

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • APRIL 2018

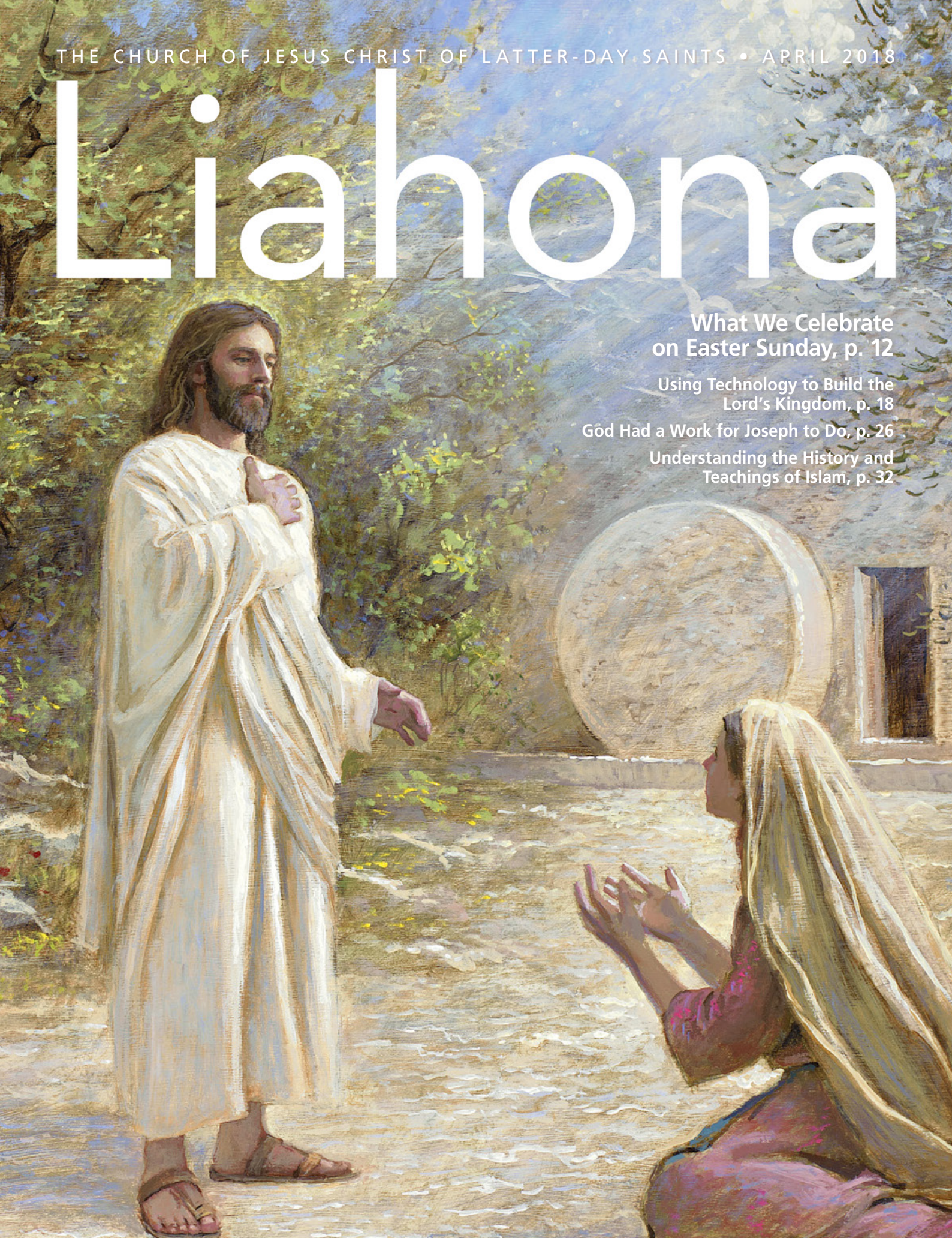
Liahona

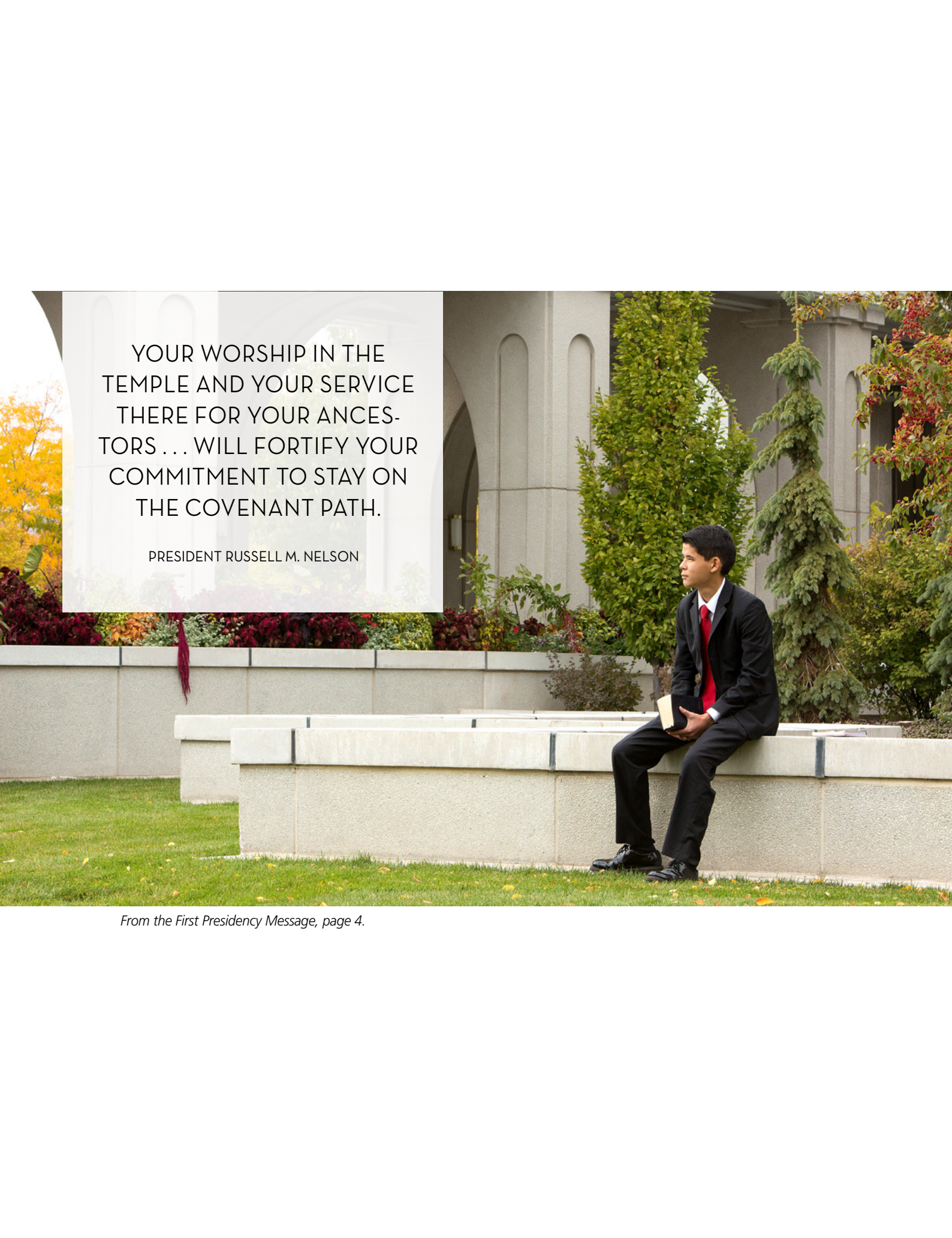
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A young man with dark hair, wearing a black suit, white shirt, and red tie, is sitting on a light-colored stone ledge. He is looking off to the right. Behind him is a large, light-colored stone building with arched windows and doorways. There are green bushes and trees in the background. The scene is outdoors on a grassy area.

YOUR WORSHIP IN THE
TEMPLE AND YOUR SERVICE
THERE FOR YOUR ANCES-
TORS . . . WILL FORTIFY YOUR
COMMITMENT TO STAY ON
THE COVENANT PATH.

PRESIDENT RUSSELL M. NELSON

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As We Go Forward Together**
By President Russell M. Nelson



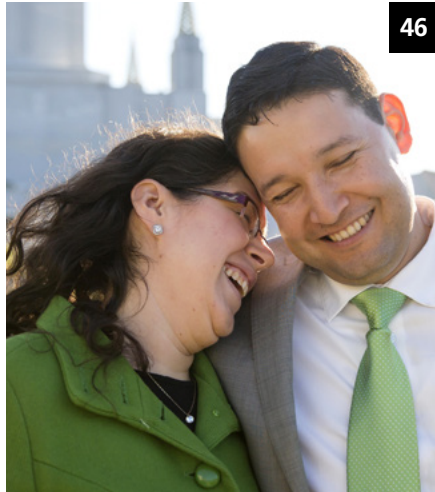
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International magazine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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Distribution Director: Troy R. Barker

Mailing address: Liahona, FL 23, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0023, USA.

The *Liahona* (a Book of Mormon term meaning “compass” or “director”) is published in Albanian, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cambodian, Cebuano, Chinese, Chinese (simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Fijian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kiribati, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Malagasy, Marshallese, Mongolian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Slovenian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Tahitian, Thai, Tongan, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese. (Frequency varies by language.)

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For Readers in the United States and Canada:

April 2018 Vol. 42 No. 4. LIAHONA (USPS 311-480) English (ISSN 1080-9554) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150. USA subscription price is \$10.00 per year; Canada, \$12.00 plus applicable taxes. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. Sixty days' notice required for change of address. Include address label from a recent issue; old and new address must be included. Send USA and Canadian subscriptions to Salt Lake Distribution Center at address below. Subscription help line: 1-800-537-5971. Credit card orders (American Express, Discover, MasterCard, Visa) may be taken by phone or at store.lds.org. (Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431)

POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS (see DMM 507.1.5.2).

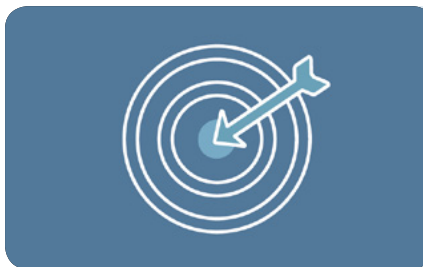
NONPOSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: Send address changes to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.



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By President
Russell M. Nelson



As We Go Forward Together

Editors' note: President Russell M. Nelson, set apart as the 17th President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on January 14, 2018, delivered these remarks on January 16, 2018, during a live broadcast from the annex of the Salt Lake Temple. He requested that his words be published in this issue.

Dear brothers and sisters, I'm humbled to be with you this morning. Four days ago we laid to rest a giant of a man, a prophet of God—President Thomas S. Monson. No words can do justice to the magnitude and magnificence of his life. I will forever cherish our friendship with gratitude for what he taught me. Now we must look forward to the future with complete faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, whose Church this is.

Two days ago all of the living Apostles met in the upper room of the Salt Lake Temple. There they made a unanimous decision, first, to reorganize the First Presidency now and, second, that I serve as President of the Church. Words are inadequate to tell you what it felt like to have my Brethren—Brethren who hold all the priesthood keys restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith in this dispensation—place their hands upon my head to ordain and set me apart as President of the Church. It was a sacred and humbling experience.

It then became my responsibility to discern whom the Lord had prepared to be my counselors. How could

I choose only two of the twelve other Apostles, each of whom I love so dearly? I'm deeply grateful to the Lord for answering my fervent prayers. I am very thankful that President Dallin Harris Oaks and President Henry Bennion Eyring are willing to serve with me as First and Second Counselors, respectively. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf has resumed his place in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He has already received major assignments for which he is uniquely qualified.

I pay tribute to him and to President Eyring for their magnificent service as counselors to President Monson. They've been totally capable, devoted, and inspired. We

Monthly First Presidency Message to Be Discontinued

This message will be the last First Presidency Message published in the *Liahona* on a monthly basis. In the future, the First Presidency will share important messages as needed through the Church's various channels, including Church magazines and LDS.org.



Each day of an Apostle's service is a day of learning and preparing for more responsibility in the future.

are very grateful for them. Each is willing to serve now where he is needed most.

As the Apostle second in seniority, President Oaks also becomes President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. However, given his call to the First Presidency and consistent with the order of the Church, President M. Russell Ballard, next in seniority, will serve as the Acting President of that quorum. The First Presidency will work hand in hand with the Twelve to discern the will of

the Lord and move His sacred work forward.

We are thankful for your prayers. They have been offered throughout the world for us. On the morning following President Monson's passing, one such prayer was offered by a four-year-old boy named Benson. I quote excerpts from his mother's letter written to my wife, Wendy. Benson prayed, "Heavenly Father, thank you that President Thomas S. Monson could see his wife again. Thank you for our new prophet.

Help him to be brave and not scared that he's new. Help him to grow up to be healthy and strong. Help him to have power because he has the priesthood. And help us always to be nice."

I thank God for children like this and for parents who are serious about their commitment to righteous, intentional parenting—for every parent, teacher, and member who carries heavy burdens and yet serves so willingly. In other words, for each one of you, I am most humbly grateful.



Keep on the covenant path. Your commitment to follow the Savior by making covenants with Him and then keeping those covenants will open the door to every spiritual blessing and privilege available.

The Lord Is at the Helm

As we go forward together, I invite you to think about the majestic manner by which the Lord governs His Church. When a President of the Church passes away, there is no mystery about who is next called to serve in that capacity. There is no electioneering, no campaigning, but only the quiet workings of a divine plan of succession put in place by the Lord Himself.

Each day of an Apostle's service is a day of learning and preparing for more responsibility in the future. It takes decades of service for an Apostle to move from the junior chair to the senior chair in the circle. During that time, he gains firsthand experience in each facet of the work of the Church. He also becomes well acquainted with the

peoples of the earth, including their histories, cultures, and languages as assignments take him repeatedly across the globe. This process of succession in the leadership of the Church is unique. I know of nothing else like it. That should not surprise us, because this is the Lord's Church. He does not work after the manner of men.

I've served in the Quorum of the Twelve under five previous Presidents of the Church. I have watched each President receive revelation and respond to that revelation. The Lord always has and always will instruct and inspire His prophets. The Lord is at the helm. We who have been ordained to bear witness of His holy name throughout the world will continue to seek to know His will and follow it.



Stay on the Covenant Path

Now, to each member of the Church I say, keep on the covenant path. Your commitment to follow the Savior by making covenants with Him and then keeping those covenants will open the door to every spiritual blessing and privilege available to men, women, and children everywhere.

As a new Presidency, we want to begin with the end in mind. For this reason, we're speaking to you today from a temple. The end for which each of us strives is to be endowed with power in a house of the Lord, sealed as families, faithful to covenants made in a temple that qualify us for the greatest gift of God—that of eternal life. The ordinances of the temple and the covenants you make there are key to

strengthening your life, your marriage and family, and your ability to resist the attacks of the adversary. Your worship in the temple and your service there for your ancestors will bless you with increased personal revelation and peace and will fortify your commitment to stay on the covenant path.

Now, if you have stepped off the path, may I invite you with all the hope in my heart to please come back. Whatever your concerns, whatever your challenges, there is a place for you in this, the Lord's Church. You and generations yet unborn will be blessed by your actions now to return to the covenant path. Our Father in Heaven cherishes His children, and He wants each of us to return home to Him. This is a grand goal of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—to help each of us to come back home.

I express my deep love for you—love that has grown over decades of meeting you, worshipping with you, and serving you. Our divine mandate is to go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, helping to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. This we will do with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that He is in charge. This is His work and His Church. We are His servants.

I declare my devotion to God our Eternal Father and to His Son, Jesus Christ. I know Them, love Them, and pledge to serve Them—and you—with every remaining breath of my life. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

BASKETS AND BOTTLES

By Chieko N. Okazaki



ABOUT SISTER OKAZAKI

Chieko Nishimura Okazaki (1926–2011)

grew up in Hawaii, USA, in a Buddhist family of Japanese ancestry. She joined the Church

when she was 15.

By then, Sister Okazaki had come to acknowledge the complexity of her ethnic and cultural status. Worried about how others would perceive them after the Japanese military bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Sister Okazaki and her mother gathered and burned every Japanese memento they owned. But then she looked in the mirror and thought, “I have never set foot in Japan. I am not Japanese in my heart. But I cannot run away from myself. My eyes, my skin, and my hair are Japanese.”¹

Sister Okazaki confronted racism throughout her life. She began teaching soon after World War II when anti-Japanese sentiment still ran high in the United States. Three mothers refused to allow their children to be in her class. But Sister Okazaki soon won them over.²

Sister Okazaki was the first woman to serve on all three of the women’s auxiliary boards: first Young Women, then Primary, then Relief Society.³

This message is an excerpt of her April 1996 general conference talk on unity and diversity (punctuation and capitalization standardized).

This new series highlights the lives of devoted women and their messages, excerpted from the book *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women* (2017). Selected chapters are available at churchhistorianspress.org/at-the-pulpit.

God has given us many gifts, much diversity, and many differences, but the essential thing is what we know about each other—that we are all His children.

Our challenge as members of the Church is for all of us to learn from each other, that we may all love each other and grow together.

The doctrines of the gospel are indispensable. They are essential, but the packaging is optional. Let me share a simple example to show the difference between the doctrines of the Church and the cultural packaging. Here is a bottle of Utah peaches, prepared by a Utah homemaker to feed her family during a snowy season. Hawaiian homemakers don’t bottle fruit. They pick enough fruit for a few days and store it in baskets like this for their families. This basket contains a mango, bananas, a pineapple, and a papaya . . . picked by a Polynesian homemaker to feed her family in a climate where fruit ripens all year round.

The basket and the bottle are different containers, but the content

is the same: fruit for a family. Is the bottle right and the basket wrong? No, they are both right. They are containers appropriate to the culture and the needs of the people. And they are both appropriate for the content they carry, which is the fruit.

Now, what is the fruit? Paul tells us: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, [and] temperance” [Galatians 5:22–23]. In the sisterhood of Relief Society, in the brotherhood of priesthood quorums, in the reverent coming together to partake of the sacrament, the fruit of the Spirit unites us in love, joy, and peace whether the Relief Society is in Taipei or Tonga, whether the priesthood quorum is in Montana or Mexico, and whether the sacrament meeting is in Fiji or the Philippines.

. . . When I was called to the Relief Society General Presidency, President [Gordon B.] Hinckley counseled me: “You bring a peculiar quality to this presidency. You will be recognized as one who represents those beyond

the borders of the United States and Canada. . . . They will see in you a representation of their oneness with the Church.” He gave me a blessing that my tongue might be loosed as I spoke to the people.⁴

. . . [When I spoke in other lands,] I could feel the Spirit carrying my words to their hearts, and I could feel “the fruit of the Spirit” bringing back to me

their love, their joy, and their faith. I could feel the Spirit making us one.

Brothers and sisters, whether your fruits are peaches or papaya, and whether you bring them in bottles or in baskets, we thank you for offering them in love. Father in Heaven, may we be one and may we be thine,⁵ I pray in the sacred name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Chieko N. Okazaki, *Lighten Up!* (1993), 7.
2. See Okazaki, *Lighten Up!*, 48–50; Gregory A. Prince, “‘There Is Always a Struggle’: An Interview with Chieko N. Okazaki,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 114–115.
3. “Obituary: Okazaki, Chieko,” *Deseret News*, Aug. 7, 2011.
4. See Prince, “‘There Is Always a Struggle,’” 121. Gordon B. Hinckley was First Counselor in the First Presidency when Sister Okazaki was called in 1990.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 38:27.





THAT BRIGHT SUNDAY MORNING

By Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

On that day, the resurrected Lord burst the bonds of death. He ascended from the grave and appeared gloriously triumphant as the Savior of all mankind.

We know what the Resurrection is—the reuniting of the spirit and body in its perfect form. . . .

Can you imagine that? Life at our prime? Never sick, never in pain, never burdened by the ills that so often beset us in mortality?

The Resurrection is at the core of our beliefs as Christians. . . .

. . . When the Savior rose from the tomb, . . . He did something no one else could do. He broke the bonds of death, not only for Himself but for all who have ever lived—the just and the unjust. . . .

. . . He made that gift available to all. And with that sublime act, He softened the devastating, consuming sorrow that gnaws at the souls of those who have lost precious loved ones.

I think of how dark that Friday was when Christ was lifted up on the cross. . . .

. . . The earth shook and grew dark. . . .

Those evil men who sought His life rejoiced. . . .

On that day the veil of the temple was rent in twain.

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were both overcome with grief. . . . The superb man they had loved and honored hung lifeless upon the cross. . . .

. . . The Apostles were devastated. Jesus, their Savior—the man who had walked on water and raised the dead—was Himself at the mercy of wicked men. . . .

It was a Friday filled with devastating, consuming sorrow. . . .

I think that of all the days since the beginning of this world's history, that Friday was the darkest.

[But] the despair did not linger because on Sunday, the resurrected Lord burst the bonds of death. He ascended from the grave and appeared gloriously triumphant as the Savior of all mankind.

And in an instant the eyes that had been filled with ever-flowing tears dried. The lips that had whispered prayers of distress and grief now filled the air with wondrous praise, for Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God, stood before them as . . . proof that death is merely the beginning of a new and wondrous existence.

Each of us will have our own Fridays—those days when the universe itself seems shattered and the



shards of our world lie littered about us in pieces. . . .

But I testify to you in the name of the One who conquered death—Sunday will come. In the darkness of our sorrow, Sunday will come.

. . . No matter our grief, Sunday will come. In this life or the next, Sunday will come.

I testify to you that the Resurrection is not a fable. We have the personal

testimonies of those who saw Him. Thousands in the Old and New Worlds witnessed the risen Savior. They felt the wounds in His hands, feet, and side. . . .

After the Resurrection, the disciples became renewed. They traveled throughout the world . . . boldly proclaiming Jesus the Christ, the resurrected Son of the living God.

Many of them . . . died as martyrs,

the testimony of the risen Christ on their lips as they perished.

The Resurrection transformed the lives of those who witnessed it. Should it not transform ours?

We will all rise from the grave. . . .

Because of the life and eternal sacrifice of the Savior of the world, we will be reunited with those we have cherished.

. . . On that day we will rejoice that the Messiah overcame all that we could live forever.

Because of the sacred ordinances we receive in holy temples, our departure from this brief mortality cannot long separate relationships that have been fastened together with cords made of eternal ties.

It is my solemn testimony that death is not the end of existence. . . .

May we understand and live in thanksgiving for the priceless gifts that come to us as sons and daughters of a loving Heavenly Father and for the promise of that bright day when we shall all rise triumphant from the grave.

. . . No matter how dark our Friday, Sunday will come. ■

From an October 2006 general conference address.

The Savior's Final, Lonely Journey

By Chakell Wardleigh
Church Magazines

Throughout His mortal life, the Savior underwent many journeys—His journey out of Bethlehem and into Egypt as an infant, His 40-day journey in the wilderness, His many journeys into cities, villages, and homes to teach, heal, and bless during His ministry, and many others. But there is one journey that the Savior had to face alone, and it was a journey only He could endure.



Simon Dewey

“On Easter Sunday we celebrate the most long-awaited and glorious event in the history of the world.

“It is the day that changed everything.

“On that day, my life changed.

“Your life changed.

“The destiny of all God’s children changed.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Gift of Grace,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 107.



Suffering beyond Compare

“**N**o 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.”

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Purifying Power of Gethsemane,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 9.

Personal Application: Though we may not always realize it, the Savior suffered all forms of pain during the Atonement. He understands every physical pain, from a broken bone to the most severe chronic illness. He felt the darkness and despair of mental ailments such as depression, anxiety, addiction, loneliness, and grief. And He felt every spiritual wound because He took upon Himself all the sins of mankind.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “In a moment of weakness we may cry out, ‘No one knows what it is like. No one understands.’ But the Son of God perfectly knows and understands, for He has felt and borne our individual burdens” (“Bear Up Their Burdens with Ease,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 90).



He Was the Only One Capable

What He did could only be done by Deity. As the Only Begotten Son of the Father in the flesh, Jesus inherited divine attributes. He was the only person ever born into mortality who could perform this most significant and supernal act. As the only sinless Man who ever lived on this earth, He was not subject to spiritual death. Because of His godhood, He also possessed power over physical death. Thus He did for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He broke the cold grasp of death. He also made it possible for us to have the supreme and serene comfort of the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Atonement: Our Greatest Hope,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 19; *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 20.

Personal Application: Through His Atonement, the Savior loosed the bands of death and redeemed all of us from our sins so that every single person could have eternal life. He was the only one capable of accomplishing such a daunting and impossible task. When we are faced with serious challenges, we can take comfort in knowing that the Savior can truly make the impossible possible.

He Did Not Turn Back

“On a hill called Calvary, while helpless followers looked on, His wounded body was nailed to a cross. Mercilessly He was mocked and cursed and derided. . . .

“The agonizing hours passed as His life ebbed. From His parched lips came the words, ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.’ . . .

“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. His lifeless body was hurriedly but gently placed in a borrowed tomb.”

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018), “He Is Risen!” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 89.

Personal Application: He suffered from agonizing pain, loneliness, and despair, but still the Savior endured and finished His mortal journey with grace—even asking His Father to forgive those who crucified Him. Because of His perfect example, we can face our own trials and hardships with grace, and with His help we can endure to the end as well.





The Many Witnesses of His Resurrection

“I believe the many witnesses of the Savior’s Resurrection whose experiences and testimonies are found in the New Testament—Peter and his companions of the Twelve and dear, pure Mary of Magdala, among others. I believe the testimonies found in the Book of Mormon—of Nephi the Apostle with the unnamed multitude in the land Bountiful, among others. And I believe the testimony of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon who, after many other testimonies, proclaimed the great witness of this last dispensation ‘that he lives! For we saw him.’ Under the glance of His all-seeing eye, I stand myself as a witness that Jesus of Nazareth is the resurrected Redeemer, and I testify of all that follows from the *fact* of His Resurrection. May you receive the conviction and comfort of that same witness.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Resurrection of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 114.

Personal Application: Though we were not among those who saw the resurrected and perfected body of the Redeemer, we can still stand as witnesses of Him today. He can always be the focus of our lives, no matter the time or place we find ourselves in. Each time we offer our hearts and hands to serve others; show gentleness, kindness, and respect to all; defend the truth; and share our testimonies of the gospel, we stand as true witnesses of Jesus Christ.

We Do Not Have to Walk Alone

“**O**ne of the great consolations of this Easter season is that because Jesus walked such a long, lonely path utterly alone, *we* do not have to do so. His solitary journey brought great company for our little version of that path—the merciful care of our Father in Heaven, the unfailing companionship of this Beloved Son, the consummate gift of the Holy Ghost, angels in heaven, family members on both sides of the veil, prophets and apostles, teachers, leaders, friends. All of these and more have been given as companions for our mortal journey because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the Restoration of His gospel. Trumpeted from the summit of Calvary is the truth that we will never be left alone nor unaided, even if sometimes we may feel that we are. . . .

“ . . . May we stand by Jesus Christ ‘at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in, even until death,’ for surely that is how He stood by us when it *was* unto death and when He had to stand entirely and utterly alone.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “None Were with Him,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 88.

Personal Application: This Easter, remember the Savior’s final, lonely journey. He sacrificed everything He had so that you and every person on the earth can become clean and have eternal life. Learn from His perfect example. Keep Him in your thoughts and in your heart. And always remember that you are never alone. Because He endured His final journey in complete and utter solitude, He will not abandon you. His love for you is infinite and unchanging, and He stands ready to offer you peace, comfort, and hope as you continue on your own journey. His gift of the Atonement is everlasting, and it was given to you. ■



See how Passover helps us understand Easter at [lds.org/go/41817](https://www.lds.org/go/41817).





By Elder Gary E. Stevenson

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

LET US Share OUR KNOWLEDGE OF A SAVIOR

*Ours is the
message of peace,
and you are
the messengers
who preach it.
You can do this
through new and
exciting channels
of technology.*

We are the Church of Jesus Christ, established in the latter days. In the same way that the Lord instructed His ancient disciples, we have been charged in the latter days to “go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

The ancient prophet Nephi succinctly summarized this mission and message and the object behind it: “And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26).

In the book of Mosiah, we read how ancient Book of Mormon prophet King Benjamin gathered his people throughout the land at the site of the temple, caused a tower to be erected, and taught them. As he taught them, he also prophesied to



1830



5,000

1850

Copies of the Book of Mormon printed

1870

1890

Music and the Spoken Word:

began in 1929—now approaching 5,000th broadcast.

1950

1974



2010

2030

Today: 175 MILLION Copies of the Book of Mormon printed

them of our day: “And moreover, I say unto you, that the time shall come when the knowledge of a Savior shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” (Mosiah 3:20).

“The Knowledge of a Savior”

One of the most precious gifts to treasure within our families and to give to others is “the knowledge of a Savior,” or of Jesus Christ.

With the opening of the dispensation of the fulness of times came an enlightenment upon all mankind and a waterfall of technological advancements. It brought with it the industrial age and communication tools, allowing the prophecy of King Benjamin to be fulfilled.

As a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, called as a special witness “of the name of Christ in all the world” (D&C 107:23) with specific assignments in both the Public Affairs and Communication Services Committee, I am able to focus on the fulfillment of this prophecy—that “the knowledge of a

Savior” is spread throughout the world—using the latest technologies available to us.

“Satellites are only the genesis of what is in store for the future of worldwide broadcasting. . . . I believe that the Lord is anxious to put into our hands inventions of which we laymen have hardly had a glimpse.”

—President Spencer W. Kimball

“Throughout Every Nation, Kindred, Tongue, and People”

Historically, advancements in print and the invention of radio and TV enabled the message of the Restoration to go throughout the world. We find numerous examples of this, some of which are within our memory.

Within 10 years of the First Vision, and the month before the Church was organized, 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon were published. Since then, over 175 million copies have been printed.

Any Sunday morning, you can listen to or watch the broadcast of *Music and the Spoken Word*, which is approaching its 5,000th broadcast. The first broadcast occurred on live radio in 1929. The first broadcast of general conference on TV took place in 1949.

Interestingly, in 1966, President David O. McKay (1873–1970) began speaking of things to come: “Discoveries latent with such potent power, either for the blessing or the destruction of human beings, as to make man’s responsibility in controlling them the most gigantic ever placed in human hands. . . . This age is fraught with limitless perils, as well as untold possibilities.”¹

In 1974, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) described his vision of a day to come: “The Lord has blessed the world with many . . . satellites. They are stationed high in the heavens, relaying broadcast signals back to almost every corner of the earth’s surface. . . . Certainly these satellites are only the genesis of what is in store for the future of worldwide broadcasting. . . . I believe that the Lord is anxious to put into our hands inventions of which we laymen have hardly had a glimpse.”²

With technological advances in communication and media now coming largely on the

heels of the internet, it seems that we have witnessed in our lifetimes the literal fulfillment of the prophecies of King Benjamin, President McKay, and President Kimball.

There is also a clear pattern of the adoption of these technologies to build the Lord's kingdom on earth. I would like to share examples of this with you.

LDS.org and Mormon.org

In 1996, the Church officially began use of the web as a messaging and communication vehicle. Since then, an estimated 260 Church-sponsored websites have been introduced, including sites available in nearly every country where members of the Church live, in their local language.

I share two familiar examples of these websites. First is LDS.org, established in 1996, which today receives over 24 million new visitors a year and over 1 million average visitors each week. Many members find curriculum for teaching and past general conference talks here. Second is Mormon.org, a website designed to introduce the gospel to our neighbors and friends who are not members of the Church. This site receives over 16 million unique visitors a year.

Mobile Apps

Of course, technologies evolve at a breakneck pace, requiring considerable effort and resources to keep up. With the invention of smartphones came the power to harness and access massive amounts of data in a handheld modality. Much of this data is organized in the form of mobile applications, or "apps." The first Church-sponsored app was released in 2007.

Examples abound of our beneficial use of mobile apps to spread our "knowledge of a Savior." I won't describe the content of the many apps that are available at your fingertips, but here are some examples of apps that are likely familiar to you:



- Gospel Library
- Mormon Channel
- LDS Tools
- LDS Music
- Family Tree

These are being used millions of times a week by millions of users.

Social Media

By definition, social media are computer-mediated technologies that allow individuals and organizations to view, create, and share information, ideas, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.

Beginning in about 2010, the Church began an earnest adoption of the use of social media to accomplish spreading "the knowledge of a Savior." This is a fast-moving and dynamic digital modality. It's almost incomparable in speed of change.

One observable characteristic of social media is that as soon as one feels acquainted or comfortable with one platform, a newer, bigger, or perceivably cooler or better one emerges.

I will briefly describe five social media platforms that the Church is using as communication channels:

1. Facebook has more than 2 billion users worldwide. Here, users build their own social network of online friends.
2. Instagram is a social site that centers on pictures and videos.

With the invention of smartphones came the power to harness and access massive amounts of data in a handheld modality.



In August 2016, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf posted a video on Instagram, teaching gospel principles to his grandson Erik in—can you guess—the cockpit of an airplane!

3. Pinterest is like a virtual bulletin board. Here visual images called “pins” are tacked onto the board. These can be inspirational phrases or aspirational photo images.

4. Twitter is a social network that enables users to send and read short 280-character messages called “tweets.”

5. Snapchat features photos and short videos that disappear either immediately or within 24 hours.

Institutionally, we are using these social media sites in a powerful way.

FACEBOOK

You may recall the tender conference message on depression that Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave a few years ago.³ From his talk, a video segment was produced that received over two million views on Facebook alone, with many thousands of likes, shares, and positive comments.⁴

INSTAGRAM

In August 2016, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf posted a video on Instagram, teaching gospel principles to his grandson Erik in—can you guess—the cockpit of an airplane!⁵ President Uchtdorf’s Instagram post was enjoyed by thousands, and numerous

positive comments accompanied it.

The Church also published to its Instagram account in November 2017 a video of Elder Dallin H. Oaks and Elder M. Russell Ballard answering a young adult woman’s question about sisters serving missions. This post was viewed over 112,000 times.

PINTEREST

On Pinterest, one can find hundreds of pins from LDS.org and even more from individual members, inspiring others.

For example, many share words of the prophets—past and present. A pin of one of President Thomas S. Monson’s teachings reads, “So much in life depends on our attitude.”⁶

TWITTER

A tweet that Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared last year on Easter morning was viewed 210,000 times. Elder Bednar demonstrated that a short, simple message, “He is not here: for He is risen” (Matthew 28:6), can have a profound and lasting impact.

SNAPCHAT

Finally, pictures and words sharing one of President Monson’s First Presidency Messages recently appeared on Snapchat.

Associated Risks

Now, having just espoused all the virtues of these new technologies and demonstrated their appropriate use, I think it is also useful to discuss some of the risks associated with them.

We should all be aware of the *time that can be consumed* on social media or in the use of mobile apps. The use of social media also carries a risk of *reducing face-to-face interaction*, which may be stifling the

development of the social skills of many of our young people.

The hazards associated with *inappropriate content* cannot be understated. There is an increasing epidemic of pornography addiction in society, which is negatively affecting and victimizing even Church members and families.

Finally, I offer two additional merging risks, whose nets are cast over virtually everyone, including young women and millennial mothers and wives. I label these two risks as “*idealized reality*” and “*debilitating comparisons*.” I think the best way to describe these two risks is to offer some examples.

Generally speaking, pictures that get posted on social media tend to portray life in the very best and often in even an unrealistic way. They are often filled with beautiful images of home decor, wonderful vacation spots, and elaborate food preparation. The danger, of course, is that many people become discouraged that they seemingly don’t measure up to this idealized virtual reality.

Inspired by a pin of a “pancake” birthday cake, my niece recently posted her attempt at the same. Rather than allowing this to create undue pressure, she decided to inspire others by posting her “Pinterest fail” (see pancake photo).

Hopefully, we can learn to find more humor and less discouragement when confronted with images that may portray idealized reality and that too often could lead to debilitating comparisons.

This apparently is not just a sign of our times but, measuring the words from Paul, was in times past as well: “But they measuring themselves . . . and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Elder J. Devn Cornish of the Seventy recently provided timely counsel as well: “We torture ourselves needlessly by

competing and comparing. We falsely judge our self-worth by the *things* we do or don’t have and by the *opinions of others*. If we must compare, let us compare how we were in the past to how we are today—and even to how we want to be in the future.”⁷

Let me share one of our family secrets, found in this family photo (see next page) taken some years ago, before the advent of social media. Were this taken today, it likely would be posted, presenting a family of four lovely, color-coordinated, well-behaved boys enjoying a harmonious family photo opportunity together. Would you like the real story?

I still remember the phone call from my wife. “Gary, where are you? We’re here at the photographer’s outdoor studio. We’re all ready to shoot. It hasn’t been easy getting the boys all dressed, coordinated, and ready. Are you nearly here?”

Well, I had forgotten and hadn’t left the office yet! I was half an hour late, and things

Many people become discouraged that they seemingly don’t measure up to idealized virtual reality.



Idealized reality



Debilitating comparisons



As for our third son, we had to wait for 20 minutes so his eyes were no longer red from crying. And, of course, the bloodstains are now on the back of our youngest son's shirt.

Now, our second son has his hands placed strategically over the top of his white athletic socks so that everything matches.

As for me, I am now in the "doghouse" because it was *my* late arrival that was the trigger for all of this.

So, when you see this beautiful picture of our family and lament, "Why can't we get things together and be a picture-perfect family like theirs?" you all know better!

Social Media and Missionary Work

As you can see, we need to be mindful of the hazards and risks, including idealized reality and debilitating comparisons. The world usually is just not as bright as it appears on social media. Nevertheless, there is much good that has and will come through these communication platforms.

The Missionary Department provided some new instruction in 2017 on practical ways social media can be used in missionary work. The many digital resources available to us can be used in powerful, easy, simple, and extremely effective ways.

There are so many applications for the use of technology in appropriate and inspired ways. We should do all we can to teach the righteous use of technology to the rising generation and to warn of and prevent the unrighteous use and associated hazards as well. This should help assure us that

had not gone so well in my absence, bordering on chaos.

What had happened? Well, my oldest son had been running through the yard and had found an apple tree, picked some apples, and begun throwing them at the other boys. He hit our third son in the back with an apple and made him fall down, and so he started to cry.

Meanwhile, as that was happening, my second son sat down and his pants went up a little bit. The other kids saw that his socks were white athletic socks, not the church socks his mother had laid out for him to wear. She asked him, "Why didn't you wear your church socks?"

He said, "Well, I don't like them. They're scratchy."

And while she's talking to him, our two-year-old son was running through the yard, tripped on something, fell down, and bloodied his nose. Now there is blood dripping onto his white turtleneck shirt, and it's stained. This is when I showed up. The only way to salvage the picture was to reverse the turtleneck and put it on backward, hiding the blood stains from the camera.

As it turns out, while our oldest son was running around and throwing apples, he fell down and got a large grass stain on his knee. So, in the picture, his arm is strategically placed, covering up the grass stains.

the benefits of technology will outweigh the associated risks.

“How Lovely Are the Messengers”

During the time I was pondering and praying deeply about this message, I woke up early one morning with a song and its simple lyrics on my mind: “How lovely are the messengers that preach us the gospel of peace.”⁸

Ours is the message of peace, and *you* are the lovely messengers who preach it. You can do this through these new and exciting channels of technology. We live in a unique world in the fulness of times with the ability to preach the gospel of peace literally at our fingertips.

We have the prophetic words of ancient prophets, which perfectly characterize our time and give direction for our day: “And moreover, I say unto you, that the time shall come when the knowledge of a Savior shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” (Mosiah 3:20).

We also have words that come to us through modern-day revelation, speaking to and giving guidance for our time and circumstances. I quote Elder Bednar: “I believe the time has come for us as disciples of Christ to use these inspired tools appropriately and more effectively to testify of God the Eternal Father, His plan of happiness for His children, and His Son, Jesus Christ, as the

Savior of the world; to proclaim the reality of the Restoration of the gospel in the latter days; and to accomplish the Lord’s work.”⁹

I invite each of you to fully consider your role to preach the gospel of peace as lovely messengers. Let each of us do our part to share our “knowledge of a Savior” with every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. The best way to do this is one step at a time and in a unique way that works best for you and your family. May each of you have the courage to blog, pin, like, share, post, friend, tweet, snap, and swipe up in a way that will glorify, honor, and respect the will of our loving Heavenly Father and bring a knowledge of the Savior to your family, loved ones, and friends—including your friends on social media. ■

From a Brigham Young University Women’s Conference address, “The Knowledge of a Savior,” delivered on May 5, 2017. For the full text in English, go to lds.org/prophets-and-apostles.

NOTES

1. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 4.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, “When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 11, 10.
3. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Like a Broken Vessel,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 40–42.
4. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Mormon Message: Like a Broken Vessel,” June 20, 2016, mormonnewsroom.org.
5. See “President Uchtdorf Relates Flying to Gospel in Post and Video with Grandson,” Sept. 30, 2016, LDS.org.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “Living the Abundant Life,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Jan. 2012, 4.
7. J. Devn Cornish, “Am I Good Enough? Will I Make It?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 33.
8. “How Lovely Are the Messengers,” hymnary.org.
9. David A. Bednar, “Flood the Earth through Social Media,” *Liahona*, Aug. 2015, 50; *New Era*, Aug. 2015, 32; see also David A. Bednar, “Sweep the Earth as with a Flood” (video), LDS.org.

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CHAPTER 3

Plates of Gold

This is chapter 3 of the new four-volume narrative history of the Church titled Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days. The book will be available in 14 languages in print, in the Church History section of the Gospel Library app, and online at saints.lds.org. The next several chapters will be published in upcoming issues until volume 1 is released later this year. Those chapters will be available in 47 languages in the Gospel Library app and at saints.lds.org. Chapter 2 describes Joseph's First Vision—seeing the Father and the Son in the spring of 1820.

Three years passed, and three harvests. Joseph spent most days clearing land, turning soil, and working as a hired hand to raise money for the yearly cash payment on the family's property. The work made it impossible for him to attend school very often, and he spent most of his free time with family or other laborers.

Joseph and his friends were young and lighthearted. Sometimes they made foolish mistakes, and Joseph found that being forgiven once did not mean he would never need to repent again. Nor did his glorious vision answer every question or forever end his confusion.¹ So he tried to stay close to God. He read his Bible, trusted in Jesus Christ's power to save him, and obeyed the Lord's command not to join any church.

Like many people in the area, including his father, Joseph believed that God could reveal knowledge through objects like rods and stones, as He had done with Moses, Aaron, and others in the Bible.² One day, while Joseph was helping a neighbor dig a well, he came across a small stone buried deep in the earth. Aware that people sometimes used special stones to search for lost objects or hidden treasure, Joseph wondered if he had found such a stone.

Looking into it, he saw things invisible to the natural eye.³

Joseph's gift for using the stone impressed family members, who saw it as a sign of divine favor.⁴ But even though he had the gift of a seer, Joseph was still unsure if God was pleased with him. He could no longer feel the forgiveness and peace he had felt after his vision of the Father and Son. Instead, he often felt condemned for his weakness and imperfections.⁵

On September 21, 1823, 17-year-old Joseph lay awake in the loft bedroom he shared with his brothers. He had stayed up late that evening, listening to his family talk about different churches and the doctrines they taught. Now everyone was asleep, and the house was quiet.⁶

In the darkness of his room, Joseph began to pray, pleading fervently that God would forgive his sins. He longed to commune with a heavenly messenger who could assure him of his standing before the Lord and give him the knowledge of the gospel he had been promised in the grove. Joseph knew God had answered his prayers before, and he had full confidence that He would answer again.

As Joseph prayed, a light appeared beside his bed and grew brighter until it filled the entire loft. Joseph looked up and saw an angel standing in the air. The angel wore a seamless white robe that came down to his wrists and ankles. Light radiated from him, and his face shone like lightning.

At first Joseph was afraid, but peace soon filled him. The angel called him by name and introduced himself as Moroni.

He said God had forgiven Joseph of his sins and now had work for him to do. He declared that Joseph's name would be spoken of for good and evil among all people.⁷

Moroni spoke of gold plates buried in a nearby hill. On the plates was etched the record of an ancient people who once lived in the Americas. The record told of their origins and gave an account of Jesus Christ visiting them and teaching the fullness of His gospel.⁸ Buried with the plates, Moroni said, were two seer stones, which Joseph later called the Urim and Thummim, or interpreters. The Lord had prepared these stones to help Joseph translate the record. The clear stones were fastened together and attached to a breastplate.⁹

For the rest of the visit, Moroni quoted prophecies from the biblical books of Isaiah, Joel, Malachi, and Acts. The Lord was coming soon, he explained, and the human family would not fulfill the purpose of their creation unless God's ancient covenant was renewed first.¹⁰ Moroni said that God had chosen Joseph to renew the covenant and that if he chose to be faithful to God's commands, he would be the one to reveal the record on the plates.¹¹

Before departing, the angel commanded Joseph to take care of the plates and show them to no one unless otherwise instructed, warning him that he would be destroyed if he disobeyed this counsel. Light then gathered around Moroni and he ascended to heaven.¹²

As Joseph lay thinking about the vision, light flooded the room again and Moroni reappeared, giving the same message as before. He then departed, only to appear once more and deliver his message a third time.

"Now, Joseph, beware," he said. "When you go to get the plates, your mind will be filled with darkness, and all manner of evil will rush into your mind to prevent you from keeping the commandments of God." Directing Joseph to someone who would support him, Moroni urged him to tell his father about his visions.

"He will believe every word you say," the angel promised.¹³

The next morning, Joseph said nothing about Moroni, even though he knew his father also believed in visions and angels. Instead, they spent the morning harvesting a nearby field with Alvin.

The work was difficult. Joseph tried to keep pace with his brother as they swung their scythes back and forth through the tall grain. But Moroni's visits had kept him awake all night, and his thoughts kept returning to the ancient record and the hill where they were buried.

Soon he stopped working, and Alvin noticed. "We must keep to work," he called out to Joseph, "or we shall not get our task done."¹⁴

Joseph tried to work harder and faster, but no matter what he did, he could not keep up with Alvin. After a

while, Joseph Sr. noticed that Joseph looked pale and had stopped working again. "Go home," he said, believing his son was sick.

Joseph obeyed his father and stumbled back toward the house. But as he tried to cross a fence, he collapsed to the ground, exhausted.

While he lay there, gathering strength, he saw Moroni standing above him once more, surrounded by light. "Why did

you not tell your father what I told you?" he asked.

Joseph said he was afraid his father would not believe him.

"He will," Moroni assured him, then repeated his message from the night before.¹⁵

Joseph Sr. wept when his son told him about the angel and his message. "It was a vision from God," he said. "Attend to it."¹⁶

Joseph set out immediately for the hill. During the night, Moroni had shown him a vision of where the plates were hidden, so he knew where to go. The hill, one of the biggest in the area, was about three miles (4.8 km) from his house. The plates were buried beneath a large, round rock on the west side of the hill, not far from its summit.

Joseph thought about the plates as he walked. Even though he knew they were sacred, it was hard for him

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*Moroni told Joseph that  
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~~~~~



Near Palmyra, New York, the Hill Cumorah is about three miles (4.8 km) southeast of the Smith family farm. Joseph knew where to go to find the Book of Mormon plates buried there because Moroni had shown him the hill in vision.

to resist wondering how much they were worth. He had heard tales of hidden treasures protected by guardian spirits, but Moroni and the plates he described were different from these stories. Moroni was a heavenly messenger appointed by God to deliver the record safely to His chosen seer. And the plates were valuable not because they were gold, but because they witnessed of Jesus Christ.

Still, Joseph could not help thinking that he now knew exactly where to find enough treasure to free his family from poverty.¹⁷

Arriving at the hill, Joseph located the place he had seen in the vision and began digging at the base of the rock until its edges were clear. He then found a large tree branch and used it as a lever to raise the stone and heave it aside.¹⁸

Beneath the boulder was a box, its walls and base made of stone. Looking inside, Joseph saw the gold plates, seer stones, and breastplate.¹⁹ The plates were covered with ancient writing and bound together on one side by three rings. Each plate was about six inches (15 cm) wide, eight inches (20 cm) long, and thin. A portion of the plates also appeared to be sealed so no one could read it.²⁰

Astonished, Joseph wondered again how much the plates were worth. He reached for them—and felt a shock pulse through him. He jerked his hand back but then reached for the plates twice more and was shocked each time.

“Why can I not obtain this book?” he cried out.

“Because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord,” said a voice nearby.²¹

Joseph turned and saw Moroni. At once the message from the night before flooded his mind, and he understood that he had forgotten the record’s true purpose. He started to pray, and his mind and soul awoke to the Holy Spirit.

“Look,” Moroni commanded. Another vision unfolded before Joseph, and he saw Satan surrounded by his numberless host. “All this is shown, the good and the evil, the holy and impure, the glory of God and the power of darkness,” the angel declared, “that you may know hereafter the two powers and never be influenced or overcome by that wicked one.”

He instructed Joseph to purify his heart and strengthen his mind to receive the record. “If ever these sacred things are obtained they must be by prayer and faithfulness in obeying the Lord,” Moroni explained. “They are not deposited here for the sake of accumulating gain and wealth for the glory of this world. They were sealed by the prayer of faith.”²²

Joseph asked when he could have the plates.

“The twenty-second day of September next,” Moroni said, “if you bring the right person with you.”

“Who is the right person?” Joseph asked.

“Your oldest brother.”²³

Ever since he was a child, Joseph knew he could rely on his oldest brother. Alvin was twenty-five years old now and could have acquired his own farm if he wanted. But he had chosen to stay on the family farm to help his parents get settled and secure on their land as they got older. He was

serious and hardworking, and Joseph loved and admired him immensely.²⁴

Maybe Moroni felt that Joseph needed his brother's wisdom and strength to become the kind of person the Lord could trust with the plates.

Returning home that evening, Joseph was tired. But his family crowded around him as soon as he came through the door, eager to know what he had found at the hill. Joseph started to tell them about the plates, but Alvin interrupted when he noticed how weary Joseph looked.

"Let us go to bed," he said, "and we will get up early in the morning and go to work." They would have plenty of time tomorrow to hear the rest of Joseph's story. "If Mother will get our suppers early," he said, "we will then have a fine long evening and all sit down and hear you talk."²⁵

The next evening, Joseph shared what had happened at the hill, and Alvin believed him. As the oldest son in the family, Alvin had always felt responsible for his aging parents' physical welfare. He and his brothers had even started building a larger house for the family so they could be more comfortable.

Now it seemed Joseph was looking after their spiritual welfare. Night after night he captivated the family with talk of the gold plates and the people who wrote them. The family grew closer together, and their home was peaceful and happy. Everyone felt that something wonderful was about to happen.²⁶

Then one autumn morning, less than two months after Moroni's visit, Alvin came home with an intense pain in his stomach. Bent over in agony, he begged his father to call for help. When a doctor finally arrived, he gave Alvin a large dose of a chalky medicine, but it only made things worse.

Alvin lay in bed for days, writhing in pain. Knowing he would probably die, he called for Joseph. "Do everything that lies in your power to obtain the records," Alvin said. "Be faithful in receiving instruction and keeping every commandment that is given you."²⁷

He died a short time later, and sorrow settled over the house. At the funeral, a preacher all but said Alvin had gone to hell, using his death to warn others of what would happen unless God intervened to save them. Joseph Sr.

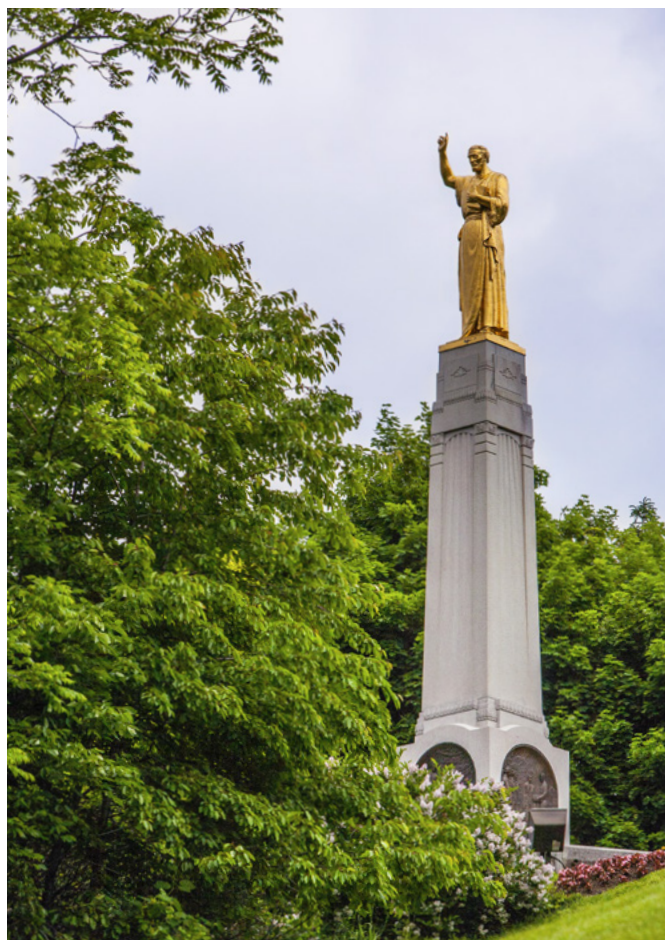
was furious. His son had been a good young man, and he could not believe that God would damn him.²⁸

With Alvin gone, talk of the plates ended. He had been such a staunch supporter of Joseph's divine call that any mention of them brought his death to mind. The family could not bear it.

Joseph missed Alvin terribly and took his death especially hard. He had hoped to rely on his oldest brother to help him get the record. Now he felt forsaken.²⁹

When the day finally came to return to the hill, Joseph went alone. Without Alvin, he was unsure if the Lord would trust him with the plates. But he thought he could keep every commandment the Lord had given him, as his

A statue of Moroni stands atop the Hill Cumorah to commemorate the place where Joseph Smith first saw the Book of Mormon plates on September 22, 1823, and obtained them exactly four years later.



brother had counseled. Moroni's instructions for retrieving the plates were clear. "You must take them into your hands and go straight to the house without delay," the angel had said, "and lock them up."³⁰

At the hill, Joseph pried up the rock, reached into the stone box, and lifted out the plates. A thought then crossed his mind: the other items in the box were valuable and ought to be hidden before he went home. He set the plates down and turned to cover the box. But when he returned to the plates, they were gone. Alarmed, he fell to his knees and pleaded to know where they were.

Moroni appeared and told Joseph that he had failed to follow directions again. Not only had he set the plates down before safely securing them, he had also let them out of his sight. As willing as the young seer was to do the Lord's work, he was not yet able to protect the ancient record.

Joseph was disappointed in himself, but Moroni instructed him to return for the plates the following year. He also taught him more about the Lord's plan for the kingdom of God and the great work beginning to roll forth.

Still, after the angel left, Joseph slunk down the hill, worried what his family would think when he came home empty handed.³¹ When he stepped inside the house, they were waiting for him. His father asked at once if he had the plates.

"No," he said. "I could not get them."

"Did you see them?"

"I saw them but could not take them."

"I would have taken them," Joseph Sr. said, "if I had been in your place."

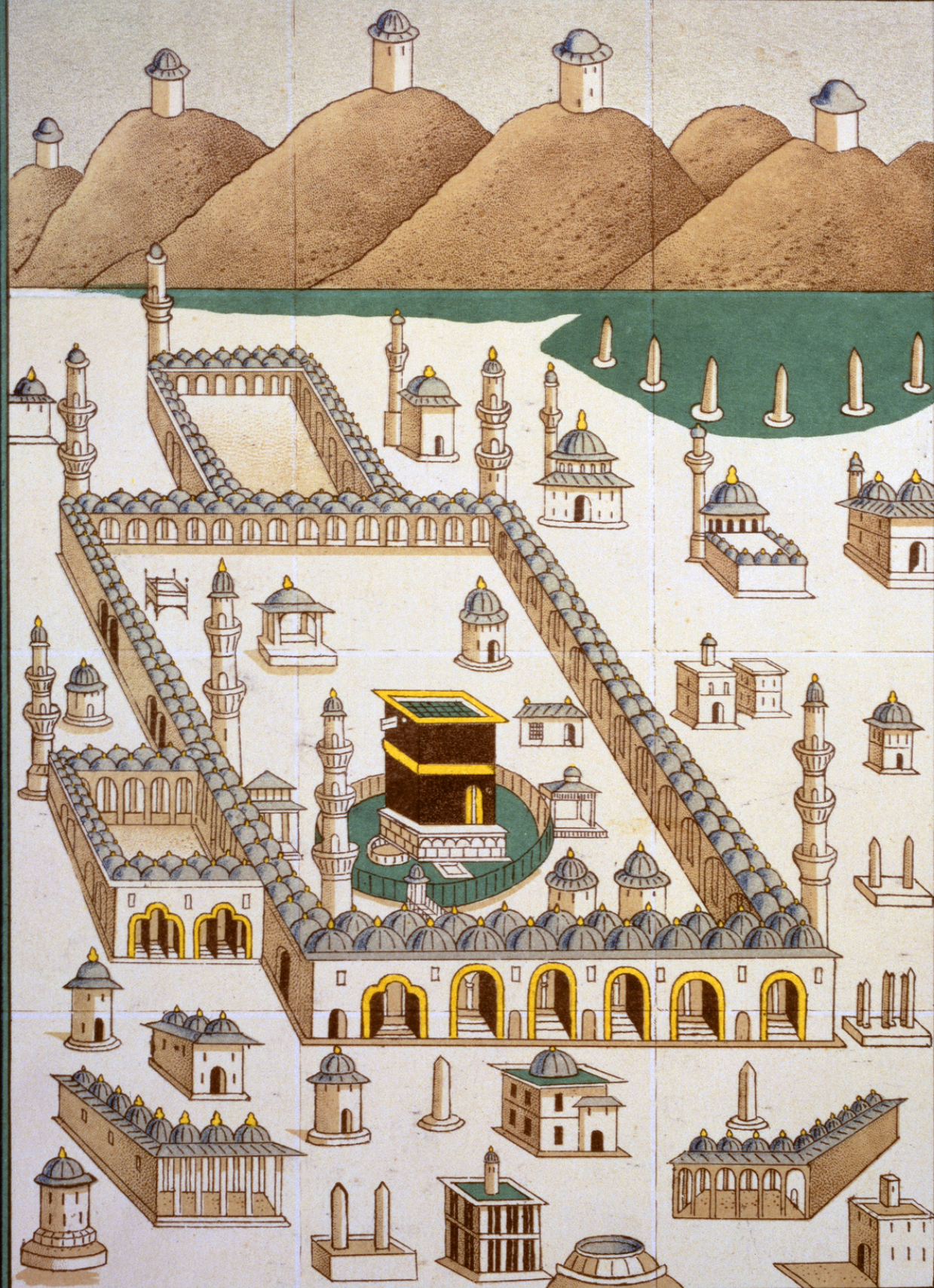
"You do not know what you say," Joseph said. "I could not get them, for the angel of the Lord would not let me."³² ■

A complete list of works cited is available in English at saints.lds.org.

The word *Topic* in the notes indicates additional information online at saints.lds.org.

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32. Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 86.



UNDERSTANDING Islam

By Daniel C. Peterson

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Note: Because it is important to understand those of other faiths, Church leaders felt that it would be helpful to provide an overview of the history and teachings of Islam, the world's second-largest religion.

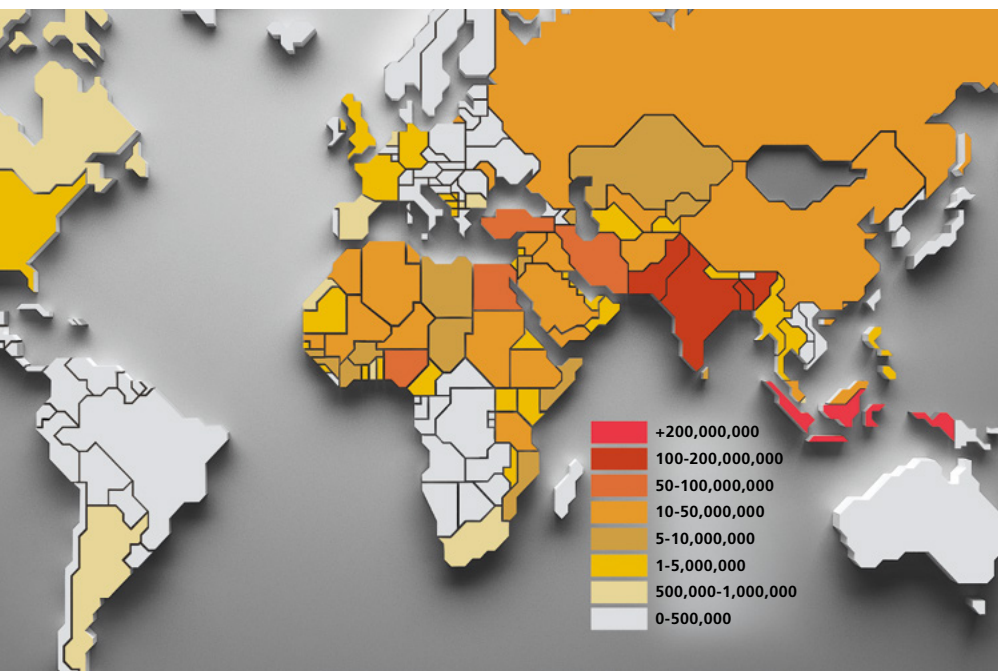
For good or ill, virtually no day passes when Islam and Muslims aren't in the news headlines. Understandably, many non-Muslims—including Latter-day Saints—are curious, even concerned. Do we share anything in common with our Muslim neighbors? Can we live and work together?

First, some historical background may be helpful:

In AD 610, a middle-aged Arabian merchant named Muhammad climbed the hills above his native town of Mecca to reflect and pray about the religious confusion surrounding him. Afterward, he reported that he had received a vision calling him as a prophet to his people. This event marks the beginning of the religion known as Islam (iss-LAAM), a word that means “submission” (to God). A believer in Islam is called a Muslim (MUSS-lim), meaning “submitter.”

Thereafter, Muhammad said he received many revelations until his death nearly 25 years later. He shared them first with the residents of his hometown, warning

A 19th-century mosaic illustrating the Kaaba in Mecca, the city where Muhammad was born and the holiest city in the Islamic world.



Global distribution of Muslims by country, in millions (Pew Research Center, 2009).

remains among its most striking and consequential characteristics.

Two principal factions emerged among Muhammad's followers after his death in AD 632, dividing initially over the question of who should succeed him as the leader of the Islamic community.² The largest of these has come to be called Sunni (it claims to follow the *sunna*, or customary practice of Muhammad, and is relatively flexible on the matter of succession). The other, which grew up around Muhammad's son-in-law, 'Ali, was called the *shi'at* 'Ali (the faction of 'Ali) and is now widely known simply as the Shi'a. Unlike Sunnis, the Shi'a (known as Shi'ite or Shi'i Muslims) believe that the right to succeed Muhammad as leaders of the community properly belongs to the Prophet Muhammad's nearest male relative, 'Ali, and his heirs.

Despite such disagreements, the Islamic world has been more unified, religiously speaking, than Christendom. Furthermore, for several centuries after about AD 800, Islamic civilization was arguably the most advanced in the world in terms of science, medicine, mathematics, and philosophy.

Sources of Muslim Doctrine and Practice

The revelations claimed by Muhammad were gathered into a book

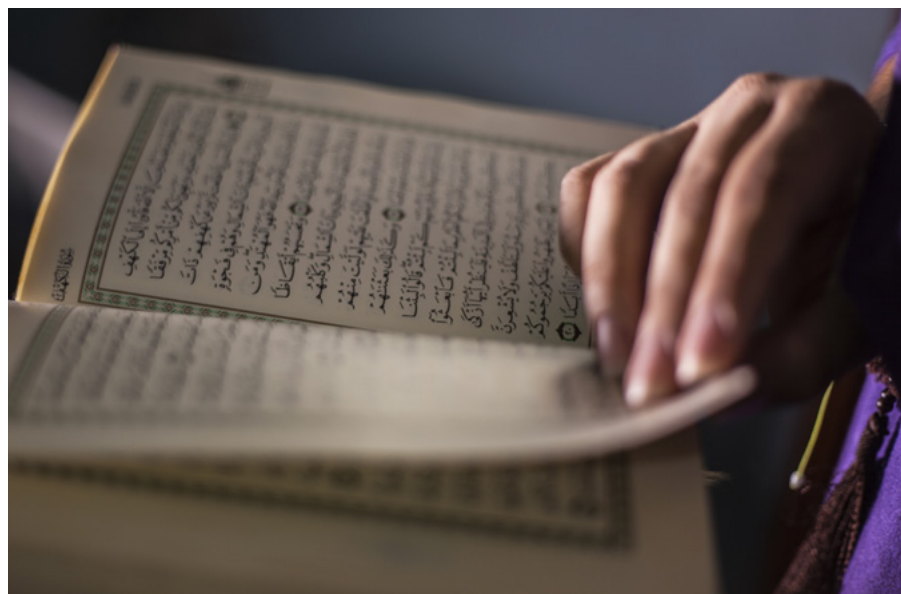
Muslims consider the Qur'an to be the word of Allah given directly to Muhammad.

of divine judgments to come; summoning his audience to repentance and to proper treatment of widows, orphans, and the poor; and preaching the universal resurrection of the dead and the ultimate judgment of God.

However, the ridicule and persecution to which he and his followers were subjected became so intense that they were obliged to flee to the town

of Medina, roughly four days' camel ride to the north.

There, Muhammad's role changed dramatically.¹ From being solely a preacher and a warner, he became the lawgiver, judge, and political leader of an important Arabian town and, over time, of the Arabian Peninsula. This early establishment of a community of believers gave Islam a religious identity rooted in law and justice that



called the Qur'an (from the Arabic verb *qara'a*, "to read" or "to recite") within a decade or two of his death. Composed of 114 chapters, the Qur'an isn't a story about Muhammad. Much like the Doctrine and Covenants, it's not a narrative at all; Muslims regard it as the word (and words) of God given directly to Muhammad.³

Christians reading it will find familiar themes. It speaks, for example, of God's creation of the universe in seven days, His placement of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, their temptation by the devil, their fall, and the call of a line of subsequent prophets (most of whom also appear in the

Bible). These prophets are described in the Qur'an as *muslims*, having submitted their wills to God.

Abraham, described as the friend of God, figures prominently in the text.⁴ (Among other things, he is believed to have received revelations that he wrote down but that have since been lost.⁵) Moses, Pharaoh, and the Exodus of the children of Israel also play a role.

Strikingly, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is mentioned 34 times in the Qur'an, as compared with 19 times in the New Testament. (She is, in fact, the only woman named in the Qur'an.)

One constant Qur'anic refrain is the doctrine of *tawhid* (taw-HEED), a word that might be translated as "monotheism" or, more literally, as

"making one." It represents one of the central principles of Islam: that there is only one entirely unique divine being. "He does not beget, nor is he begotten," declares the Qur'an, "and there is none like him."⁶ What follows from this is surely the most important distinction between Islam and Christianity: Muslims don't believe in the deity of Jesus Christ or the Holy Ghost. It also indicates that, while all people are equally creations of God, according to Islamic doctrine we are not His children.

Yet Muslims believe Jesus to have been a sinless prophet of God, born of a virgin and destined to play a central role in the events of the last days. He is mentioned frequently and reverently in the Qur'an.

About two million Muslims undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca each year.



Muslims kneel in prayer five times a day.

Basic Muslim Teachings and Practices

The so-called “Five Pillars of Islam”—most concisely summarized not in the Qur’an but in a statement traditionally ascribed to Muhammad—set forth some basic Islamic doctrine:

1. Testimony

If Islam has a universal creed, it’s the *shahada* (sha-HAD-ah), “profession of faith,” or “testimony.” The term refers to an Arabic formula that, translated, runs as follows: “I testify that there is no god but God [Allah] and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.” The *shahada* is the entryway into Islam. To recite it with sincere belief is to become a Muslim.

The Arabic equivalent of the word *God* is *Allah*. A contraction of the words *al-* (“the”) and *ilah* (“god”), it’s not a proper name but a title, and it’s closely related to the Hebrew word *Elohim*.

Since there is no Islamic priesthood, there are no priesthood ordinances. Nor is there a single Islamic



“church.” Thus, professing the *shahada* is, in a sense, the Islamic equivalent of baptism. The current lack of a formal, unified, worldwide leadership structure has other implications. For example, there is no overall leader of the world’s Muslims, nobody who speaks for the entire community. (Muhammad is almost universally regarded as the final prophet.) This also means that there is no church from which terrorists or “heretics” can be excommunicated.

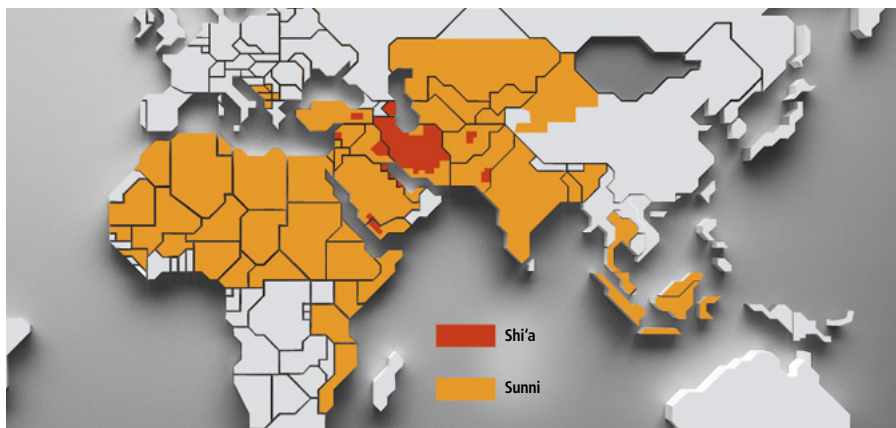
2. Prayer

Many non-Muslims are aware of the Muslim ritual prayer called *salat* (sa-LAAT), which involves a specific

number of physical prostrations, five times daily. Reciting prescribed verses from the Qur’an and touching the forehead to the ground demonstrates humble submission to God. More spontaneous prayer, called *du’a*, can be offered at any time and does not require prostration.

For midday prayers on Friday, Muslim men are required and Muslim women encouraged to pray in a mosque (from Arabic *masjid*, or “place of prostration”). There, in gender-separated groups, they form lines, praying as led by the mosque’s imam (ee-MAAM, from Arabic *amama*, meaning “in front of”), and listen to a short sermon. Fridays, however, aren’t quite equivalent to the Sabbath; although the “weekend” in most Muslim countries centers on *yawm al-jum’a* (“the day of gathering”) or Friday, working on that day isn’t considered sinful.

More than 85 percent of the world’s Muslims are Sunni (see Pew Research Center). Shiites are a minority virtually everywhere except in Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iran, and Iraq.



3. Almsgiving

Zakat (za-KAAT, meaning “that which purifies”) denotes making charitable donations to support the poor, as well as to mosques and other Islamic undertakings. It is generally reckoned at 2.5 percent of a Muslim’s total wealth above a certain minimum amount. In some Muslim countries, it’s gathered by government institutions. In others, it’s voluntary.

4. Fasting

Every year devout Muslims abstain from food, drink, and sexual relations from sunrise until sunset during the entire lunar month of Ramadan. They also commonly devote themselves to special charity toward the poor and to reading the Qur’an during the month.⁷

5. Pilgrimage

Muslims possessing the health and resources to do so should undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetimes. (A visit to Medina, the second holiest city in Islam, is typically included but isn’t required.) For faithful Muslims, doing so is a deeply spiritual and moving event, something like attending general conference in person or entering the temple for the first time.

Some Current Issues

Three focal points of contemporary non-Muslim concern about Islam are religious violence; Islamic, or *shari’a*, law; and Islam’s treatment of women.

Some extremists have used the term *jihad* to refer exclusively to “holy

war,” but the word actually means “practical work,” as opposed to “mere” prayer and scripture study.

Muslim jurists and thinkers have varied in their understanding of jihad. Standard legal sources argue, for instance, that acceptable military jihad must be defensive and that opponents must be forewarned and allowed opportunity to cease provocative actions. Some jurists and other Muslim thinkers today argue that jihad can designate any practical action intended to benefit the Islamic community or to improve the world more

A group of Muslim women join together for iftar, the evening meal when Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast at sunset.



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Some Muslim women wear the hijab head covering as a sign of modesty or devotion to Allah or to visibly express their Muslim identity.

generally. Muhammad is said to have distinguished between the “greater jihad” and the “lesser jihad.” The latter, he said, is warfare. But the greater jihad is to combat injustice as well as one’s personal resistance to living righteously.

Today’s Islamist terrorism claims religious roots, but it arguably reflects social, political, and economic grievances that have little or no connection to religion as such.⁸ Moreover, it’s important to note that the vast majority of the world’s Muslims have not joined the terrorists in their violence.⁹

Shari’a is another point of concern for some non-Muslims. Drawn from the Qur’an and the *hadith*—brief reports of what Muhammad and his closest associates said and did that provide models of Muslim behavior as well as supplement and explain Qur’anic passages—it is a code of Muslim conduct.¹⁰ Rules governing both male and female dress (such as the *hijab*, or veil) are found in *shari’a*; while they’re enforced by some Muslim countries, they’re left to individual choice in others. *Shari’a* also covers such matters as personal hygiene; the time and content of prayer; and rules governing marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Thus, when Muslims indicate in surveys that they wish to be governed by *shari’a*, they may or may not be making a political statement. They may simply be saying that they aspire to live genuinely Muslim lives.



Many non-Muslims, when they think of Islam’s treatment of women, immediately think of polygamy and veils. But the cultural reality is far more complex. Many passages in the Qur’an declare women to be equal to men, while others seem to assign them subordinate roles. Certainly there are practices in many Islamic countries—often with roots in pre-Islamic tribal culture or other pre-existing customs—that render women subservient. However, the way Muslims see women’s roles varies considerably from country to country and even within countries.

Latter-day Saint Views of Islam

Despite our different beliefs, how can Latter-day Saints approach building relationships with Muslims?

First of all, we should recognize Muslims’ right to “worship how, where, or what they may” (Articles of Faith 1:11). In 1841, Latter-day Saints on the city council of Nauvoo passed an ordinance on religious freedom guaranteeing “free toleration, and equal privileges” to “the Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists,

Baptists, Latter-day Saints, Quakers, Episcopalians, Universalists, Unitarians, Mohammedans [Muslims], and all other religious sects and denominations whatever.”¹¹

We should also recall that our Church leaders have generally been strikingly positive in their appreciation of the founder of Islam. In 1855, for example, in a time when many Christians condemned Muhammad as an antichrist, Elders George A. Smith (1817–75) and Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles delivered lengthy sermons not only manifesting an impressively informed and fair understanding of Islamic history but also praising Muhammad himself. Elder Smith remarked that Muhammad “was no doubt raised up by God on purpose” to preach against idolatry, and he expressed sympathy for Muslims, who, like the Latter-day Saints, find it hard “to get an honest history” written about them. Speaking immediately afterward, Elder Pratt expressed admiration for Muhammad’s teachings and for the morality and institutions of Muslim society.¹²

A more recent official statement came in 1978 from the First Presidency. It specifically mentions Muhammad among “the great religious leaders of the world,” saying that, like them, he “received a portion of God’s light. Moral truths were given to [these leaders] by God,” wrote Presidents Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, and Marion G. Romney, “to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals.”¹³

Building on Common Ground

While Latter-day Saints and Muslims obviously differ on important matters—notably the divinity of Jesus Christ, His role as Savior, and the calling of modern prophets—we have many things in common. We both believe, for example, that we are morally accountable before God, that we should pursue both personal

righteousness and a good and just society, and that we will be resurrected and brought before God for judgment.

Both Muslims and Latter-day Saints believe in the vital importance of strong families and in the divine command to help the poor and needy and that we demonstrate our faith through acts of discipleship. There seems no reason why Latter-day Saints and Muslims cannot do so alongside one another and even, when opportunities present themselves, by cooperating together in communities where, more and more, we find ourselves neighbors in an increasingly secular world. Together, we can demonstrate that religious faith can be a powerful force for good and not merely a source of strife and even violence, as some critics argue.

The Qur’an itself suggests a way of living peacefully together despite

our differences: “If God had willed, he could have made you a single community. But he desired to test you in what he has given you. So, compete with one another in good deeds. You will all return to God, and he will inform you regarding the things wherein you used to disagree.”¹⁴ ■

NOTES

1. In fact, AD 622—the year of Muhammad’s *Hijra*, or immigration, to Medina—is the base year of the Muslim (*Hijri*) calendar, and the revelations gathered in the Qur’an are classified as either Meccan or Medinan.
2. Over the centuries, the two factions have grown apart over other secondary issues as well.
3. Significantly, though, while translation of the Qur’an into other languages is allowed, only the original Arabic is regarded as truly the Qur’an and truly scriptural.
4. See Qur’an 4:125.
5. See Qur’an 53:36–62; 87:9–19; see also Daniel C. Peterson, “News from Antiquity,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1994, 16–21.
6. Qur’an 112:3–4. Translations from the Qur’an are from Daniel C. Peterson.
7. Standard editions of the Qur’an are divided into 30 equal portions for precisely that purpose.
8. See, for example, Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (2005); Graham E. Fuller, *A World without Islam* (2010); Robert A. Pape and James K. Feldman, *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It* (2010).
9. See Charles Kurzman, *The Missing Martyrs: Why There Are So Few Muslim Terrorists* (2011); see also John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (2008); James Zogby, *Arab Voices: What They Are Saying to Us, and Why It Matters* (2010).
10. It’s rather similar, in fact, to rabbinic law in Judaism.
11. Ordinance in Relation to Religious Societies, City of Nauvoo, [Illinois] headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March 1, 1841.
12. See *Journal of Discourses*, 3:28–42.
13. First Presidency statement, Feb. 15, 1978. In his revision of *Introduction to the Qur’an* (1970) by Richard Bell, W. Montgomery Watt, an eminent scholar of Islam and an Anglican priest, offered one possible way in which a believing Christian might view the Qur’an as inspired.
14. Qur’an 5:48; compare 2:48.



THIS IS THE PLACE

My father, a devout Christian, taught me to have faith in Jesus Christ. That faith helped me survive Nigeria's three-year civil war in the late 1960s when I was in the army. Later, however, I became confused and quit attending church.

When I came to the United States in 1981 to get an education, I felt that I needed God in my life. For two years I attended different churches in Boston, Massachusetts, but none of them appealed to me. I didn't feel the Spirit, so I stopped looking.

Not long after my wife, Mabel, joined me from Nigeria in 1984, I started having a burning desire to again draw closer to God and belong to a church. A friend visiting from Nigeria didn't know I was looking for a church, but he told me about a church he had heard of that had a book called the Book of Mormon.

After that, I continued looking for churches. I found a church called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

In the temple, the words I heard my first day at church have been confirmed to me many times.



Saints. The word *saint* caught my attention. I didn't know there was a church with members called saints. That Sunday I decided to check it out.

At the sacrament meeting I attended, the congregation sang hymns in a reverent manner, priests blessed bread and water, and the service was conducted in order and humility. Afterward, as I walked to the foyer and contemplated the service, I heard my name.

"Simeon," the voice of the Spirit said, "this is the place."

At that point, two missionaries approached. They introduced themselves and the Book of Mormon. I looked at them and said, "I don't know anything about the Book of Mormon, but I know the Bible. I am ready."

They began teaching me the plan of salvation. Less than a month later, I was baptized. My wife joined the Church a short while later. A few years after that, we were sealed in the Washington D.C. Temple and our five children were sealed to us.

In the temple, many things have been revealed to me, but the words I heard my first day at church have been confirmed to me many times through revelation in the temple: "This is the place." The impact of that statement from the Holy Ghost has forever changed my life and the lives of my wife and children. ■

Simeon Nnah, Aba, Nigeria

With each excuse, my scripture reading dwindled until I was hardly reading at all.



HOW COULD I REJUVENATE MY SCRIPTURE STUDY?

I had been home from my mission for only three months when I began to struggle with reading the scriptures.

I had read the scriptures every day on my mission and promised to continue when I returned home. But as time passed, things just seemed to get in the way. I either had too much homework, was too busy working, or was just too tired. With each excuse, my scripture reading dwindled until I was hardly reading at all.

I opened the Book of Mormon one night and planned on reading just a verse. The verse I read reminded me that the scriptures contain “the pleasing word of God, yea, the word which healeth the wounded soul” (Jacob 2:8).

I pondered this verse and realized the negative effect neglecting

scripture study was having on me. I felt more stressed at school, more apathetic at church, and more distanced from God. My soul needed the healing word of God found in the scriptures. I knew I needed to reorganize my priorities.

I turned to my friends, family, and Church leaders to ask for suggestions to rejuvenate my scripture study. I found three things to be helpful.

First, I realized that studying the scriptures at night was not effective for me. Studying in the morning allowed me to ponder throughout the day the doctrine and principles I had read that morning.

Second, we are taught to read scriptures with our families, but since I was at college and away from my

family, I started reading scriptures with roommates and friends. This helped me stay accountable, and it sparked great gospel discussions.

Third, I started writing down promptings and thoughts I received during scripture study. This helped me focus on what I was reading and helped me better recognize the voice of the Spirit.

Once scripture study became a priority in my life again, I found that I had more time and energy to accomplish everything I needed to get done. Most important, I felt a closeness to God again as I read and pondered the scriptures. Now when I spend time in the scriptures, I feel peace and find healing for my soul. ■

Sarah Keenan, Utah, USA



I found my aunt and her five-month-old baby in a hammock tied to two young mango trees.

“JUMP IN THE RIVER!”

One day my grandmother asked me to take some food she had prepared to my aunt. It was a hot Saturday afternoon, and there were a lot of other things I wanted to do instead of go on an errand for my grandmother. I told her to ask one of my cousins to go instead, but she insisted that it should be me.

An hour passed, and I began to feel that I should do what my grandmother had asked. I picked up the food and made my way to my aunt's house. It was far away, and when I arrived, I didn't plan on staying long.

I found my aunt and her five-month-old baby in a hammock tied to two young mango trees. The trees

were beside a river that ran behind the house. I walked toward them to deliver the food. Suddenly, the ropes to the hammock broke. My aunt and her baby rolled into the river. Fear gripped me. I didn't know how to swim, and no one was around to help. I didn't know what to do.

Immediately, I heard the voice of the Spirit: “Jump in!”

Without a second thought, I jumped. Fortunately, I found the baby in just a couple of seconds, and my aunt was able to get out of the water. As I came out of the water with the baby, I couldn't believe what had just happened. I jumped in a river when I didn't know how to swim, but because

I listened to the Spirit, my baby cousin and I were saved from drowning.

I realized how important it is to recognize and listen to the direction and inspiration that God gives to us through the Holy Ghost. I am grateful that I eventually did what my grandmother asked and took the food to my aunt's house. I know we must make efforts to be sensitive to spiritual promptings so we can be the hands of God to help His children. ■

Elvin Jerome Laceda, Pampanga, Philippines



FEELING AT HOME AGAIN

I was not prepared for my brother's phone call. "Mom just passed away," he said. "She fell and hit her head."

I was shocked. My mom was gone at age 60, and I had just talked with her the night before. I kept asking myself why this had happened. I couldn't understand why she had to leave me. I was angry! I dwelled on my anger for several weeks.

Eventually, I decided who was to blame. It was God's fault. He took her away from me too soon. My mom missed many milestones in my life, and I thought it was because of Him. I was not a member of the Church at the time, but I was a devout Christian. Instead of relying on God for strength,

I turned away from Him and shut Him out of my life.

I missed my mom so much. As I was growing up, my home with my parents was a safe place. No matter where I was or what I was doing, every time I talked with my mom or spent time with her, I felt at home. Now that "at home" feeling I loved was gone.

Years went by, and I lost my faith almost entirely. I tried to understand why my mom had to die, but nothing brought me peace. Then, for about one week, the following thought repeatedly came to my mind: I needed to look heavenward for understanding. I told this to my dear friend who was a member of the

Church. She asked if I would like to learn more about her faith.

I didn't realize it right away, but the Spirit woke up my soul from a sound sleep. The more I learned about the gospel, the more I felt I had found a safe place again. The feeling of being "at home" returned.

I was baptized in May 2013. I am grateful that my faith returned. I no longer turn my back on God. Instead, I embrace Him. I am still saddened by my mom's sudden passing, but because of my faith in God, I know that I will one day be "at home" with my mom and my family forever. ■

Judy Rascher, Colorado, USA

When Rakotomalala became interested in the gospel, the nearest church was in Antsirabe, a city 30 miles (50 km) from his village in Sarodroa. Rakotomalala and a friend found a way to make the journey each Sunday.

Today, Sarodroa has a small meetinghouse where over 100 members attend every Sunday. Rakotomalala has seen his village embrace the gospel. Four missionaries have served from Sarodroa and the Church continues to grow.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Rakotomalala Alphonse

Sarodroa, Madagascar

I wanted to attend church, but I had no money for the bus. I talked to my friend, Razafindravaonasolo, and she said we could ride my bike. We rode two hours one way from Sarodroa to Antsirabe every Sunday. When I would get tired of pedaling, I would ride on the back and she would start pedaling. Then when she got tired, we would switch places again.

Eventually, Razafindravaonasolo's family and I joined the Church. We attended church in Antsirabe until a branch opened in Sarodroa. We were so happy when we could attend church in our own village!

See more photos of Rakotomalala and Razafindravaonasolo at lds.org/go/41845.

Learn more about the growth of the Church in Sarodroa at lds.org/go/41844.







**By Elder
Ulisses Soares**
Of the Presidency
of the Seventy

Paths to True Happiness

More than anything else, Heavenly Father desires our true and lasting happiness.

“Our happiness is the design of all the blessings He gives us—gospel teachings, commandments, priesthood ordinances, family relationships, prophets, temples, the beauties of creation, and even the opportunity to experience adversity. . . . He sent His Beloved Son to carry out the Atonement so we can be happy in this life and receive a fulness of joy in the eternities.”¹

People everywhere are looking for something. In their own way, what they are really looking for is happiness. As with truth itself, however, many are kept from happiness “because they know not where to find it” (D&C 123:12).

Because they do not know where to find true and lasting happiness, they look for it in things that actually bring temporary pleasure

only—buying things, seeking honor and praise from the world through inappropriate behavior, or focusing on physical beauty and attractiveness.

Pleasure is often confused with happiness. It seems that the more people seek temporary pleasure, the less happy they become. Usually, pleasure endures for only a short time.

As President David O. McKay (1873–1970) said: “You may get that transitory pleasure, yes, but you cannot find joy, you cannot find happiness. Happiness is found only along that well beaten track, narrow as it is, though straight, which leads to life eternal.”²

Unfortunately for many, happiness is elusive. Scientists know that “more than simply positive mood, happiness is a state of well-being that encompasses living a good life—that is, with a sense of meaning and deep satisfaction.”³

Research shows that happiness is not the result of bouncing from

**May each of us
choose to love
the Lord and
follow His paths
to happiness.**

one experience to the next. Instead, achieving happiness typically involves a long-sustained effort for something more important in life. Happiness is determined by habits, behaviors, and thought patterns that we can directly address with intentional action. Much of our happiness is actually “under personal control.”⁴

Let us consider the importance of some of the paths of happiness found in the scriptures and taught by modern prophets and apostles. Faithfully and firmly planting our footsteps on those paths will allow us to enjoy happiness in the journey ahead.

Virtue

The first of these paths is virtue, which is a pattern of thought and behavior based on high moral standards. It encompasses chastity and moral purity, which qualify you to enter the Lord's holy temples. Virtuous

people possess a quiet dignity and inner strength. They are confident because they are worthy to receive and be guided by the Holy Ghost. Virtue begins in the heart and mind, and it is the accumulation of thousands of small decisions and actions each day.

"Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dew from heaven.

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever" (D&C 121:45–46).

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) has taught that "there is no friendship more valuable than your own clear conscience, your own moral cleanliness—and what a glorious feeling it is to know that you stand in your appointed place clean and with the confidence that you are worthy to do so."⁵

Uprightness

A second path of happiness is uprightness. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



“Recognize that enduring happiness comes from what you are, not from what you have.

“Real joy comes from righteous character, and that is built from a pattern of consistent righteous decisions. . . . Your righteous decisions determine who you are and what is important to you. They make doing the right things easier. For happiness now and throughout your life, steadfastly obey the Lord.”⁶

As we study the scriptures, we learn that the promises made by the Lord to us encourage righteous living. Those promises nourish our souls, bringing us hope by encouraging us not to give up even in the face of our daily challenges of living in a world of waning ethical and moral values. Therefore, we need to make sure that our thoughts, words, and actions are leading us along the path back to our Heavenly Father.

Faithfulness

A third path to happiness is faithfulness. It is fundamental to understand that God blesses us according to our faith, which is the source of living with divine purpose and eternal perspective. Faith is a practical principle that inspires diligence. It is manifest in our positive attitude and

desire to willingly do everything that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ ask of us. It is what takes us to our knees to implore the Lord for guidance and encourages us to arise and act with confidence to achieve things consistent with His will.

As you go forward in your journey, you will be tested to see if you will do all things that the Lord your God commands you (see Abraham 3:25). This is part of the mortal experience. It will require that you press forward with steadfast faith in Christ, being led by the Spirit and trusting that God will provide for your needs.

Remember that you must not waver in your faith—even in times of great difficulty. As you are steadfast, the Lord will increase your capacity to rise above the challenges of life. You will be enabled to subdue negative impulses, and you will develop the capacity to overcome even what appear to be overwhelming obstacles.

Holiness

Holiness, another path to happiness, is related to spiritual and moral perfection. Holiness indicates purity of heart and intent. How can we labor each day to feed ourselves spiritually so that we can develop such godly character?

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) answered: “We develop our spiritual selves by practice. . . . We must have daily exercise by our spirits by prayer, by doing daily good deeds, by sharing with others. We must feed our spirits daily by studying the scriptures every day, by [family home evening], by attendance at meetings, by the partaking of the sacrament. . . .

“The righteous man strives for self-improvement knowing that he has daily need of repentance.”⁷

Another important element of holiness is related to making and keeping covenants in the temple. If we are faithful, these covenants can elevate us beyond the limits of our own power and perspective. All the promised blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ can be ours through our faithfulness to the ordinances and covenants we make before Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ in the temple. Part of the pattern of living “after the manner of happiness” includes building a temple in which to worship and make covenants with the Lord (see 2 Nephi 5:16, 27).

The key point of this path is that we should be very careful to develop spirituality and be morally pure.

Obedience

Keeping all the commandments of God is related to the other paths to happiness. After the Nephites had separated from the Lamanites, they prospered exceedingly as they kept the judgments, statutes, and commandments “of the Lord in all things, according to the law of Moses” (2 Nephi 5:10). This pattern is another important element of living “after the manner of happiness.”

President Monson has taught: “When we keep the commandments, our lives will be happier, more fulfilling, and less complicated. Our challenges and problems will be easier to bear, and we will receive [God’s] promised blessings.”⁸ He also said, “The knowledge which we seek, the answers for which we yearn, and the strength which we desire today

to meet the challenges of a complex and changing world can be ours when we willingly obey the Lord’s commandments.”⁹

The Savior entreats us:

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. . . .

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:15, 21).

Selflessness and Love

The golden pathway to happiness is one of selflessness and love—love that has concern, interest, and some measure of charity for every living soul. Love is the direct route to the happiness that will enrich and bless our lives and the lives of others. It means, as the

Savior said, that you show love even to your enemies (see Matthew 5:44).

In doing so, you will be fulfilling the greater commandment to love God. You will soar above the ill winds that blow—above the sordid, the self-defeating, and the bitter. True and lasting happiness comes only when we choose to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37; see also Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27).

May each of us choose to love the Lord and follow His paths to happiness, which is “the object and design of our existence.”¹⁰ ■

From a commencement address, “Paths for Happiness,” given at Brigham Young University–Hawaii on June 8, 2017. For the full address in English, go to devotional.byuh.edu.

NOTES

1. “Happiness,” Gospel Topics, topics.lds.org.
2. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Oct. 1919, 180.
3. “Happiness,” *Psychology Today*, psychologytoday.com/basics/happiness.
4. “Happiness,” *Psychology Today*.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Examples of Righteousness,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2008, 65.
6. Richard G. Scott, “Making the Right Decisions,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 34.
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* (2000), 176, 178.
8. Thomas S. Monson, “Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 83.
9. Thomas S. Monson, “Obedience Brings Blessings,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 92.
10. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 5:134.



Learn what true happiness is at lds.org/go/41849.

Marriage, Money, and Faith

By Sunday Chibuikwe Obasi

I attended the young single adult summit in Kumasi, Ghana, not because I needed a girlfriend—I was already engaged—but because I felt that I needed more motivation and that the summit would be the right place to find it. Indeed, my prayers were answered at the summit after Sister Call, a senior missionary assigned to work with young single adults, spoke about the importance of temple marriage.

Toward the end of the discussion, her countenance suddenly changed and she said, “You do not need money to get married—all you need is faith.” I felt like she was talking to me directly, but I didn’t think it could really apply to me because we had to purchase several items in preparation for the wedding. I said to myself, “How can I not need money but only faith?”

I thought about this over and over again throughout the week. In the

process I asked myself, “Is God limited in what He can do?” At first, I thought no, but on second thought I thought yes. But then came a follow-up question, “How can He be limited if He is all-powerful?” The Spirit taught me the answer: God’s blessings are dependent upon our obedience to Him. He is not limited in His ability to bless us, but we must invite those blessings by exercising faith to do what He would have us do.

Later, I called my fiancée, Priscilla, to discuss our proposed marriage plans. Despite our lack of money, we decided to choose a date for our wedding, but we could not decide on a particular date. We agreed that she should ask her bishop which dates were open on the ward and stake calendars. Out of the two dates he offered, we chose September 27, 2014—which meant that we had barely seven weeks to the day of the wedding!

My fiancée and I had little time before our wedding, and even less money, but we had something even more important: faith.

Priscilla asked, “*Obim* [meaning “my heart” in the Igbo language], do you have some money? The time is short.”

I replied, “No, but I do have some faith.”

She laughed and said, “It’s OK. Let’s fast and pray.” Paraphrasing 1 Nephi 3:7, she continued, “The Lord will open a way for us because He has commanded us to get married.”

Within that week I was paid for a job I had done months previously. Then Priscilla told me that she wanted to start a business to raise more funds. With the money I had made, she bought used women's handbags and

resold them. After buying some of the items on her list of things required, she still had more than double the money I gave her.

During this time, there were no jobs coming my way. Every promised

job fell through. We had two weeks remaining and there were still things we needed to buy. My fiancée suggested that the date be moved back. All I said was, "A miracle is on the way."

Just two days before our wedding day, the miracle happened: I was paid for a job I had done over two weeks before. I was also learning that with faith and hard work, the Lord would bless us to accomplish our righteous goals.

We went to the bank to cash the check and from there to the market to purchase the remainder of what was required amidst heavy rain, which we saw as heaven's approval of our act of faith.

Less than 24 hours later, we were married. When we were asked to exchange vows, the feeling was unlike anything I had ever felt in my life. I felt so accomplished that I believed I could do all things through faith from that point on. We were later sealed in the Accra Ghana Temple.

Though you may need *some* money to prepare for marriage, the most important thing you need is faith. ■

The author lives in Ashanti Region, Ghana.



“If I feel like I’m losing my faith, what can I do to regain it?”



“One of the purposes of the Church is to nurture and cultivate the seed of faith—even in the sometimes sandy soil of doubt and uncertainty. . .

“... Please, first doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf,
Second Counselor in the First
Presidency, “Come, Join with Us,”
Oct. 2013 general conference.



Go to the Scriptures

If I am having a hard time feeling the Spirit, it helps me to go to the scriptures and see the faith that everyone has. It gives me faith. Maybe your prayers have been really short. Try to make them more sincere and Heavenly Father will help you regain your faith.

Chris B., age 14, Oregon, USA



Nourish the Seed of Faith

I know that I can pray to the Father and ask Him to help me maintain the plant of faith that I have growing. I must do the necessary things to nourish it, like read the scriptures, seek out spiritual experiences, count my blessings, and ask for help from my family. That way, my faith can start growing again. It won't happen from one day to the next—it is a process that takes time. I have to have patience and trust in the Lord.

Elías B., age 18, Mendoza, Argentina



Figure It Out Together

When I feel like I'm losing my faith, I talk to my mom and dad, and we

figure things out together. Sometimes we sing an uplifting song afterward so that we can feel the Spirit.

Emmalie C., age 15, Colorado, USA

Ask Your Parents

In addition to praying directly to Heavenly Father, we can ask our parents how we can return to Him and recover our faith.

Elías S., age 12, Paysandú, Uruguay

Pray, Reach Out, and Read

As a person who dwindled in faith, there are three things I did to recover. First, I prayed. Praying for strength and to know what I should do worked well. Second, I told close friends, and they helped me immensely when I needed it. Third, I read scriptures. Many of them relate to faith and can help us regain it.

Jack J., age 14, Florida, USA



Why does God allow war?

War has been part of the story of mankind on this earth since almost the beginning. But the Lord, the Prince of Peace, does not want us to wage war with one another. He weeps when people choose not to love one another and “are without affection, and . . . hate their own blood” (Moses 7:33), corrupting the earth through violence (see Genesis 6:11–13). Those whose wickedness brings war to the earth will be judged for their actions.

The Lord has commanded His people to “renounce war and proclaim peace” (D&C 98:16). However, when nations do take up arms against each other, the Lord has also said that we are sometimes justified in defending our families, nations, and freedoms against destruction, tyranny, and oppression (see Alma 43:45–47; Alma 46:12–13; D&C 134:11). And Latter-day Saints who serve in their nations’ militaries are upholding the principle of “being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates” (Articles of Faith 1:12).

For more, see Gordon B. Hinckley, “War and Peace,” Apr. 2003 general conference; “War,” Gospel Topics, [topics.lds.org](https://www.lds.org/topics).

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

Tell Us What You Think

“How can my patriarchal blessing help me make decisions?”

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by May 15, 2018, at liahona.lds.org (click “Submit an Article or Feedback”).

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



PR

Follow the example of Joseph Smith and the pattern of the Restoration.



AYER



By Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

THE KEY TO TESTIMONY AND THE RESTORATION

As Church leaders, we are often asked, “How do I receive a testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ?”

Gaining a testimony and becoming converted begins with study and prayer, then living the gospel with patience and persistence and inviting and waiting upon the Spirit. The life of Joseph Smith and the pattern of the Restoration are excellent examples of this process. As [I share]... the events of the Restoration with you, look for the steps that lead to testimony....

*Turn to the scriptures.
Kneel in prayer.
Ask in faith.
Listen to the Holy Ghost.*





Great Confusion

Joseph Smith was born on December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Vermont, USA. He came into a family that prayed and studied the Bible. In his youth, he became interested in religion and discovered a “great confusion” over the doctrines of Christ, with “priest contending against priest, and convert against convert” (Joseph Smith—History 1:6).

This confusion . . . began centuries earlier in what has been called the Great Apostasy. The day of Christ “shall not come,” said the Apostle Paul, “except there come a falling away first” (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

A few decades after Christ’s Resurrection, His Apostles were killed, His teachings were corrupted, and the priesthood was taken from the earth. But Paul, seeing our day, prophesied “that in the dispensation of the fulness of times [God would] gather together in one all things in Christ” (Ephesians 1:10). He would restore Christ’s true Church to the earth once more. . . .

Joseph Finds an Answer

Joseph . . . , at the age of 14, found himself caught in a “tumult of [religious] opinions.” Often he asked himself, “If any one of [these churches] be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?” (Joseph Smith—History 1:10).

Joseph turned to the Bible for answers. “If any of you lack wisdom,” he read in the Epistle of James, “let

him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).

Following James’s direction, Joseph went to a grove of trees near his home and prayed. As he called upon God, “a pillar of light . . . descended,” brighter than the noonday sun, and “two Personages” appeared. “One of them spake . . . , calling [Joseph] by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*” (Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17).

God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, conversed with Joseph. They answered his question. They taught him that the true Church of Christ had been lost from the earth. Joseph learned that these members of the Godhead were separate and distinct beings, They knew him by name, and They were willing to answer his prayers. The heavens were opened, the night of apostasy was over, and the light of the gospel began to shine forth.

Like Joseph, many of us find ourselves seeking the light of truth. . . . Like Joseph, we must search the scriptures, pray, . . . [be] humble, and [learn] to exercise faith.

Moroni and the Golden Plates

During the three years following his First Vision, Joseph [said he often felt discouraged because of his weaknesses and imperfections]. But he did not lose faith or forget the power of prayer.

On September 21, 1823, at the age of 17, [Joseph] knelt to ask “for forgiveness of all [his] sins” . . . and [to know his] “standing before [God]” (see Joseph Smith—History 1:29). As he prayed, a light . . . appeared, increasing “until the room was lighter than at noonday” (verse 30). In that light there stood a personage dressed in a robe of “exquisite whiteness” (verse 31). He called Joseph by name and introduced himself as Moroni. He said “that God had a work for [Joseph] to do” and told him of an ancient record “written upon gold plates,” which, when translated, became the Book of Mormon. The book contained a record of the fulness of the gospel. (See verses 33–34.) . . . Joseph was directed to . . . that record, buried . . . [in the] nearby Hill . . . Cumorah.

The next day Joseph found the plates, but the time had not yet arrived to bring them forth. Moroni instructed Joseph to meet him there that same day each year for the next four years (see verses 52–53). Joseph obeyed. Each year he went to the hill where Moroni gave him “instruction” (verse 54) concerning the Restoration of Christ’s Church. . . .

Every major event of the Restoration was preceded by prayer.

Joseph received the plates on September 22, 1827, at the age of 21. He also received an ancient instrument for translating them, called the Urim and Thummim. Using this sacred interpreter, along with the Holy Ghost, Joseph began the work of translation. . . .

The Restoration Unfolds

At the age of 23, Joseph was translating the plates when he and [his scribe], Oliver [Cowdery], came upon a passage about baptism for the remission of sins. . . . They wanted to know more. Joseph knew what to do.

On May 15, 1829, [Joseph and Oliver] went into the woods to inquire of the Lord. While they were praying, John the Baptist appeared “in a cloud of light” (Joseph Smith—History 1:68). He . . . had baptized the Savior in life, [and] he held the priesthood keys necessary to perform that ordinance by the authority of God.

. . . John . . . laid his hands on [Joseph’s head and then Oliver’s] and conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon [each] of them (see D&C 13; Joseph Smith—History 1:68–69). . . . In late May or early June 1829, the Melchizedek, or higher, Priesthood was conferred on Joseph and Oliver by the Apostles Peter, James, and John.

The translation of the Book

of Mormon was also completed that June, and the book was published on March 26, 1830. . . . Days later, on April 6, the Church was formally organized. . . . As prophesied by Paul, the ancient Church of Christ was once again established on the earth.

But the work of the Restoration was not over. . . . [The Kirtland Temple, the first temple built in this dispensation,] was dedicated . . . on March 27, 1836. One week later, on April 3, a meeting was held there. Following a solemn and silent prayer, . . . the Lord Jesus Christ [appeared to Joseph and Oliver.] . . . Moses, Elias, and Elijah also appeared [in the Kirtland Temple] and [gave priesthood keys] to Joseph (see D&C 110).

A Pattern for Us to Follow

Brothers and sisters, can we see the pattern? Every major event of the Restoration—the First Vision, the appearance of Moroni and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon,

the restoration of the priesthood, and the appearance of Jesus Christ [in] His holy temple—was preceded by prayer. . . .

[Many times] I have felt the undeniable witness of the Spirit of God, like a fire burning in my heart, that the restored gospel is true. . . . [If you do not know these things for yourself,] may I suggest accepting the invitation extended by Moroni in the Book of Mormon: “And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:4–5). . . .

. . . Follow the example of Joseph Smith and the pattern of the Restoration. Turn to the scriptures. Kneel in prayer. Ask in faith. Listen to the Holy Ghost. . . . And in the name of Jesus Christ, I promise, “If ye will . . . ask [Heavenly Father] in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping [the Lord’s] commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you” (1 Nephi 15:11). ■

From an October 2003 general conference address.



WHAT, WHY, *and* HOW:

A BREAKDOWN OF THE RESTORATION

By Faith Sutherlin Blackhurst

Church Magazines

Say you're on a weeklong trip to the beach with your friend's family. You've had lots of fun, but you're beginning to miss your own family. Then your dad sends you a text message to see how things are going—it's just what you needed to feel loved and remembered.

Life on earth is a little like that. God doesn't send us texts, but we are away from our heavenly home, so one way Heavenly Father communicates His love for us is by sending prophets.

DISPENSATION

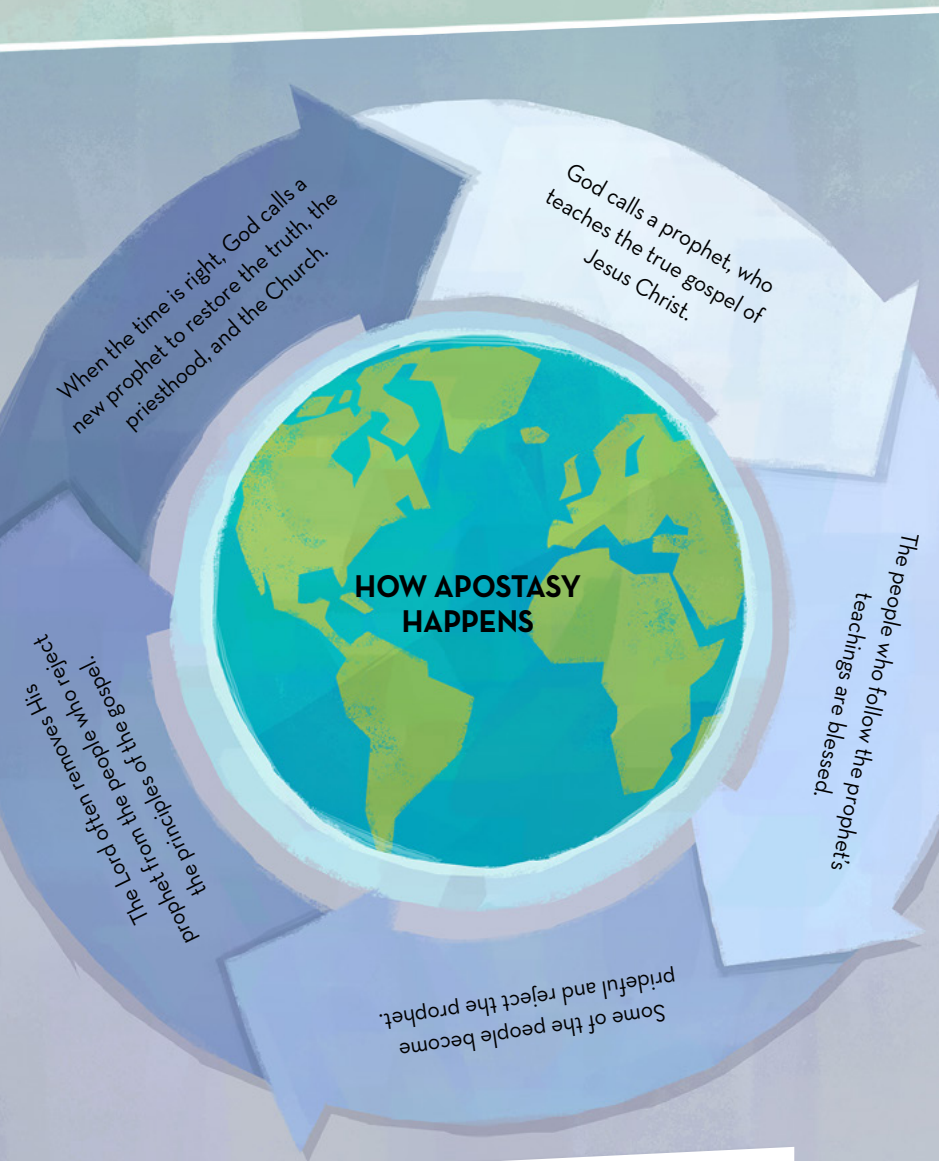
Prophets lead what are called *dispensations*, periods of time when (1) God has at least one authorized priesthood leader on the earth and (2) this leader, a prophet, learns about the plan of salvation directly from God. The prophet then teaches, or *dispenses*, the gospel to the people.

Thanks to the scriptures, we know about many of the dispensations. Some important ones were those of Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, and Joseph Smith. The Lord began a dispensation through each of these prophets.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BEN SIMONSEN

To teach the gospel, you'll need to be able to explain what apostasy, dispensations, and the Restoration are. This chart can help.



APOSTASY

Apostasy=wickedness. When an individual or group turns away from the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, rejects the prophets, and falls into sin, they are in apostasy.

RESTORATION

A restoration is the act of returning something to its original condition. It is not a reformation, which alters something existing to create something new. For example, if you wanted to restore an old house, you would rebuild it with the same layout that it had originally. You might want to add a new fireplace, but then you would be changing the house, not restoring it.



The gospel of Jesus Christ needed to be restored because it was lost during the Great Apostasy. The people had lived for centuries without the true Church. So the Lord *restored* His Church and gospel through Joseph Smith, just as ancient prophets had prophesied (see Isaiah 2:1–3; 29:13–14; Acts 3:19–21; Revelation 14:6–7; 2 Nephi 3:3–15).

The true gospel of Jesus Christ is here to stay—so will you stay with it? Even though the world grows more and more wicked, Jesus Christ's Church will remain to the end.

You have a choice to make—the same choice that has faced mortals since the beginning of time: will you follow the prophet? If you do, you will be blessed and have the Spirit to guide you.



ADAM

Adam was a true pioneer: he was the first man on earth and the first prophet! He taught his family the gospel, but even in the beginning, many “sought their own counsels in the dark” and rejected the truth (Moses 6:28).



ENOCH

Have you ever heard of an entire city being taken up to heaven? Well, the city of Zion—established by Enoch—was so righteous that the people went to dwell with God (see Moses 7:23).



HEADS OF DISPENSATIONS

These prophets were called of God, “on account of their exceeding faith and good works” (Alma 13:3; see also Abraham 3:22–23). The priesthood keys they held were restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Here are a few interesting things about these prophets. See what else you can learn about them as you study the scriptures.



NOAH

You know about Noah's ark. Only eight people—Noah's family—survived the Flood because they listened to Noah's warnings (see Genesis 7; Moses 8). But did you know that he received the priesthood when he was 10 years old (see D&C 107:52) and that “giants . . . sought Noah to take away his life”? (Moses 8:18).



ABRAHAM

Abraham was almost sacrificed by wicked priests, but an angel saved him (see Abraham 1). He had some amazing revelations, including a vision of the premortal life. Members of the Church are his descendants, and the Abrahamic covenant is named after him. (See Abraham 2–5.)



MOSES

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and helped them gain freedom. He “sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; but they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence” (D&C 84:23–24). In fact, because of their apostasy, they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years!



JESUS CHRIST

Not only did Jesus Christ teach the gospel and perform many miracles, but He also established His Church on the earth. He atoned for our sins and was crucified and resurrected to enable us to overcome spiritual and physical death. He is the head of His Church today, and He and Heavenly Father are the source of priesthood authority.



THE GREAT APOSTASY

After the Savior's Resurrection, His Apostles and other Church leaders tried to spread the gospel, but people rejected their teachings and even killed most of the Apostles. Because of the people's wickedness, the fulness of the gospel was lost from the earth. The world fell into spiritual darkness (see Isaiah 60:2).

- For more than 1,000 years, the people had no access to the ordinances of salvation, the blessings of the temple, or the guidance of a prophet.
- Precious truths were lost from the Bible.
- False ideas were taught about the true nature of God.
- Some of the ordinances of salvation were changed or taught incorrectly (see Isaiah 24:5).
- This apostasy eventually led to the formation of many churches.



THE REFORMATION

During the Great Apostasy, some religious-minded people in Europe realized that the gospel of Jesus Christ was not being taught correctly. These reformers were not prophets, but they did their best to teach the truth as they understood it. They helped make the Bible available to more people. Many fought for religious freedom and opened the way for the Restoration of the gospel.



JOSEPH SMITH

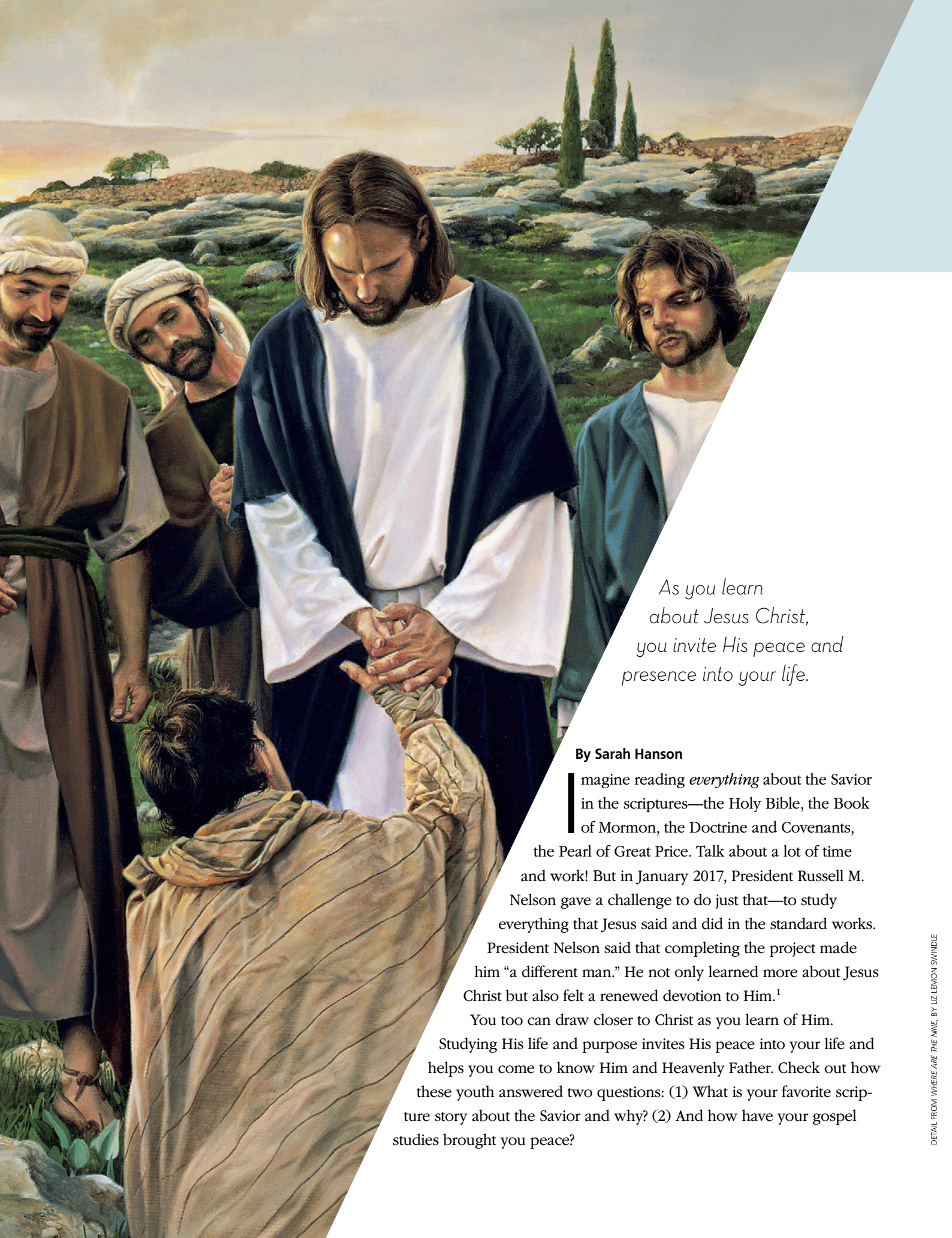
So was the fulness of the gospel lost forever? No! God revealed important truths to Joseph Smith again. Heavenly messengers restored all of the necessary priesthood keys to him (see D&C 27:8-13; 110; 128:18-21), making this the "dispensation of the fulness of times" (D&C 138:48). It is also known as the latter-days because it's the last dispensation before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

You Are Here

THE RESTORATION

Guess what? YOU have the blessings of the Restoration. Yes, you!

- The Church of Jesus Christ was restored with a prophet and apostles to lead it.
- The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and other modern revelation restored precious truths that had been lost (see 2 Nephi 27).
- Joseph Smith received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist (see D&C 13) and the Melchizedek Priesthood from the Apostles Peter, James, and John (see D&C 128:20).
- Authorized priesthood holders perform the ordinances of salvation properly.
- And we know that the truth will never be lost through an apostasy again (see Daniel 2:44). ■



*As you learn
about Jesus Christ,
you invite His peace and
presence into your life.*

By Sarah Hanson

Imagine reading *everything* about the Savior in the scriptures—the Holy Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price. Talk about a lot of time and work! But in January 2017, President Russell M. Nelson gave a challenge to do just that—to study everything that Jesus said and did in the standard works. President Nelson said that completing the project made him “a different man.” He not only learned more about Jesus Christ but also felt a renewed devotion to Him.¹

You too can draw closer to Christ as you learn of Him.

Studying His life and purpose invites His peace into your life and helps you come to know Him and Heavenly Father. Check out how these youth answered two questions: (1) What is your favorite scripture story about the Savior and why? (2) And how have your gospel studies brought you peace?

GETTING TO KNOW THE SAVIOR

I like the story of the 10 lepers because Christ showed so much love toward the leper who thanked Him. He said, “Thy faith hath made thee whole” (Luke 17:19; see verses 11–19). I love the genuine kindness that He shows everyone.

Because of some recent tragedies at my school, everyone there is in need of a lot of peace and comfort. I’ve found strength and peace through my studies in seminary. The seminary teachers make the scriptures and the gospel very personalized for everyone. It’s really cool to see the contrast in the seminary classroom compared to a normal classroom. There’s just a different feeling there that brings peace.

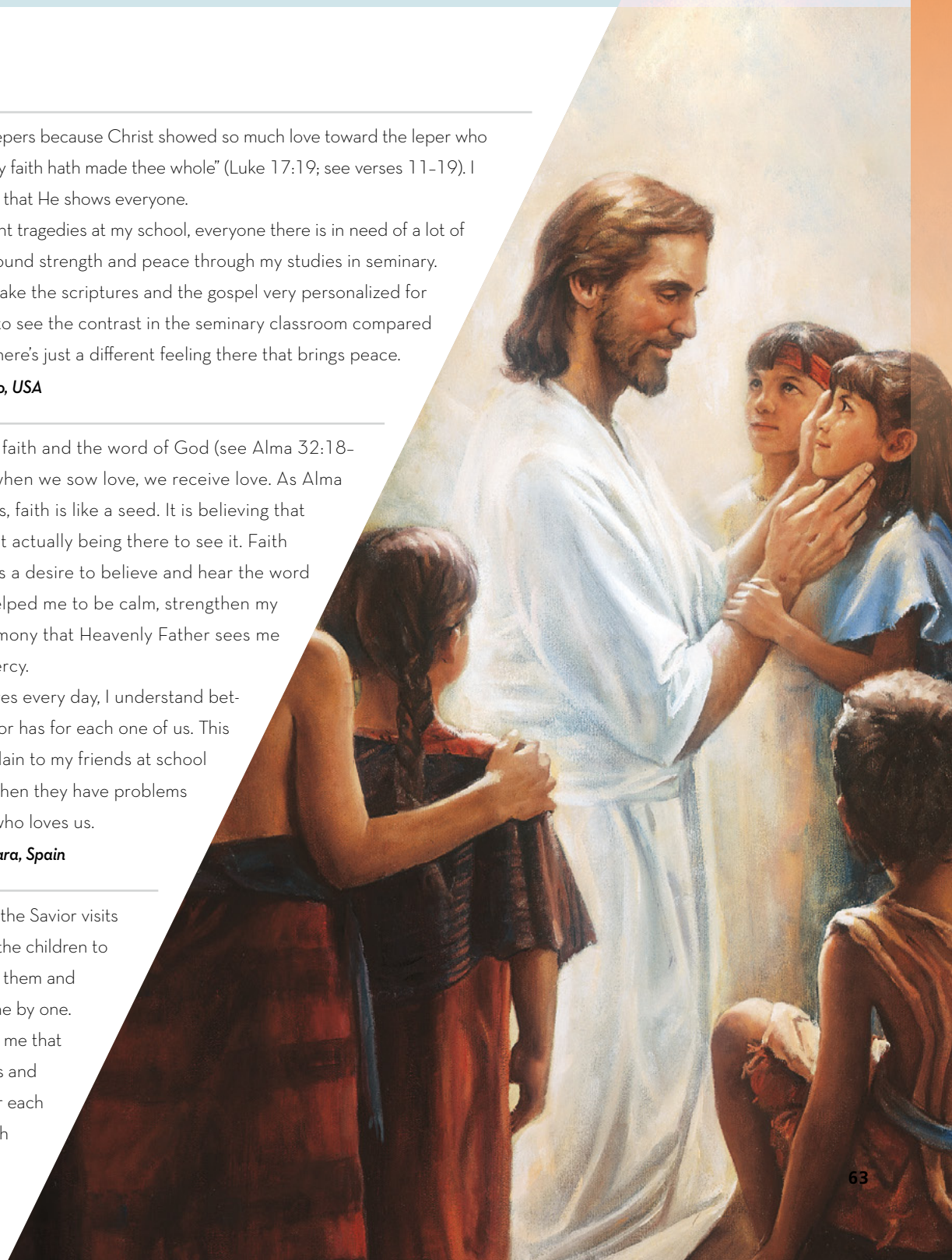
Gabriel S., age 16, Colorado, USA

The story of Alma about faith and the word of God (see Alma 32:18–43) has taught me that when we sow love, we receive love. As Alma explains to the Zoramites, faith is like a seed. It is believing that something is true without actually being there to see it. Faith grows when a person has a desire to believe and hear the word of God. All of this has helped me to be calm, strengthen my heart, and obtain a testimony that Heavenly Father sees me with eyes of love and mercy.

As I study the scriptures every day, I understand better the love that our Savior has for each one of us. This knowledge helps me explain to my friends at school that they are not alone when they have problems because there is a God who loves us.

Maria D., age 17, Guadalajara, Spain

I like in 3 Nephi 17 when the Savior visits the Americas and invites the children to come to Him. He sits with them and spends time with them one by one. That’s an amazing story to me that shows who Jesus Christ is and how much love He has for each of us. I believe He’ll sit with





each of us
too when we
need His help.

This year
I challenged myself
to read a page of
scriptures every day.
As I've done that, I've
grown to look forward to
it every day. I've learned
so much from the words and
the stories in the scriptures as
I've tried to spend time to under-
stand them, and I've drawn closer
to my Heavenly Father and Savior
as I've learned about Them too. That's
brought a lot of peace into my life.

Anna C., age 17, Montana, USA

I love when Christ comes to the Americas, asks if there are any sick and afflicted among them, and then heals them. Then He blesses the little children. (See 3 Nephi 17.) I think it's a really cool and powerful story. I like little kids, and I like when people give them extra love, because children are so pure. The story shows me the depth of the Savior's love for us. Since He loved the people back then enough to do everything He did, He can love us today too.

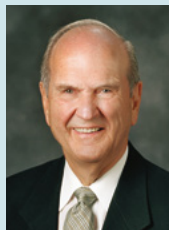
Isaiah 53:3 says the Savior is "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." When I think about Christ's Atonement, what He went through for us, and how I can be forgiven when I repent of my sins, I feel really peaceful. Many people in the Book of Mormon—the sons of Mosiah, Ammon, and Alma the Younger—had rocky pasts, but they were able to be forgiven. They turned to Christ, repented, and became awesome examples that we can learn from today. It's comforting to me to know I can be forgiven too.

Alina T., age 18, Oregon, USA

My favorite scripture story about Jesus is when He turned water into wine during a wedding, at the prompting of His mother (see John 2:1–11). This is my favorite because the story shows Jesus's respect for women and His mother in particular. This story encourages children to obey their parents, not out of fear but out of immense love. Jesus Christ's example is what everyone should strive for. His love for His mother never ceased, and neither should our love for our parents. It is also my favorite passage because His miracle is an act of service, and we too can create miracles by helping others.

This story and other stories in the scriptures have brought me peace. It is very comforting knowing that if I am always trying to learn of Christ and follow His teachings, I can return to our loving Heavenly Father one day.

Anne R., age 17, Victoria, Australia



FOCUS ON HIM

“Our focus must be riveted on the Savior and His gospel. It is mentally rigorous to strive to look unto Him in every thought. But when we do, our doubts and fears flee.”

President Russell M. Nelson, “Drawing the Power of Christ into Our Lives,” Apr. 2017 general conference.

I love the story of Christ and the rich young man (see Mark 10:17–22). It gives me a lot of insight and perspective about prioritizing God above everything. Being asked to sell every single worldly possession would be a very difficult request for just about everyone. But I think that being willing to place God over possessions is one of the things that each of us has to learn in life. Jesus Christ’s boundless love for us is truly spectacular. It is definitely better than any amount of money or belongings we gain in this life.

Reading the scriptures brings me peace and comfort, as well as greater wisdom and understanding. Although I may not always feel the power of scripture study immediately, I know that reading the scriptures positively influences my life and helps me to feel the Spirit and recognize His promptings.

Yuzhen C., age 19, Taichung, Taiwan

As Christ is on His way to see a young girl who is dying, a woman with a blood issue simply touches His clothing and is healed. Christ turns and talks with her after realizing that she has touched Him (see Luke 8:43–48). Despite going to help someone else, Christ made time for her as well. Christ makes time for all of us too.

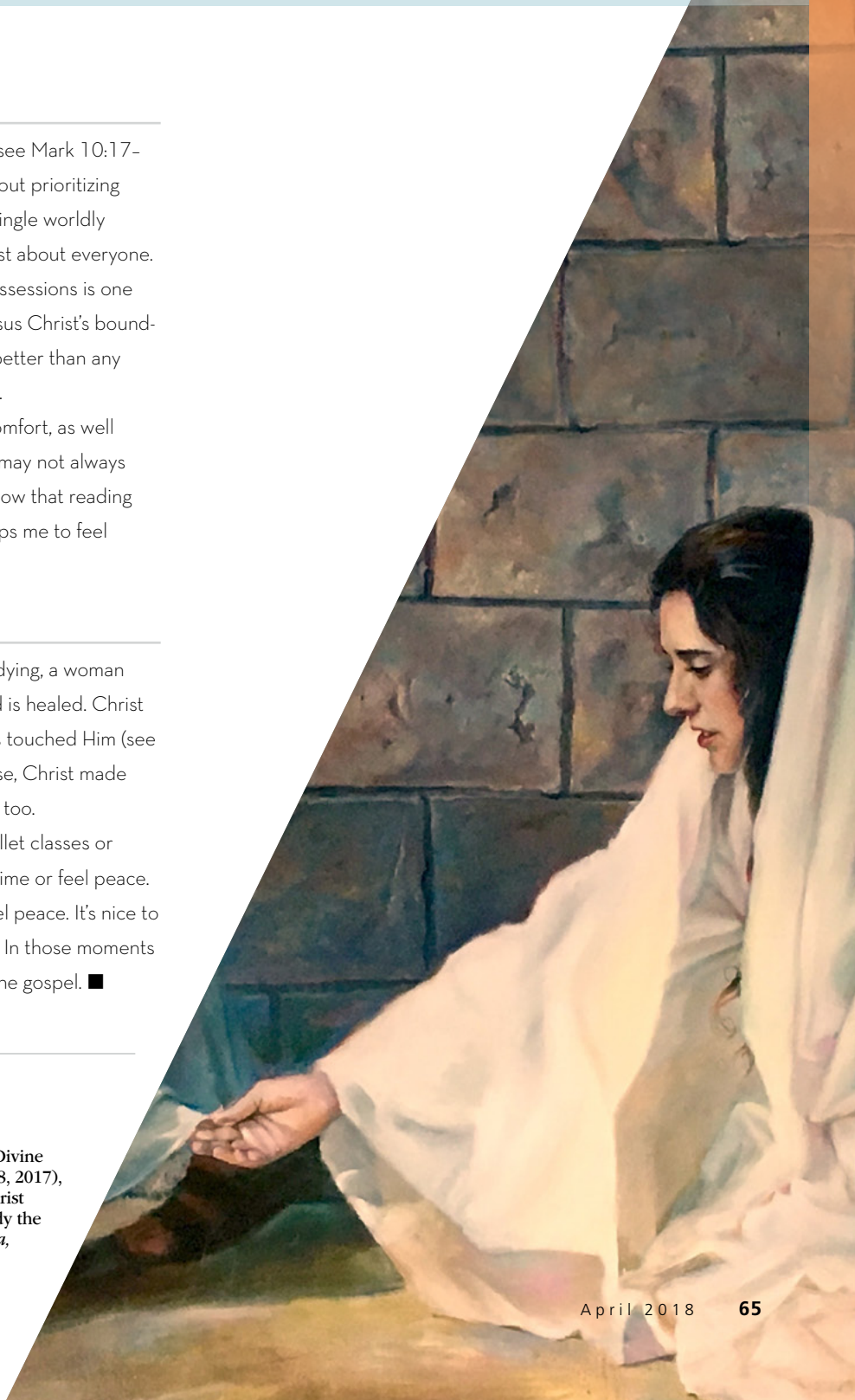
I have a really busy life, running to school or ballet classes or other errands. During all of that, I don’t get alone time or feel peace. When I read my scriptures or say a prayer, I do feel peace. It’s nice to feel that way and have a break from the craziness. In those moments of peace, I grow closer to the Savior and grow in the gospel. ■

Zoe B., age 17, Utah, USA

The author lives in Utah, USA.









NOTE

1. See Russell M. Nelson, “Prophets, Leadership, and Divine Law” (worldwide devotional for young adults, Jan. 8, 2017), broadcasts.lds.org; “Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives,” Apr. 2017 general conference; “Study the Savior’s Words,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2018, 56–59; *New Era*, Jan. 2018, 2–5.



What the Restoration Means to Me

The Restoration of the Church began when Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ visited Joseph Smith in 1820. After that, other important things happened to bring Jesus Christ's Church back to earth. Read these cards, cut them out, glue them to paper, and play a matching game.

	Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith...		... so I know They have bodies like me!
	Joseph Smith translated the golden plates...		... so I can read the Book of Mormon!
	John the Baptist gave the Aaronic Priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery...		... so I can be baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints!
	Peter, James, and John restored the Melchizedek Priesthood...		... so I can have the gift of the Holy Ghost!



The Church was organized on April 6, 1830...



... so I can go to church!



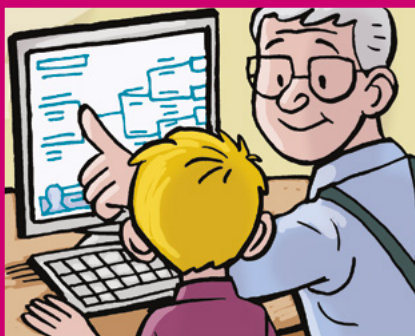
Emma Smith collected songs for the Church's first hymnbook...



... so I can sing the hymns!



In the Kirtland Temple, Elijah gave Joseph Smith the keys to seal families...



... so I can do family history and go to the temple!



The Lord commanded early Saints to pay a tithe of 10 percent...



... so I can donate tithing and fast offerings!



Aurelia Rogers started the Primary Association to teach children in her neighborhood...



... so I can go to Primary!



"As one of His servants, I declare my witness that Jesus is the Christ, our Redeemer and our Savior. I know that He lives and that His tender mercies are available to all of us."

By Elder David A. Bednar

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

From *"The Tender Mercies of the Lord,"* Ensign or Liahona, May 2005, 99.



By Elder
Valeri V. Cordón
Of the Seventy

An Amazing Lesson



*“I will . . . open you
the windows of heaven, and
pour you out a blessing” (Malachi 3:10).*

When I was growing up in Guatemala, my family owned a factory that made uniforms for sports teams.

My dad wanted the children in our family to learn to work hard. We helped him in the factory. I got in trouble a lot when I was little. I always seemed to break things! But when I was older, my dad let me take care of the knitting machines.

My dad paid us for the work we did. Then he would ask, “What are you going to do with your money?” I knew what the right answer was: “Pay my tithing and save for my mission.”

When I was about 13, our business lost a lot of money. We had to get rid of a lot of our sewing machines. Instead of having two hundred workers, we had fewer than five. They worked in our garage at home.

I had always paid my tithing, but I never really understood how important it was. Then I learned an amazing lesson. One Saturday morning I heard my parents talking quietly. My dad told my mom that there was enough money to either pay tithing or buy food. There wasn’t enough for both. I was worried. What would my dad do?

On Sunday I saw my dad hand an envelope to our branch president. He chose to pay tithing! I was glad he did, but I was also worried. What would we eat?

The next morning some people knocked on our door. They told my dad that they needed uniforms right away. Usually people paid us after the order was finished. But these people paid my dad that day, even before we had made the uniforms!

In one weekend, I learned a beautiful lesson that has lasted me a lifetime. The law of tithing helps us build our faith and show our gratitude to Heavenly Father. Paying tithing is a blessing! ■

Abuelo's Shoe Shop

By Ray Goldrup

Based on a true story

"I am sorry" is not always easy to say"

(Children's Songbook, 98).

Miguel opened the door to his abuelo's (his grandpa's) shoe shop. He smelled the leather that Abuelo worked with. It was one of his favorite smells.

"Hi, Abuelo!"

Abuelo was kneeling down and tracing a customer's foot onto a piece of paper. He didn't look up. Abuelo's hearing wasn't very good.

Miguel sat down at a workbench. He looked at the stacks of cut leather. He imagined what Abuelo would make with each one, using his hammer and pliers.

The tools reminded Miguel of something else he loved. Abuelo always gave him a piece of candy whenever Miguel helped clean up.

But Miguel was hungry now! He knew he wasn't supposed to take a treat without asking, but it looked like Abuelo would be busy for a while. "Maybe I don't have to wait," Miguel thought.

Miguel reached under the counter for the candy jar. It was full of his favorite candy—sweet and spicy with chili powder! As he opened it, Miguel felt a little uncomfortable. But the candy looked so tasty. He hurried and put it in his mouth.

Pretty soon the customer left. Abuelo picked up a piece of leather and dunked it in some water. That helped keep the leather soft and easy to work with.



*"You know, we
need to be more
like this shoe,"
Grandfather said.*



Miguel gobbled the rest of the candy as fast as he could. Then he walked over to Abuelo.

"Hello!" Abuelo said with a smile. "I'm glad you came to see me."

Miguel hugged Abuelo. He hoped Abuelo couldn't tell he'd eaten a piece of candy. Miguel pushed the worry away.

"It looks like you're busy today," Miguel said, pointing to the stacks of leather. "Do you need any help?"

"Sure! Could you pass me that thread?"

Miguel reached for a long piece of thread. He tugged it between his hands. It was tougher than it looked.

"Wow, that's strong."

Abuelo chuckled. "It has to be, to last through the wear and tear of life." Abuelo pulled the thread through the leather. Then he got that look on his face that Mamá sometimes called the "Wise Abuelo" look.

"You know, we need to be more like this shoe," Abuelo said with a nod.

Miguel squinted at the leather. "Um. We do?"

"Yes, indeed. We need to stay strong. That way Satan's temptations won't make us fall apart."

The red candy flashed through Miguel's mind. He knew he should tell Abuelo about it.

Abuelo took an old shoe off the shelf. "See this big hole?"

Miguel could probably fit his hand through the hole. "Yeah."

"This was once a small hole that could've been fixed easily. But they waited, and now it's going to be much

harder to fix. Bad habits and bad choices are like that hole. Best to fix them early."

Abuelo nodded again, and the Wise Abuelo look turned back into a smile. They kept talking as Abuelo worked. The whole time, Miguel kept thinking about the red candy stick.

When Abuelo finished, Miguel helped him clean up. Then Abuelo reached for his jar of candy.

Finally Miguel couldn't take it anymore. "I took one of your candies!" he blurted out.

Abuelo set down the jar. "What was that?"

Miguel told him about taking the candy without asking. "I'm so sorry, Abuelo! I'll never do it again, I promise!"

Abuelo gave Miguel a big hug. Miguel felt so much better.

"Thank you for being honest. That's more important to me than just about anything else."

On the walk home, Miguel felt just like one of Abuelo's new pair of shoes. Strong as can be, and ready for life! ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



A GOOD FEELING

One day me and my mom went to pay my mom's water bill, and the man in front of us dropped a whole lot of money but didn't realize it. I hurried and gave it back to him. He said, "Thank you very much" and said that he didn't think any other kid would do that. I had such a good feeling after that. I will always remember that good feeling.

Brianna C., age 9, Idaho, USA

Dare to Be KIND!

I shine my light by
being kind to others.

Hi!

I'm Claudia
and I live in
Australia.

Claudia's
brother, Tyler

I Stand Up for Others

A boy in my class at school has a hard time learning. I stick up for him when people tease him, and I help him in class when he needs it. My teacher said this is the only year he feels a part of his class.



My Tiny Teddy Bear

When my teacher's uncle died, she was very sad. She doesn't know about the Church, so I told her that Heavenly Father loves her. I made her a card and told her that she will see her uncle again. I gave her my special tiny teddy bear to help her through sad times.



Lucky Friends

My neighbor Olivia struggles with walking, talking, and hearing. Olivia's mum says that Olivia is lucky to have a friend like me. I am lucky too!



Singing and the Holy Ghost

I like to sing songs from the *Children's Songbook*. My family says it helps them feel the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost gives me a warm feeling inside.

HOW CAN YOU SHINE?

DARE to make friends with someone who doesn't have many friends.

DARE to help your neighbor.

DARE to invite a friend to church.

DARE to sing!



SEND US A STAR!

How do you let your light shine, as Jesus asked us to do? Email a picture of your star with your story and your photo, along with your parent's permission, to liahona@ldschurch.org.



I know that Heavenly Father answers prayers. When my family lived in Germany, we went on a *Volksmarch* in our village. *Volksmarch* is where friends and neighbors enjoy time with each other by going on a nature walk together. My parents said that I could walk ahead of the group with one of my friends, and we started out on the long trail.

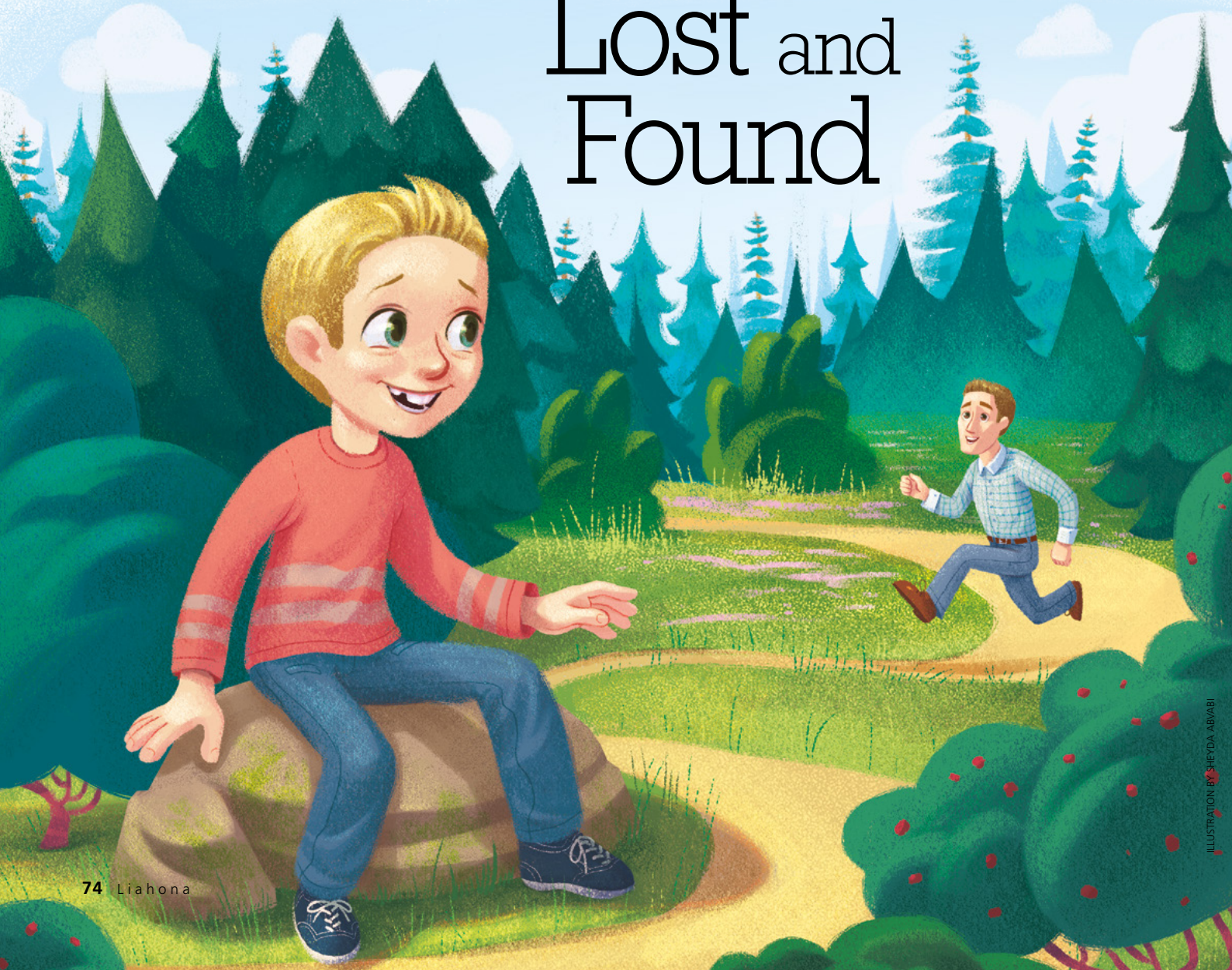
After a few minutes I could not see anyone in my family. I told my friend that I was going to stay on the trail and wait for them. Soon I could no longer see my friend or her family, and my parents still hadn't come. I

was all alone in the forest, and I felt scared. I decided to say a prayer that someone would find me.

In another part of the forest, my dad felt the Holy Ghost telling him, "Go look for your son." He felt how much I needed him, so he turned right around and told my mom that he was going to look for me. A few minutes later my dad came running up the trail where I was waiting and found me. I was so glad to see my dad! When he told me about having a strong feeling that I needed help, I knew that Heavenly Father had answered my prayer.

I am so glad to know that wherever I am, I can talk to Heavenly Father. He will help me find my way. ■

Lost and Found



OUR PAGE



I was nervous at my baptism, but when I got in the water, I felt full of joy and happiness.

Thomas B., age 8, Uruguay



We traveled from Cambodia to the Hong Kong China Temple so that my little sister, Laura, could be sealed to our family. I felt the Spirit in that special place.

Rosa P., age 9, Cambodia



One day in class, I was reading quietly while everyone else played board games. When the bell rang, they stuffed the games back on the shelf and made a mess. I started cleaning it up, and soon everyone else started helping. I let my light shine by being a good example.

Winnie W., age 10, Canada



When I turned eight, my grandparents and many friends came to my baptism. My father baptized and confirmed me. Later I donated 12 inches (30 cm) of my hair to a child with cancer. My birthday made me very happy!

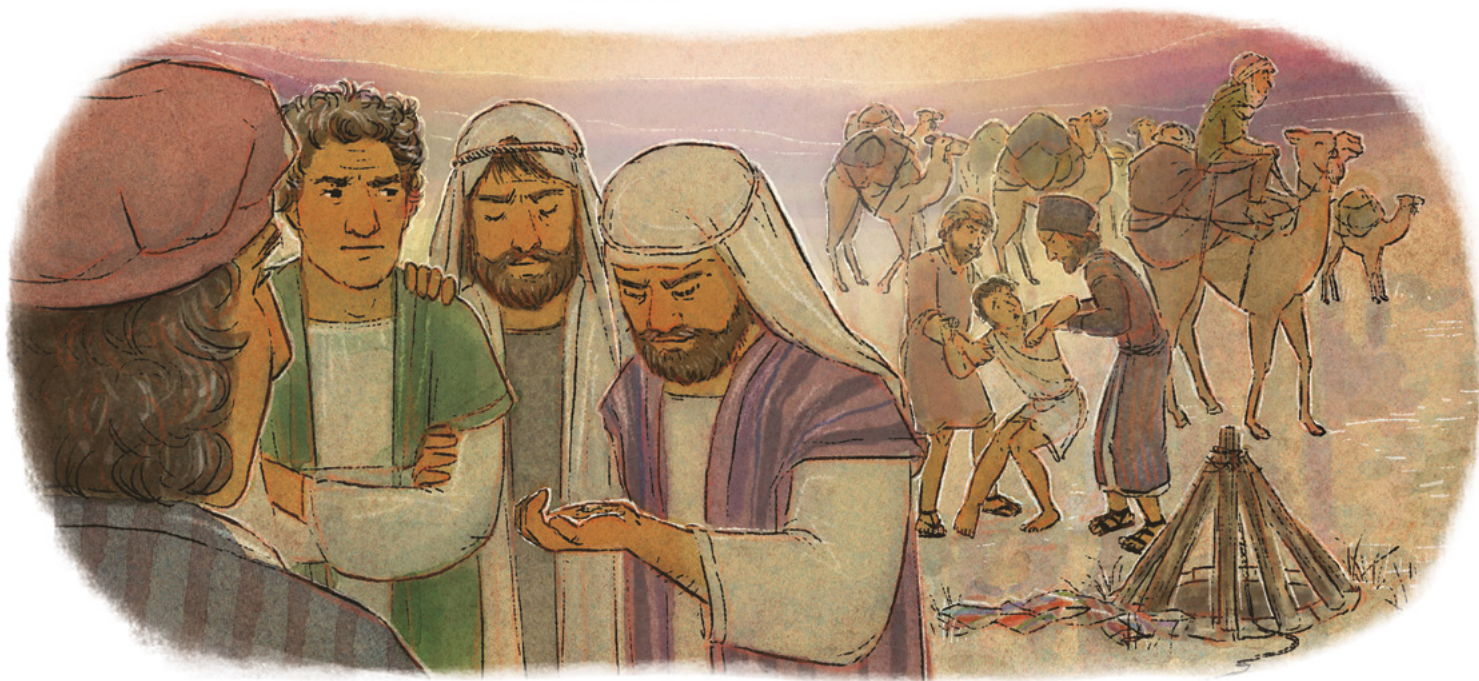
Lavona R., age 8, Indonesia

Joseph Is Sold into Egypt

By Kim Webb Reid

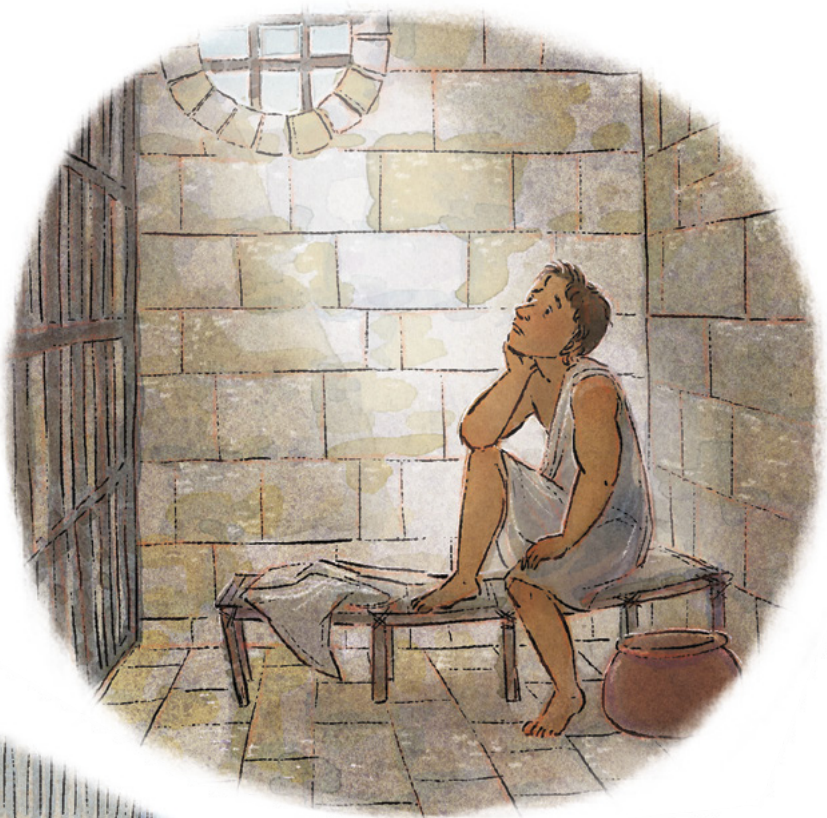


Joseph had 11 brothers. His father gave him a beautiful, colorful coat. God told Joseph that he would lead his brothers.



Joseph's older brothers were angry. They didn't want Joseph to be their leader! They sold him to people going to Egypt, and he became a slave.

Joseph worked hard. He made good choices, even when people lied about him and put him in prison.



Even during the hard times, Joseph trusted God. And God was with Joseph. Joseph became a leader in Egypt! When he got older, he helped lead his family, just like God said he would.



I can trust God like Joseph did. I can choose the right.
God will be with me no matter what. ■

From Genesis 37–41.

Jesus Says, "Come, Follow Me."





By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION

Jesus Christ is in fact the only name or way by which salvation can come to mankind.

Consider for a moment the significance of the Resurrection in resolving once and for all the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth and the great philosophical contests and questions of life. If Jesus was in fact literally resurrected, it necessarily follows that He is a divine being. No mere mortal has the power in himself to come to life again after dying. Because He was resurrected, Jesus cannot have been only a carpenter, a teacher, a rabbi, or a prophet. Because He was resurrected, Jesus had to have been a God, even the Only Begotten Son of the Father.

Therefore, what He taught is true; God cannot lie.

Therefore, He was the Creator of the earth, as He said.

Therefore, heaven and hell are real, as He taught.



Therefore, there is a world of spirits, which He visited after His death.

Therefore, He will come again, as the angels said, and “reign personally upon the earth” [Articles of Faith 1:10].

Therefore, there is a resurrection and a final judgment for all.

Given the reality of the Resurrection of Christ, doubts about the omnipotence, omniscience, and benevolence of God the Father—who gave His Only Begotten Son for the redemption of the world—are groundless. Doubts about the meaning and purpose of life are unfounded. Jesus Christ is in fact the only name or way by which salvation can come to mankind. The grace of Christ is real, affording both forgiveness and cleansing to the

repentant sinner. Faith truly is more than imagination or psychological invention. There is ultimate and universal truth, and there are objective and unchanging moral standards, as taught by Him.

Given the reality of the Resurrection of Christ, repentance of any violation of His law and commandments is both possible and urgent. The Savior’s miracles were real, as is His promise to His disciples that they might do the same and even greater works. His priesthood is necessarily a real power that “administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest” [D&C 84:19–20]. Given the reality of the Resurrection of Christ, death is not our end, and though “skin worms destroy [our bodies], yet in [our] flesh shall [we] see God” [Job 19:26]. ■

From an address given at the April 2014 general conference.



**CHRIST VISITS THE NEPHITES,
BY MINERVA TEICHERT**

"Have ye any that are sick among you? . . . Bring them hither and I will heal them. . . .

"And it came to pass that when he had thus spoken, all the multitude . . . did go forth with their sick and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them" (3 Nephi 17:7, 9).



YOUTH TEACHERS

**WHAT, WHY, AND HOW:
A BREAKDOWN OF THE
RESTORATION**

*Make apostasy and restoration
easy to understand this Sunday.*

58

YOUNG ADULTS

**SIX PATHS
TO TRUE
HAPPINESS**

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PARENTS AND
PRIMARY LEADERS

**A RESTORATION
MATCHING
GAME FOR
FAMILY HOME
EVENING OR
SHARING TIME**

66

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



ENGLISH