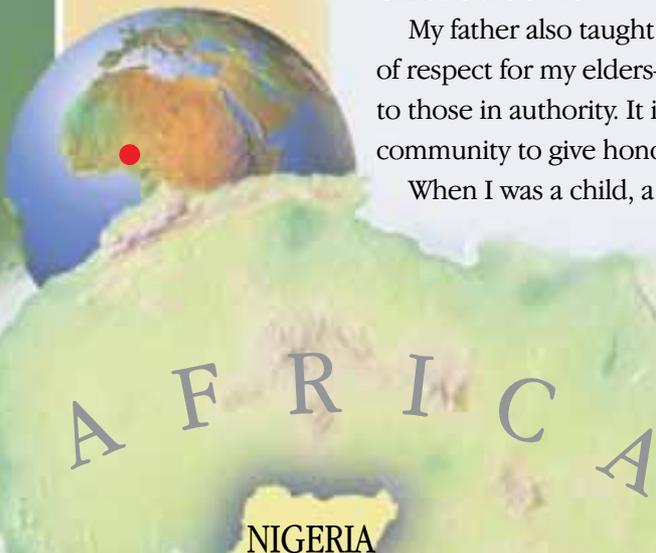
When I was a child, a neighbor brought

us food during a celebration. When our family receives such a gift, it is customary in my home for my father to decide when the family eats the food. This time, my father was not home. I desired so much to eat the food that I cried and begged my mother to give me some. My mother didn’t want to disrespect my father’s traditional role, but she also didn’t want me to be unhappy. She cut some of the food and gave me a little to eat.

Later, when my father came home, he was unhappy about what I had done. He invited me into his room and told me he was disappointed that I had not shown contentment for what I already had. He taught me that peace of mind and a good life are only for those who are content with what they have.

Years later I started visiting many churches, but I never felt at home. One day I returned home from work, and my landlady told me that my wife and I must move out by the next day. I could not think of any wrongdoing or problems that would cause her to ask us to leave.

I went to a friend’s house to ask for help in quickly finding a new apartment, and there I met the missionaries. They



introduced themselves and said they could answer my questions at the end of the lesson. As they taught about the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Restoration of the gospel, I thought about how I had moved from one church to another without finding the truth. I made an appointment with the missionaries, and they taught my wife and me. Soon we were baptized and confirmed.

Since that time I have held several callings in the Church. I found out that my parents had laid a very solid foundation for me to believe in God, to be content with what I have, and to know that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can be saved.

Children, listen to your parents' counsel, and follow the teachings of your Primary teachers and leaders. I know that if you will be obedient, if you will read the Book of Mormon, if you will honor your baptismal covenants, the Lord will bless you. ●



Standing Tall

BY JENNIFER MADDY
Church Magazines

CHILDREN ALL OVER THE WORLD PRAY, SING PRIMARY SONGS, AND LEARN ABOUT THE GOSPEL—JUST LIKE YOU! THIS MONTH LET'S MEET JUDY AND CHRISTOPHER SERENI OF CALCI, ITALY.

In Italy there is a tower that leans. People used to think that the 12th-century architect meant for the bell tower to lean, but scientists have discovered that it was designed to stand straight up. The ground underneath the Leaning Tower of Pisa moves unpredictably, and water collects beneath the foundation, rising and falling depending on the season. For 200 years builders tried to stop the tower's tilt, but one fact made it impossible: the tower's foundation shifted with the movement of the unstable ground.

In Calci, a town just outside of Pisa, Judy and Christopher Sereni of the Pisa Branch don't stand on shaky ground. They have built a strong foundation based on the gospel, their love for each other, and their love for their family.



Favorite Things

Judy, age 11

Food: strawberries

School subject: history

Family activity: playing games together

Sport: volleyball

Would like to visit: the temple

Christopher, age 8

Food: gelato (Italian ice cream)

School subject: literature

Family activity: playing video games with Dad

Sport: soccer

Place to visit: the ocean



When They Grow Up

Judy wants to be an actress or a singer.

Christopher wants to ride a motorcycle and play soccer.

The Strength of Service

One thing that keeps the Sereni family standing strong in the gospel is their baptismal covenants. Christopher was recently baptized and confirmed, and something that made it extra special was “when my dad and a friend sang together,” he says.

Now Christopher and Judy work on keeping their baptismal covenants all the time and doing what Jesus Christ would like them to do. “When I have friends who get hurt, I try to help out,” Christopher says. Judy also likes to serve: “I help out at home. I help Christopher with his studies, and I serve my friends.”

Dad adds, “When they’re asked to set the table or wash the dishes after a meal, they’re willing. Just of their own free will, they help out.”

A Solid Example

There aren’t many members of the Church in Calci, but Judy doesn’t see that as a problem. Her gospel foundation remains unshaken. “A couple of friends have asked me about the Church,” she says. “I brought a friend with me to church, and she came and she liked it. Sometimes friends have made fun of me, or somebody in class heard that I attend a different church. But for the most part my friends are understanding, and they ask questions.”



Dad’s Thoughts

“Judy is very mothering and very helpful and tries to make sure everybody else is taken care of. Christopher is loving and kind. Together they are very happy. Of course there are the little family arguments that happen between brother and sister, but they’re happy, and that’s important.”

Spiritual Foundation

The children’s spiritual foundation is strengthened by attending Primary. Judy likes to read a scripture while at the pulpit, and they both enjoy singing the songs. Christopher’s favorite song is “I Am a Child of God.”¹ The good feelings they have at church continue in their home. “During family prayer I feel the Spirit,” Christopher says, and Judy agrees.

Today scientists are working to make the Leaning Tower more stable. They say it will be good for another 300 years or so. Luckily, Judy and Christopher have built their lives on a solid foundation, one that will support them for eternity. ●

NOTE

1. *Children’s Songbook*, 2–3.



Certain Women, by Walter Rane

The artist commemorates the faithfulness of “certain women,” named and unnamed, who followed Jesus Christ: “Certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto [Jesus Christ] of their substance” (Luke 8:2–3).



In 1995 the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” reaffirming doctrines and practices that prophets have stated repeatedly throughout the history of the Church. They taught that each individual “is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature” and that the family, by divine design, “is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.” See “By Divine Design,” p. 26.