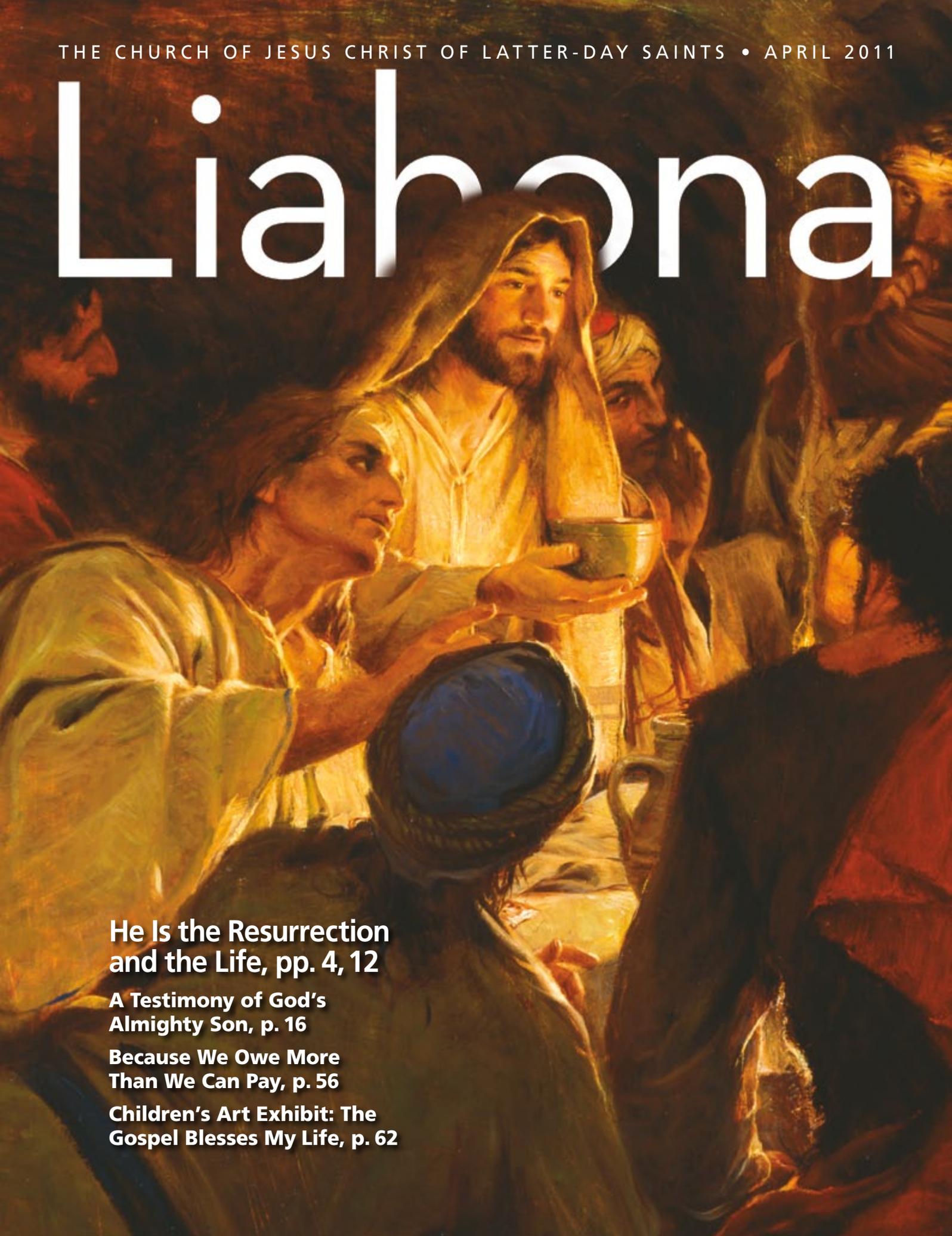


# Liahona



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© SCALA/ART RESOURCE, NEW YORK

*Ecce Homo (Behold the Man!), by Antonio Ciseri*

*“And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,*

*“Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him. . . .*

*“I will therefore chastise him, and release him.*

*“(For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)*

*“And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas. . . .*

*“Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.*

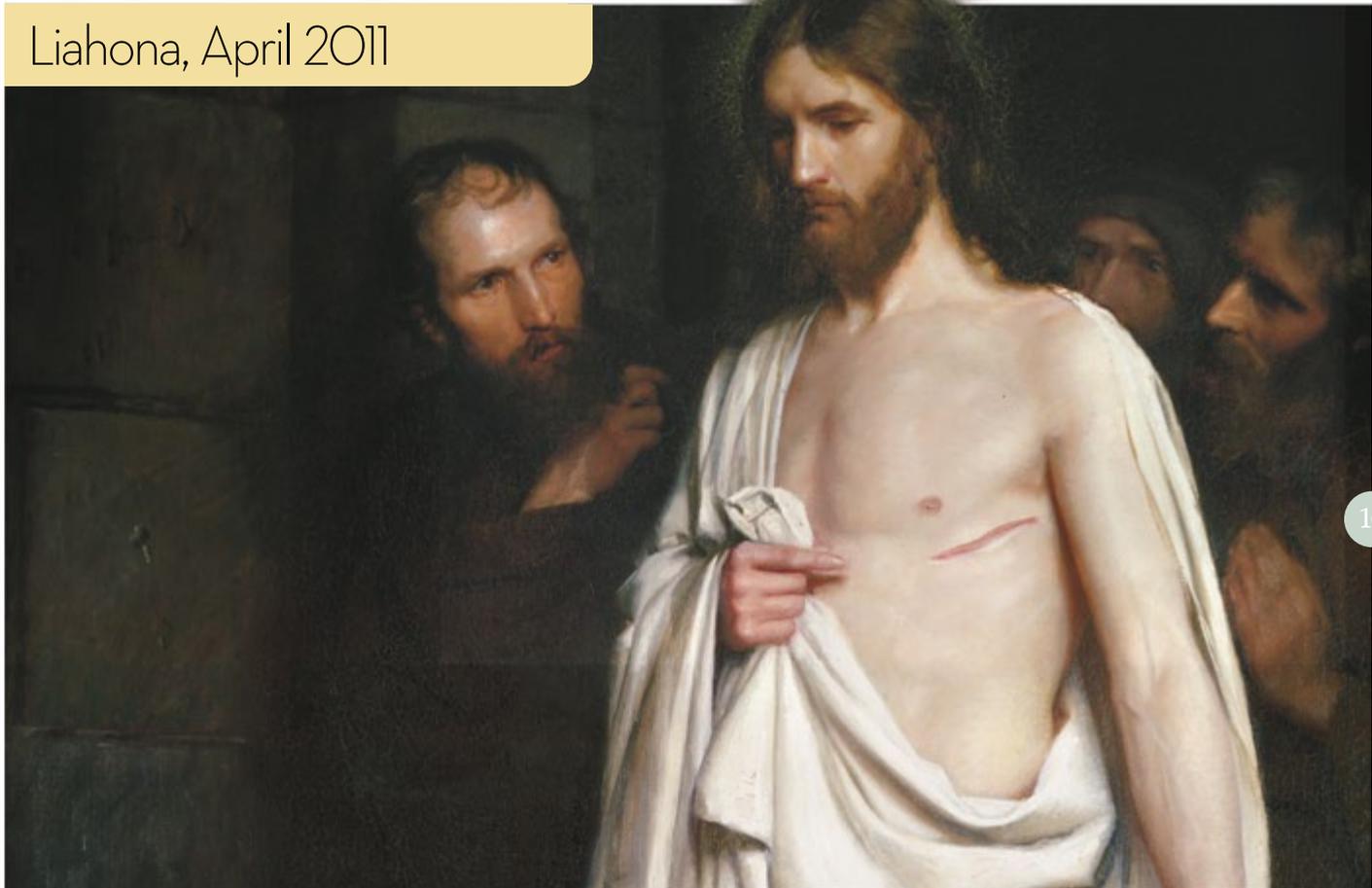
*“But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.*

*“And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.*

*“And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. . . .*

*“And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.*

*“. . . He delivered Jesus to their will” (Luke 23:13–14, 16–18, 20–25).*



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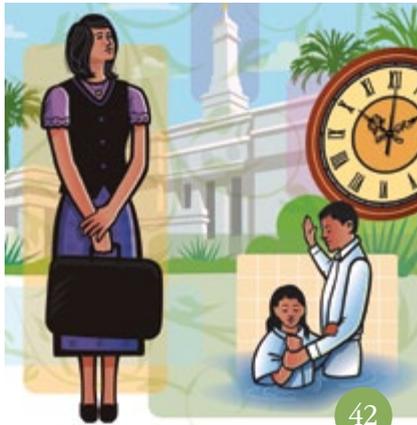
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## FOR ADULTS



Read stories of conversion from the Marshall Islands (page 32) and see more photos at [www.liahona.lds.org](http://www.liahona.lds.org).

## FOR YOUTH



When two Tahitian teens decided to focus on scripture mastery, it changed their lives (page 52). Learn more at [www.seminary.lds.org](http://www.seminary.lds.org).

## FOR CHILDREN



### See 23 pieces of art

from the international art exhibit on pages 62–64 and other entries at [www.liahona.lds.org](http://www.liahona.lds.org).

## IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at [www.languages.lds.org](http://www.languages.lds.org).

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By President  
Thomas S. Monson



# He Is Not Here, but Is Risen

Today only ruins remain of Capernaum, that city by the lakeshore, heart of the Savior's Galilean ministry. Here He preached in the synagogue, taught by the seaside, and healed in the homes.

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus took a text from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isaiah 61:1; see also Luke 4:18)—a clear pronouncement of a divine plan to rescue the sons and daughters of God.

But Jesus's preaching in Galilee had been merely prelude. The Son of Man had always had a dread rendezvous to keep on a hill called Golgotha.

Arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane after the Last Supper, deserted by His disciples, spat upon, tried, and humiliated, Jesus staggered under His great cross toward Calvary. He progressed from triumph to betrayal, torture, and death on the cross.

In the words of the song "The Holy City":

*The scene was changed. . . .  
The morn was cold and chill,  
As the shadow of a cross arose  
Upon a lonely hill.<sup>1</sup>*

For us our Heavenly Father gave His Son. For us our Elder Brother gave His life.

At the last moment the Master could have turned back. But He did not. He passed beneath all things that He might save all things: the human race, the earth, and all the life that ever inhabited it.

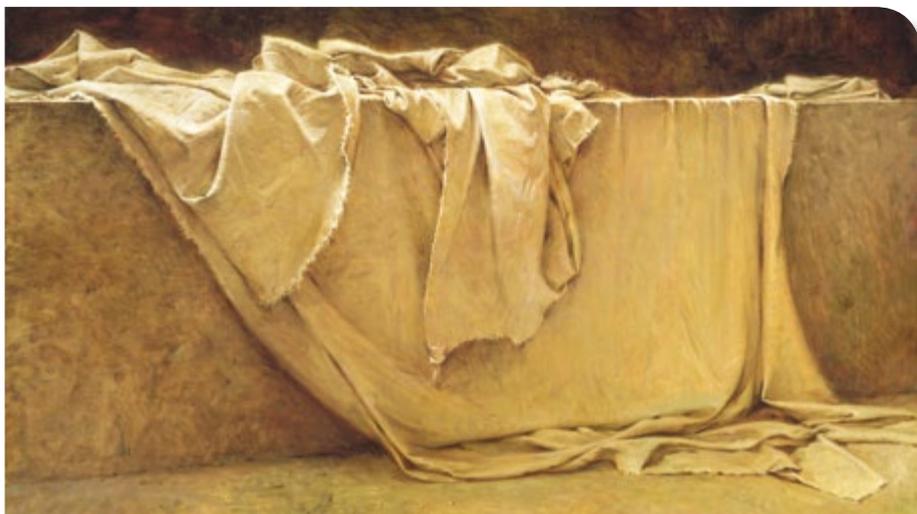
No words in Christendom mean more to me than those spoken by the angel to the weeping Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as they approached the tomb to care for the body of their Lord: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:5–6).

With this pronouncement, those who have lived and died, those who now live and one day will die, and those yet to be born and yet to die had just been rescued.

As the result of Christ's victory over the grave, we shall all be resurrected. This is the redemption of the soul. Paul wrote:

"There are . . . celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another



glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

“So also is the resurrection of the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:40–42).

It is the celestial glory that we seek. It is in the presence of God that we desire to dwell. It is a forever family in which we want membership.

Of Him who delivered each of us from endless death, I testify 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, who declared, “I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:4).

“Oh, sweet the joy this sentence gives: ‘I know that my Redeemer lives!’”<sup>2</sup>

Of this I testify. ■

#### NOTES

1. Frederick E. Weatherly, “The Holy City” (1892).
2. “I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” *Hymns*, no. 136.

#### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

**G**ood teachers encourage unity among those they teach. As people share their insights and listen to one another respectfully, they not only enjoy a positive atmosphere for learning but also become more unified (see *Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999],

63). Unity will develop among those you teach as you and they reverently bear testimony of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection. This unity can help families follow President Monson’s counsel to become a “forever family.”



## YOUTH

### He Showed Us the Way to Return Home



**T**he Savior came to the earth to show us how to live the plan that was authored in heaven—a plan that, if lived, will make us happy. His example showed us the way to return home to our Heavenly Father. No other who has ever lived has been so ‘steadfast and immovable’ (Mosiah 5:15). He was never distracted. He was focused on carrying out the will of the Father, and He remained true to His divine mission. . . .

“You are a part of that wondrous plan that was presented in the premortal realms. Your coming to the earth now has been anticipated since the plan was accepted. Your position in time and place is no accident. Your ‘exceeding faith and good works’ (Alma 13:3) then has laid the foundation for what you may accomplish now if you are faithful and obedient. . . . You have a great work to do. In order to accomplish your divine mission and live the plan of happiness, you too must be steadfast and immovable.”

Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president, “At All Times, in All Things, and in All Places,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2008, 116.

## CHILDREN

### We Can Be Forever Families

**P**resident Monson teaches that through the power of the Savior’s Atonement, we can be together again with our families after death. Bring this family together by following the instructions below.

*Instructions:* The family members at left are separated from each other and from the Savior by death. Make a copy of this page, print it from [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org), or make your own illustration to demonstrate how the Savior can bring us together. Fold the page at each dotted line so that the stars at the bottom of the page touch each other, hiding the dark areas.





Faith • Family • Relief

# The Purpose of Relief Society

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

When our presidency was first called, we were given some resources about the history of Relief Society. We studied them prayerfully, wanting to know the purpose of Relief Society and what the Lord would have us do. We learned that the purpose of Relief Society as established by the Lord is to organize, teach, and inspire His daughters to prepare them for the blessings of eternal life.

To fulfill this purpose of Relief Society, the Lord has commissioned each sister and the organization as a whole to:

1. Increase in faith and personal righteousness.
2. Strengthen families and homes.
3. Provide relief by serving the Lord and His children.

We can do this work in the Lord's way only when we seek, receive, and act on personal revelation. Without personal revelation, we cannot succeed. If we heed personal revelation, we cannot fail. The prophet Nephi instructs us that the Holy Ghost will show us "all things what [we] should do" (2 Nephi 32:5). We must allow ourselves to be still enough and quiet enough to listen to the voice of the Spirit.

Sisters, we have a vital role to play in helping build the kingdom of God and preparing for the Lord's coming. In fact, the Lord's work cannot be accomplished without the help of His daughters. Because of that, the Lord expects us to increase our offering. He expects us to fulfill the purpose of Relief Society as never before.

*Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president.*

## From the Scriptures

Deuteronomy 6:5–7; Luke 10:30–37;  
James 1:27; 2 Nephi 25:26; Mosiah 3:12–13

*To read about a woman who was an example of faith and personal righteousness, see page 28.*

## What Can I Do?

1. What inspiration have I received to help my sisters increase in faith and personal righteousness and strengthen their families and homes? What relief can I provide?
2. How will I use this message to strengthen my faith and increase my own commitment to personal righteousness?

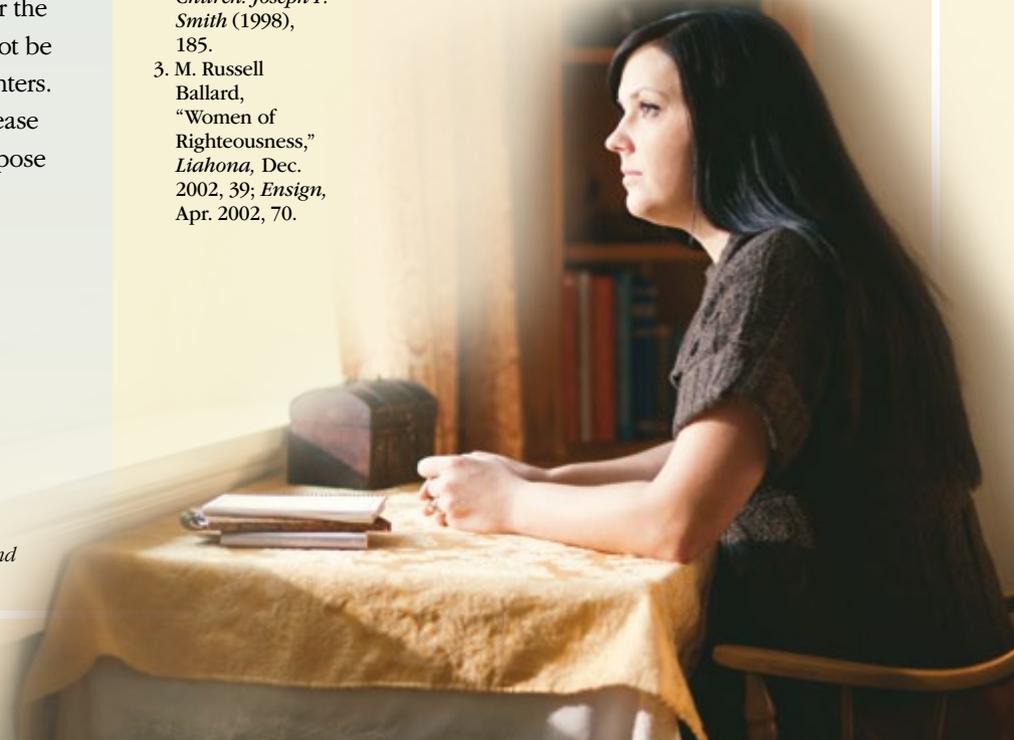
For more information, go to [www.reliefsociety.lds.org](http://www.reliefsociety.lds.org).

## NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:25.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 185.
3. M. Russell Ballard, "Women of Righteousness," *Liahona*, Dec. 2002, 39; *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 70.

## From Our History

At a June 9, 1842, meeting of the Relief Society, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught the sisters that their society was "not only to relieve the poor, but to save souls."<sup>1</sup> This statement of a spiritual as well as a temporal purpose has characterized Relief Society throughout its history. In 1906 President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) taught: "[Relief Society] has not only to deal with the necessities of the poor, the sick and the needy, but a part of its duty—and the larger part, too—is to look after the spiritual welfare and salvation of the mothers and daughters of Zion; to see that none is neglected, but that all are guarded against misfortune, calamity, the powers of darkness, and the evils that threaten them in the world."<sup>2</sup> In 2001 Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reiterated, "Every sister in this Church who has made covenants with the Lord has a divine mandate to help save souls, to lead the women of the world, to strengthen the homes of Zion, and to build the kingdom of God."<sup>3</sup>



# Small & Simple Things

*“Out of small things proceedeth that which is great”  
(D&C 64:33).*

## CHURCH HISTORY AROUND THE WORLD



### The Marshall Islands

Although Church members visited the Marshall Islands during World War II, official missionary work did not begin there until February 1977. That year Elder William Wardel and Elder Steven Cooper from the Hawaii Honolulu Mission were assigned to work in the area. With the assistance of Eldred Fewkes, a member of the Church who had moved to the Marshall Islands for work, they arranged to hold Church services in a building of another church.

That first year the missionaries baptized 27 converts. Three years later the Marshall Islands became part of the Micronesia

Guam Mission. In 1984 the Majuro Marshall Islands District was formed. Church membership continued to grow, leading to the formation of a second district in 1991 on the atoll Kwajalein. In 2006 the Marshall Islands Majuro Mission was created. The next three years saw a large increase in active membership due to activation efforts, convert baptisms, and strengthening local leadership. The result was that on June 14, 2009, the Majuro Marshall Islands Stake was organized.

To read stories of faith and conversion of members in the Marshall Islands, see page 32.

### Learning from Conference

Our children are now grown and have their own homes and families, but we have found a great method of learning together from the words of the prophets. During the month following each general conference, I study the addresses on [www.conference.lds.org](http://www.conference.lds.org) and select quotations that give direction, guidance, and comfort. I collect enough that there is one quote for each day during the upcoming six months. (For example, during April, I find a quote a day for May 1–October 31.) Then I give copies of these quotes to each of our children.

As a complement to their own study of conference, these quotes of the day often become a topic of conversation among family members. It is a wonderful experience to review the counsel of the prophets during the months following general conference, even when we live miles apart.

**Christine Tippetts, Utah, USA**

THE CHURCH IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS	
Membership	4,486
Missions	1
Stakes	1
Districts	1
Wards/Branches	11

# J. Reuben Clark Jr.: A Man of Uncommon Gifts



**J**oshua Reuben Clark Jr. was born in Grantsville, Utah, on September 1, 1871. Though he had little formal education and was unable to attend high school, his mother had tutored him, and he loved learning. He graduated first in his class from the University of Utah with a bachelor of science degree and went on to receive a law degree from Columbia University law school in New York City.

Brother Clark married Luacine Annetta Savage in the Salt Lake Temple in 1898, and they became the parents of four children.

Armed with his law degree and a brilliant mind, J. Reuben Clark Jr. went on to a distinguished legal and civil service career that culminated in his being named U.S. ambassador to Mexico in 1930. That career ended, however, when Brother Clark was sustained as Second Counselor to President Heber J. Grant in the First Presidency on April 6, 1933. Although he was a high priest at the time, he was not a General Authority. He was ordained an Apostle when he was subsequently sustained as First Counselor to President Grant in October

**President Clark (left) with Lamont Toronto, mission president.**



**The First Presidency in 1945 (from left): J. Reuben Clark Jr., Heber J. Grant, and David O. McKay.**

1934. President Clark went on to serve as a counselor to Presidents George Albert Smith and David O. McKay.

Among his many contributions to the Church, one that stands out is the example of humility he set when David O. McKay became President of the Church. He called President Clark to be his Second Counselor. Because President Clark had been serving as First Counselor in previous First Presidencies, some apparently thought he had been slighted, but President Clark explained: “In the service of the Lord, it is not where you serve but how. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, one takes the place to which one is duly called, which place one neither seeks nor declines.”<sup>1</sup>

President Clark died on October 6, 1961.

**NOTE**

1. J. Reuben Clark Jr., in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 154.

## LDS EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE SERVICES WORKSHOP

**L**DS Employment Resource Services offers a workshop to help those who are looking for work, wanting to enroll in school, or starting a business. The workshop helps people define their career goals and develop confidence in their ability to succeed. It is designed to be instructional, interactive, motivating, and fun. Individuals who apply what they learn in the workshop are often able to

find work in less time than they would otherwise.

The workshop includes topics such as identifying career goals, finding resources to achieve one’s goals, writing résumés, and succeeding in a new job.

To find if there is a workshop location near you, ask your bishop or branch president or visit [www.ldsjobs.org](http://www.ldsjobs.org) and click on “Find a Center.”

## “REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH” (ECCLESIASTES 12:1)

The scriptures chronicle the ministries of the prophets and apostles. Many of these leaders knew God from their youth. Here are five scriptural accounts that describe the experiences of some of these future leaders.



- John the Baptist, who was called to prepare the people for “the coming of the Lord,” was “ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power” (D&C 84:27–28).



- King Josiah, crowned at age eight, spent his 31-year reign helping the Jews become converted to the gospel (see 2 Kings 22).

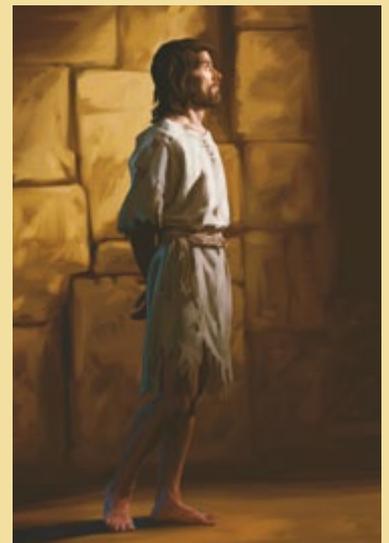
- Mormon was about 10 years old when Ammaron chose him to be the next keeper of the records (the plates of Nephi). At about age 16 Mormon led the Nephite armies. (See Mormon 1:2–4; 2:1–2.)



- David was a mere “stripling” (a young man) when he slew Goliath, perhaps the same age as the soldiers in Helaman’s army (see 1 Samuel 17:49–56; Alma 53:22).



- Joseph was 17 when he was sold into Egypt, where “the Lord was with Joseph” (see Genesis 37:2, 27–28; 39:2).



TOP LEFT, ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL MANN; DETAIL FROM SHAPHAN BRINGS THE SCROLLS TO JOSIAH, BY ROBERT T. BARRETT © 1990, MAY NOT BE COPIED; MORMON ABRIDGING THE PLATES, BY TOM LOVELL © IRI; DAVID AND GOLIATH, BY STEVE NETHERCOTT, MAY NOT BE COPIED; ANCIENT EXAMPLES/MODERN PROMISES, BY JEFF WARD

# "All of This Blesses Me"

By Michael R. Morris

Church Magazines

If it's Saturday, you'll find Elvira Guagliarello busily working in the kitchen of her home in Puerto Madryn, located on the shores of Argentina's Nuevo Gulf in the southern province of Chubut.

She measures out flour and water and then reaches for other ingredients. She says little as she works, her actions speaking louder than her words. After all, she's on the Lord's errand.

"I feel good because I know I am doing something good," says Sister Guagliarello as she mixes the ingredients. She thinks of the Savior as she works, happy with the thought that the product of her service will help other members of the Church remember Him.

Sister Guagliarello, age 82, enjoys serving as a visiting teacher, helps direct the music in her ward, and makes bread for use in the ordinance of the sacrament—a calling she has magnified for nearly 10 years. She

prepares a loaf of bread for herself earlier in the week, but on Saturdays she sets aside time to make bread "especially for the Church," she says. "I say to myself, 'I have to make bread, and I have to go to church.' I don't want to fail."

Health permitting, she also attends the temple—making an annual 20-hour bus trip north to the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple.

"Sister Guagliarello is always happy to serve in every way she can," says her bishop, Jesús Santos Gumiel. "Ward members know they can count on her. Despite her age, she is faithful in preparing the bread every Saturday and in coming to church every Sunday. She's a good example."

Sister Guagliarello met the full-time missionaries in 1962 in Mar del Plata, south of Buenos Aires, while working in a boarding house where they lived. When she recognized them knocking



Elvira Guagliarello

on doors 15 years later, after she had moved to Puerto Madryn, she took the discussions, was baptized, and began her life of service in the Church.

Today she lives by herself, but she doesn't feel alone. She has her scriptures and her ward family, and she communes frequently with her Heavenly Father through prayer. In addition, she enjoys the companionship of the Spirit, which the Lord has promised to those who serve Him by serving others.<sup>1</sup>

"All of this blesses me," Sister Guagliarello says with a smile. "The Church puts us to work, and that makes me happy. I have always found joy in serving our Father in Heaven." ■

#### NOTE

1. See Henry B. Eyring, "In the Strength of the Lord," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2004, 19; see also John 14:16–18; Doctrine and Covenants 88:3.

## MAKING THE MOST OF SENIOR YEARS

The key to feeling useful and overcoming loneliness is to look for ways to help others who are

in need. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) suggested that senior members of the Church consider serving in the following ways:

1. Working in the temple and attending often.
2. Collecting and writing family histories.
3. Becoming involved in missionary service.
4. Building family togetherness.
5. Accepting and fulfilling Church callings.
6. Rendering Christlike service.
7. Staying physically fit, healthy, and active.

From Ezra Taft Benson, "To the Elderly in the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 4–6.



# JESUS CHRIST ATONED FOR OUR SINS

One of the reasons we are here on earth is to learn to obey God's commandments. Except for Jesus Christ, who lived a perfect life, everyone who has lived upon the earth has sinned (see Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8). Sin is when we willfully break God's commandments, and all sins have a punishment attached to them. When we sin, justice requires that we suffer the punishment (see Alma 42:16–22).

Ultimately, the consequence of any sin is separation from God (see 1 Nephi 10:21). This separation is so severe that we cannot repair it on our own.

To overcome this separation, our

Heavenly Father provided a way for His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself the burden of our sins, making it possible for us to be spiritually clean and reunited with Him. This is the plan of mercy.

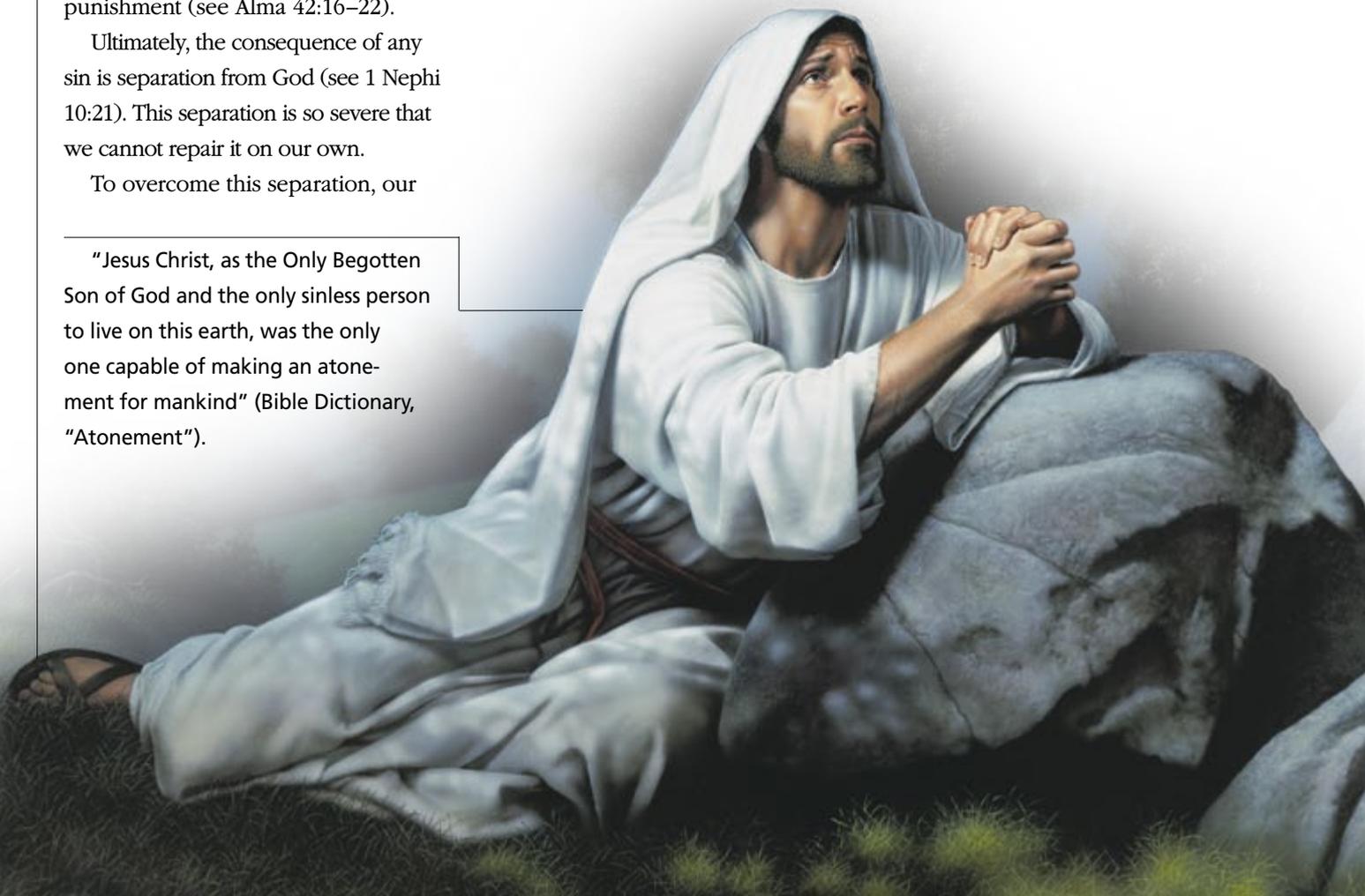
The Savior taught, "For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; but if they would not

repent they must suffer even as I" (D&C 19:16–17).

As part of His Atonement, Jesus suffered for our sins in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary. By repenting of our sins, we can bring the power of His Atonement into our lives.

Jesus Christ, who willingly atoned for our sins, said:

"Jesus Christ, as the Only Begotten Son of God and the only sinless person to live on this earth, was the only one capable of making an atonement for mankind" (Bible Dictionary, "Atonement").



**The Atonement also provides the following blessings:**

1. Resurrection to all who are born on earth (see Alma 11:42–45).



“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30). ■

For more information, see *Gospel Principles* (2009), 59–66; and *True to the Faith* (2004), 14–20.



3. Ability to find peace in times of trial because Jesus took upon Himself our pains and sicknesses (see John 14:27; Alma 7:11–12).

*“Behold, I have come unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin.*

*“Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God.*

*Behold, for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved” (3 Nephi 9:21–22).*

2. Eternal life in God’s presence for all children who die before they arrive at the age of accountability, age eight (see Mosiah 3:16; 15:24–25; Moroni 8:8–12).



4. Compensation to the righteous for the inequities of this life (see Preach My Gospel [2004], 52).

# Repent, Turn to the Lord, and Be Healed



## THE BLESSINGS OF REPENTANCE

“Sin is the willful transgression of divine law. The Atonement of Jesus Christ is the gift of God to His children to correct and overcome the consequences of sin. . . .

“The gift of the Atonement of Jesus Christ provides us at all times and at all places with the blessings of repentance and forgiveness.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Point of Safe Return,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2007, 99, 101.

*“Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more” (D&C 58:42).*

By David L. Frischknecht

Curriculum Department

Recently a good and faithful woman I know was seriously injured in a car accident. Included in her injuries were broken ribs and broken vertebrae. Part of her rehabilitation required that she wear a brace on her back and neck so she couldn’t move them. The brace looked very uncomfortable. But it was necessary. It provided the condition through which her back and her neck could heal.

Repentance is like that brace. When we sin, we injure our soul, and divine treatment is needed to make us whole again. Repentance provides the condition that allows the Savior, through the power of the Atonement, to *heal* us (see 3 Nephi 9:13). If some part of repentance is not comfortable—like a brace on a broken back—we need to repent anyway.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “True repentance brings us back to doing what is right. To truly repent we must

recognize our sins and feel remorse, or godly sorrow, and confess those sins to God. If our sins are serious, we must also confess them to our authorized priesthood leader. We need to ask God for forgiveness and do all we can to correct whatever harm our actions may have caused. Repentance means a change of mind and heart—we stop doing things that are wrong, and we start doing things that are right. It brings us a fresh attitude toward God, oneself, and life in general.”<sup>1</sup>

When we successfully complete the repentance process, the result is healing, relief, and happiness. Dorothy J. R. White wrote:

*Consider tears that fall on the outside,  
Yet wash the inside clean.*<sup>2</sup>

The Lord pleads with insistence, love, and persuasion that we repent, because He wants to heal us. He suffered in His body and spirit to pay the penalty for our sins if we repent. He explains:

“For behold, I, God, have suffered



***The prodigal son humbly returned to his father and said, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son” (Luke 15:21). His father welcomed him home. So does our Heavenly Father welcome us when we repent.***

these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

“Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.

“Wherefore, I command you again to repent” (D&C 19:16–20).

May we repent now, turn to the Lord, and be healed. ■

**NOTES**

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Point of Safe Return,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2007, 100.
2. Dorothy J. R. White, “Repentance,” *Ensign*, July 1996, 27.

**What are the blessings of repentance and forgiveness?**

- The Holy Ghost will verify to us that we are forgiven.
- God will take away the burden of guilt for our sins.
- We will enjoy the influence of the Holy Ghost in greater abundance.

For more information on this topic, see Ezekiel 33:15–16; Alma 12:33–34; 36:13, 17–20; and Boyd K. Packer, “The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 18–21.

**WHY DOES REPENTANCE HEAL US?**

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles helps answer this question in his general conference talk “Repent . . . That I May Heal You” (*Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 40–43). The prophet Alma also helps us understand repentance and the Atonement (see Alma 42).

1. Our repentance allows us to access Christ’s Atonement and be healed. Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane and on Golgotha atoned for the sins of all of us. He is able and eager to forgive our sins.
2. When we sin, we turn away from God. This injures our spirit.
3. When we repent, we “re-turn” to God. This helps our remorse to subside. Forgiveness also takes “away the guilt from our hearts” (Alma 24:10) and brings “peace of conscience” (Mosiah 4:3), thus healing us.

Consider sharing with someone your testimony of the blessings that have come to you as a result of repentance.

# THE Purifying Power OF GETHSEMANE



**By Elder Bruce R.  
McConkie (1915–85)**

Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

*Bruce R. McConkie was born on July 29, 1915, in Michigan, USA. He was sustained to the First Council of the Seventy on October 6, 1946, and was ordained an Apostle on October 12, 1972. He died on April 19, 1985, in Salt Lake City, Utah. This address was delivered in general conference on April 6, 1985.*

I feel, and the Spirit seems to accord, that the most important doctrine I can declare, and the most powerful testimony I can bear, is of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His Atonement is the most transcendent event that ever has or ever will occur from Creation's dawn through all the ages of a never-ending eternity.

It is the supreme act of goodness and grace that only a god could perform. Through it, all of the terms and conditions of the Father's eternal plan of salvation became operative.

Through it are brought to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. Through it, all men are saved from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment.

And through it, all who believe and obey the glorious gospel of God, all who are true and faithful and overcome the world, all who suffer for Christ and His word, all who are chastened and scourged in the cause of Him whose we are—all shall become as their Maker and sit with Him on His throne and reign with Him forever in everlasting glory.

In speaking of these wondrous things, I shall use my own words, though you may think they are the words of scripture, words spoken by other apostles and prophets.

True it is they were first proclaimed by others, but they are now mine, for the Holy Spirit of God has borne witness to me that they are true, and it is now as though the Lord had revealed them to me in the first instance. I have thereby heard His voice and know His word.

## **In the Garden of Gethsemane**

Two thousand years ago, outside Jerusalem's walls, there was a pleasant garden spot, Gethsemane by name, where Jesus and His intimate friends were wont to retire for pondering and prayer.

There Jesus taught His disciples the doctrines of the kingdom, and all of them communed with Him who is the Father of us all, in whose ministry they were engaged and on whose errand they served.

This sacred spot, like Eden where Adam dwelt, like Sinai from whence Jehovah gave His laws, like Calvary where the Son of God gave His life a ransom for many, this holy ground is where the sinless Son of the Everlasting Father took upon Himself the sins of all men on condition of repentance.



these infinite agonies—this suffering beyond compare—continued for some three or four hours.

### **His Arrest, Trial, and Scourging**

After this—His body then wrenched and drained of strength—He confronted Judas and the other incarnate devils, some from the very Sanhedrin itself; and He was led away with a rope around His neck, as a common criminal, to be judged by the arch-criminals, who as Jews sat in Aaron's seat and who as Romans wielded Caesar's power.

They took Him to Annas, to Caiaphas, to Pilate, to Herod, and back to Pilate. He was accused, cursed, and smitten. Their foul saliva ran down His face as vicious blows further weakened His pain-engulfed body.

With reeds of wrath they rained blows upon His back. Blood ran down His face as a crown of thorns pierced His trembling brow.

But above it all He was scourged, scourged with 40 stripes save one, scourged with a multi-thonged whip into whose leather strands sharp bones and cutting metals were woven.

Many died from scourging alone, but He rose from the sufferings of the scourge that He

We do not know, we cannot tell, no mortal mind can conceive the full import of what Christ did in Gethsemane.

We know He sweat great goutts of blood from every pore as He drained the dregs of that bitter cup His Father had given Him.

We know He suffered, both body and spirit, more than it is possible for man to suffer, except it be unto death.

We know that in some way, incomprehensible to us, His suffering satisfied the demands of justice, ransomed penitent souls

from the pains and penalties of sin, and made mercy available to those who believe in His holy name.

We know that He lay prostrate upon the ground as the pains and agonies of an infinite burden caused Him to tremble and would that He might not drink the bitter cup.

We know that an angel came from the courts of glory to strengthen Him in His ordeal, and we suppose it was mighty Michael, who foremost fell that mortal man might be.

As near as we can judge,

***No mortal mind can conceive the full import of what Christ did in Gethsemane.***

might die an ignominious death upon the cruel cross of Calvary.

Then He carried His own cross until He collapsed from the weight and pain and mounting agony of it all.

### **Upon the Cross**

Finally, on a hill called Calvary—again, it was outside Jerusalem’s walls—while helpless disciples looked on and felt the agonies of near death in their own bodies, the Roman soldiers laid Him upon the cross.

With great mallets they drove spikes of iron through His feet and hands and wrists. Truly He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

Then the cross was raised that all might see and gape and curse and deride. This they did, with evil venom, for three hours from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Then the heavens grew black. Darkness covered the land for the space of three hours, as it did among the Nephites. There was a mighty storm, as though the very God of nature was in agony.

And truly He was, for while He was hanging on the cross for another three hours, from noon to 3:00 p.m., all the infinite agonies and merciless pains of Gethsemane recurred.

And, finally, when the atoning agonies had taken their toll—when the victory had been won, when the Son of God had fulfilled the will of His Father in all things—then He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30), and He voluntarily gave up the ghost.

### **In the Spirit World**

As the peace and comfort of a merciful death freed Him from the pains and sorrows of mortality, He entered the paradise of God.

When He had made His soul an offering for sin, He was prepared to see His seed, according to the messianic word.

These, consisting of all the holy prophets and faithful Saints from ages past; these, comprising all who had taken upon them His name, and who, being spiritually begotten by Him, had become His sons and His daughters, even as it is with us; all these were assembled in

the spirit world, there to see His face and hear His voice.

After some 38 or 40 hours—three days as the Jews measured time—our blessed Lord came to the Arimathean’s tomb, where His partially embalmed body had been placed by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

### **His Resurrection**

Then, in a way incomprehensible to us, He took up that body which had not yet seen corruption and arose in that glorious immortality which made Him like His resurrected Father.

He then received all power in heaven and on earth, obtained eternal exaltation, appeared unto Mary Magdalene and many others, and ascended into heaven, there to sit down on the right hand of God the Father Almighty and to reign forever in eternal glory.

His rising from death on the third day crowned the Atonement. Again, in some way incomprehensible to us, the effects of His Resurrection pass upon all men so that all shall rise from the grave.

As Adam brought death, so Christ brought life; as Adam is the father of mortality, so Christ is the father of immortality.

And without both, mortality and immortality, man cannot work out his salvation and ascend to those heights beyond the skies where gods and angels dwell forever in eternal glory.

### **A Knowledge of the Atonement**

Now, the Atonement of Christ is the most basic and fundamental doctrine of the gospel, and it is the least understood of all our revealed truths.

Many of us have a superficial knowledge and rely upon the Lord and His goodness to see us through the trials and perils of life.

But if we are to have faith like Enoch and Elijah, we must believe what they believed, know what they knew, and live as they lived.

May I invite you to join with me in gaining a sound and sure knowledge of the Atonement.

We must cast aside the philosophies of men and the



immortality and eternal life.

If there had been no Fall of Adam, by which cometh death, there could have been no Atonement of Christ, by which cometh life.

### His Atoning Blood

And now, as pertaining to this perfect Atonement, wrought by the shedding of the blood of God—I testify that it took place in Gethsemane and at Golgotha, and as pertaining to Jesus Christ, I testify that He is the Son of the living God and was crucified for the sins of the world. He is our Lord, our God, and our King. This I know of myself, independent of any other person.

I am one of His witnesses, and in a coming day I shall feel the nail marks in His hands and in His feet and shall wet His feet with my tears.

But I shall not know any better than I know now that He is God's Almighty Son, that He is our Savior and Redeemer, and that salvation comes in and through His atoning blood and in no other way.

God grant that all of us may walk in the light, as God our Father is in the light, so that, according to the promises, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, will cleanse us from all sin. ■

*Subheads added; capitalization, punctuation, and spelling standardized.*

wisdom of the wise and hearken to that Spirit which is given to us to guide us into all truth.

We must search the scriptures, accepting them as the mind and will and voice of the Lord and the very power of God unto salvation.

As we read, ponder, and pray, there will come into our minds a view of the three gardens of God—the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Garden of the Empty Tomb, where Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene.

### The Creation, Fall, and Atonement

In Eden we will see all things created in a paradisiacal state—without death, without procreation, without probationary experiences.

We will come to know that such a creation, now unknown

to man, was the only way to provide for the Fall.

We will then see Adam and Eve, the first man and the first woman, step down from their state of immortal and paradisiacal glory to become the first mortal flesh on earth.

Mortality, including as it does procreation and death, will enter the world. And because of transgression, a probationary estate of trial and testing will begin.

Then in Gethsemane we will see the Son of God ransom man from the temporal and spiritual death that came to us because of the Fall.

And finally, before an empty tomb, we will come to know that Christ our Lord has burst the bands of death and stands forever triumphant over the grave.

Thus, Creation is father to the Fall; and by the Fall came mortality and death; and by Christ came

*The effects of His Resurrection pass upon all men so that all shall rise from the grave.*



By Elder D. Todd  
Christofferson  
Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles



# TO ALWAYS REMEMBER HIM

*When we always remember the Savior, we can “cheerfully do all things that lie in our power,” confident that His power and love for us will see us through.*

**T**he sacramental prayers confirm that one of the central purposes of the sacrament as instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ is that we might “always remember him” (D&C



20:77, 79). Remembering the Savior obviously includes remembering His Atonement, which is symbolically represented by the bread and water as emblems of His suffering and death. We must never forget what He did for us, for without His Atonement and Resurrection, life

would have no meaning. With His Atonement and Resurrection, however, our lives have eternal, divine possibilities.

I wish to elaborate on three aspects of what it means to “always remem-

ber him”: first, seeking to know and follow His will; second, recognizing and accepting our obligation to answer to Christ for every thought, word, and action; and third, living with faith and without fear so that we can always look to the Savior for the help we need.

*You and I can put Christ at the center of our lives and become one with Him as He is one with the Father. We can begin by stripping everything out of our lives and then putting it back together in priority order with the Savior at the center.*



**1. Seek to know and follow the will of Christ just as He sought the will of the Father.**

The sacramental blessing on the bread commits us to be willing to take upon us the name of the Son “and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given [us]” (D&C 20:77). It would also be appropriate to read this covenant as “always remember Him to keep His commandments.” This is how He always remembered the Father. As He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek

not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30).

Jesus achieved perfect unity with the Father by submitting Himself, both body and spirit, to the will of the Father. Referring to His Father, Jesus said, “I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). Because it was the Father’s will, Jesus submitted even to death, “the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7). His focus on the Father is one of the principal reasons Jesus’s ministry had such clarity and power.

In the same way, you and I can put Christ

at the center of our lives and become one with Him as He is one with the Father (see John 17:20–23). We can begin by stripping everything out of our lives and then putting it back together in priority order with the Savior at the center. We should first put in place the things that make it possible to always remember Him—frequent prayer and scripture study, thoughtful study of apostolic teachings, weekly preparation to partake of the sacrament worthily, Sunday worship, and recording and remembering what the Spirit and experience teach us about discipleship.

Other things may come to your mind particularly suited to you at this point in your life. Once we make adequate time and means for these matters in centering our lives in Christ, we can begin to add other responsibilities and things of value, such as education and family responsibilities. In this way the essential will not be crowded out of our lives by the merely good, and things of lesser value will take a lower priority or fall away altogether.

I recognize that aligning our will to that of Jesus Christ as He aligned His will to the Father's is something not easily achieved. President Brigham Young (1801–77) spoke understandingly of our challenge when he said:

“After all that has been said and done, after he has led this people so long, do you not perceive that there is a lack of confidence in our God? Can you perceive it in yourselves? You may ask, [Brother] Brigham, do you perceive it in yourself? I do, I can see that I yet lack confidence, to some extent, in him whom I trust.—Why? Because I have not the power, in consequence of that which the fall has brought upon me. . . .

“ . . . Something rises up within me, at times[,] that measurably draws a dividing line

between my interest and the interest of my Father in heaven; something that makes my interest and the interest of my Father in heaven not precisely one.

“I know that we should feel and understand, as far as possible, as far as fallen nature will let us, as far as we can get faith and knowledge to understand ourselves, that the interest of that God whom we serve is our interest, and that we have no other, neither in time nor in eternity.”<sup>1</sup>

Though it may not be easy, we can consistently press forward with faith in the Lord. I can attest that over time our desire and capacity to always remember and follow the Savior will grow. We should patiently work toward that end and pray always for the discernment and divine help we need. Nephi counseled, “I say unto you that ye must pray always, and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul” (2 Nephi 32:9).

I witnessed a simple example of this kind of prayer when Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and I were assigned to conduct a videoconference interview of a couple in another country. Shortly before going into the studio, I reviewed once again the information we had collected about the couple and felt I was prepared for the interview. A few minutes before the appointed time, I saw Elder Oaks sitting alone with head bowed. In a moment he raised his head and said, “I was just finishing my prayer in preparation for this interview. We will need the gift of discernment.” He had not neglected the most important preparation, a prayer to consecrate our performance for our good and the Lord's glory.

*Whatever we “get away with” in life or manage to hide from other people, we must still face when the inevitable day comes that we are lifted up before Jesus Christ, the God of pure and perfect justice.*



## **2. Prepare to answer to Christ for every thought, word, and action.**

The scriptures make it clear that there will be a great day of judgment when the Lord will stand to judge the nations (see 3 Nephi 27:16) and when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is the Christ (see Romans 14:11; Mosiah 27:31; D&C 76:110). The individual nature and extent of that judgment are described by Alma in the Book of Mormon:

“For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence.

“But this cannot be; we must come forth and stand before him in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, and acknowledge to our everlasting shame that all his judgments are just; that he is just in all his works, and that he is merciful unto the children of men, and that he has all power to save every man that believeth on his name and bringeth forth fruit meet for repentance” (Alma 12:14–15).

When the Savior defined His gospel, this judgment was central to it. He said:

“Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

“And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had

been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

“And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works” (3 Nephi 27:13–15).

Being “lifted up upon the cross” is, of course, a symbolic way of referring to the Atonement of Jesus Christ by which He satisfied the demands that justice may have upon each of us. In other words, by His suffering and death in Gethsemane and on Golgotha, He paid all that justice could demand of us for our sins. He therefore stands in the place of justice and is the personification of justice. Just as God is love, God is also justice. Our debts and obligations now run to Jesus Christ. He, therefore, has the right to judge us.

That judgment, He states, is based on our works. The especially “good news” of His gospel is that He offers the gift of forgiveness conditioned on our repentance. Therefore, if our works include the works of repentance, He forgives our sins and errors. If we reject the gift of pardon, refusing to repent, then the penalties of justice that He now represents are imposed. He said, “For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; but if they would not repent they must suffer even as I” (D&C 19:16–17).

Always remembering Him, therefore, means that we always remember that nothing is hidden from Him. There is no part of our lives, whether act, word, or even thought, that can be kept from the knowledge of the Father and the Son. No cheating on a test, no instance of shoplifting, no lustful fantasy or indulgence, and no lie is missed, overlooked, hidden, or forgotten. Whatever we “get away with” in life or manage to hide from other people, we must still face when the inevitable day comes that we are lifted up before Jesus Christ, the God of pure and perfect justice.

This reality has helped impel me at different times either to repentance or to avoid sin altogether. On one

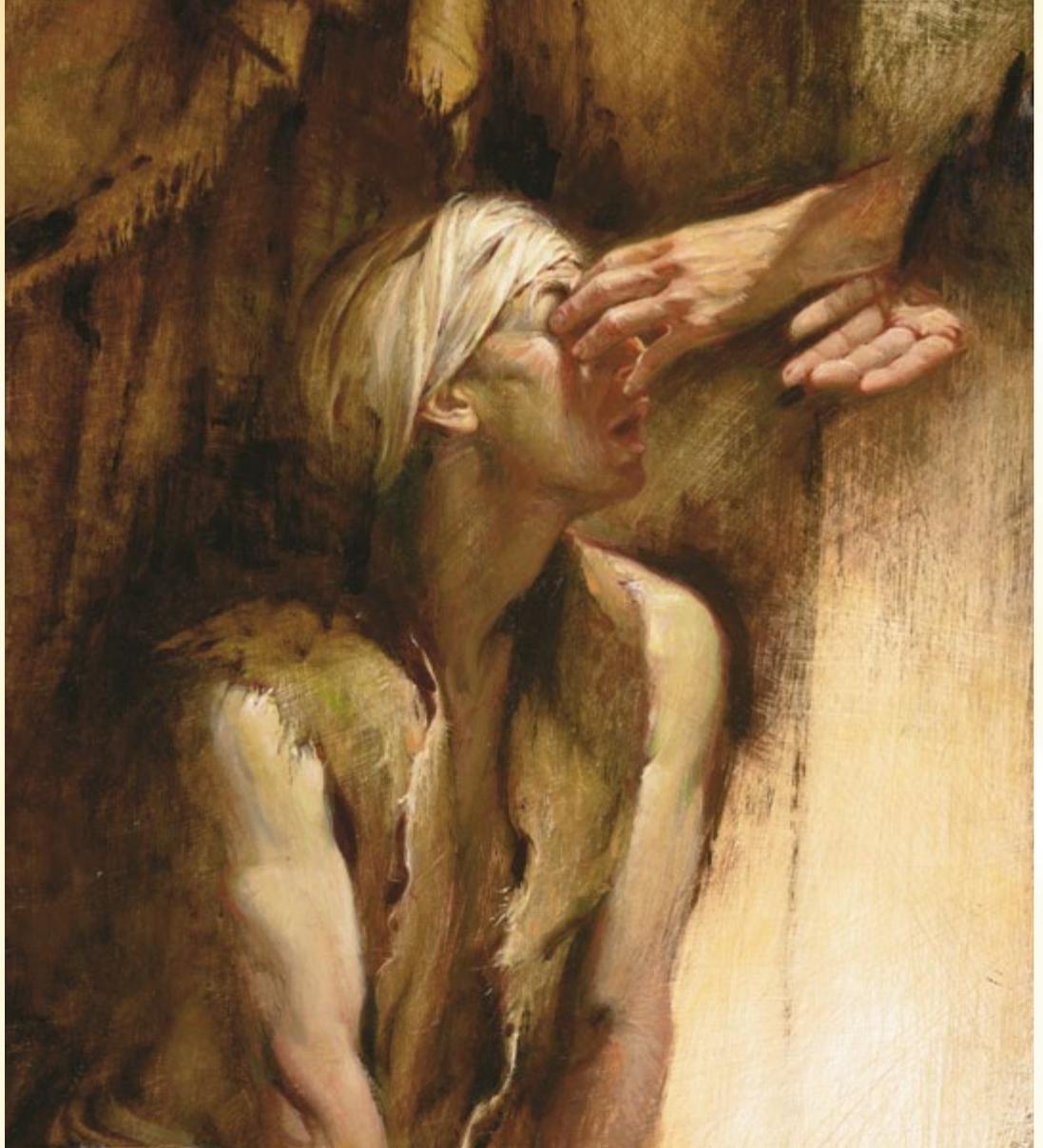
occasion in connection with a home sale, there was an error in the documentation, and I found myself in a position where I was legally entitled to get more money from the buyer. My real estate agent asked if I wanted to keep the money since it was my right to do so. I thought about facing the Lord, the personification of justice, and trying to explain that I had a legal right to take advantage of the buyer and his mistake. I couldn’t see myself being very convincing, especially since I would probably be asking for mercy for myself at the same time. I knew I could not live with myself if I were so dishonorable as to keep the money. I replied to the agent that we would stick with the bargain as we all understood it originally. It is worth a great deal more to me than any sum of money to know that I have nothing to repent of in that transaction.

In my youth I once was negligent in a way that caused a minor injury to one of my brothers. I did not own up to my stupidity at the time, and no one ever knew about my role in the matter. Years later I was praying that God would reveal to me anything in my life that needed correction so that I might be found more acceptable before Him, and this incident came to my mind. I had forgotten about it, but the Spirit whispered that this was an unresolved transgression I needed to confess. I called my brother, apologized, and asked for his forgiveness, which he promptly and generously gave. My embarrassment and regret would have been less had I apologized when the accident happened.

It was interesting and significant to me that the Lord had not forgotten about that event of the distant past even though I had. Sins do not take care of themselves or simply fade away. Sins do not get “swept under the rug” in the eternal economy of things. They must be dealt with, and the wonderful thing is that because of the Savior’s atoning grace, they can be dealt with in a much happier and less painful manner than directly satisfying offended justice ourselves.

We should also take heart when thinking of a judgment in which nothing is overlooked because this also means that no act of obedience, no kindness, and no good deed however small is ever forgotten, and no corresponding blessing is ever withheld.

*We know that challenges, disappointments, and sorrows will come to each of us in different ways, but we also know that in the end, because of our divine Advocate, all things can be made to work together for our good.*



### **3. Fear not and look to the Savior for help.**

In the infant days of the Restoration, Jesus counseled and comforted Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, who were working to translate the Book of Mormon and who would soon have the priesthood conferred upon them. Joseph was 23 years old at the time, and Oliver was 22. Persecution and other obstacles were frequent if not constant. In these conditions, in April 1829 the Lord spoke these words to them:

“Fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail.

“Behold, I do not condemn you; go your ways and sin no more; perform with soberness the work which I have commanded you.

“Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.

“Behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet; be faithful, keep my commandments, and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. Amen” (D&C 6:34–37).

Looking unto the Savior in every thought is, of course, another way of saying “always remember him.” As we do, we need not doubt or fear. The Savior reminded Joseph and Oliver as He reminds us that through His Atonement He has been given all power in heaven and earth (see Matthew 28:18) and has both the capacity and will to protect us and minister to our needs. We need only be faithful, and we can rely implicitly on Him.

Preceding the comforting revelation to Joseph and Oliver, the Prophet endured a poignant, painful experience that taught him to look to the Savior and not fear the opinions, pressures, and threats of men.

In June 1828 Joseph allowed Martin Harris to take the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to show to family members in Palmyra, New York. After Martin failed to return as promised, an anxious Joseph traveled by stagecoach to his parents' home in Manchester Township, New York. The Prophet immediately sent for Martin. When Martin arrived, he admitted that he did not have the manuscript or know where it was.

Joseph exclaimed: "Oh! My God, my God. . . . All is lost, is lost. What shall I do? I have sinned. It is I that tempted the wrath of God by asking him for that which I had no right to ask. . . . Of what rebuke am I not worthy from the angel of the Most High?"

The next day the Prophet returned to Harmony. Once there, he said, "I commenced humbling myself in mighty prayer before the Lord . . . that if possible I might obtain mercy at his hands and be forgiven of all that I had done which was contrary to his will."<sup>2</sup>

After chastising Joseph for fearing man more than God, the Lord told him:

"Thou art Joseph, and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord, but because of transgression, if thou art not aware thou wilt fall.

"But remember, God is merciful; therefore, repent of that which thou hast done which is contrary to the commandment which I gave you, and thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work" (D&C 3:9–10).

"For a time, the Lord took the Urim and Thummim and the plates from Joseph. But these things were soon restored to him. 'The angel was rejoiced when he gave me back the Urim and Thummim,' the Prophet recalled, 'and said that God was pleased with my faithfulness and humility, and loved me for my penitence and diligence in prayer, in the which I had performed my duty so well as to . . . be able to enter upon the work of translation again.' As Joseph moved forward in the great work before him, he was now fortified

by the sweet feelings of receiving the Lord's forgiveness and a renewed determination to do His will."<sup>3</sup>

The Prophet's determination to rely upon God and not fear what men could do became fixed after this experience. His life thereafter was a shining example of what it means to remember Christ by relying upon His power and mercy. Joseph expressed this understanding during his very difficult and trying incarceration at Liberty, Missouri, in these words:

"You know, brethren, that a very large ship is benefited very much by a very small helm in the time of a storm, by being kept workways with the wind and the waves.

"Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed" (D&C 123:16–17).

In short, to "always remember him" means that we do not live our lives in fear. We know that challenges, disappointments, and sorrows will come to each of us in different ways, but we also know that in the end, because of our divine Advocate, all things can be made to work together for our good (see D&C 90:24; 98:3). It is the faith expressed so simply by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) when he would say, "Things will work out."<sup>4</sup> When we always remember the Savior, we can "cheerfully do all things that lie in our power," confident that His power and love for us will see us through.

May we always remember Him—"that [we] may always have his spirit to be with [us]" (D&C 20:77). I bear my witness of the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I bear witness of the reality of the living, resurrected Lord. I bear witness of the infinite and personal love of the Father and the Son for each of us, and I pray that we will live in constant remembrance of that love in all its expressions. ■

*From an address delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on January 27, 2009. To listen to the address in English, visit [web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches/default.aspx](http://web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches/default.aspx).*

#### NOTES

1. Brigham Young, "Discourse," *Deseret News*, Sept. 10, 1856, 212.
2. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 69, 71.
3. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 71.
4. In Jeffrey R. Holland, "President Gordon B. Hinckley: Stalwart and Brave He Stands," *Liahona*, June 1995 special edition, 6; *Ensign*, June 1995, 4.

# Rebecca Swain Williams: STEADFAST & IMMOVABLE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RICHARD HULL

*Despite her family's hostility toward the Church, this early convert remained faithful and devoted to the work.*

**By Janiece Lyn Johnson**

In June 1834 a young mother who was faced with being disinherited by her father wrote a bold and moving letter sharing her conviction of the Restoration. Although she must have known her prospects of changing his mind were dim, Rebecca Swain Williams nevertheless stood firm despite the impending consequences. She declared to her father, Isaac, that the Book of Mormon and the Church were true, just as the Prophet Joseph Smith described, and that she had heard the Three Witnesses “declare in public meeting that they saw a Holy Angel come down from heaven and [bring] the plates, and la[y] them before their eyes.”<sup>1</sup>

Rebecca’s testimony is moving not just for the power it demonstrates but also because of her unshakable testimony and indomitable will. Despite her father’s rejection and the fact that her husband, Frederick G. Williams,

became disaffected from the Church for a time, Rebecca never allowed her faith to waver. Tireless and unyielding, Rebecca stands as an example to us today of how we can remain firm and steadfast in the face of life’s greatest challenges, even when those closest to us may reject our faith and spurn us.

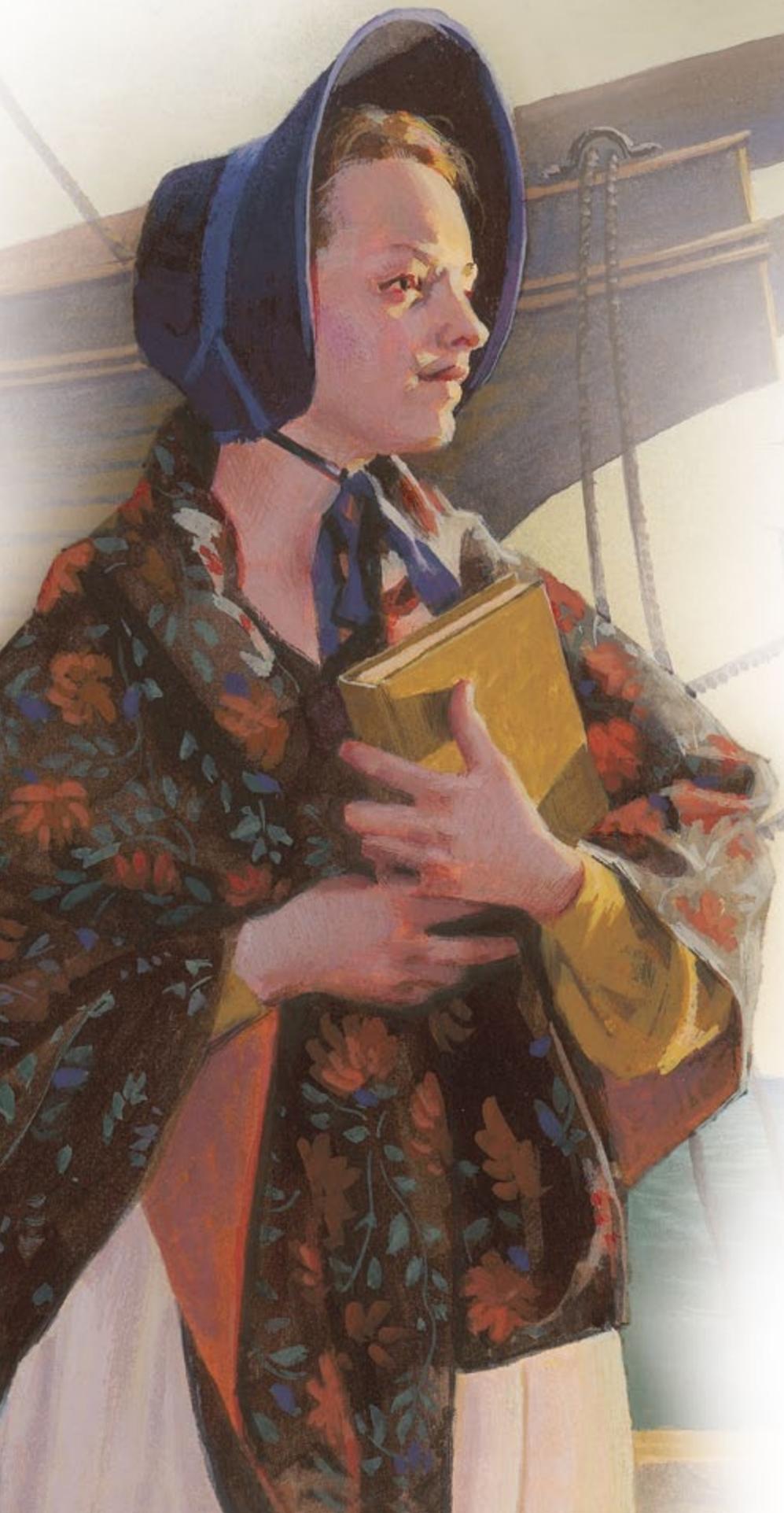
## **Conversion to the Church**

Born in Pennsylvania, USA, in 1798, Rebecca Swain was the youngest of 10 children.<sup>2</sup> When she was about nine, her family moved to Niagara, near the United States–Canada border. They were close enough to Fort Niagra that they could hear the gunfire when the fort was attacked during the War of 1812. Even as a young girl Rebecca showed her fearlessness. Once, while traveling alone through the woods, she met a bear face-to-face on the trail. Having a parasol in her hand, she opened and closed it several times

in the bear’s face, and it ran away.<sup>3</sup>

When Rebecca was 17, she crossed Lake Ontario to visit her sister in Detroit. On the voyage she met the tall, dark-eyed pilot of the ship, Frederick Granger Williams. Their frequent visits quickly transformed affection into love, and the two were married in late 1815. The Williamses moved around the great Western Reserve of Ohio, USA, before finally settling in Kirtland around 1828. Her husband took up the practice of medicine and became rather well known for his abilities, and Rebecca learned to help him with procedures. Together they had four children.

In the fall of 1830, the first Mormon missionaries arrived in Kirtland. Rebecca listened to them with interest and attended all of the missionaries’ meetings; she even brought her children. Frederick attended as often as his medical practice would allow. The two would study, discuss, and learn together, but Frederick was less certain in his



commitment. Meanwhile Rebecca became convinced of the truthfulness of the gospel.

A family biographer later described Rebecca as a kind of Eve in the Garden of Eden: she was “the first to see the necessity” to step into full fellowship in the gospel covenant.<sup>4</sup> She was baptized in October 1830.

Frederick still vacillated. Sometimes he wanted to leave the Church alone but in the end could not because he felt drawn back to that sacred, new book of scripture: the Book of Mormon. As the Spirit worked in him, he recognized the truthfulness of the gospel and followed Rebecca’s example by being baptized.

### **Dedicated Service**

As the Church quickly became central to Frederick and Rebecca’s lives, the impact on their family was immediate. Frederick was ordained an elder right after his baptism and confirmation. The very next day, he enthusiastically accepted an assignment to leave within a few weeks to serve a mission with Oliver Cowdery. They anticipated the mission would last three weeks; in reality it became a 10-month trip to Missouri. His long absence from home was the first of many such periods for Rebecca. Because of Frederick’s missionary efforts and his calling into the First Presidency, he was frequently away. Rebecca, like many early Mormon women, spent long months tending their home and raising their children without the help of her husband.

Despite the work, Rebecca continued faithful and served willingly. The Prophet Joseph Smith and his family lodged in the Williamses' home for a time when the Smiths first moved to Kirtland. Rebecca proved loyal to the Prophet and his family as she cared for them through trying times. Once a mob came and surrounded the home looking for Joseph. Rebecca disguised Joseph in her bonnet and cloak. Joseph was able to leave the house and pass through the crowd to safety.

In March of 1832, Rebecca again provided invaluable aid to the Prophet when a mob burst into the John Johnson farm in Hiram, Ohio, and brutally assaulted Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. After beating Sidney senseless and attempting to pour poison down Joseph's throat, the mob tarred and feathered the Prophet. When Emma Smith saw her husband, she thought the tar was blood and fainted.<sup>5</sup> Rebecca and Frederick spent that night peeling tar from Joseph's bleeding and torn body and caring for the Smith children. Their succor was helpful, as Joseph found the strength to preach the next morning.

### Sharing the Gospel with Conviction

One of Rebecca's most abiding hopes was that her family, her father in particular, would accept the restored gospel and receive the joyous blessings of the faith. She had, like Lehi, tasted of the love of God and wanted to share it with those closest to her (see 1 Nephi 8:12). With that in mind, Rebecca eagerly wrote to her family about her

conversion and testimony and the great joy she felt as a member of the Church.

However, Rebecca's conversion infuriated her father. In his terse response he demanded that she leave the Church. But Rebecca would not be swayed. She responded, as a family historian describes, that "she was more firm than ever in her conviction of the truth of Mormon doctrines" and included her own powerful testimony.<sup>6</sup> To her sorrow this letter did not produce the results she had hoped for. Her father threatened to disown her and vowed to cut off all communication with her if she did not leave the Church.

Still, Rebecca did not yield and continued her efforts to share the gospel. In 1834 she wrote another letter—the only one to survive—to her father, revealing the depth of her faith and the pain she felt that he refused to accept anything of the Mormons.

Her father had read newspaper reports attacking the Church, particularly with regard to the Book of Mormon and the testimony of the Three Witnesses, and tried to dissuade Rebecca on these accounts.

"It gives me pain to hear that your mind is so much disturbed about the Book of Mormon," she wrote. Quoting scripture from the Book of Mormon and from Joseph Smith's new revelations, Rebecca shared her witness of the Book of Mormon. She also explained that the book prophesied of the selection of three witnesses to it. As evidence, she quoted the ancient prophet Ether, who said that "in the mouth of

three witnesses" would the truth of the book "be established" (Ether 5:4).<sup>7</sup>

Rebecca then described how she had personally seen the Three Witnesses—David Whitmer, Martin Harris, and Oliver Cowdery—and heard them testify of having seen an angel and the gold plates. After defending their testimonies and character, she urged her father to further investigate the work. For, she wrote to her father, should "you and mother know the circumstances as we do in relation to this work, I am persuaded you would believe it."<sup>8</sup>

Echoing Moroni's promise at the end of the Book of Mormon, Rebecca pled that her family would ask God if "he would enlighten [their] minds in the way of truth." And then she planned to send a missionary "capable of teaching the Gospel as it is in Jesus," to further help them.<sup>9</sup> In the end her father would have nothing to do with it.

Even her letters to her brother John—to whom Rebecca was particularly close—were returned unopened. On the back of one of the returned letters, John wrote, "Father forbids me read your letter, or to write to you. Goodbye and God bless you always. Your brother, John."<sup>10</sup>

However, Rebecca's missionary efforts were successful with her eldest sister, Sarah Swain Clark. Sarah joined the Church in Michigan in 1832. Sarah's daughters also joined the Church and were faithful throughout their lives.



## Faithful to the End

No matter the heartache and pain Rebecca felt from her father's choices, she still loved him. She wrote: "My heart mourns for my relations according to the flesh. . . . I pray the Lord to comfort you in your last day with his Holy Spirit and may they be your best days. . . . I hope your mind will be composed concerning this work. Be assured that we feel firm in the cause knowing that the Lord is at the helm."<sup>11</sup>

Rebecca had to contend not only with her father's disbelief but also with problems in her husband's commitment to the faith. During 1837 and 1838, her husband, Frederick, then a member of the First Presidency, was repeatedly at odds with other Church leaders. He even left the Church for a time and was excommunicated.

However, not long after, Frederick humbled himself, rejoined the Church, and died in full fellowship. We do not have a record of Rebecca's feelings at the time, but she would not regret her allegiance with

the Saints and remained committed.

When rumors of Frederick's dissent reached Rebecca's father in New York, Isaac hoped that Rebecca would renounce the faith as well. However, Rebecca sent him a letter that demonstrated her continued fidelity. After reading her response, Isaac slowly shook his head and said, "Not one word of repentance."<sup>12</sup>

Rebecca remained stalwart in her defense of Joseph Smith and the restored Church. And in spite of the sacrifices caused by choosing the Church over her father, Rebecca continued to honor him. She valued what her father had taught her, and she expressed her love and gratitude for him. She closed her 1834 letter noting that she would "ever remember the instruction . . . I have received from my beloved Father."<sup>13</sup>

In 1839 Rebecca's father died. Just three years later she lost her husband. Despite these painful difficulties, Rebecca's faith and courage endured. When the Saints trekked

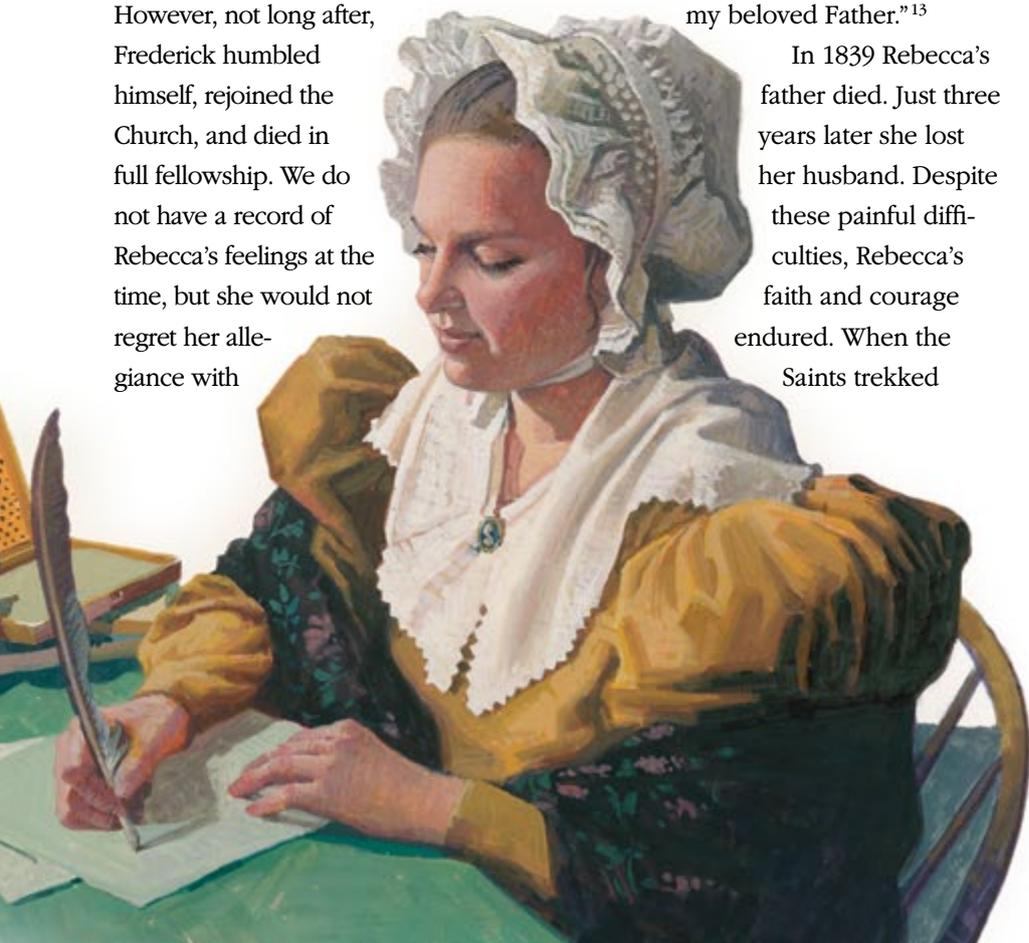
west to Utah, she traveled with her son Ezra's family and drove her own team. She later took charge of a farm on Mill Creek. When the Salt Lake Tabernacle was completed and the Saints were asked to donate what they could, she gave a set of silver spoons to be used in making trays for the sacrament table. And finally in 1860, though she was very frail, when President Brigham Young called upon her family to settle in remote Cache Valley, Utah, she willingly relocated once more—again driving her own team.

Rebecca died in Smithfield, Utah, on September 25, 1861. She stayed true to her beliefs, her knowledge of truth, and what she had experienced. She remained "steadfast and immovable" to the end (Mosiah 5:15). ■

*Spelling and punctuation modernized.*

## NOTES

1. Rebecca Swain Williams to Isaac Fischer Swain, June 4, 1834, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. Biographical information comes from Nancy Clement Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams . . . and His Wife Rebecca Swain Williams: Read Their True Story in the First Introduction—after 100 Years* (1951); and Frederick G. Williams, "Frederick Granger Williams of the First Presidency of the Church," *BYU Studies*, vol. 12, no. 3 (1972): 243–61.
3. Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams*, 5.
4. Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams*, 55.
5. *History of the Church*, 1:263.
6. Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams*, 63.
7. See also Rebecca Williams letter of June 4, 1834.
8. Rebecca Williams letter of June 4, 1834.
9. Rebecca Williams letter of June 4, 1834.
10. In Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams*, 63.
11. Rebecca Williams letter of June 4, 1834.
12. George Swain letter, Mar. 17, 1839, typescript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
13. Rebecca Williams letter of June 4, 1834.



# Sailing True

## IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

By Joshua J. Perkey

Church Magazines

Ancient mariners traveled the seas guided by the positions of the sun, moon, and stars. At night they kept their eyes keenly focused on the North Star, its fixed position providing a heavenly anchor for sailors, helping them sail a true course to their destination.

In the Marshall Islands of the Pacific Ocean, sailors discovered another technique. There, wave patterns, or ocean swells, flow between the atolls and islands in a consistent pattern. A well-trained mariner can travel hundreds of miles by following an intricate web of swells—each like a one-way street—from one island or atoll to the next. Those who know where the swells are and where they flow can lead other travelers safely to their destinations.

Likewise, Jesus Christ is our perfect example, whose true light guides us. His laws and ordinances, like the

ocean swells, can lead us safely to our heavenly home. Yet for all of us, there are others whose service and support work in concert with the Master Navigator's role. In the following stories, three Marshallese members share how others helped them navigate life's rocky shoals and storms to lead them unto Christ.

### The Influence of a Righteous Woman

Hirobo Obeketang sits back on his couch and smiles. He and his wife, Linda, have just finished holding family home evening with four of their children and the sister missionaries. They also treated the missionaries to a fish dinner, complete with eyes and tail—a tradition in Majuro, the capital of the Marshall Islands. As Hirobo describes his life, he expresses how grateful he is for the Church, the



*As we sail through the rocky shoals of life,  
each of us benefits from the guidance of  
faithful members to help us make our way  
back to our heavenly home.*

gospel, and his family,  
especially his wife.

It is June 2009. One day earlier the Majuro Marshall Islands Stake was created, and Hirobo was called to serve as the first stake executive secretary. Hirobo, as new stake president Arlington Tibon describes him, “is very, very strong,” one of the faithful leaders of the island.

But Hirobo is the first to point out that until recently that wasn’t the case. In fact, he credits his wife with being the strong one—the one who made the difference in his life. He explains, “I was baptized when I was eight years old, but when I was 16, I became less active.”

A few years later he and Linda began living together, though they weren’t married. Linda was not a member of the Church. In 2000, shortly after Linda discovered that Hirobo had been baptized as a child, she became interested in the Church and began meeting with the sister missionaries.

“She studied for two years and decided she wanted to be baptized,” Hirobo recalls. “We had to get married first, but I wasn’t interested in getting married. I was confused; I was really into the world’s temptations. I didn’t understand the importance of family, and I didn’t really care or listen to anybody.”

Linda, though not baptized, raised their children in the Church. Every year she asked Hirobo to marry her so she could get baptized; each time he said no. Over the years two of their daughters were baptized, but Hirobo did not attend their baptisms.

Then, in 2006, their nine-year-old son, Takao, passed away

from a seizure and high fever. About 300 members from the Majuro district came to the funeral to support the family.

“Their support was a really big thing for me,” Hirobo says. “I started to think that God was probably telling me something.”

He began thinking about how he was the reason his wife couldn’t get baptized, even though he was a member of the Church. “She was getting stronger and stronger. She was really inspiring me,” he recalls.



“So I sat down and thought about how I was halfway through my life. I asked myself, ‘Am I going to continue doing what I am doing? Do I have a chance to work for God for the second half of my life?’ I started saying my prayers and thinking about coming back to church to start working for God.”



Hirobo began studying with the missionaries and relearning doctrine. President Nelson Bleak of the Marshall Islands Majuro Mission befriended him, as did other members, including then-district president Arlington Tibon. Finally, Hirobo committed to return, and the next thing he knew, he was attending not just sacrament meeting but also Sunday School and priesthood meeting. At last, Hirobo made up his mind.

“When I came back, I said, ‘This is it. This is what I’m going to do.’ And it changed my life completely.”

Hirobo and Linda were married on August 30, 2008. He soon received the Aaronic Priesthood and baptized his wife. Two months later Hirobo received the Melchizedek Priesthood and was called as the district executive secretary.

Hirobo looks at his wife and smiles. “She couldn’t believe I was the one who baptized her,” he says. “Imagine—it took her eight years, from 2000 to 2008. She is amazing.”

### The Example of a Righteous Father

Sometimes our guide, like a mariner, works closely with us, teaching us what we need to know so we can successfully navigate life. In many cases the mariner accomplishes this by setting the example for us to follow. Such was the case with Patricia Horiuchi’s father, Frank.

After meeting the missionaries, Frank began regularly inviting them over for dinner. Soon he started taking the lessons. But no one else in his family wanted anything to do with the Church. “When we saw the missionaries coming,” Patricia says, “we would all run away—me and my younger brothers and sisters.”

Then Frank was baptized in July 2007 by the mission president, Nelson Bleak. It was a defining moment for Patricia and her siblings.

“I saw my father starting to change,” she says. “I knew that if the gospel could touch my father’s heart, it could touch mine and change my life. So I decided to study with the sister missionaries, and they challenged me to study the Book of Mormon and the Bible. My brother and I had had a fight before that, and I had never forgiven him. Then I read in the scriptures that if you forgive others, God will forgive you.” (See 3 Nephi 13:14–15.)

Patricia realized she had to forgive her brother in order to begin changing her life, be clean, and have peace. So she did.

“After I threw away my bad attitudes and changed to a new person who kept the commandments, I was so excited. I knew I had to get baptized so I could be in the true Church,” she says. “The Church put me on the right track. It separated



me from bad influences. It taught me to respect my parents, to stay in school, and to keep on the right track.”

### The Influence of a Righteous Man

Lydia Kaminaga, like Hirobo Obeketang, was born into the Church but became less active during her teen years. But the story

***Above left: Hirobo Obeketang (also shown with his family on the previous pages) works as a hotel manager. Below: Patricia Horiuchi was a leader for the Marshall Islands’ first young single adult conference in June 2009 (bottom right).***



### UNIVERSAL CHALLENGES

Though geography, culture, and distance may separate them from other Latter-day Saints, members in the Marshall Islands explain that they face many of the same challenges all members do.

Gary Zackious (right), a stake young single adult leader, says that “people come up to you and say, ‘We don’t need a prophet today, and we don’t need any more scripture.’ Some members don’t really read the scriptures or understand them, so when someone tells them something that slackens their belief, they back off from what they know is true.”



For Gary, the solution is simple: “I was challenged by the missionaries to pray about the Book of Mormon, the Restoration, and Joseph Smith to know if they are true. One night I was praying on my knees. I felt the Spirit. It was a feeling I had never experienced before. I know the things I was taught by the missionaries are true. Reading the Book of Mormon strengthened my testimony as a young convert.” From his baptism to his mission to today, Gary says, “My testimony has grown as I read the Book of Mormon and study the scriptures and the words of the prophets.”

Ernest Mea (right), who works with Gary as a Church translator in the Marshall Islands, says that a lot of young people get caught in immorality. He keeps on the strait and narrow path by engaging in wholesome activities with like-minded friends. “Before my mission, we played basketball at the church every day but Sunday and Monday,” he says.



For Michael Lone (right) of the Jenrok Ward, joining the Church in 2006 came at a price: he couldn’t continue living at home. Showing faith and conviction, he was baptized anyway.



Just a year later he was called on a mission—to the Marshall Islands. More recently, Michael’s family has begun to show interest in the Church and to study with the missionaries.



of her journey back is as remarkable as it is distinct.

Lydia and her husband, Kaminaga Kaminaga, both grew up in the Church. “I never had any doubt about the teachings of the Church,” says Kaminaga. “I’ve always believed them.”

But life moved differently for Lydia. When she was in seventh grade, she says, “I was the only Mormon in my school, and I felt left out. I did what my friends were doing. I got my priorities wrong.”

Lydia’s parents sent her to Provo, Utah, USA, to live with family, hoping their influence might inspire Lydia to live the gospel. Though she learned things that helped her later in life, at the time she wasn’t interested in Church activity.

Lydia moved back to the Marshall Islands in January 2002, just a month after Kaminaga returned from serving a mission in Japan. They met shortly thereafter. Although Lydia was not living Church standards, Kaminaga kept coming to her house pretending that he wanted to visit her nephew, Gary Zackious.

Eventually, Kaminaga made up his mind

***“I have a strong testimony of repentance,” says Lydia Kaminaga, shown here with her husband, Kaminaga, and their daughter, Wellisa.***



to talk to her parents about going out on dates—wholesome, clean activities—with Lydia. Although they initially tried to dissuade him, Kaminaga says he “finally told them, ‘There’s still a chance for her to change.’ When I said that, the whole feeling in the room changed. Her dad cried and said, ‘I’ve always wanted her back in the Church. You can try.’”

At first Lydia didn’t take Kaminaga seriously. After all, he was a clean-cut returned missionary, and she hadn’t been active.

“But he saw something I didn’t see,” Lydia explains. Since



she wasn't dating anyone, she agreed to go out with him. "He brought me back. Being his girlfriend, I had to set my standards straight. He reminded me of my covenants made at baptism. He reminded me of all the things I really missed a lot, like reading scriptures and family home evening. Kaminaga and I did service projects together. We read the Book of Mormon. We went to firesides. He showed me how to live differently. Going to church was not just sacrament meeting but also Sunday School and Relief Society too."

As they spent time together on dates that were wholesome and uplifting, Lydia's life began to change and her testimony grew. She still had to clear some things up, however.

"It was hard coming back," she admits. "Repentance is not easy, but I have a really strong testimony of repentance. In a lot of ways, our dating was about getting to know each other more and about getting me back to church, to see things differently."

"It's about relationships," adds Kaminaga.

Lydia and Kaminaga were married on November 28, 2002. A year later they were sealed in the Laie Hawaii Temple and attended Brigham Young University–Hawaii. Now they live in the Marshall Islands with their three children. Lydia serves as their ward's Sunday School teacher for the young men and young women, and Kaminaga serves as the Young Men president.

As Hirobo, Patricia, and Lydia testify, when we exercise patience and persistence and seek the blessings of the Lord, many things are possible. Those who follow the Savior and listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost can, like the ancient mariner guiding travelers home, make all the difference in another person's life. ■

## FIRST STAKE IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

For years Church members in the Marshall Islands have desired to have a stake there. On June 14, 2009, their desires were fulfilled. Elder David S. Baxter of the Seventy, who organized the stake, explains: "It is remarkable how the membership grew in the past couple of years. The stake was created because the development of the Church there made it inevitable. But it has been a long time in coming. Members had to overcome a number of challenges."



Marshall Islands stake president Arlington Tibon (above) taught members while he served as district president that if they wanted a stake, they would have to work for it. He instructed district leaders to teach members from Malachi 3 and 3 Nephi 24 about the blessings of paying tithing. Leaders also encouraged youth and adults to study the Book of Mormon. They even held a successful event where the youth read the Book of Mormon for 12 hours straight.

President Tibon also set a goal to get members to understand "how important it is to be sealed in the temple," explaining that receiving "the endowment helps them overcome a lot of things, makes them different, changes their lives."

Under President Tibon's leadership, members in the Marshall Islands visited two temples: one in Tonga and one in Hawaii. Each visit came after significant sacrifice. But, as Angela Tibon, President Tibon's wife, says, those trips "have had a great impact on how committed members are to Heavenly Father and to the Church."

"Yes," echoes President Tibon, "we saw the spiritual life here in Majuro go way up."



## I'M NOT INTERESTED IN THE CHURCH

I didn't want to have anything to do with the Church when my wife asked if the missionaries could teach our sons. But I didn't say no because she was already a member.

When the missionaries started coming to our home twice a week, I would go to my friend's house next door. My friend was a strong member of another Christian church. Every time I visited with him, he wanted to talk about the Bible. I told him I was not into that sort of thing and didn't want to study religion. But he kept trying to convince me, and I finally said yes. So for a long time I studied the Bible with my friend while

the missionaries taught my boys.

One day it was time for the missionaries to come to our house. But instead of leaving, I decided to stay in the next room. As the missionaries started teaching my sons, I found myself wanting to hear more. I moved closer and closer to the door to hear better. They were teaching my sons about apostles and prophets.

Later I realized I wanted to learn more. I spoke with the missionaries

and decided to take the discussions from them—privately. My wife was always there, but no one else knew about it.

So when the missionaries came to teach my

boys twice a week, I would go to my friend's house. Then, on a different day, they would teach me.

One day when my friend said something bad about the Church, I refuted what he said. Like many people in the Marshall Islands, he did not know much about the Church and misunderstood some things Latter-day Saints believe. When he said other negative things, I again defended the Church.

That's how it went for seven months. Then one day I realized that the Holy Ghost had been confirming to me that everything the missionaries were teaching me was true. I realized I needed to get baptized, even though I still knew so little about the gospel.

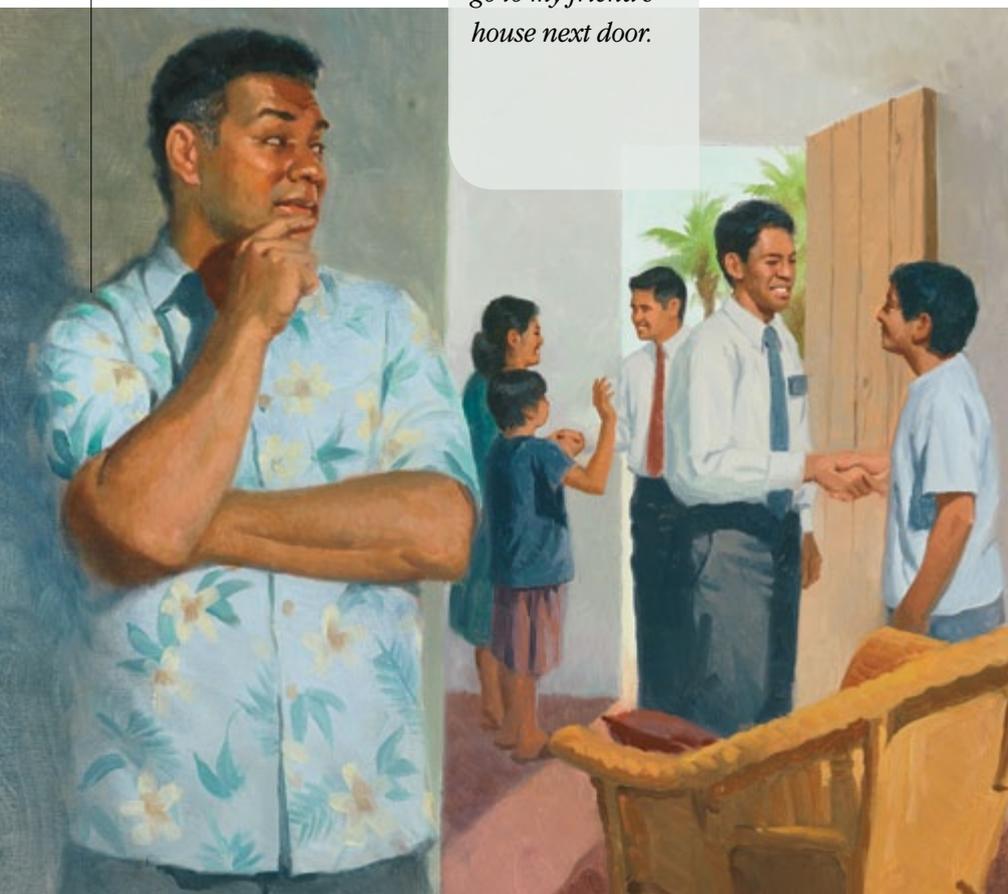
After my baptism in 2007, I was so happy. We started saving money to go to the temple in Hawaii, where my wife, our three children, and I were sealed in December 2008.

Being a member of the Church has made a huge impact on my life. I decided to quit my second job entertaining at a restaurant because I would come home late and my garments would be saturated with tobacco smoke. Despite the loss of that extra income, the Lord has taken care of us.

I know the Church is true and that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God because of the Spirit that I have felt and the blessings I have received. ■

Tanintoa Sexton, Marshall Islands

**W**hen the missionaries started coming to our home twice a week, I would go to my friend's house next door.



## MY CROSS-STITCH PONIES

I have a cross-stitched picture of two pinto ponies that I worked on for about a year. It was almost completed when I discovered I'd made a mistake in the color of one of the ponies. Since it was a possible color for a horse's hide, I didn't realize my mistake until I saw that the color of the pony clashed with the adjacent colors on the canvas.

I was devastated. I had spent all that time working on the picture, and the thought of taking out all the stitches of the wrong color was almost overwhelming. With tears in my eyes, I opened the trash can and threw the picture in.

I sat down at the table where I kept my sewing supplies to mourn the loss of my pretty pony picture and move on to other projects. But I couldn't do it—I couldn't just let go of the project I had worked so hard on. I opened the trash and retrieved the cloth. I found a knot on the back of the offending color and snipped it carefully. Turning the picture over, I began removing the thread.

Sometimes the removal went quickly. Other times I found it wasn't so easy. I wasn't sure how to undo what I had done. Sometimes I had to cut the thread one stitch at a time. My son remarked that he was impressed that I would go to all that work to make it right. It was only a cross-stitched picture, after all.

As I removed the stitches, I began

to think of repentance and how hard it has been to correct some of the errors I have made. True repentance requires intense desire, labor, and suffering, but it is worth the effort.

As I restitched the horse, I was reminded that repentance allows Jesus's Atonement to remove the stain of sin from my life and help me begin anew. My "repentance ponies" hang in my home, a gentle but vivid reminder to do what is right, never give up when I fall short, and remember that through repentance, the Atonement will make up the difference. ■

Sandra Jennings, New Mexico, USA

*I had spent all that time working on the picture, and the thought of taking out all the stitches of the wrong color was almost overwhelming.*



## BUT THERE'S NO CHURCH HERE

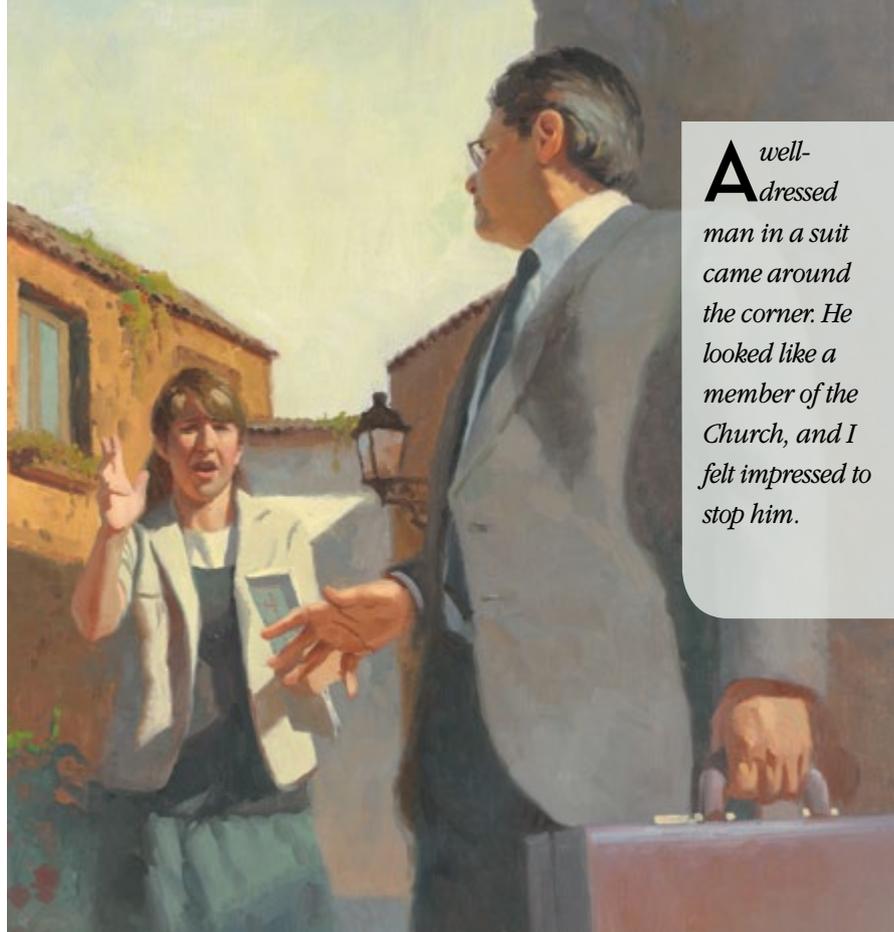
**D**uring a trip to the Mediterranean, I diligently attended Church meetings wherever I could. In Seville, Spain, I enlisted the aid of a hotel receptionist, the local telephone directory, and a city map to help me find the local Latter-day Saint meeting-house. I wrote down the address and the name of the Church in Spanish. Saturday evening I prayed to know what time the meetings started, and I felt a strong impression that I needed to be there by 10:00 a.m.

Just before I left for church at 9:30 on Sunday morning, I prayed again that I would be able to find the meetinghouse. Following my map, I began to navigate a maze of narrow streets. It was a delightful morning. I passed cafés and a bird market full of squawking birds.

I made it to the designated address only to find nothing that remotely resembled a church. I walked up and down the street looking in vain. I was confused and anxious, and it was almost 10:00 a.m.

Finally, I prayed to my Father in Heaven: "Thou hast commanded me to go to church, and here I am, but there's no church here."

Just then a well-dressed man in a suit came around the corner. He looked like a member of the Church, and I felt impressed to stop him. In a somewhat garbled manner, I



**A** well-dressed man in a suit came around the corner. He looked like a member of the Church, and I felt impressed to stop him.

told him I was looking for a church. He said something I didn't understand, and I looked perplexed. So he opened his briefcase, and I saw two leather-bound books that looked like scriptures. I handed him my slip of paper on which I had written "La Iglesia de Jesucristo" (The Church of Jesus Christ). He smiled and pointed back along the way I had come, and together we walked to church. The building was located at a different address just a few minutes away and was easy to miss if you didn't know it was there. It was set back in a small square, behind large gates.

At the meetinghouse I soon found out that the man who had helped me was none other than the bishop of the ward and that the meetings began at 10:30 a.m. I had arrived with time to spare.

During the ward's fast and testimony meeting, I felt impressed to

bear my testimony. With a missionary translating my words from English into Spanish, I bore my testimony and described how the Lord had provided a way for me to get to church. The bishop then bore his testimony and explained that he had to park farther away that morning, so he was later than normal. When he saw me, he thought I looked like a member of the Church, so he stopped to help me. He then spoke of members who are lost spiritually and said we have to help them find the Church.

Over the years my memories of the sights of Seville have faded, but my memory of finding the church there hasn't. That memory is a testimony to me of the great love our Father in Heaven has for us and that His hand is visible in my life if I just look for all the things that "work together for [my] good" (Romans 8:28). ■

Julie Ismail, Western Australia, Australia

## HIS SUFFERING EASES OURS

**A**s a nurse in the newborn intensive care unit, I care for sick, sometimes very small, babies. One night I was assigned to a little boy born 17 weeks early and weighing just over one pound (0.5 kg). His hands were tiny, his little legs about as big around as my finger, and his feet about the size of my thumb. Because of his severe respiratory problems, doctors didn't expect him to live through the night.

A quiet hush falls over the entire unit when a newborn is fighting for life. There is increased stress on everyone, especially the baby's nurse, and tonight that was me. His parents had been with him most of the day, but they were exhausted. His mother had returned to her room for some much-needed rest.

The baby's private room contained an isolette (incubator), monitors, ventilator, and IV pumps, which were keeping him alive. Because he was so ill and needed such intensive care, I wasn't assigned any other patients that night. I would be at his side all night, busy with medications, monitoring, treatments, and tests.

As the night wore on, I tried to imagine how I would feel if I were his mother. The heartache would have been unbearable.

I gently washed his face, touched his little hands and feet, gingerly changed and positioned him in a soft new blanket. I wondered what else

I could do for my little patient. What would his mother do? What would Heavenly Father want me to do?

This precious, innocent little spirit would soon be returning to his Father in Heaven. I wondered if he was afraid. I thought of my own children. When they were young and scared, I had sung to them. "I Am a Child of God" was their favorite. Choking back tears, I sang to the baby.

As a nurse I saw the tubes and the blood, counted the rise and fall of the baby's chest, listened to the beating of his heart, and watched the numbers on the monitors. As a Latter-day Saint I saw a celestial spirit and marveled at the plan of salvation.

As the night progressed, his health deteriorated. He eventually developed a condition that caused him to bleed into his lungs.

In the morning my little patient slipped silently through the veil. He left his mother's arms and was "taken home to that God who gave [him] life" (Alma 40:11).

I grew closer to the Savior and Heavenly Father that night. I developed a greater understanding of the Lord's love for mankind—and His love for me. I was reminded, even surprised, by the depth of love I felt for Him. And I felt a desire to be more kind, more gentle, more forgiving, more compassionate—more like Him—one day and one heartbeat at a time. ■

Barbara Winter, Arizona, USA

**C**hoking back tears, I sang "I Am a Child of God" to the baby.



# A COVENANT IS FOREVER

*When it comes to decisions I have made as part of a covenant with a loving Heavenly Father, it doesn't matter what the world says.*

By Marta Valencia Vásquez

When I was a teenager, our Young Women president gave each young woman a gift: a picture of the temple. She talked to us about covenants and living clean lives. Then she encouraged us to set a goal to go to the temple one day.

I took this sister's counsel to heart and decided to make preparation a priority. There was no temple in Costa

Rica at that time, but I did know from my recent baptism what a covenant was, and I looked forward to the opportunity to make additional covenants with the Lord.

No one else in my family was a member of the Church then, so the gospel was not taught in our home. Still, I decided that I could learn about gospel standards on my own and

follow them. My preparation included attending seminary, even though it was held very early in the morning. It included not dating until I reached age 16. And it meant living the law of chastity—certainly not something popular or even common among most of my peers, but something I knew I could do because I had covenanted with the Lord that I would.

Studying the scriptures, both in seminary and on my own, strengthened my resolve to live a chaste, clean life. I remember being particularly inspired by the 2,000 stripling warriors. As it says in Alma 53:20–21, these young men “were exceedingly valiant



## FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUNG ADULTS

“I have only one question: Are you going to follow the true and living prophets or not? It really isn't any more complicated than that. The standard of the Church with regard to morality is clearly outlined in the 'For the Strength of Youth' pamphlet, which you haven't outgrown, even

though many of you are no longer in Young Men and Young Women. If you choose to read anything that contains material that is contrary to the moral standards of the Church, then you are placing yourself and your own wisdom above the counsel of God's prophets—a course of action that would indeed be very unwise. As soon as people begin to think that they know better than God or his oracles, or that counsel given doesn't apply to themselves, they are stepping

onto a slippery slope that has claimed far too many victims already. It takes faith—real faith, unequivocal and unreserved—to accept and attempt to live by prophetic counsel even when you don't completely understand it. Such simple faith has the power to guide you safely through every challenge you may face in your life.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “When Shall These Things Be?” in *Brigham Young University 1995–96 Speeches* (1996), 189.



for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all—they were men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted. . . . They were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him.” I too wanted to be faithful in the things I’d been entrusted with, including my baptismal covenants.

Additional understanding of covenants came when I was called to serve in the El Salvador San Salvador East Mission. When I received my endowment in the temple, Doctrine and Covenants 82:10 came to my mind: “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.” Throughout my mission, that idea of covenants—of us doing our part and

***The covenants I made at baptism and the covenants I made in the temple are as valid today as the day I made them.***

the Lord doing His—motivated me to do my best. As I did so, my companions and I were blessed in our work.

My mission was many years ago, but I continue to find strength from keeping my covenants. I have since been blessed to serve for seven years in the San José Costa Rica Temple. Serving as a temple worker gave me regular opportunities to remember the covenants I had made. I have found similar reminders in serving in the Young Women organization,

where I have tried to teach the importance of covenants just as my leaders taught me.

Keeping our covenants is not always easy. For instance, many people see the law of chastity (or, in some cases, religious behavior in general) as outdated. Fortunately, I don’t feel added pressure from those who don’t share my beliefs or from the passage of time. I look back on what I felt as a young woman when our leader encouraged us to prepare and live for temple covenants. The decision I made then is one I’ve followed to this day.

I can stand firm in my decisions because they weren’t decisions I made just by myself, for myself. Rather, they are decisions I have made as part of a covenant with a loving Heavenly Father. It doesn’t matter what the world says. I promised the Lord that I would obey His commandments. It is a matter of honor. The covenants I made at baptism and the covenants I made in the temple are as valid today as the day I made them. A covenant with God is forever.

Living the way God has asked us to live isn’t always easy, but I testify that it is possible. We can gain confidence and power from living our covenants, and we can be sure that Heavenly Father will never leave us alone. With Him on our side, we can do all things (see Moroni 7:33). ■

# LISTENING AT LAST

## Name withheld

**W**hile in college, I was blessed with a challenging internship in a city far away from home. An old friend of mine was living nearby, and though we didn't share the same faith, our differences had not stopped us from being casual friends.

When I first met Madeline (name has been changed), we were both working with another young woman who was a great example of a Latter-day Saint. I remember the Spirit pointing out subtle differences between each young woman, explaining how even small choices can set a course for later in life. I have actually remembered these spiritual impressions for years.

Now back in contact after a few years, Madeline and I planned a time to get together. When the evening arrived, I became surprisingly nervous. I took a train to her city, and as I got closer, a voice inside my mind and heart said, "You're supposed to date only people who have high standards."

"This isn't a date," I thought. "I'm just getting together with an old

friend." The Spirit repeated the warning, pushing until I realized it was indeed a date and I began to wonder about my friend's current standards and lifestyle. "She knows I'm LDS," I rationalized. "She's familiar with my standards, and there won't be a problem."

I did, however, begin to wonder if the "subtle differences" I had noted before had caused our paths to diverge more than I expected. So I followed the prompting of the Spirit, and I called my friend to cancel. I was so afraid of offending her. How could I explain spiritual impressions to a friend who doesn't appreciate the mission of the Holy Ghost?

I explained that I wasn't comfortable with one of the activities we had planned and hoped this would give me an acceptable reason for getting out of the evening. She was disappointed and offered to change our plans. I was relieved and agreed to the change because I thought, "Maybe the activity was why the Spirit was warning me." But the

anxiety I was feeling would not go away.

We had a fun time that night, but from time to time, the Spirit told me the earlier warning was important. At first nothing seemed concerning, but as the evening progressed, it became clearer that while we may have come from similar backgrounds, we were headed in completely different directions. Our standards were not the same—even in small things. When

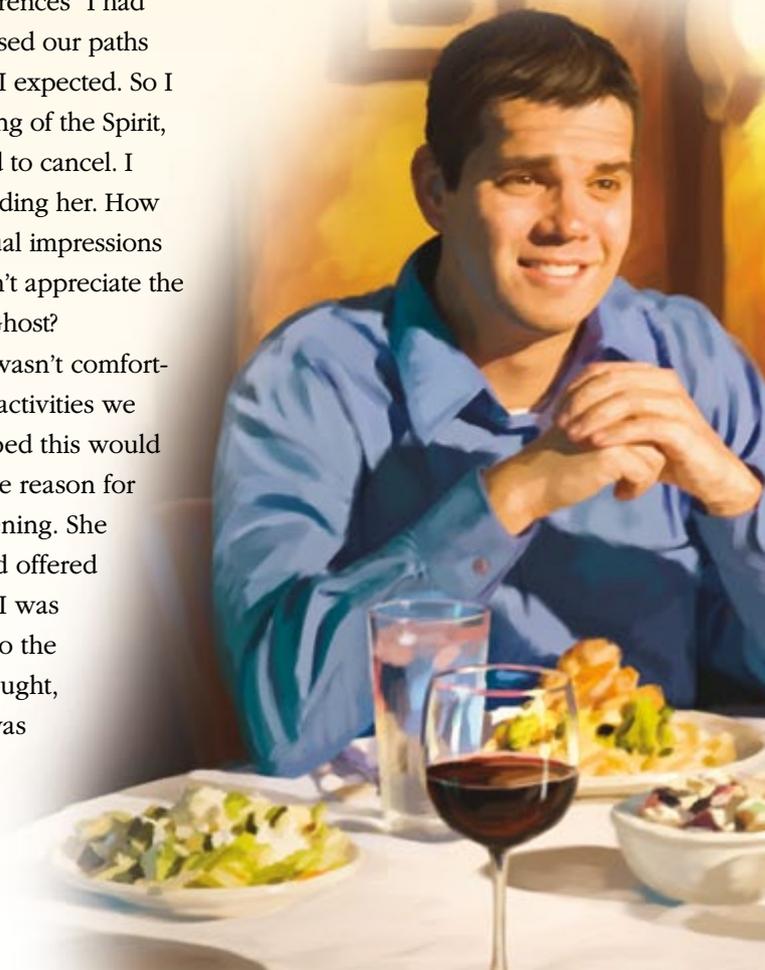
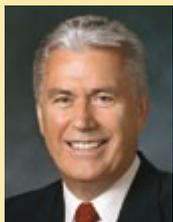


ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF WARD



## BARELY OFF COURSE?

“All too often . . . we set out on what we hope will be an exciting journey only

to realize too late that an error of a few degrees has set us on a course for spiritual disaster.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “A Matter of a Few Degrees,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2008, 58–59.

*“She’s an old friend, and it isn’t a date,” I told myself. So why did the Spirit keep warning me I shouldn’t be there?*

she ordered wine, I explained that I would rather not pay for alcohol. She respected my wishes and paid for it herself.

My spiritual anxiety continued to grow as the evening wore on. As dinner wrapped up, I was on the edge of my chair, ready to go, because I knew the evening’s last train was leaving soon and I lived too far away to take a taxi. Aware of my worry, my friend said I could sleep at her place. Now the Spirit would not leave me alone, confirming what I already knew: staying was not an option.

As I walked her home, I worked hard to look calm. “Are you sure you don’t want to stay?” she asked. I was sure. She wasn’t forward or offensive, but the Spirit quietly spoke more clearly than the sound of thunder.

I could not miss my train!

I waited until I knew she was inside, then ran as fast as I could to reach the train station in time. I couldn’t help thinking of Joseph in Egypt when he ran from temptation (see Genesis 39:7–12).

As I think back over the happenings of that night, I feel both fear and gratitude: fear for what might have been and gratitude for the companionship of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit spoke, and even though I should have done so sooner, I’m glad I finally listened.

It’s obvious that my view of the situation that night was definitely not as clear as the Lord’s. As Isaiah recorded:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8–9).

Some choices we face in life are quickly made and forgotten. There are other choices that come with lessons we would do well never to forget. I am so thankful to know that when we heed the promptings of the Holy Ghost—and when we do so immediately—we can more easily stay on the path Jesus Christ set for us to follow. ■

# Questions & Answers

## “Why does my family have problems even though we go to church, have family home evening, and try to live the gospel? What more can we do?”

**L**iving the gospel brings blessings but doesn't mean you won't face challenges. Trials can strengthen your faith by prompting you to seek Heavenly Father's help. Solving problems with His help teaches you how to make righteous decisions.

Have you discussed this situation as a family? By counseling together, you might find helpful ideas. Have you fasted and prayed for solutions as a family? Have you searched the scriptures and general conference talks? Maybe your family needs to make some changes to improve the situation, or maybe you just need to persevere, waiting patiently and trusting that the Lord will strengthen you during this trial (see Mosiah 24:15).

If others have caused your family pain, try to forgive them and not blame them. While forgiveness might not immediately solve the problem, it will bring peace to your heart and make the problem easier to deal with.

The adversary is attacking families because their strength is so important to the Church and your community. So keep enduring. Keep going to church, holding family home evening, and living the gospel. Obedience enables you to feel the Holy Ghost, and His guidance is vital to finding the answers you seek. Living in a strong family, even one that has to overcome problems, is one of the most important goals you can have.

### Use the Guides We Have Been Given



Perhaps a family is not strengthened until it has been tested. Fortunately, we do not need to face our problems alone; Heavenly Father wants us to succeed as individuals and families. To help us, He has provided important guides, such as the scriptures, a living prophet, other Church leaders, and the Holy Spirit. They can help us understand and apply the gospel principles that will bring joy to us and our families. In addition, never forget to tell your parents that you

appreciate and love them. I know that the Lord will provide a way for your family to be united, strengthened, and lifted up. I know that the family is ordained of God.

*Jared L., age 18, Mindanao, Philippines*

### Learn from Your Challenges



No matter how hard you try, there will always be challenges. These tests are to help us grow. It all depends on how you react to those challenges. The key is to

learn from them. Take a step back and see what is actually going on around you. Pray about the trials you are going through and have faith that the Lord will help you get through them. They can become a strength to you, and in turn you can be a strength to others.

*Makenzie C., age 18, Chihuahua, Mexico*

### Read the Family Proclamation

Problems come whether we say our prayers or not. They are not to punish us but to strengthen us. The problems we encounter in life provide an opportunity for families to work together. As my family pushes through stress, money problems, and just trying to find time to be together, we become closer to each other and our Heavenly Father. One thing we do when times are tough is read “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” It reminds us of the holy bond we share and how important it is to keep our covenants.

*Anna G., age 15, Georgia, USA*

### Accept Heavenly Father's Will

I think that one way Heavenly Father tries us is through problems. What we must not forget is that He is our Father and as such He loves us so much and thus wants what is best for us. I know that the only way we can overcome problems is through perseverance and accepting the will of the Father.

*José C., age 18, Ancash, Peru*

### Have Faith in the Lord



What helps me when I question why my family has problems, even when we are

doing everything we can, is the story of Job and how much he went through. Job 19:25–26 reads: “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” Job was faced with some of the most difficult challenges, and yet he still knew that his Redeemer lives! When we are able to think and live as Job did, I know that we will be able to see past our problems and see that we have a Redeemer, who is lifting us through these trials.

*Megan B., age 17, Utah, USA*

### Face Problems with Hope

Problems make us stronger when faced correctly. What you need to do is to face the problems with

hope and courage. You may be doing your best by attending church and trying to live the gospel, so you have to acknowledge the fact that your problems are to refine you and make you better in the end. Try also to identify something you do not do right and make an effort to correct it. Try often to help others, and as you do so, your problems will seem lighter. Above all, counsel with the Lord always. Pray about your problems and ask Heavenly Father to guide you.

*Raymond A., age 18, Accra, Ghana*

### Endure to the End

The family is central to the Creator's plan, so naturally the adversary is going to do all he can to stop us from living together as a happy, gospel-focused family. We know we can't expect life to be easy or that once we go to church and have family home evening, life will be free of

temptations. When things get rough, read your scriptures, pray, and just talk as a family.

*Elder Dudley, age 21, Indonesia Jakarta Mission*



### FOLLOW THE COUNSEL OF PROPHETS

“With the help of the Lord and His doctrine, all the hurtful effects from challenges a

family may meet can be understood and overcome. Whatever the needs of family members may be, we can strengthen our families as we follow the counsel given by prophets.

“The key to strengthening our families is having the Spirit of the Lord come into our homes.”

**Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 32.**

### NEXT QUESTION

“How do you keep your anger under control when you are really upset?”

Send your answer by May 15, 2011, to:

*Liahona*, Questions & Answers 5/11  
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420  
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA  
Or e-mail: [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org)

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter: (1) full name, (2) birth date, (3) ward or branch, (4) stake or district, (5) your written permission, and, if you are under age 18, your parent's written permission (e-mail is acceptable) to publish your response and photograph.

# ALWAYS REMEMBER HIM

THE LAST SUPPER, BY SIMON DEWEY



**WE ALL PROMISED.**  
(SEE LUKE 22:19–20; D&C 20:77,79.)

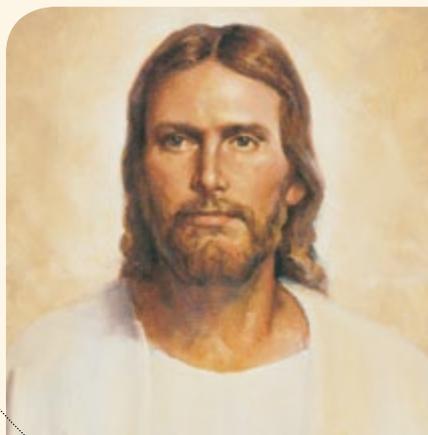
# Doctrine and Covenants 76:22–24

*These verses declare a modern witness of Jesus Christ: He lives!*

## Many Testimonies

Many testimonies had been given of the resurrected Christ before this revelation. Here are some examples:

- Mary Magdalene (see John 20:11–18)
- The Apostles of Jesus's day (see Matthew 28:9–20; Mark 16:14–20; Luke 24:36–53; John 20:19–29; 21)
- The two disciples on the road to Emmaus (see Luke 24:13–35)
- Stephen (see Acts 7:55–56)
- Paul (see Acts 9:1–6)
- The Nephites (see 3 Nephi 11–28)
- Moroni (see Ether 12:39)
- Joseph Smith (see Joseph Smith—History 1:16–20)



22 And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the "testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he <sup>b</sup>lives!

23 For we "saw him, even on the <sup>b</sup>right hand of "God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only "Begotten of the Father—

24 That by "him, and through him, and of him, the <sup>b</sup>worlds are and were created, and the <sup>b</sup>inhabitants thereof are begotten <sup>d</sup>sons and daughters unto God.



## He Lives!

"I have read—and I believe—the testimonies of those who experienced the grief of Christ's Crucifixion and the joy of His Resurrection. I have read—and I believe—the testimonies of those in the New World who were visited by the same risen Lord.

"I believe the testimony of one who, in this dispensation, spoke with the Father and the Son in a grove now called sacred and who gave his life, sealing that testimony with his blood."

President Thomas S. Monson, "He Is Risen!" *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2010, 89.



## Begotten Sons and Daughters unto God

"You are no ordinary beings, my beloved young friends all around the world. You are glorious and eternal. . . .

"It is my prayer and blessing that when you look at your reflection, you will be able to see beyond imperfections and self-doubts and recognize who you truly are: glorious sons and daughters of the Almighty God."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Reflection in the Water" (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Nov. 1, 2009); available at CESfiresides.lds.org.



## Worlds Are and Were Created

"Under the direction of the Father, Christ was the Lord of the universe, who created worlds without number—of which ours is only one (see Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:2).

"How many planets are there in the universe with people on them? We don't know, but we are not alone in the universe! God is not the God of only one planet!"

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in "Special Witnesses of Christ," *Liahona*, Apr. 2001, 5; *Ensign*, Apr. 2001, 6.

*Editors' note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verse, only a starting point for your own study.*

# REWARDS of Rebuilding

*As I saw the ruins from the earthquake, I was sad. But then I realized that God loves those who died as well as those who survived.*

**By Ashley Dyer**

**B**ecause I live in Shanghai, China, I had the opportunity to go with a school group to Sichuan Province in southwestern China to help build houses for victims of the earthquake that devastated the area a few years ago. We worked hard laying bricks, shoveling mortar, pushing wheelbarrows full of bricks, and handing bricks down “assembly lines” of people. By the second day my back ached, and my gloves were filled with holes. However, the trip was an unforgettable experience for me and strengthened my testimony of my own and each person’s individual worth, one of the Young Women values.

As I worked hard each day, I noticed that my belief in my own worth grew. I felt good about myself because I was doing things to improve the living situation of those less fortunate than I am.

We also had the opportunity to visit a school in the area. When we arrived, a crowd of cute little children came running toward us. When I saw all these wonderful little children, I recognized their individual worth also. They are all beautiful children of God, and I felt strongly that He loves and knows each of them.

Near the end of my trip we had the chance to go to a resort, where we were going to eat lunch. When we got there, however, we found that it had been destroyed in the earthquake. It was the worst destruction I have ever seen. It made me want to cry. The ceilings and walls of

the buildings were caved in, the trees nearby had fallen, and there was rubble everywhere. A huge boulder had rolled down the mountain and crashed into the side of one building, causing the ceiling and the wall to cave in. There was a single shoe lying on one of the doorsteps.

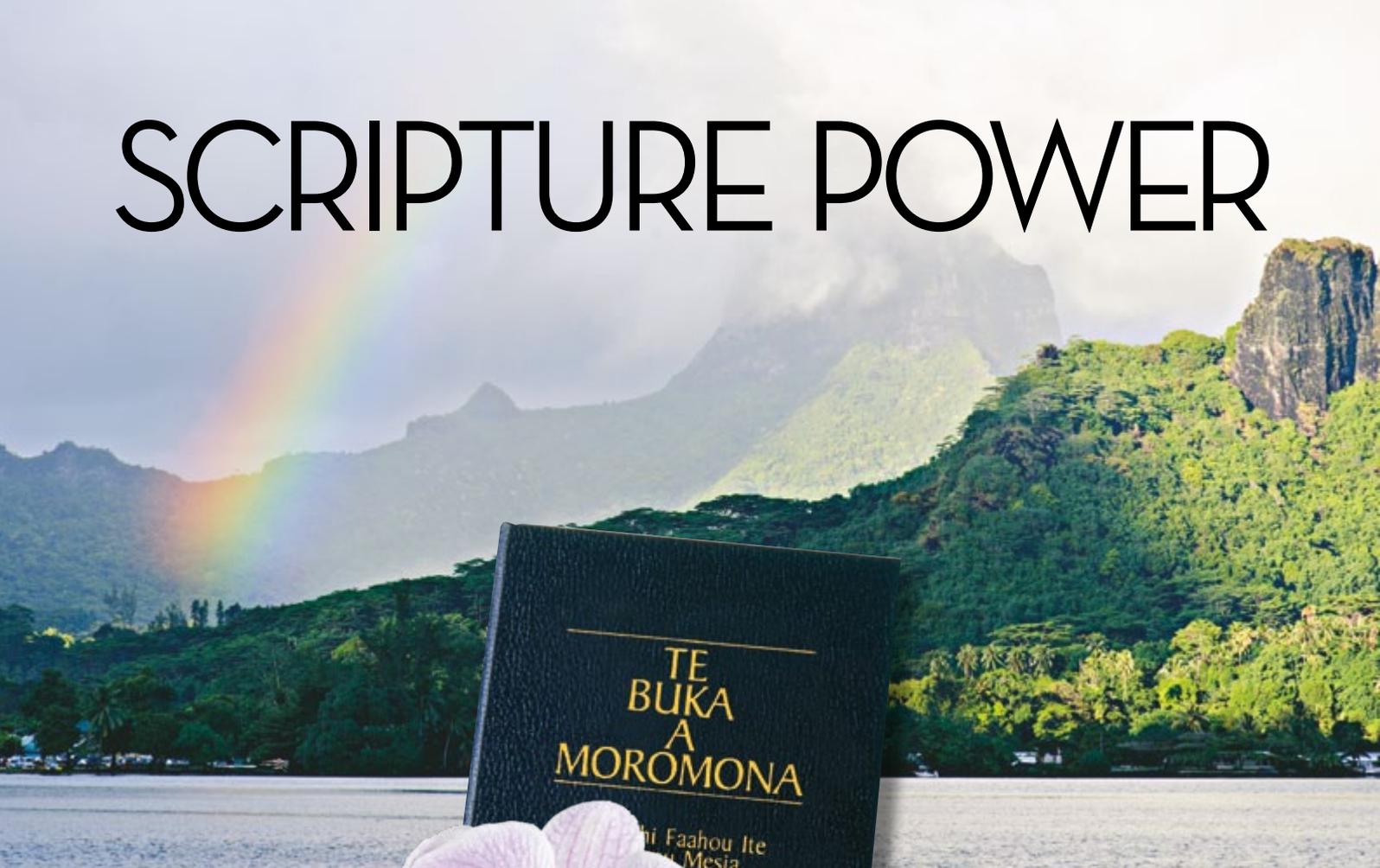
As I thought about this and the fact that people had been killed in this disaster, I struggled to understand how Heavenly Father would let this happen. Didn’t He love them? Then I thought back to what we had discussed in Young Women class and realized that yes, He did love them. He knew and loved them each individually. Those who died that day were all children of God. Initially, it made me even sadder thinking about that. But then I realized that these people were in the spirit world and they could return to Heavenly Father again. This thought comforted me and gave me a feeling of peace.

I know that I am a child of God, with great individual worth. We are all children of our Heavenly Father, who knows us personally. He loves us with a love that is deeper and stronger than any of us could ever imagine. This understanding was planted deeply in my heart as I worked with and served among the people who had suffered so terribly in the Sichuan earthquake. ■

*Ashley Dyer (right) helped rebuild homes for local residents after the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, China.*



# SCRIPTURE POWER



*When two Tahitian teens gave the scriptures a chance, their lives changed.*

**By Adam C. Olson**  
Church Magazines

**R**ooma didn't really want to study the scriptures. Vaitiare didn't really want to go to seminary. And they didn't have to. But when they chose to, their lives changed.

## **Why Not?**

Why would a teen choose to spend two hours every Thursday night studying the scriptures with his mom? A year ago Rooma Teroatea of Tahiti probably would have wondered the same thing.

Now he might ask why a teen would choose *not* to.

During three years of seminary, Rooma had

never really paid attention when his teachers assigned scriptures to read for the next lesson. "I didn't want to read them," he says. "The scriptures really didn't jump out at me."

But he wondered why Church leaders in his ward and stake always used the scriptures in their talks and lessons. He watched his leaders. He noticed how easy it was for his stake president to quote from the scriptures.

So when the Faaah Tahiti Stake divided the seminary students into teams to hold scripture mastery competitions throughout his last year of seminary, Rooma decided to give the scriptures a chance.

That's when his weekly study sessions with his mother began. Each Thursday night they studied together for the class competition the next day, learning where important verses are and even memorizing many of them.

And that's when things began to change for Rooma. His scripture study strengthened his relationship with his mom. He started to see the parallels between what the scriptures teach and what is happening in the world today. As he prayed about what he was reading, he realized it was of God.

It also helped him lead his team to victory in the stake scripture mastery championship.

*When Rooma Terooatea (below) and his seminary classmates traveled to neighboring Moorea (left) to test their scripture knowledge, the outcome didn't matter—Rooma was already a winner.*



**STUDY DILIGENTLY**

“Crash courses are not nearly so effective as the day-to-day read-

ing and application of the scriptures in our lives. Become acquainted with the lessons the scriptures teach. . . . Study them as though they were speaking to you, for such is the truth. . . .

“ . . . If you will study the scriptures diligently, your power to avoid temptation and to receive direction of the Holy Ghost in all you do will be increased.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Be Your Best Self,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2009, 68.

Rooma recognizes in the blessings he's received a lesson he learned in his studying. “In Mosiah 2:24 King Benjamin taught that when we choose to do what the Lord asks, we are blessed immediately,” says Rooma. One of the greatest blessings he has received is that “after studying the scriptures this year, I know that the Book of Mormon is true.”

**Don't Tell Me What to Do**

At the beginning of the school year, Vaitiare Pito wasn't even a member of the Church. So how did a new member who had never been to seminary before help her team win the Faaa stake scripture mastery championship?

“I wasn't worried about not having a lot of experience,” she says. “I





***Once Vaitiare Pito of Tahiti decided to study the scriptures, she began recognizing the blessings.***

learned many of those verses during the missionary lessons.”

Most of Vaitiare’s family joined the Church after her father died unexpectedly and the ward mission leader brought the missionaries to Vaitiare’s home. They talked about family unity and being together forever. “It really brought a change to our family,” she says.

However, it didn’t necessarily change the 17-year-old’s independent streak. “After I was baptized, everyone told me I should go to seminary,” she says. “I don’t like being told what to do, so it took me a while to go.”

Eventually she decided for herself to go and found she enjoyed it. She was assigned to be part of the same scripture mastery team as Rooma.

At first she didn’t make an effort to read the scripture assignments. But when she decided she would, she soon recognized a number of blessings.

“The scriptures have been a great help,” she says. “I have learned from the scriptures many things,” including the importance of prayer and that Heavenly Father will answer those prayers.

She also learned that when she decides to commit to something, like going to seminary or reading the scriptures, keeping the commitment is easier than if she does it because she has to or is “supposed” to.

Now that the school year is over, Vaitiare is grateful she chose to go to seminary and study the scriptures: “I know when we read the scriptures, we are blessed.” ■

# The Clue in My Blessing

By Scott Talbot

I served in the Texas Houston South Mission as a Spanish-speaking elder. One day my companion and I were knocking on doors, trying to find somebody to teach. We came to a house with a huge hole in the worn, wooden porch.

An older woman answered the door and invited us in. I'm not sure if she really knew who we were and what we were doing, but she was very polite. We began teaching her the first lesson, and things seemed to be going fine. Soon it was my turn to teach about Joseph Smith and the First Vision. I watched as the woman's facial expressions seemed to show growing confusion. It was obvious she was not really following what I was trying to explain to her.

After asking a few questions about what we had gone over so far and about how much of it she was understanding, I felt myself becoming frustrated that she wasn't getting the concept of the First Vision. It had been a long day, and the last thing a missionary wants is for somebody not to understand what he so badly wants people to know is true.

In the split second I felt my emotions starting to slip toward anger, a small passage from my patriarchal blessing came to my mind. It was a section about my future family that advised me to teach my future children the concepts of the gospel. As that paragraph went through my head, I knew the Spirit was telling me

to teach this humble woman in the same way I would teach a child.

I began teaching her with a more

## PREPARE FOR SERVICE

**Y**oung men, I admonish you to prepare for service as a missionary. Keep yourselves clean and pure and worthy to represent the Lord. Maintain your health and strength. Study the scriptures. Where such is available, participate in seminary or institute. Familiarize yourself with the missionary handbook *Preach My Gospel*."

President Thomas S. Monson, "As We Meet Together Again," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 6.

simple and loving approach. I imagined my own children sitting around the living room looking up at me, their father, as I taught them about the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was amazing to see the change on her face. Her eyebrows soon lifted, and her eyes began to shine. Her confused look became one of interest and wonder. As I related the story of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appearing to Joseph Smith, tears filled her eyes and ran down her cheeks. The Spirit filled the room, and my frustration turned into great joy.

I will never forget this experience.

Now I can't wait to teach the same principles to my children someday and feel that great joy again. ■





By President  
Boyd K. Packer

President of the Quorum  
of the Twelve Apostles



# THE MEDIATOR JESUS CHRIST

Let me tell you a story—a parable.

There once was a man who wanted something very much. It seemed more important than anything else in his life. In order for him to have his desire, he incurred [took on] a great debt.

He had been warned about going into that much debt and particularly about his creditor, the one who lent the money. But it seemed so important for him to have what he wanted right now. He was sure he could pay for it later.

So he signed a contract. He would pay it off some time along the way. He didn't worry too much about it, for the due date seemed such a long time away. He had what he wanted now, and that was what seemed important.

The creditor was always somewhere in the back of his mind, and he made token [small] payments now and again, thinking somehow that the day of reckoning [the day he had to repay all the money] would never really come.

## Justice or Mercy?

But as it always does, the day came and the contract fell due. The debt had not been fully paid. His creditor appeared and demanded payment in full.

Only then did he realize that his creditor had not only the power to repossess [take away] all that he owned but also the power to cast him into prison as well.

"I cannot pay you, for I have not the power to do so," he confessed.

"Then," said the creditor, "we will take your possessions, and you shall go to prison. You agreed to that. It was your choice. You signed the contract, and now it must be enforced."

"Can you not extend the time or forgive the debt?" the debtor begged. "Arrange some way for me to keep what I have and not go to prison. Surely you believe in mercy? Will you not show mercy?"

The creditor replied, "Mercy is always so one-sided. It would serve only you. If I show mercy to you, it will leave me unpaid. It is justice I demand. Do you believe in justice?"

"I believed in justice when I signed the contract," the debtor said. "It was on my side then, for I thought it would protect me. I did not need mercy then nor think I should need it ever."

"It is justice that demands that you pay the contract or suffer the penalty," the creditor replied. "That is the law. You have agreed to it,

*Jesus Christ,  
our Mediator,  
pays the price  
that we are not  
able to pay so  
we can return  
to live with  
our Heavenly  
Father.*

To learn more about this topic, read Alma 42, the prophet Alma's explanation of justice, mercy, and the Atonement.



*By eternal law, mercy cannot be extended unless there be one who is both willing and able to assume our debt and pay the price and arrange the terms for our redemption.*

and that is the way it must be. Mercy cannot rob justice.”

There they were: One meting out justice, the other pleading for mercy. Neither could prevail [win] except at the expense of the other.

“If you do not forgive the debt, there will be no mercy,” the debtor pleaded.

“If I do, there will be no justice,” was the reply.

Both laws, it seemed, could not be served. They are two eternal ideals that appear to contradict one another. Is there no way for justice to be fully served and mercy also?

There is a way! The law of justice *can* be fully satisfied and mercy *can* be fully extended—but it takes someone else. And so it happened this time.

### **His Mediator**

The debtor had a friend. He came to help. He knew the debtor well. He thought him foolish to have gotten himself into such a predicament. Nevertheless, he wanted to help because he loved him. He stepped between them, faced the creditor, and made this offer: “I will pay the debt if you will free the debtor from his contract so that he may keep his possessions and not go to prison.”

As the creditor was pondering the offer, the mediator added, “You demanded justice. Though he cannot pay you, I will do so. You will have been justly dealt with and can ask no more. It would not be just.”

And so the creditor agreed.

The mediator turned then to the debtor. “If I pay your debt, will you accept me as your creditor?”

“Oh yes, yes,” cried the debtor. “You save me from prison and show mercy to me.”

“Then,” said the benefactor [one who helps], “you will pay the debt to me, and I will set the terms. It will not be easy, but it will be possible. I will provide a way. You need not go to prison.”

And so it was that the creditor was paid in full. He had been justly dealt with. No contract had been broken. The debtor, in turn, had been extended mercy. Both laws stood fulfilled. Because there was a mediator, justice had claimed its full share and mercy was fully satisfied.

### **Our Mediator**

Each of us lives on a kind of spiritual credit, a debt. One day the account will be closed, a settlement demanded. However casually we may view it now, when that day comes and the foreclosure is imminent [near], we will look around in restless agony for someone, anyone, to help us.

And by eternal law, mercy cannot be extended save there be one who is both willing and able to assume our debt and pay the price and arrange the terms for our redemption.

Unless there is a mediator, unless we have a friend, the full weight of justice must fall on us. The full payment for every transgression, however minor or however deep, will be exacted [taken] from us to the uttermost.

But know this: Truth, glorious truth, proclaims there is such a Mediator. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). Through Him mercy can be fully extended to each of us without offending the eternal law of justice.

The extension of mercy will not be automatic. It will be through covenant with Him. It will be on His terms, His generous terms, which include, as an absolute essential, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.

All mankind can be protected by the law of justice, and at once each of us individually may be extended the redeeming and healing blessing of mercy. ■

*From “The Mediator,” Ensign, May 1977, 54–56.*



**I** will be honest with Heavenly Father, others, and myself."

My Gospel Standards

# Niya's Choice

By Marcel Niyungi

Based on a true story

**N**iya was playing in front of her home when her aunt called her inside. "Niya, will you go to the greengrocer's shop and buy some carrots for dinner?" her aunt asked.

"Yes!" Niya said happily. She liked going to the shop, and she liked helping her aunt.

Niya took the money her aunt gave her and walked down the road to the nearby shop.

"I need to buy some carrots for dinner," Niya told the shopkeeper.

The shopkeeper put the carrots in Niya's bag and told her how

much they cost. Niya handed him the money.

"Here's your change," the shopkeeper said as he handed her back some money.

Niya thanked him and started walking home. As she walked, she looked at the money the shopkeeper had given her. "He gave me too much change," she thought. "Now I can have this money for myself!"

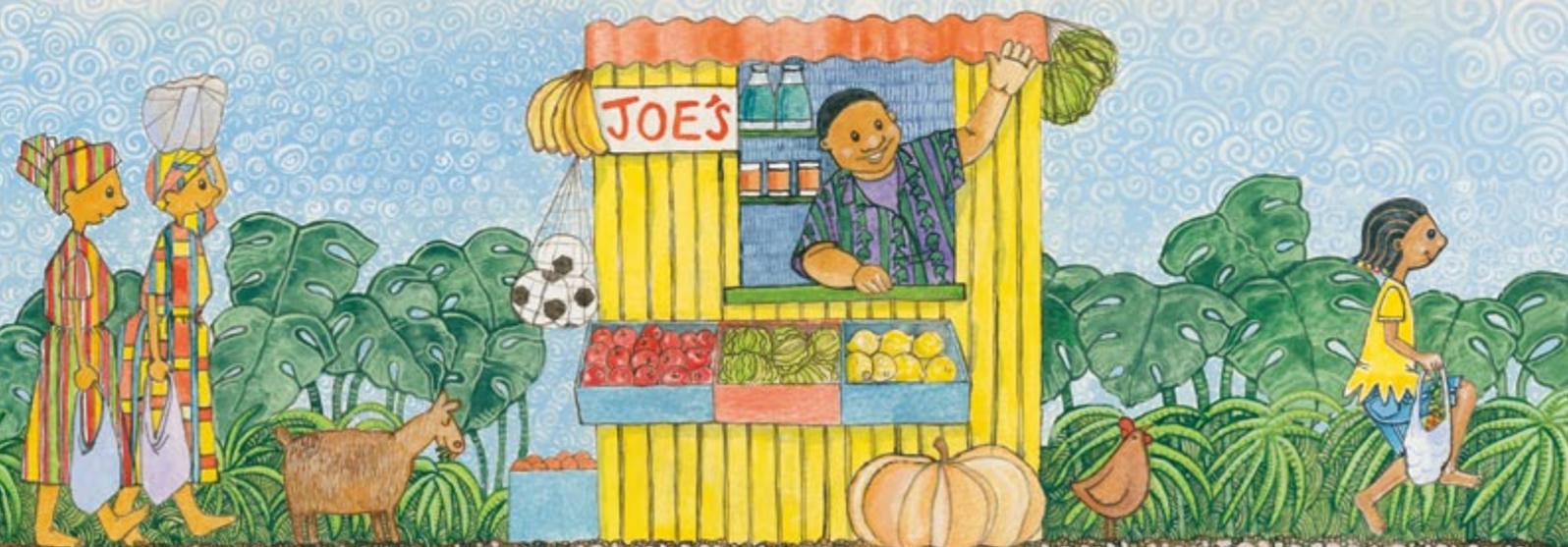
But then Niya stopped walking. "Heavenly Father won't be happy with me if I keep this money," she thought. "I must be

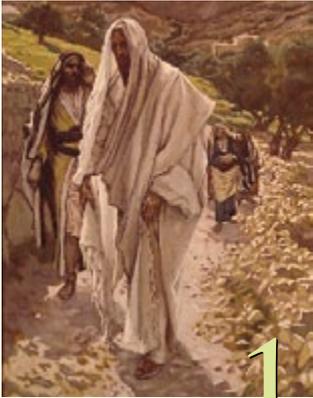
honest in my words and actions."

Niya turned around and went back to the shop. "You gave me too much money back," she told the shopkeeper as she handed him the extra money.

The shopkeeper took the money. "You are a good girl," he said. Then he put some apples in a bag and gave them to Niya. "Thank you for being honest. Please take these apples and enjoy them with your family."

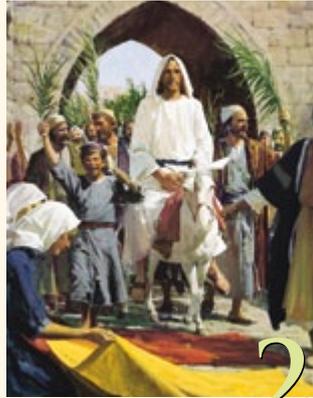
Niya felt warm and happy inside as she walked home. She knew Heavenly Father was pleased that she had chosen to be honest. ■





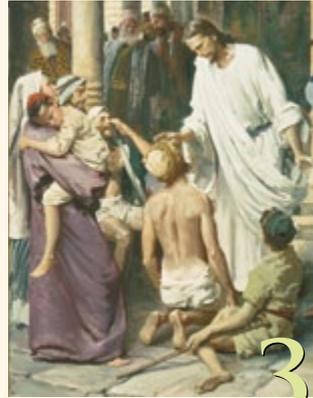
## SATURDAY

An important holiday called Passover was only six days away. Many people were coming to Jerusalem so they could offer sacrifices in the temple on that day. Jesus walked to Bethany, a village near Jerusalem. He would stay there for five nights with His friends Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Mary anointed His feet with oil. See [John 12:1-3](#).



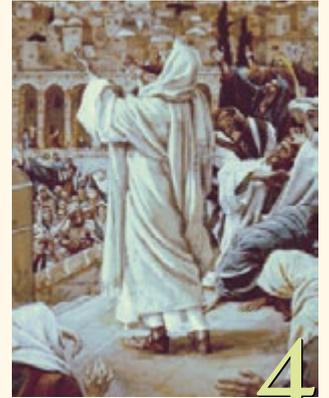
## SUNDAY

Jesus walked from Bethany to Jerusalem. He rode into the city on a donkey, as a verse in the Old Testament said He would. People recognized Him as their King, shouting, "Hosanna," and laying down palm leaves in front of the donkey to keep dust from getting on the Savior. Jesus visited the temple and then returned to Bethany. See [Zechariah 9:9](#); [Matthew 21:1-11](#); [Mark 11:1-11](#).



## MONDAY

Jesus saw people buying and selling things in the temple. Because He wanted the temple to be a "house of prayer," He made them leave. Then He healed people who were lame or blind. The jealous priests were angry with Him. See [Matthew 21:12-17](#); [Mark 11:15-19](#).



## TUESDAY

Jesus taught people in the temple and on a nearby hill called the Mount of Olives. The priests plotted to kill Jesus. One of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, agreed to turn Jesus over to the priests in exchange for 30 silver coins. See [Matthew 25:31-46](#); [26:14-16](#).

# EASTER WEEK

You can prepare for Easter by learning about what happened during the week before Jesus Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection. Starting eight days before Easter, read the events and scripture verses listed for each day.



5

## WEDNESDAY

The scriptures do not say what Jesus did on this day. He may have spent the day with His disciples. You could read the parable of the ten virgins, a story Jesus taught to His disciples to help them prepare for His Second Coming.

See **Matthew 25:1–13**.



6

## THURSDAY

Jesus's disciples got ready for the Passover meal. During the meal, Jesus told the disciples that one of them would betray Him. Then, to help them remember Him, He gave them the sacrament for the first time. Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to suffer for our sins and to pray to God. People came with swords and arrested Him. The disciples ran away in fear.

See **Matthew 26:17–29, 36–56**.



7

## FRIDAY

Jesus was taken to the high priest, Caiaphas. Jesus's disciple Peter denied that he knew Him. Jesus was questioned by the governor, Pilate, and by Herod. He was condemned to die on the cross. Jesus was crucified. A rich man named Joseph laid Jesus in his tomb. Jesus's mother, Mary, and Mary Magdalene visited the tomb.

See **Matthew 26:57–72; 27:1–2, 27–37; Luke 23:44–46, 50–56**.



8

## SATURDAY

Jesus's body lay in the tomb. A large stone was put in front of the door. The wicked priests asked Pilate to have guards stand outside the tomb to make sure no one went inside.

See **Matthew 27:57–66**.



## EASTER SUNDAY

Jesus was resurrected! He had risen from the tomb. An angel descended from heaven and rolled away the stone. Jesus told His disciples to teach and baptize others and promised to always be with them.

See **Matthew 28**.

# Children's Art from Around the World

Entries from the international children's art exhibit on the theme "The Gospel Blesses My Life."

**W**atch for more art from the exhibit on Our Page in future issues. See other entries at [www.liahona.lds.org](http://www.liahona.lds.org).



Andreza A., age 10, Brazil



Dasha K., age 11, Ukraine



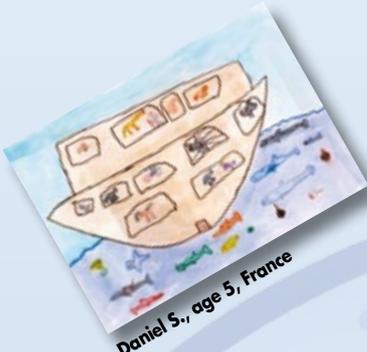
Zeniff F., age 9, Mexico



Chung-chi, age 6, Taiwan



Beth B., age 5, Canada



Daniel S., age 5, France



Karen L., age 6, Bolivia

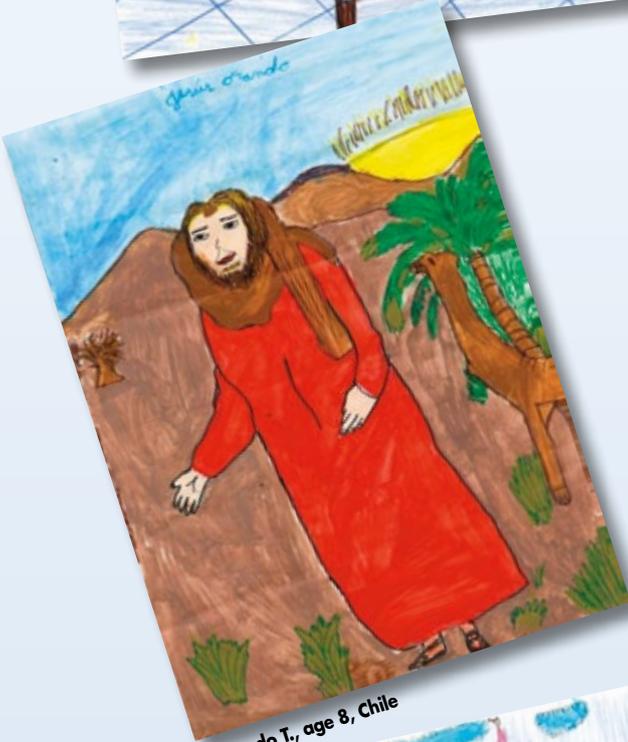


Nathalie S., age 9, Guatemala

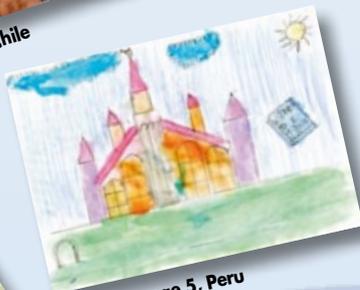
Carolina A., age 7, Peru



Sara R., age 9, Argentina



Leonardo T., age 8, Chile



Fatima B., age 5, Peru



Lee W., age 9, Poland



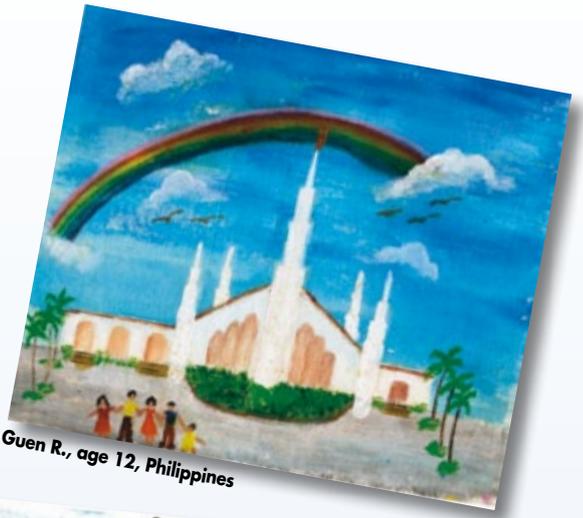
Addison O., age 10, Vietnam



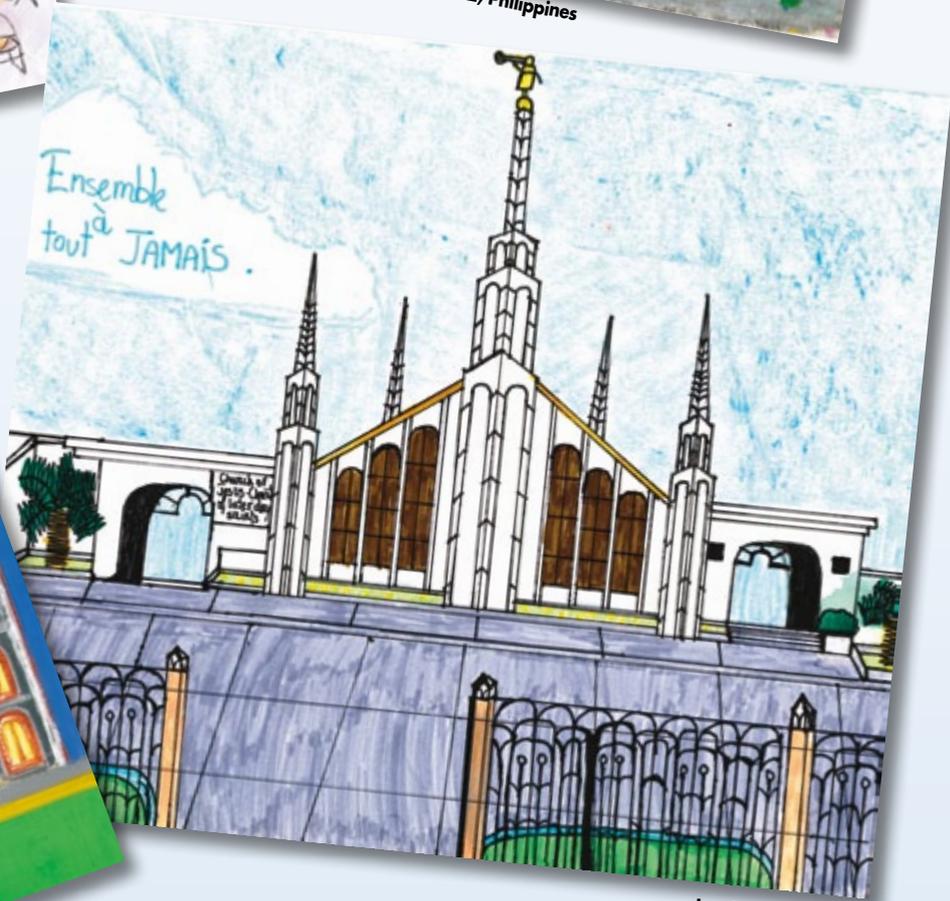
Alina S., age 8, Ukraine



Vanessa G., age 11, Mexico



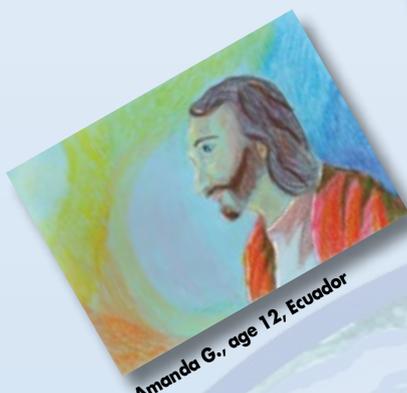
Guen R., age 12, Philippines



Lee J., age 11, Tahiti



Erdenejargaliin O., age 8, Mongolia



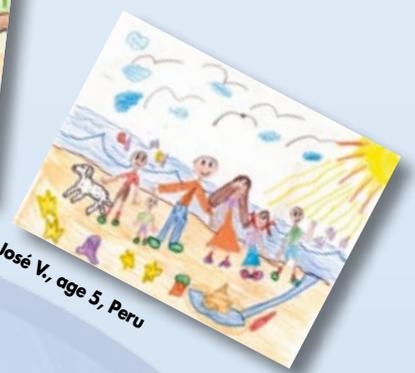
Amanda G., age 12, Ecuador



Martina F., age 11, Argentina



Adriana B., age 10, Ecuador



José V., age 5, Peru

## Special Witness



Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shares some thoughts on this subject.

ILLUSTRATION BY BRYAN BEACH

# How can I **stay safe** from bad things in the world?

From "How to Live Well amid Increasing Evil," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2004, 100–102.

Seek and be attentive to the personal guidance given to you through the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father prepared the scriptures and provides continuing divine guidance to sustain us. That help will assure that you can live with peace and happiness amid increasing evil.

As you continue to center your mind and heart in the Lord, He will help you have a rich and full life no matter what happens in the world around you.

Though life may seem difficult now, hold on to the iron rod of truth. You are making more progress than you realize.

You can live a virtuous, productive, righteous life by following the plan of protection created by your Father in Heaven: His plan of happiness.

# Jesus Christ Is My Savior & Redeemer

By Ana Maria Coburn and Cristina Franco

*"We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel" (Articles of Faith 1:3).*

**W**hat would you be willing to give for someone you love very, very much? Our Savior, Jesus Christ, loves us so much that He gave His own life for us.

Heavenly Father knew that if we sinned and made mistakes, we would not be able to live with Him again. So His Son, Jesus Christ, offered to be our Savior. Heavenly Father chose Him to save us because He was the only one who could live a life without sin.

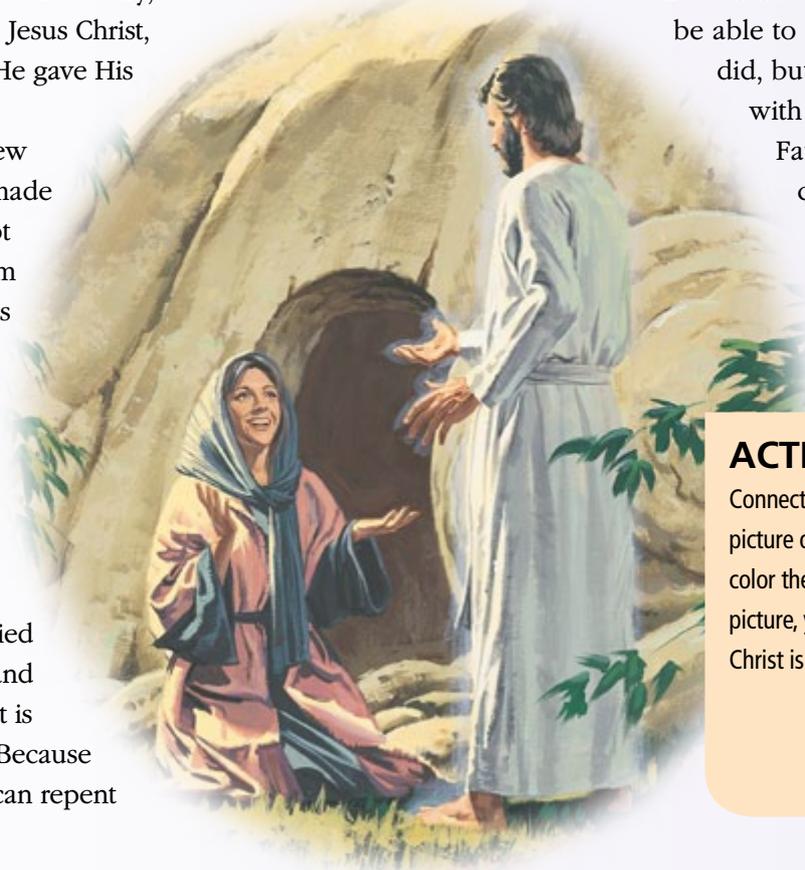
Jesus suffered and died to save us from death and our sins. This loving act is called the Atonement. Because of the Atonement, we can repent

of our sins, be forgiven, and become clean and pure, as Jesus is.

Jesus was crucified and died, but after three days He was resurrected. He lived again! Because He was resurrected, we will be resurrected too. This means that our

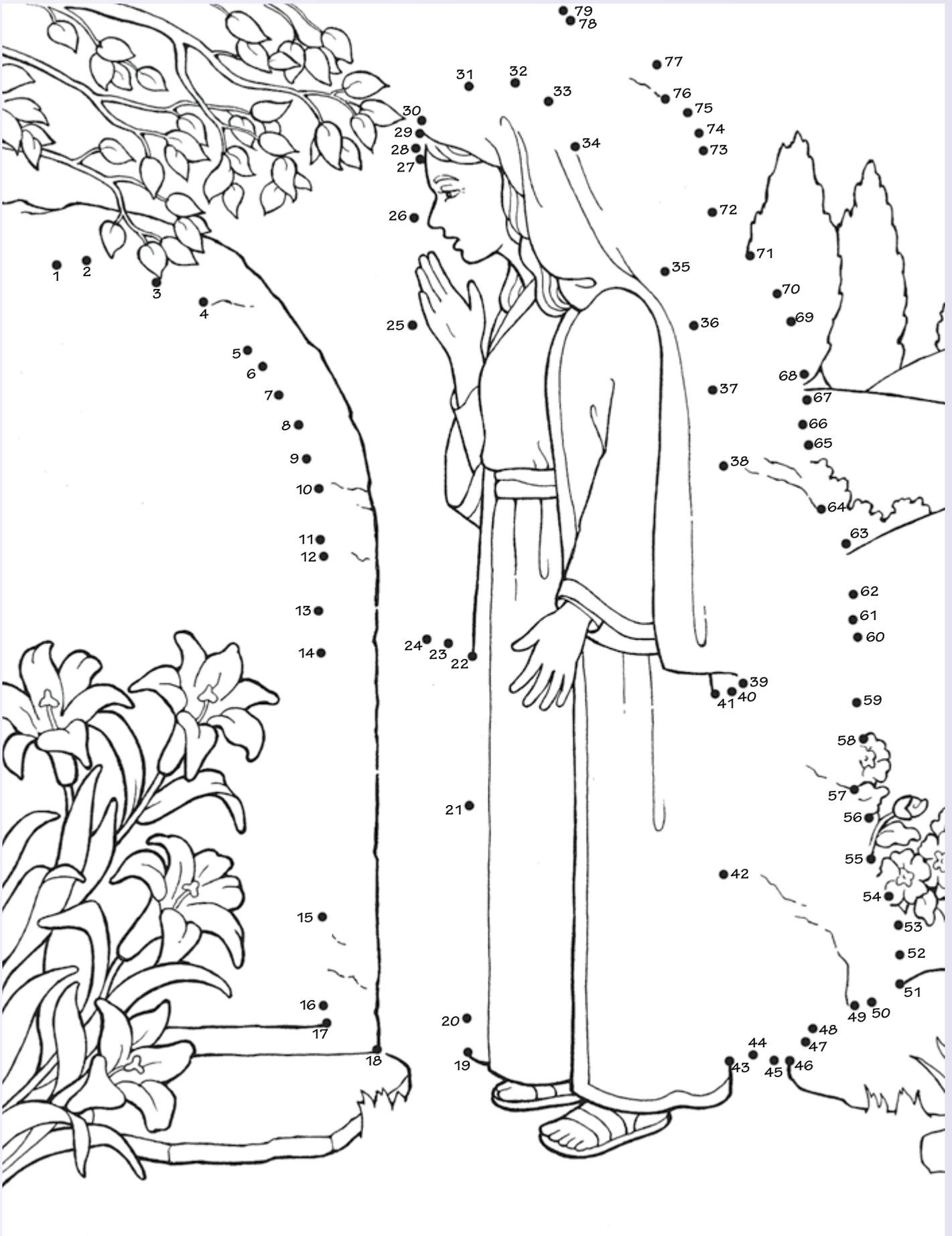
bodies and spirits will be reunited forever.

Truly, Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer. He is the perfect example for all of us. He taught us how to treat one another with kindness. He taught us how to serve one another. He taught us how to become better. We won't be able to live a perfect life as He did, but we can return to live with Jesus and Heavenly Father by obeying the commandments and doing our best. We need to follow Jesus Christ every day. ■



## ACTIVITY

Connect the dots to complete the picture of Mary at the empty tomb. Then color the picture. When you look at the picture, you can remember that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer.



# Happy at Home

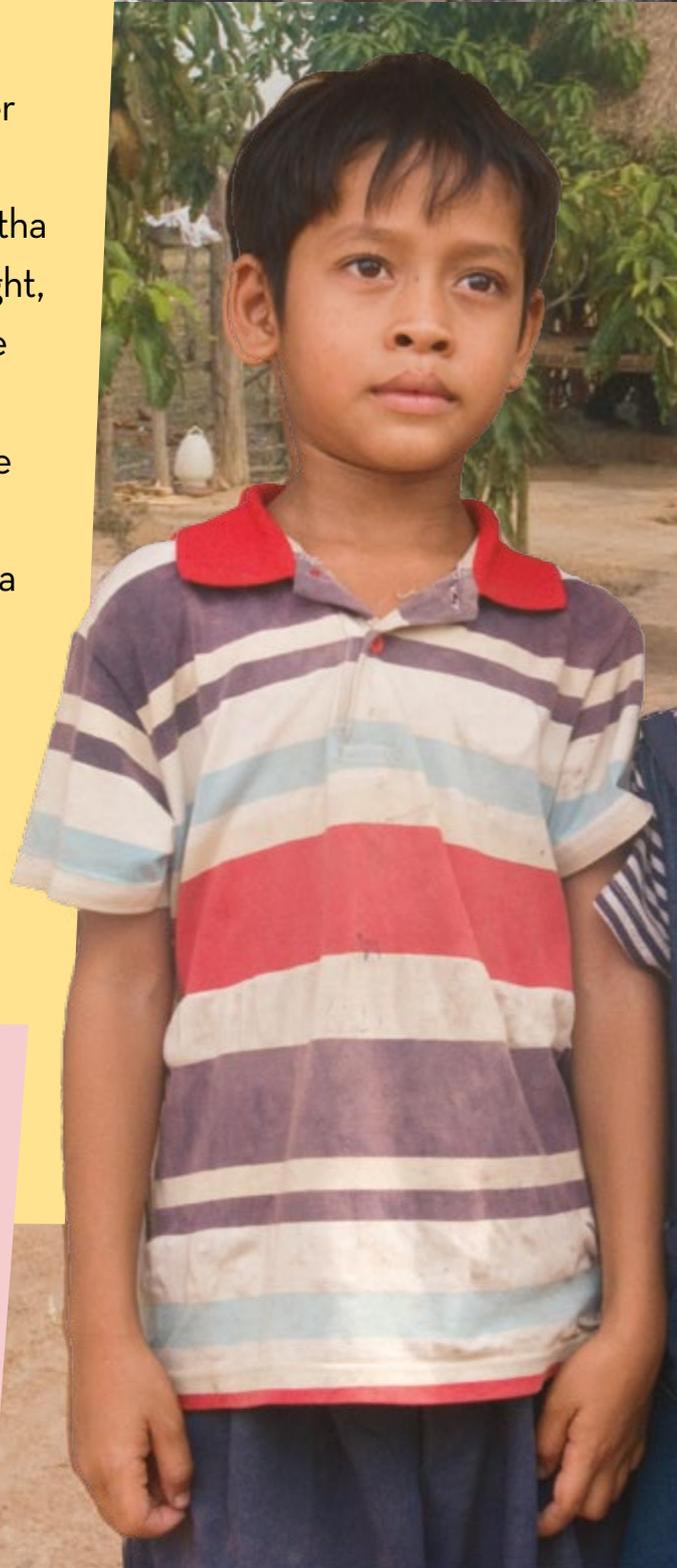
By Chad E. Phares

Church Magazines

**B**untha and Neath are a brother and sister who live in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

When he turned eight years old, Buntha decided to be baptized. When Neath turns eight, she also will be baptized. “I want to receive the Holy Ghost,” she says.

It is important to Buntha and Neath to serve others. Buntha wants to be a missionary when he grows up. Neath can’t wait until she can be a “grandma missionary,” a senior missionary. ■



**Buntha and Neath** spend a lot of time together. They both try to be nice to each other and their family members.

People come from around the world to visit their city's ancient buildings, but **Buntha and Neath** are most happy staying at home and spending time with their family.



**Buntha and Neath** have a special outdoor learning area where they sit to read the scriptures, do their homework, and read the *Liahona*. Buntha and Neath like to read their scriptures. They try to read the scriptures every day. Neath likes to read about Lehi's dream. Buntha likes to read about Nephi.



**Neath** likes to play marbles. **Buntha** likes to play football with any ball he can find.

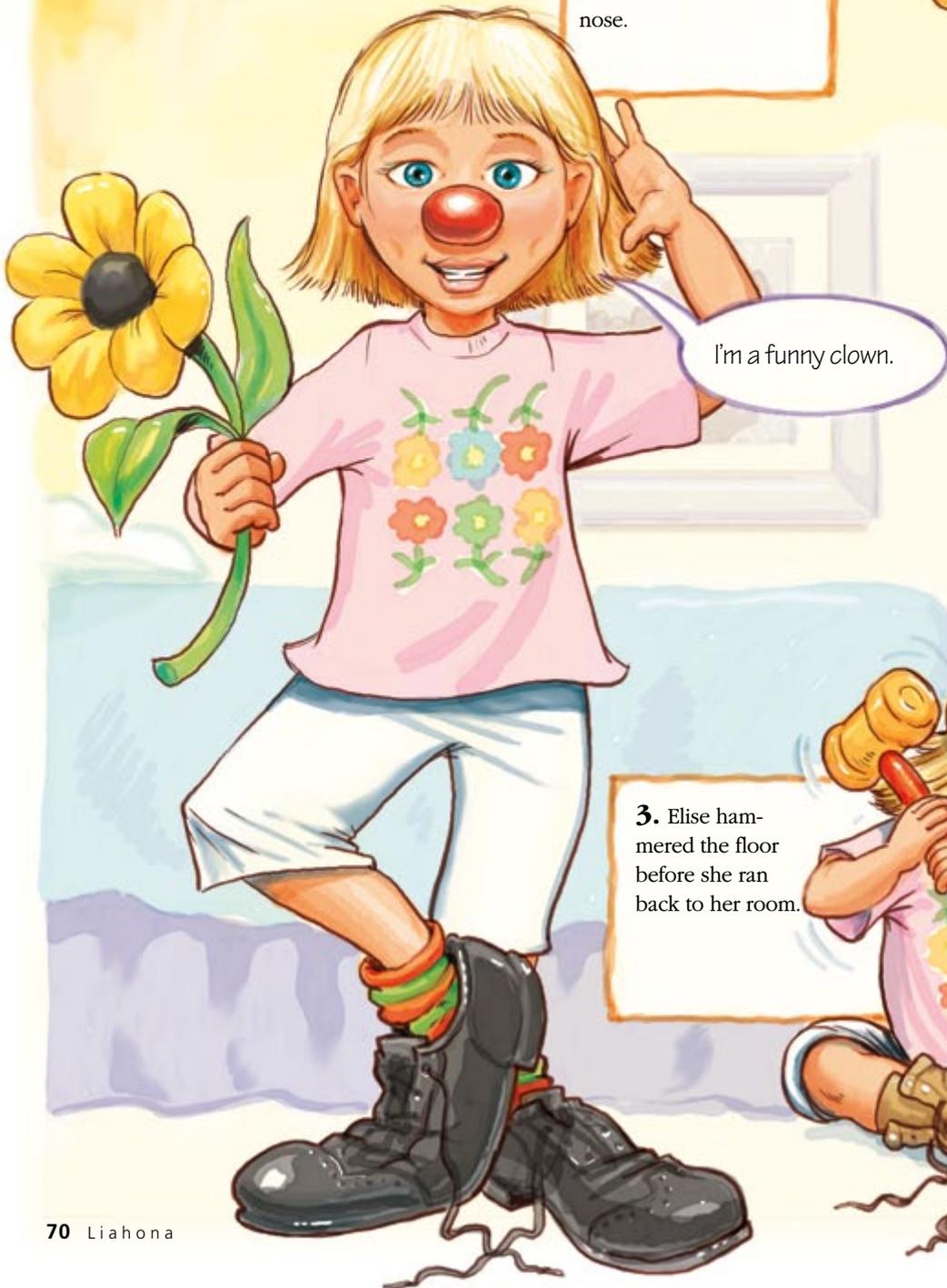
# All Dressed Up

By Kaare Revill

Based on a true story

*"Ye are the children of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 14:1).*

1. Elise wanted to dress up. She put on Dad's shoes and a fake red nose.



2. Elise ran back to her room. She put on a yellow construction hat and grabbed a plastic hammer.

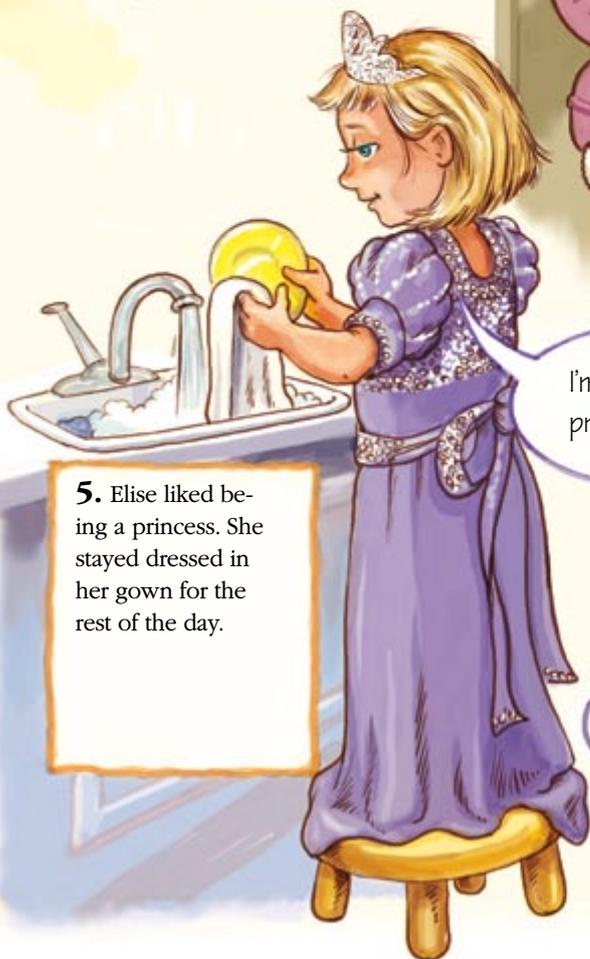


3. Elise hammered the floor before she ran back to her room.



4. Elise put on a glittery purple and silver gown and twirled out of her room.

6. At bedtime Elise changed into her favorite green pajamas. She walked out of her room and sat on Mom's lap.



5. Elise liked being a princess. She stayed dressed in her gown for the rest of the day.

I'm a beautiful princess.

7.

I am Elise. I am a child of God.

## WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD

**N**o matter where we live or what we look like, we are all children of God. Look at the children in the circles at the top and see if you can find them on the map. Circle each child you find.

### HELPS FOR PARENTS

**T**alk about some of your child's physical characteristics or personality traits. What makes him or her unique? Explain that Heavenly Father created us all to be different but that we are all His children. Help your child spot unique characteristics of each child on the map.





## Handbook Training Emphasizes Work of Salvation

By Adam C. Olson

Church Magazines

**D**uring a worldwide leadership training in February 2011, members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles instructed participants on using the new handbooks more effectively. The meeting was a follow-up to the November 2010 worldwide leadership training in which the handbooks were introduced.

The speakers emphasized how to use the handbooks in a more inspired way, the importance of understanding the doctrinal foundation of the new handbooks, how to apply the principles of adaptation to Church programs, how the handbooks' changes can be applied to carry out the work of salvation, and the role of women in councils.

Participating in the broadcast were President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency; Elders Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, Richard G. Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, David A. Bednar, Quentin L. Cook, D. Todd Christofferson, and Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; Elders Craig C. Christensen, Bruce D. Porter, and W. Craig Zwick of the Seventy; and the general presidents of the auxiliaries.

### More Inspired Use of the Handbooks

Calling the meeting a “second opportunity to discover how to use the handbook more effectively,” President Eyring encouraged leaders to increase their

capacity to receive revelation.

“Only by the Spirit will you know how to apply what you read in the handbook,” he said. “. . . It may seem to you impractical to expect or even hope for the stream of revelation you need in your daily service. It will not come without faith and hard work, but it is possible.”

President Eyring promised that as leaders work and pray to “understand and follow the words of life” given to them, the Lord would help them give service and leadership beyond their own powers.

### Doctrinal Foundation of the Handbooks

“[The handbook] is doctrinal,” said Elder Oaks, “and it is shorter than the prior handbook because

on many subjects it refrains from stating rules or giving directions. Instead, it gives principles that inspired leaders can apply . . . according to their local circumstances.”

Elder Bednar and Elder Christofferson warned leaders against skipping the beginning chapters of *Handbook 2* to get to the policies in the chapters thereafter. The earlier chapters lay a doctrinal foundation for understanding and applying the principles and policies that follow.

Elder Bednar said that for the handbooks to be “principle-based, with fewer applications spelled out, is a much more spiritually demanding and rigorous requirement for all of us.”

### Principles of Adaptation

“On matters of doctrine, covenants, and policies established by the First Presidency and the Twelve, we do not deviate from the handbook,” said Elder Nelson. “Adaptability is



*“The handbook will become a treasure to you as you use it to help lead others to choose the way to eternal life. That is its purpose.”*

**President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency**

allowed on some other activities to meet local circumstances.”

According to Elder Porter, chapter 17, “Uniformity and Adaptation,” was included to help local leaders follow the Spirit and determine when it is appropriate to adapt certain programs. The chapter explains what cannot be changed and gives five conditions under which adaptations may be made: family circumstances, limited transportation and communication, small quorums or classes, insufficient number of leaders, and security conditions.

“Appropriate adaptations do not weaken the Church. They strengthen it,” said Elder Porter in an address read by Elder W. Craig Zwick of the Seventy. In making inspired adaptations, local leaders should not feel they are settling for less than the ideal. “Every unit of the Church has access to the doctrines, the ordinances, the priesthood power, and the gifts of the Spirit necessary for the salvation and exaltation of God’s children,” Elder Porter wrote.

### The Work of Salvation

Changes made throughout *Handbook 2* are meant to further the work of salvation. President Eyring said: “The handbook will become a treasure to you as you use it to help lead others to choose the way to eternal life. That is its purpose.”

Chapter 5 specifically brings together under the title “The Work of Salvation in the Ward and Stake” a number of topics previously treated separately, including member missionary work, convert retention, activation, temple and family history work, and teaching the gospel.

“Paul said that in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times, all things will be gathered together in one in Christ,” said Elder Bednar (see Ephesians 1:10). “There’s one work.”

For example, what some previously considered



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND, © IRI

as separate missions of the Church are “the same work in different spheres,” he said. Missionary work is proclaiming the gospel and inviting others to receive sacred ordinances and make covenants. Perfecting the Saints—including retention, activation, and teaching—is the work of inviting people to honor ordinances and covenants. Redeeming the dead through family history and temple work is providing the opportunity to receive ordinances and make covenants to those who have died.

Elder Holland said that in general the changes to the handbook lead to an understanding that quorum and auxiliary leaders aren’t on the ward council simply to think about their own quorum and auxiliary members, but that they have a shared responsibility for the spiritual welfare of all members.

Elder Cook helped clarify how some of the policy changes in *Handbook 2* contribute to the work of salvation.

He emphasized the importance of bishops and ward councils meeting welfare needs now that a welfare meeting no longer exists. He explained the increased role of Melchizedek Priesthood leaders in counseling with quorum members. He further clarified changes that allow fathers who are not fully temple worthy to participate in ordinances and blessings of family members in certain circumstances.

“We are not in the business of running programs

***In the work of salvation, priesthood leaders should consider the next ordinances an individual needs and how to assist in that preparation.***

## AUXILIARY PANELS

### USE NEW TRAINING LIBRARY

During the February 2011 worldwide leadership training, the general presidents of the Church's auxiliaries participated in a series of panel discussions that used examples drawn from a new online training resource.

The Leadership Training Library is a collection of real-life examples of leaders serving around the world that model principles found in *Handbook 2*. Shot in Brazil, England, Guatemala, and Korea, the videos are currently in translation and will be available online for use later in 2011.

Using these videos, the auxiliary general presidents, under the direction of Elders Robert D. Hales and Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Elder Craig C. Christensen of the Seventy, discussed three important principles found in *Handbook 2*.

#### 1. Prepare Spiritually

"It is amazing how the Lord looks and waits for ways to bless us," explained Rosemary Wixom, Primary general president, after viewing an example of how a Relief Society leader from South Korea earnestly asked for and received inspiration as she planned a meeting.

Elder Andersen, discussing with Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president, and Sister Wixom, said, "This is a spiritual work. It can only be done in the Lord's way." Panel members discussed how preparing spiritually allows leaders to focus on individuals, tailoring activities, lessons, and assignments to meet their needs. "Revelation is scattered among us," Elder Andersen testified.

#### 2. Participate in Councils

A true story of ward council members in Guatemala working together to successfully invite a family to return to full activity in the Church provided an opportunity for Elder Christensen to lead a discussion on working together in councils with all five auxiliary presidents: Sister Beck; Sister Wixom; Russell T. Osguthorpe, Sunday School general president; Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president; and David L. Beck, Young Men general president.

The panel discussed how the combined efforts of council members can help ward members progress, how active council members reduce the bishop's load, and how leaders and members should listen, share, and seek the Lord's will concerning ward members.

#### 3. Minister to Others

The focus of the third video was a young man in England who is striving to stay fully active in the Church. The panel, moderated by Elder Hales and including Brother Osguthorpe, Brother Beck, and Sister Dalton, identified the importance of leaders working with parents, in Church councils, and with youth.

"If you will do exactly as you've seen today," Elder Hales concluded, "talk about [the video examples], discuss them, and take them to the Lord . . . you will be guided and directed on how you can help and strengthen and accomplish what you need to do in the callings which you've been given." ■

or managing an organization," said Elder Bednar. "That's necessary, but it is not sufficient. This is the work of salvation. And when we begin to think about ordinances and covenants, then priesthood leaders would properly ask the question, what is the next ordinance that is needed in the life of this individual or this family, and in what ways can we assist the preparation?"

#### Women in Council

Elder Scott expressed concern that in some places, leaders miss opportunities to include women when counseling together. "When [women] can be encouraged to take part freely in ward council meetings, their ideas are always helpful

#### MORE ONLINE

Find audio, video, and text of both worldwide leadership training broadcasts at [lds.org/menu/service/serving-in-the-church](http://lds.org/menu/service/serving-in-the-church).

*Handbook 2* can be found online at [lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church](http://lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church).

The new Leadership Training Library will be available on the Serving in the Church section of [lds.org](http://lds.org) by mid-2011.



**Church leaders said that both men and women should be allowed to equally and freely express their ideas in leadership meetings.**

and inspirational,” he said.

Leaders can encourage participation by calling on sisters by name and by expressing gratitude for insights and recommendations offered, Elder Scott explained.

“A complementary blessing that comes to the homes of priesthood leaders” who follow these guidelines is that “these men can become more appreciative of the sacred role of their wives in their own homes,” he added.

He taught the importance of seeking unanimity among council members. When that feeling is sensed, a leader may identify it and call for a vote. In instances when members may not be unanimous, leaders should solicit counsel from each member of the ward council, express gratitude for insights shared, make a decision, and ask council members for united support in that decision. Elder Scott emphasized the importance of confidentiality in ward council matters.

### Anticipated Results

Elder Nelson concluded the training by expressing three hopes: that simplification will allow the time and resources of members to be utilized with greater effectiveness, that the power of the priesthood will grow in each priesthood holder to bless every individual and every family in the Church, and that each member may feel a greater sense of devotion and discipleship. ■

## IN THE NEWS

### Elder Perry Creates First Stake in Guam

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited Guam in December 2010 to create the Barrigada Guam Stake, the first stake in the territory of Guam. While there, Elder Perry, who served in the United States Marine Corps in the area during World War II, also visited the Pacific War Museum and the neighboring island of Saipan. There are 1,971 members of the Church living in Guam. The territory of Guam is part of the Asia North Area of the Church.

### LDS Doctors Treat Cholera in Papua New Guinea

A handful of LDS doctors from Australia spent time treating victims of a cholera outbreak in remote villages of northwest Papua New Guinea in late 2010.

The doctors worked with hundreds of patients, saving one man who was minutes from death when he arrived at the hospital and others who would not have lasted 24 hours without treatment.

People flocked by land and canoe to the doctors. David Williams of Brisbane and Anthony Mahler of Cairns said that within one day of arriving at the village of Sogere, they had

treated more than 200 cases of cholera. In referring to the overall experience, Dr. Mahler said, “[It] was the most professionally rewarding experience of my life,” in spite of the difficulties and the exhausting workload.

In addition to sending doctors, the Church has provided relief supplies, including medical aid and water purifiers. Food shipments and soap were also shipped to the crisis areas from the Church in Port Moresby, and shipments of personal hygiene kits are being sent from Port Moresby and Brisbane. A missionary couple with expertise in water treatment went to Papua New Guinea to help coordinate relief efforts.

### DVD Introduces Mutual Theme for 2011

In January, the Church began distributing the DVD *We Believe: Strength of Youth Media 2011* to Church units around the world to use in support of the 2011 Mutual theme.

The DVD is filled with multimedia designed to help the youth make the theme, Articles of Faith 1:13, a central part of their lives. Segments feature President Thomas S. Monson, the Young Men and Young Women general presidents,

## WORLD BRIEFS

### Church Accepting Entries for Ninth International Art Competition

The Church History Museum will make registration forms for the Church's Ninth International Art Competition available online on April 4, 2011. Entries for the competition must be submitted online or post-marked by October 7, 2011. The theme of the upcoming competition is "Make Known His Wonderful Works" (D&C 65:4). For more information in English or to view selected art from past competitions, visit [lds.org/churchhistory/museum/competition](http://lds.org/churchhistory/museum/competition).

### New Testament Stories Now in Action

In support of the 2011 New Testament curriculum, videos from the *New Testament Stories* book are now animated

using a method called parallax. The 65 videos are available in English as are audio MP3 recordings for each video in the 11 LDS.org languages. The parallax videos will become available in each language during 2011. Find the videos at [scripturestories.lds.org](http://scripturestories.lds.org) and choose **New Testament Stories**.

### Young Men in Bangalore Commit to Duty to God

More than 30 young men from the Bangalore India District gathered in the hills of Kanakapura to learn about the new Duty to God program and learn spiritual lessons from challenging physical activities. The young men used a rope and pulley system to cross a pond. They went for a morning run, climbed a mountain, and learned to rappel. The activity was concluded with a testimony meeting. ■

music, youth testimonies, and more. Much of the content consists of youth testimonies and motivational experiences.

The music, messages, and testimonies can be used to enrich youth classes, meetings, and activities throughout the year.

All of the material is available online for download at [youth.lds.org](http://youth.lds.org).

The DVD also includes translation in the following languages: Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. ■

### UPDATE

The January 2011 *Liahona* states that nonnative missionaries are serving in the Ivory Coast (see Samuel Gould, "In the Presence of Angels," 50). After the issue was printed conditions changed there, and nonnative missionaries were reassigned. The Church closely monitors political situations wherever missionaries serve and removes missionaries when necessary. Missionaries return only when conditions are deemed safe again.



See and hear classic New Testament stories come to life in beautiful color and narration at [scripturestories.lds.org](http://scripturestories.lds.org).

## COMMENT

### He Lifts Our Burdens

I love this magazine and all its content. I love the articles by the General Authorities, especially the conference talks. They instruct us and encourage us to move forward, despite our trials.

I have been a member of the Church for 26 years, and I have read every issue of the *Liahona*. I often read through past issues, and one article I hold especially dear is “The Tender Mercies of the Lord,” by Elder David A. Bednar (May 2005, 99). It helps me remember how often Heavenly Father intervenes with His tender mercies and lifts our heavy burdens.

Iolanda Valenti, Italy

### Teachings Come from the Lord

I am thankful every month to have the words of the living prophets. I know their teachings come from the Lord and will bless my life if I put them into practice. Reading the experiences of the Saints around the world strengthens my faith and testimony because I learn what others do to overcome their burdens.

Byron David Calderon Mosquera, Ecuador

*Please send your feedback or suggestions to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org). Submissions may be edited for length or clarity. ■*

## FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

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

### “To Always Remember Him,”

**page 20:** Consider discussing as a family Elder Christofferson’s counsel “We can begin by stripping everything out of our lives and then putting it back together in priority order with the Savior at the center.” Consider talking about some of the blessings Elder Christofferson mentions that come as we “always remember the Savior.”

**“Scripture Power,” page 52:** After reading this article together, invite family members to share their feelings about reading the scriptures and going to seminary. Invite them to write in their journals their testimonies regarding the power of scriptures. Encourage your children to study and memorize scripture-mastery scriptures.

### “The Mediator Jesus Christ,”

**page 56:** As you read the article together, invite your family to listen for the importance of a mediator. Ask them what would have happened if a mediator hadn’t helped the man in debt. You could also read scriptures about and discuss how the Savior is our mediator. Consider reading 2 Nephi 2:27–28 and Alma 42:24–25.

**“All Dressed Up,” page 70:** Consider inviting family members to dress up in a costume or pretend to be someone else. Give each person an opportunity to share who they are. After reading the story, explain that no matter what roles we play, we are always children of God.

### Happy Times and Eternal Ties

When my children were small, they liked to play games after family home evening. One of their favorites, “Trunky the Elephant,” was named after a song our daughter, Jocelyn, learned in school. After we all sang the song, I would be Trunky and give the children rides on my back. First, my two-year-old son, Jorge; then, my four-year-old daughter, Jocelyn; and finally my wife, Elizabeth, would climb on. With all three on my back, I would take them on a ride around the living room. We had a lot of fun.

Years later, my grown children were both waiting for their mission calls. During one family home evening, they remembered “Trunky the Elephant.” We sang the song together; then, after a hiatus of many years, I again became the elephant. First my son, then my daughter, and finally their mother climbed on my back. I ended up flat on the floor, and we all ended up laughing.

The memory of that moment makes us grateful that the prophets have taught us about family home evening. We learned that no matter how simple our family home evenings may be, the most important thing is that we have happy times with our families, times that strengthen our eternal ties. ■

Victor G. Chauca Rivera



# CROWN OF THORNS, CROWN OF VICTORY

By Larry Hiller

Church Magazines

**A**ugust in the Holy Land. Around us the ruins of Capernaum shimmered in the afternoon heat. It was a fascinating place to be, but our guide and a nearby cicada had both been droning for some time, and my mind began to wander.

Suddenly I was alert as the guide pointed to the tree that shaded us and said offhandedly, “They call that the ‘crown of thorns’ tree.” I looked up at the leafy branches. Where were the thorns? Reaching, I gingerly pulled a small branch closer.

There, among the delicate leaves, I saw the thorns. Slender and green, wickedly sharp and as long as my thumb, they couldn’t be seen from more than a few feet away. But anyone coming into contact with one of those leafy twigs would certainly feel pain.

I thought of the many paintings I had seen of the Savior standing before a mockery of a court, robed in purple and wearing a crown of twisted, dry, thorny vines. Suddenly it occurred to me that a slave or soldier tasked with making that crown might want to work with supple green branches like those of the tree overhead—not with brittle, dry twigs. More tellingly, the purpose of the crown was not just to inflict pain but to taunt and mock.

In the ancient world a green, leafy crown or



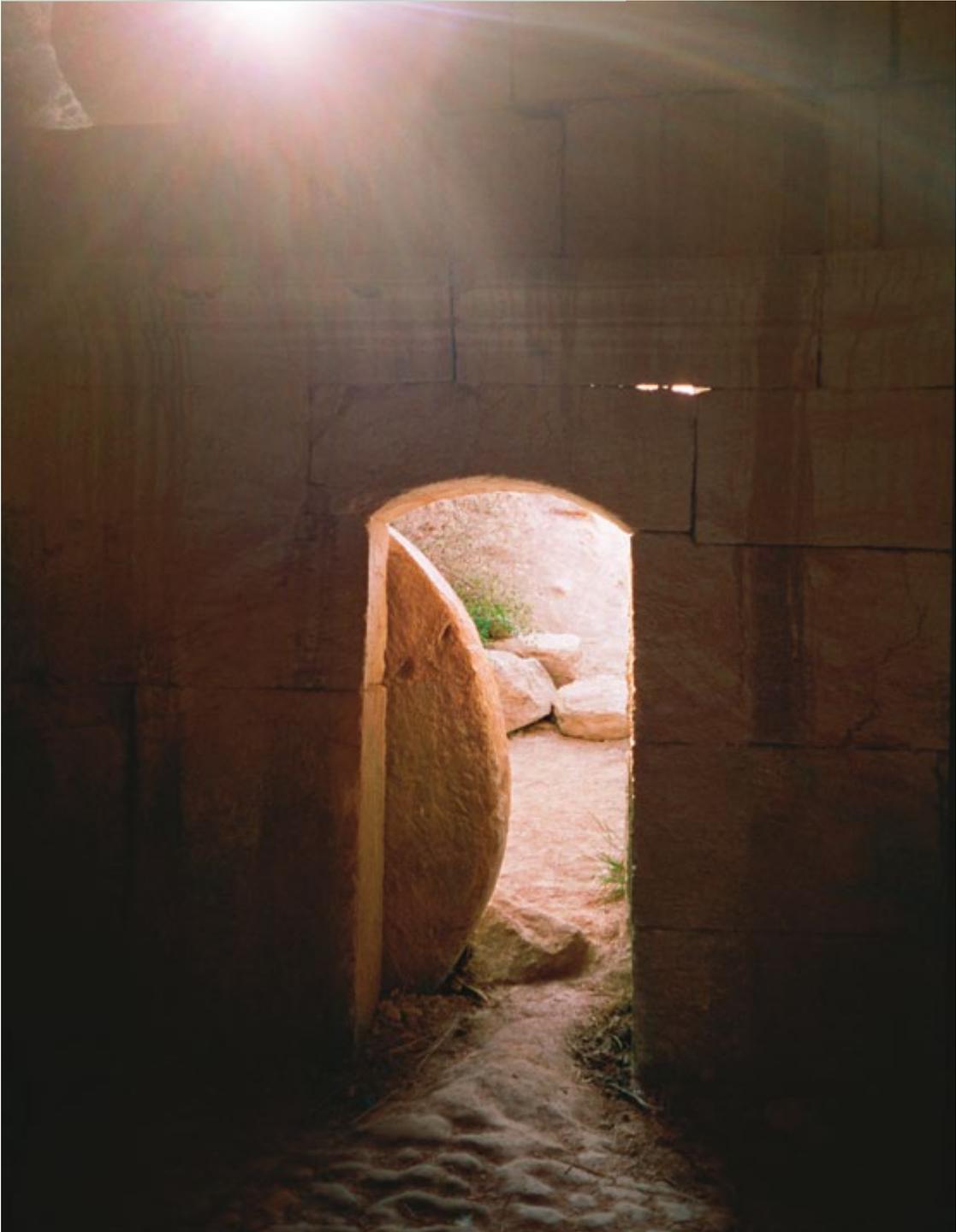
*For me the crown of thorns has become a symbol of the Savior’s awareness of all our hidden pains—and His ability to heal them.*

wreath—usually of fragrant laurel leaves—was often given to the winners of contests and battles. Laurel wreaths adorned the images of kings and emperors. Perhaps the cruel crown pressed down on the Savior’s brow was leafy and green in sardonic reference to that ancient honor. It’s just supposition, not a matter of doctrine. But for me, visualizing it that way brings one aspect of the Atonement more clearly into focus: the Savior is aware of our sorrows, and He is able to heal us.

The robe placed on Him was a mocking symbol of royalty. It covered the welts and gashes of the scourging He had just suffered. In the same way, a leafy crown of thorns would appear to be a victor’s garland but would actually hide the pain it inflicted.

So many of us bear unseen hurts. The hymn teaches that “in the quiet heart is hidden sorrow that the eye can’t see” (“Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” *Hymns*, no. 220). But the Savior *does* see. He is well acquainted with private anguish. His whole ministry was lived in anticipation of the Atonement and Resurrection. Yet those He taught and blessed and healed did not know. Even His own disciples remained unaware.

The Savior sees past the “robes” and “crowns” that mask our sorrows from others. Having suffered “pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind,” He is full of mercy and knows how to succor us when we lay our burdens at His feet (see Alma 7:11–12). His is the balm that can heal even deep and hidden wounds. And the crown He holds out to us is truly the victor’s. ■



*Resurrection Morning*, by Steven Edwards

*During His mortal ministry, Christ told His disciples that “the Son of man must . . . be slain, and be raised the third day” (Luke 9:22).*

*After He was crucified, “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary [came] to see the sepulchre.*

*“And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and*

*came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. . . .*

*“And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.*

*“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said” (Matthew 28:1–2, 5–6).*



Remembering the Savior obviously includes remembering His Atonement, which is symbolically represented by the bread and water as emblems of His suffering and death,” writes Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “We must never forget what He did for us, for without His Atonement and Resurrection, life would have no meaning. With His Atonement and Resurrection, however, our lives have eternal, divine possibilities.” See “To Always Remember Him,” page 20.