

# Liahona



Opening the Door  
of Prayer, p. 2

Meet Elder Andersen, p. 8

Four Questions You Might  
Have about Patriarchal  
Blessings, p. 34

Children's Gifts to President  
Monson, p. F4

# Adults

## FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

2 **That He May Write upon Our Hearts**  
By President Henry B. Eyring

## VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

25 **Seek Education and Lifelong Learning**

## FEATURE ARTICLES

8 **Elder Neil L. Andersen: Man of Faith**  
By Elder D. Todd Christofferson  
*The Church's newest Apostle, called in April 2009, has lived his life by acting in faith, believing that the Lord will bless us beyond our abilities.*

16 **Opening the Heavens**  
By Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi  
*Do you want to deepen your spirituality? Each morning spend precious and reverent time with Heavenly Father, approaching Him in prayer and scripture study.*

22 **Guarding against Danger from Within: The Legend of Mixco Viejo** By Adam C. Olson  
*How do we keep our families safe? An ancient legend suggests a way.*

26 **Managing Postpartum Depression: A Gospel Perspective** By Lynn Clark Callister  
*Helpful ways to meet the challenge of postpartum depression.*

## DEPARTMENTS

44 **Latter-day Saint Voices**  
*A quick conversion to home teaching; a father's timeless counsel found in an old Bible; finding strength and comfort amid problems; a lost key at a new job.*

48 **Using This Issue**  
*Family evening ideas; a memorable family home evening; topics in this issue.*

## ON THE COVER

Front: Photo illustration by David Stoker.  
Back: Scene from the Church film *The Restoration*; photo illustration by Matthew Reier.

# Youth

## FEATURE ARTICLES

14 **Better Than an A** By Shanda Stephens  
*My little sister was looking for a hero. Did I have time to be one?*

34 **When Should I Get My Patriarchal Blessing?**  
By Robert K Wagstaff  
*What is a patriarchal blessing? When and how should you get yours? A stake patriarch explains.*

37 **Too Holy?** By R. Val Johnson  
*His friends called him a killjoy. But to join the Church, this young man gladly made some changes.*

38 **Role Models** By Elder Benson E. Misalucha  
*There are many people who inspire us to live as we should. You will strengthen your testimony and learn to be obedient by following their examples.*

## DEPARTMENTS

21 **Poster: Too Much Information?**

32 **Questions & Answers**  
*"My friend has started smoking. How can I offer to help her quit without offending her?"*



August 2009 Vol. 33 No. 8  
LIAHONA 04288

Official international magazine of The Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter-day Saints

**The First Presidency:** Thomas S. Monson, Henry B. Eyring,  
Dieter F. Uchtdorf

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

**Editor:** Spencer J. Condie

**Advisers:** Gary J. Coleman, Kenneth Johnson,  
Yoshihiko Kikuchi, W. Douglas Shumway

**Managing Director:** David L. Frischknecht

**Editorial Director:** Victor D. Cave

**Senior Editor:** Larry Hiller

**Graphics Director:** Allan R. Loyborg

**Managing Editor:** R. Val Johnson

**Assistant Managing Editors:** Jennifer L. Greenwood,  
Adam C. Olson

**Associate Editor:** Ryan Carr

**Assistant Editor:** Susan Barrett

**Editorial Staff:** David A. Edwards, Matthew D. Flitton,  
LaRene Porter Gaunt, Annie Jones, Carrie Kasten, Jennifer  
Maddy, Melissa Merrill, Michael R. Morris, Sally J. Odekirik,  
Judith M. Paller, Joshua J. Perkey, Chad E. Phares, Jan  
Pinborough, Richard M. Romney, Don L. Searle, Janet  
Thomas, Paul VanDenBerghe, Julie Wardell  
**Senior Secretary:** Laurel Teuscher

**Managing Art Director:** M. M. Kawasaki

**Art Director:** Scott Van Kampen

**Production Manager:** Jane Ann Peters

**Design and Production Staff:** Cali R. Arroyo, Collette  
Nebeker Aune, Howard G. Brown, Julie Burdett, Thomas S.  
Child, Reginald J. Christensen, Kim Fenstermaker, Kathleen  
Howard, Eric P. Johnsen, Denise Kirby, Scott M. Mooy,  
Ginny J. Nilson

**Prepress:** Jeff L. Martin

**Printing Director:** Craig K. Sedgwick

**Distribution Director:** Randy J. Benson

For subscriptions and prices outside the United States and  
Canada, contact your local Church distribution center or  
ward or branch leader.

Send manuscripts and queries to *Liahona*, Rm. 2420, 50 E.  
North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA; or  
e-mail: [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org).

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

© 2009 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.  
Printed in the United States of America.

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

The *Liahona* can be found in many languages on the Internet  
at [www.liahona.lds.org](http://www.liahona.lds.org).

**For Readers in the United States and Canada:**

August 2009 Vol. 33 No. 8. 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 (Visa, MasterCard,  
American Express) may be taken by phone. (Canada Poste  
Information: Publication Agreement #40017431)

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Salt Lake  
Distribution Center, Church Magazines, PO Box 26368,  
Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368.

# Children

## COME LISTEN TO A PROPHET'S VOICE

F2 **Reach Out to Others** By President Thomas S. Monson

## FEATURE ARTICLES

F4 **Happy Birthday, President Monson!**

F10 **Jason's Escape** By Carolyn LeDuc

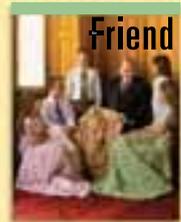
## DEPARTMENTS

F6 **From the Life of the Prophet Joseph Smith:  
Hard at Work, Hard at Play**

F8 **Sharing Time: The Temple—I'm Going There  
Someday** By Cheryl Esplin

F13 **Coloring Page**

F14 **Making Friends:  
Love Your Country**  
By Richard M. Romney



THE FRIEND COVER  
Photograph by Craig  
Dimond.



See if you can find  
the Tagalog CTR  
ring hidden in this  
issue. Choose the  
right page!

## Comment

### It Leads Us Down the Right Path

I was baptized about a year ago,  
and I thank the Lord for sending the  
missionaries to my home. Thanks to  
the scriptures and the teachings of the  
prophets published in the *Liahona*, I  
have been able to better understand  
this life and God's love for me and for  
my family. The scriptures and gospel  
teachings in the *Liahona* have strength-  
ened my testimony, helped me to grow,  
and nourished my spirit. I encourage  
everyone to read the *Liahona*; it draws  
us nearer to our Father and leads us  
down the right path.

*Stephanie Acosta, Uruguay*

### The Savior Shows Us the Way

I am grateful for the *Liahona*, espe-  
cially the issue about the Savior (March  
2008). It inspired me and strengthened  
my testimony of Him. He did all things  
for us. He set the perfect example of  
how to live in this world, how to over-  
come trials, and how to be immovable  
in keeping the commandments. I am  
so thankful for the Savior. I know He  
lives. He is always willing to comfort  
us and show us the way. All we need  
to do is come unto Him.

*Nenetha C. Ybañez, Philippines*

Please send your feedback or suggestions to  
[liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org). Letters that are printed  
may be edited for length or clarity.



# That He May Write upon Our Hearts

BY PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING

First Counselor in the First Presidency

**P**arents should teach their children to pray. The child learns both from what the parents do and what they say.

The child who sees a mother or a father pass through the trials of life with fervent prayer to God and then hears a sincere testimony that God answered in kindness will remember what he or she saw and heard. When trials come, that individual will be prepared.

In time, when the children are away from home and family, prayer can provide the shield of protection the parent will want so much for them to have. Parting can be hard, particularly when the parent and the child know that they may not see each other for a long time. I had that experience with my father. We parted on a street corner in New York City. He had come there for his work. I was there on my way to another place. We both knew that I probably would never return to live with my parents under the same roof again.

It was a sunny day, around noontime, the streets crowded with cars and pedestrians. On that particular corner there was a traffic light which stopped the cars in all directions for a few minutes. The light changed to red;

the cars stopped. The crowd of pedestrians hurried off the curbs, moving every way, including diagonally, across the intersection.

The time had come for parting, and I started across the street. I stopped almost in the center, with people rushing by me. I turned to look back. Instead of moving off in the crowd, my father was still standing on the corner looking at me. To me he seemed lonely and perhaps a little sad. I wanted to go back to him, but I realized the light would change and so I turned and hurried on.

Years later I talked to him about that moment. He told me that I had misread his face. He said he was not sad; he was concerned. He had seen me look back, as if I were a little boy, uncertain and looking for assurance. He told me in those later years that the thought in his mind had been: "Will he be all right? Have I taught him enough? Is he prepared for whatever may lie ahead?"

There were more than thoughts in his mind. I knew from having watched him that he had feelings in his heart. He yearned for me to be protected, to be safe. I had heard and felt that yearning in his prayers—and even more in the prayers of my mother—for all the years I had lived with them. I had learned from that, and I remembered.



*Our goal when we teach our children to pray is for them to want God to write upon their hearts and be willing then to go and do what God asks of them.*

### **A Matter of the Heart**

Prayer is a matter of the heart. I had been taught far more than the rules of prayer. I had learned from my parents and from the Savior's teachings that we must address our Heavenly Father in the reverent language of prayer. "Our Father . . . in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9). I knew that we never profane His sacred name—never. Can you imagine how the prayers of a child are harmed by hearing a parent profane the name of God? There will be terrible consequences for such an offense to the little ones.

I had learned that it was important to give thanks for blessings and to ask for forgiveness. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). I had been taught that we ask for what we need and pray for others to be blessed. "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). I knew that we must surrender our will. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). I had been taught and found it true that we can be warned of danger and shown early what we have done which displeased God. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13).

I had learned that we must always pray in the name of Jesus Christ. But something I had seen and heard had taught me that those words were more than a formality. There was a picture of the Savior on the bedroom wall where my mother was bedridden in the years before she died. She had put it there because of something her cousin, Elder Samuel O. Bennion of the Seventy (1874–1945), had told her. He had traveled with an Apostle who described seeing the Savior in a vision. Elder Bennion gave her that print, saying that it was the best portrayal he had ever seen of the Master's strength of character. So she framed it and placed it on the wall where she could see it from her bed.



She knew the Savior, and she loved Him. I had learned from her that we do not close in the name of a stranger when we approach our Father in prayer. I knew from what I had seen of her life that her heart was drawn to the Savior from years of determined and consistent effort to serve Him and to please Him. I knew the scripture was true which warns, "For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?" (Mosiah 5:13).

### **No Casual Invocation**

Now years after my mother and father are gone, the words "in the name of Jesus Christ" are not casual for me, either when I say them or when I hear others say them. We must serve Him to know the Master's heart. But we also must pray that Heavenly Father will answer our prayers in our hearts as well as in our minds (see Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16).

President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), a former counselor

in the First Presidency, described the blessing of people coming together having prayed for such answers. He was speaking of going to a priesthood meeting, yet many of you have prepared your hearts in the way he described in these words:

"I should enter that assembly with my mind entirely free from all influence that would prevent the operation of the Spirit of God upon me. I should go in a prayerful spirit, asking God to *write upon my heart* His will; not with my own will already prepared, and determined to carry out my will . . . , regardless of everyone else's views. If I were to go, and all the rest were to go, with this spirit, then the Spirit of God would be felt in our midst, and that which we would decide upon would be the mind and will of God, because God would reveal it to us. We would see light in the direction

where we should go, and we would behold darkness in the direction we should not go.”<sup>1</sup>

Our goal when we teach our children to pray is for them to want God to write upon their hearts and be willing then to go and do what God asks of them. It is possible for our children to have faith enough, from what they see us do and what we teach, that they can feel at least part of what the Savior felt as He prayed to have the strength to make His infinite sacrifice for us: “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

I have had prayers answered. Those answers were most clear when what I wanted was silenced by an overpowering need to know what God wanted. It is then that the answer from a loving Heavenly Father can be spoken to the mind by the still, small voice and can be written on the heart.

#### **Learning to Seek His Will**

Some parents will ask: “But how can I soften the heart of my child now grown older and convinced he or she doesn’t need God? How can I soften a heart enough to allow God to write His will upon it?”

***The child who sees a mother or a father pass through the trials of life with fervent prayer and then hears a sincere testimony that God answered in kindness will remember. When trials come, that individual will be prepared.***



Sometimes tragedy will soften a heart. But for some, even tragedy is not enough.

But there is one need even hardened and proud people cannot believe they can meet for themselves. They cannot lift the weight of sin from their own shoulders. And even the most hardened may at times feel the prick of conscience and thus the need for forgiveness from God. A loving father, Alma, taught that need to his son Corianton this way: “And now, the plan of mercy could not be brought about except an atonement should be made; therefore God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also” (Alma 42:15).

And then, after bearing testimony of the Savior and His Atonement, the father made this plea for a softened heart: “O my son, I desire that ye should deny the justice of God no more. Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins, by denying the justice of God; but do you let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in humility” (Alma 42:30).

Alma knew what we can know: that testifying of Jesus Christ and Him crucified had the greatest possibility of helping his son sense the need for the help only God could give. And prayers are answered to those whose hearts are softened by that overwhelming feeling of the need for cleansing.

### **Opening the Door of Prayer**

When we teach those we love that we are spirit children temporarily away from a loving Heavenly Father, we open the door of prayer to them.

We lived in His presence before we came here to be tested. We knew His face, and He knew ours. Just as my earthly father watched me go away from him, our Father in Heaven watched us go into mortality.

His Beloved Son, Jehovah, left those glorious courts to come down into the world to suffer what we would suffer and to pay the price of all the sins we would commit. Our

## **IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS**

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

1. Sing or read the first two verses of the hymn “Our Savior’s Love” (*Hymns*, no. 113). Note the loving relationship described in the hymn. Read President Eyring’s experience about parting with his father in New York City. Invite family members to explain how they felt when they have had to leave a loved one for a time. Discuss how prayer can help family members feel closer to Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and each other.

2. Display a paper heart with “God’s Will” written on it. Read the section “No Casual Invocation,” and ask what the family thinks President Cannon meant by “write upon my heart His will.” Discuss how family members can “pray . . . to want God to write upon their hearts and be willing then to go and do what God asks of them.” Bear testimony of how prayer helps us know God’s will.

Savior provided for us the only way to go home again to our Heavenly Father and to Him. If the Holy Ghost can tell us just that much about who we are, we and our children might feel what Enos felt. He prayed this way:

“And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens.

“And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed” (Enos 1:4–5).

I can promise you that no joy will exceed what you will feel if a child of yours prays in the hour of need and receives such an answer. You will someday be separated from him or her, with a longing in your heart to be reunited. A loving Heavenly Father knows that this longing would last forever unless we are reunited as families with Him and His Beloved Son. He put in place all that His children will need to have this blessing. To find it, they must ask of God for themselves, nothing doubting, as the boy Joseph Smith did.

My dad was concerned that day in New York because he knew, as my mother knew, that the only real tragedy

would be if we were apart forever. That is why they taught me to pray. They knew we could be together forever only with God's help and with His assurances. As you will do, they taught prayer best by example.

The afternoon my mother died, we went from the hospital to the family home. We sat quietly in the darkened living room for a while. Dad excused himself and went to his bedroom. He was gone for a few minutes. When he walked back into the living room, there was a smile on his face. He said that he'd been concerned for Mother. During the time he had gathered her things from her hospital room and thanked the staff for being so kind to her, he thought of her going into the spirit world just minutes after her death. He was afraid she would be lonely if there was no one to meet her. He had gone to his bedroom to ask his Heavenly Father to have someone greet Mildred, his wife and my mother. He said that he had been told in answer to his prayer that his mother had met his sweetheart. I smiled at that too. Grandma Eyring was not very tall. I had a clear picture of her rushing through the crowd, her short legs moving rapidly on her mission to meet my mother.

Dad surely didn't intend at that moment to teach me about prayer, but he did. I can't remember a sermon from my mother or my father about prayer. They prayed when times were hard and when they were good. And they reported in matter-of-fact ways how kind God was, how powerful, and how close. The prayers I heard most were about what it would take for us to be together forever. And the answers which will remain written on my heart seem to be the assurances that we were on the path.

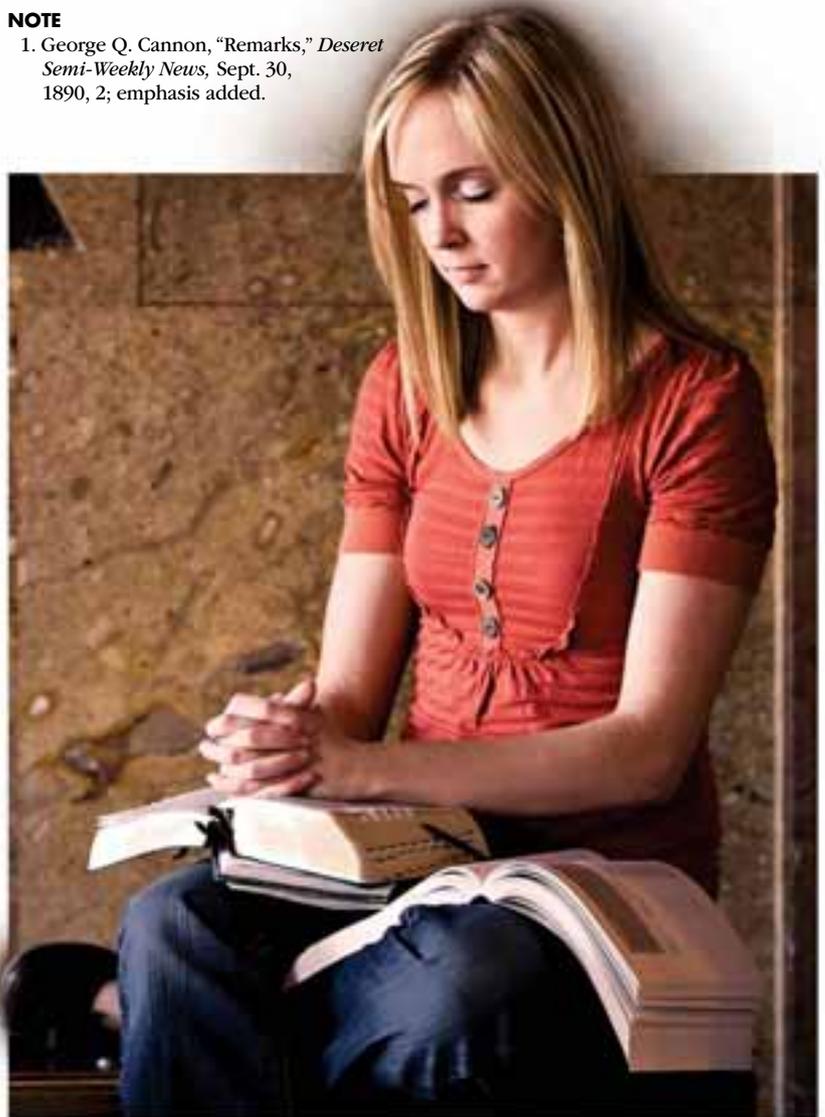
When I saw in my mind my grandmother rushing to my mother, I felt joy for them and a longing to bring my sweetheart and our children to such a reunion. That longing is why we must teach our children to pray.

I testify that our Heavenly Father answers the pleadings of faithful parents to know how to teach their children to pray. I testify as a servant of Jesus Christ that because of His Atonement, we can have eternal life in families if we honor the covenants offered in this, His true Church. ■

**NOTE**

1. George Q. Cannon, "Remarks," *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, Sept. 30, 1890, 2; emphasis added.

**I**n time, when the children are away from home and family, prayer can provide the shield of protection the parent will want so much for them to have.



# Elder Neil L. Andersen: *Man of Faith*

BY ELDER D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

One February evening in 1968, Neil Andersen found himself the center of attention. He had been selected as a high school junior to represent Idaho in the Student Burgesses, a gathering of students from 37 countries and each of the 50 states in the United States. Students came together in Williamsburg, Virginia, to discuss challenges facing democracy.

This was the first time 16-year-old Neil, raised on a small farm in Pocatello, Idaho, had ever flown on an airplane, traveled so far from home, or been among so many bright and sophisticated young people.

As evening discussions turned to subjects around the world, Neil's membership in the Church became evident. Some of the delegates began to challenge his beliefs. Young Neil had never before been asked such pointed questions regarding his faith.

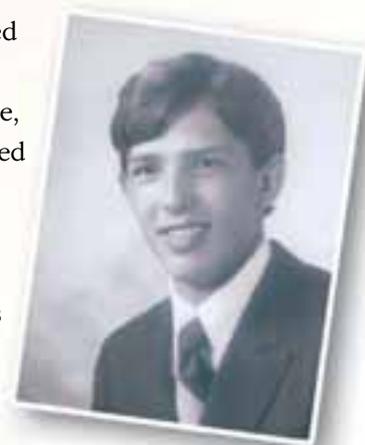
"I remember praying in my mind that I would say the words that needed to be spoken," he recalls. "What followed was a little miracle for me. I told them more than I knew. I felt the power of the Lord as He guided me through sensitive explanations and the sharing of my deep convictions. I could feel the Spirit of the Lord as I spoke. At the conclusion they expressed their appreciation and quietly acknowledged their respect for what I believed.

"I learned that there is a power and influence in this sacred work beyond ourselves and that it is worth defending. I understood that as we are true and faithful, 'ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is in [us]' (1 Peter 3:15), the Lord will bless us beyond our own abilities."

This is how Elder Neil L. Andersen has lived his life—acting in faith.

## **A Foundation of Faith**

Neil Linden Andersen was born on August 9, 1951, the third of five children, to Lyle and Kathryn Andersen. Neil's father was a student at





Utah State University studying agricultural husbandry. When Neil was three, the family moved to Colorado.

Neil's parents taught their family through their own faith and sacrifice. They lived 90 miles (145 km) from the meetinghouse. Making the journey to Church meetings was something they just did every Sunday. "We wanted to show our children how important the Church is," his mother, Kathryn, explains.

When Neil was five, his family moved to a dairy farm in Pocatello, Idaho. Neil raised rabbits, rode horses, and played in the fields with his siblings. When Neil was about seven years old, a rabbit he especially liked escaped from its cage. He relates:

"I looked all over our little farm, but I could not find it anywhere. I remember walking back behind an old barn and praying that I could find the rabbit.

"Immediately after the prayer, an image came into my mind of a spot beneath some boards. And sure enough, I went to that spot and found my rabbit. This experience and many others like it taught me that the Lord responds to the small and simple prayers of all of us."

Life on his parents' farm instilled the principle of hard work in Neil. "I milked a lot of cows and moved a lot of irrigation pipe," he says. "I can remember that on Christmas morning before we opened our presents, we had cows to milk. Looking back, I realize how valuable it was to

learn that part of life is just hard work."

As a young man Neil also worked hard at sports. In high school he lettered in cross-country running. However, he focused most of his energies on excelling in other ways. His mother recalls, "While at Highland High School, he attended Boys State in Boise, Idaho, and was elected governor by all of the other delegates. He was president of the Idaho Association of Student Councils, which included all the high school student body officers throughout Idaho."

As a freshman at Brigham Young University in 1969, Neil Andersen was a diligent student. However, his sister Sheri notes, "as driven as he was by education, he was always planning to go on a mission. His only question was if he was really prepared to serve. I was so impressed that faith was a choice to him."

Elder Andersen also remembers putting the question to the Lord. As he recalled recently in general conference, the feeling came, "You don't know everything, but you know enough."<sup>1</sup> Armed with that assurance, Neil Andersen accepted a mission call and served faithfully in France.

After his mission Neil continued to excel at BYU. He was named an Edwin S. Hinckley Scholar and elected student body vice president.

It was also at BYU that he met the person who would have the greatest influence on his life: Kathy Sue Williams. He and Kathy were married in the Salt Lake Temple on March 20, 1975, just before he graduated. Marriage was followed by two years at Harvard University, where he earned

**Opposite page, from left to right: Neil L. Andersen today and as a teenager in high school in Pocatello, Idaho. Above, from left to right: Neil (center) with his parents, Kathryn and Lyle, and siblings Lauri, Sheri, and Alan, 1962; Neil as a young boy on the farm in Idaho. Below: Neil as a missionary in France, 1970-72.**





**Above: Neil and Kathy on their wedding day, 1975, at the Salt Lake Temple.**

**Right: Neil and Kathy with their children, Brandt, Derek, Camey (Hadlock) in back, and Kristen (Ebert), in Tampa, Florida, 1988. Opposite page: The Andersen family in France while Elder Andersen served as mission president, around 1990.**

a master's degree in business administration in 1977.

### **A Focus on Family**

Neil and Kathy had their first child while attending Harvard, toward the end of their first year of marriage. Three more children followed.

With the arrival of children, Kathy postponed her studies but never gave up on finishing her degree. Elder Andersen expresses his admiration: "When we were in Brazil [where Elder Andersen served in the Area Presidency] and the children were

no longer living with us, she opened her books, learned Portuguese, and finished her degree—18 credit hours in Portuguese. That's the kind of tenacity that she has."

Following graduate school, the Andersens moved to Tampa, Florida, where they intended to settle for life, as this was where Kathy had been reared and where her family still lived. Neil engaged in several successful business ventures, including real estate development, health care, and advertising. The Lord, however, had other plans for him.

In 1989, while serving in a stake presidency, Neil was called as the mission president in Bordeaux, France. After returning to Florida in 1992, he was called within a month to be president of the Tampa Florida Stake. The following year, a new calling came: this time to the First Quorum of the Seventy. In 2005, he was called to the Presidency of the Seventy. Then, in April 2009, he was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Despite the pressures of his work and

his Church callings through those many years, his devotion to his family never wavered.

The Andersens' oldest daughter, Camey Hadlock, says, "Daddy [an endearing term still used by his sons and daughters] always made time for the children. For example, he took each one individually to breakfast with him once a month. He let us pick the place for breakfast and the topics we would talk about. We looked so forward to having his undivided attention."

Derek Andersen remembers his dad making time to play: "Growing up, we loved playing basketball as a family. He'd come home from work, and we'd team up against my older brother and play basketball together."



Daughter Kristen Ebert recalls that even though her father was extremely busy, “he always had time to listen and to give sound advice.”

The Andersens were so faithful in having family scripture study and singing a hymn each night that the children would do it alone if their parents returned home late.

For family home evening, the Andersens would often study the conference talks in the *Ensign*. “It was clear that when the prophet spoke, we listened,” Derek says.

Sister Andersen says, “Neil is a man with deep faith and love for the Savior. The loving kindness he has always shown to me and our children has brought immeasurable strength to our family and filled our lives with happiness and peace.”

Judging by the way her husband treats her, one can see that Kathy is the heart of the home. She explains, “Neil recognizes and expresses an abundance of gratitude for the little things that I do each day—things that many people would not even notice or would regard as insignificant, such as cleaning the house, preparing dinner, or washing the clothes.”

Kristen says, “I’ve always appreciated my father’s example of treating my mother with kindness and respect. He opens doors for her, helps her be seated, volunteers to do the dishes, and so forth.”

Elder Andersen says, “Kathy is absolute and uncompromising in her loyalty to the Lord and to me and the family. She does so much to put me and the children first. It is impossible not to love her completely and want to do things for her.

“Once I married her,” he adds, “the standards in my life went way up—being totally consistent in prayer and scripture study, keeping the commandments with precision. Her influence upon me and our children is phenomenal. She has a pure and disciplined faith.”

Elder Andersen credits his wife with being a strong support to the children through challenging circumstances. Including their mission, they spent 10 of the past 20 years outside the United States, moving a total of eight times. “You can see the challenges our children faced moving

nearly every year: new friends and in most cases a new country. Kathy was the strength that held them together and kept them realizing that this would be a positive experience for them.”

The children too were resilient. “We appreciate the children’s sacrifices during those years. The Lord has rewarded them richly with choice companions and wonderful children of their own,” Elder Andersen says.

### Trusting the Lord

When President Thomas S. Monson, then a counselor in the First Presidency, called Neil Andersen to serve as mission president, accepting that call required financial sacrifice. Neil owned a prosperous and growing advertising agency. “It’s not a business that is easily left to others,” Elder Andersen explains. “We accepted the call not knowing how we would make the transition work.”

Sister Andersen adds, “I have always had confidence in his faith. He has consistently reassured us: ‘If we put the Lord first, He will open the way, and miracles will follow.’”

Within weeks an offer to buy the business came forward unsolicited. “It was clearly the Lord’s hand at work in a miraculous way,” Elder Andersen says.

The principle of the Lord’s work being a work of miracles was taught constantly to the missionaries in France. Kurt Christensen, who served as a missionary under President Andersen, explains, “He always raised our vision of the blessings the Lord desired for France. He taught about pure faith and obedience with exactness, and the Lord poured out His miracles upon us.”

Wherever their assignments have taken the Andersens—western Europe, Brazil, Mexico, and elsewhere—they have loved the devoted members of the Church and have worked diligently to learn the language of the countries.





Once, when Kathy commented on the countless hours Neil devoted to learning languages, he expressed that he had been given a spiritual gift and that the Lord expected him to labor diligently to realize that gift. Elder Andersen now speaks French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

### Following the Brethren

“For 16 years the members of the First Presidency and the Twelve have been my examples and teachers,” Elder Andersen explained as he spoke in general conference after his call to the Twelve. “I have experienced their love and sure witness of our Heavenly Father and His Son. I have watched them untiringly seek first to build up the kingdom of God. I have seen the power of God rest upon them and magnify and sustain them. I have witnessed the fulfillment of their prophetic voice.”<sup>2</sup>

While Elder Andersen served as Executive Director of the Church Audiovisual Department, he had almost weekly meetings with President James E. Faust (1920–2007). “One time I went to President Faust with a piercing problem I didn’t know how to solve,” Elder Andersen recalls. “He said to me, ‘Neil, have you prayed about it? Have you prayed all night like Enos did?’ And then he sat back in his chair and said, ‘I’ve prayed all night many times to receive the answer to difficult challenges. That is how you will get your answer as well.’ He was right.”

It was at this time that Elder Andersen oversaw the development of the movie *The Testaments of One Fold and One Shepherd*; the initial launch of Mormon.org, the Church’s missionary Web site; and the installation of the audiovisual systems in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City.

Through these experiences Elder Andersen has recognized the guidance of the First Presidency and the Twelve. “The Brethren teach you about spiritual power. They are not just teaching you facts; they are teaching how to understand and listen to the Lord. You learn to be a servant of the Lord.”

### Serving the One

Elder Andersen acknowledges, “President Monson has been a wonderful teacher to me and many others, as he has taught us to reach out to others as the Savior would. He has constantly emphasized that there is no greater joy than knowing you have been an instrument in the Lord’s hand to answer an honest prayer.”

These principles have taken root in Elder Andersen.

The mother of a young man whom Elder Andersen had once met briefly recalls that at one point her son “was on the verge of emotional and physical collapse” when he saw Elder and Sister Andersen sitting at a table in a cafeteria. “My son later told us, ‘I would not have approached any other person, but when I saw Elder Andersen, I knew he loved me, and I immediately got up from my chair and approached him.’”

Despite the terrible change in the young man’s appearance caused by his current crisis, Elder Andersen recognized him and called him by name. Elder and Sister Andersen took the young man home, fed him, and talked

### MILESTONES IN CHURCH SERVICE

- 1970–72: Missionary, France
- 1984–89: Counselor, Tampa Florida Stake presidency
- 1989–92: President, France Bordeaux Mission
- 1992–93: President, Tampa Florida Stake
- 1993: Called to the First Quorum of the Seventy
- 1994–97: Counselor, Europe West Area Presidency
- 1998–2001: Executive Director, Church Audiovisual Department
- 2002–05: President, Brazil South Area Presidency
- 2005–09: Presidency of the Seventy
- 2008–09: Senior President, Presidency of the Seventy
- April 2009: Called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



at length with him. Then, though it was midnight, Elder Andersen drove several hours to take the young man home.

“Elder Andersen’s influence didn’t end there,” explains the mother. “Now, years later, he continues to see our son, to be interested in his life. He saved our son.”

Once, when Elder Andersen was visiting in a hospital, he noticed a 26-year-old patient named Lora McPherson, who was recovering from surgery related to cancer. Her mother, Nancy, relates:

“[Elder Andersen] gave her a priesthood blessing, sent her a copy of the talks from a recent general conference, and later asked Lora to share her thoughts on what she was grateful for, which he used in a talk at BYU–Hawaii.

“As Lora was recovering, Elder Andersen invited her to visit him in his office, showing her around the Church Administration Building.

“Several months later, when it became apparent that Lora’s time on earth was limited, Elder Andersen gave Lora a beautiful blessing, which brought her so much comfort in anticipating her passing from this life to the next. He later adjusted his travel schedule to speak at Lora’s funeral.

“We have been so impressed with the ability of Elder Andersen to carry out his global and family responsibilities and still take time for the one. He is truly an example of the Savior’s admonition to seek out and serve those in need.”

**Opposite page, from left: With President James E. Faust following production of the movie *The Testaments of One Fold and One Shepherd* in 2000; speaking at a celebration in connection with the rededication of the São Paulo Brazil Temple in 2004; as mission president with President Boyd K. Packer while creating the Bordeaux France Stake in 1992; with Elder D. Todd Christofferson during the April 2009 general conference. Right: Elder and Sister Andersen with children and grandchildren in 2006.**

## A Servant of the Lord

Speaking of his father’s calling as an Apostle, son Brandt says, “This call is life changing, but it won’t change my parents’ lives. They are the same in private as they are in public.” All who know Elder Neil L. Andersen will agree.

It has been my blessing to have a close association with Elder Andersen during his service as a General Authority. The faith that was evident even in childhood sustains him still. He teaches the gospel with conviction, in large measure because he so faithfully lives it in every aspect of his life. His counsel is unfailingly wise. I have observed that he is blessed with prophetic insights that I am confident will only grow with the mantle of his new calling as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As he embarked upon this sacred service, Elder Andersen humbly declared: “I take solace that in one qualification for the holy apostleship where there can be no latitude extended, the Lord has deeply blessed me. I do know with perfect and certain clarity through the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, the Beloved Son of God.”<sup>3</sup> ■

## NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, “You Know Enough,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 13.
2. Neil L. Andersen, “Come unto Him,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 79.
3. Neil L. Andersen, *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 78.



# Better Than an A

*What kind of hero would ignore an adorable seven-year-old?*

BY SHANDA STEPHENS

**W**ords jumbled in my mind as I desperately tried to concentrate on Dante's *Inferno*. I gazed at the living room clock. It was already 10:00 p.m. I had a quiz in the morning on eight chapters of the *Inferno* that I had not read yet, I needed to write an outline for my English class, and I also had a 6:00 a.m. meeting in the seminary building. I needed to go to bed soon. I read:

*Soon as the charity of native land  
Wrought in my bosom, I the scatter'd leaves  
Collected, and to him restored, who now  
Was hoarse with utterance.<sup>1</sup>*

I was finally grasping the concentration needed to endure this dragging night.

*. . . To the limit thence  
We came, which from the third the second round  
Divides, and where of justice is display'd  
Contrivance horrible.*

"Hi, Shan," my seven-year-old sister, Shallen, uttered. I mumbled a little humph and hoped she would go away. Where was I? Hmmm . . . *horrible . . . horrible . . .* Aha!

*. . . Things then first seen  
Clearlier to manifest, . . .*

I couldn't concentrate. I felt Shallen's baby doll face examining my every move. I felt like a prisoner under the careful eye of my annoying little sister. Her sparkling, emerald eyes ignited with excitement when she saw me look at her.

"Today in school my teacher told us that all the second

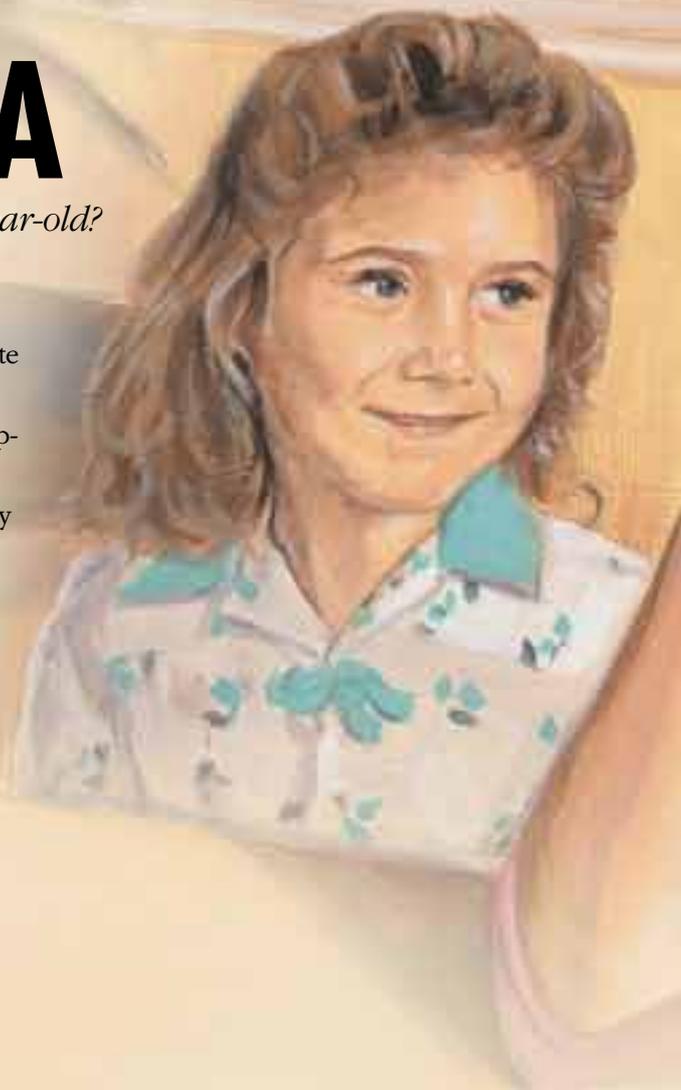
graders are going to have a hero day, and we get to dress up as our hero, and we get to give a report, and it is going to be fun, and we get to wear our hero outfit all day even at recess, and we . . ."

I knew if my blabbering kid sister didn't stop talking, I would never finish my chapters, my critical outline, or see the reality of straight-A grades.

I had to do something. Her absence was essential. Neglecting her would hopefully bore her, and she would redirect the "hero day" story to another family member.

My index finger guided me back to my place in the *Inferno*:

*. . . I tell how next  
A plain we reach'd, that from . . .*





*If my blabbering kid sister didn't stop talking, I would never finish my chapters, my outline, or see the reality of straight-A grades. I had to do something. Her absence was essential.*

"And we get to draw pictures of our hero and . . ."

Why couldn't she understand that I was going to be up all night doing my homework? My anger was surfacing, a swelling bubble about to burst, when she actually stopped talking. I was startled. I kept my eyes buried in my book, hoping she had finally discovered my lack of interest.

"Shan," she whispered in her innocent, sweet voice.

My eyes still fixated on Dante's words. She paused for a moment. I glanced up to see her head bowed in despair from my lack of attention. My guilt began to build, but I buried my eyes even deeper in the print of the faded pages.

"Shan, I want you to be my hero. Can I wear your life-guard uniform for hero day?"

My eyes darted from my book to the golden hair that

swallowed my little sister's drooping face. I never dreamed that I was Shallen's hero—a hero who didn't even take time for an adorable seven-year-old. My guilty heart crumbled in shame when I realized my selfishness.

I put down my pen and set the book aside. I took my sweet little admirer by the hand and led her to my room. I dressed her in my sun-worn shirt, crowned her with my foam visor, and placed the water-worn whistle that faintly read "Shanda" around her neck. She looked up at me and beamed the most beautiful smile I had ever seen on her face. Her love convinced me that my little sister was much more important than any grade I would ever receive. ■

**NOTE**

1. See Dante, *Inferno*, canto 14.

# Opening the Heavens

BY ELDER YOSHIHIKO KIKUCHI  
Of the Seventy



*Do you want to have the heavens opened to you daily? There is a way. It follows a pattern set by the Prophet Joseph Smith.*

**D**o you want to feel the love of God more powerfully in your life? Do you want to feel more in tune with His Spirit? Do you want to have the heavens opened to you daily?

There is a way you can feel a daily renewal of God’s everlasting love and drink from “the fountain of living waters” (1 Nephi 11:25). It follows a pattern set by the Prophet Joseph Smith when he went to a grove of trees early one morning in 1820 seeking answers to his questions. I speak of a morning devotional time spent in prayer, meditation, and scripture study. If you have a devotional every morning, even if only for a few minutes, you will be deeply blessed. I know this to be true.

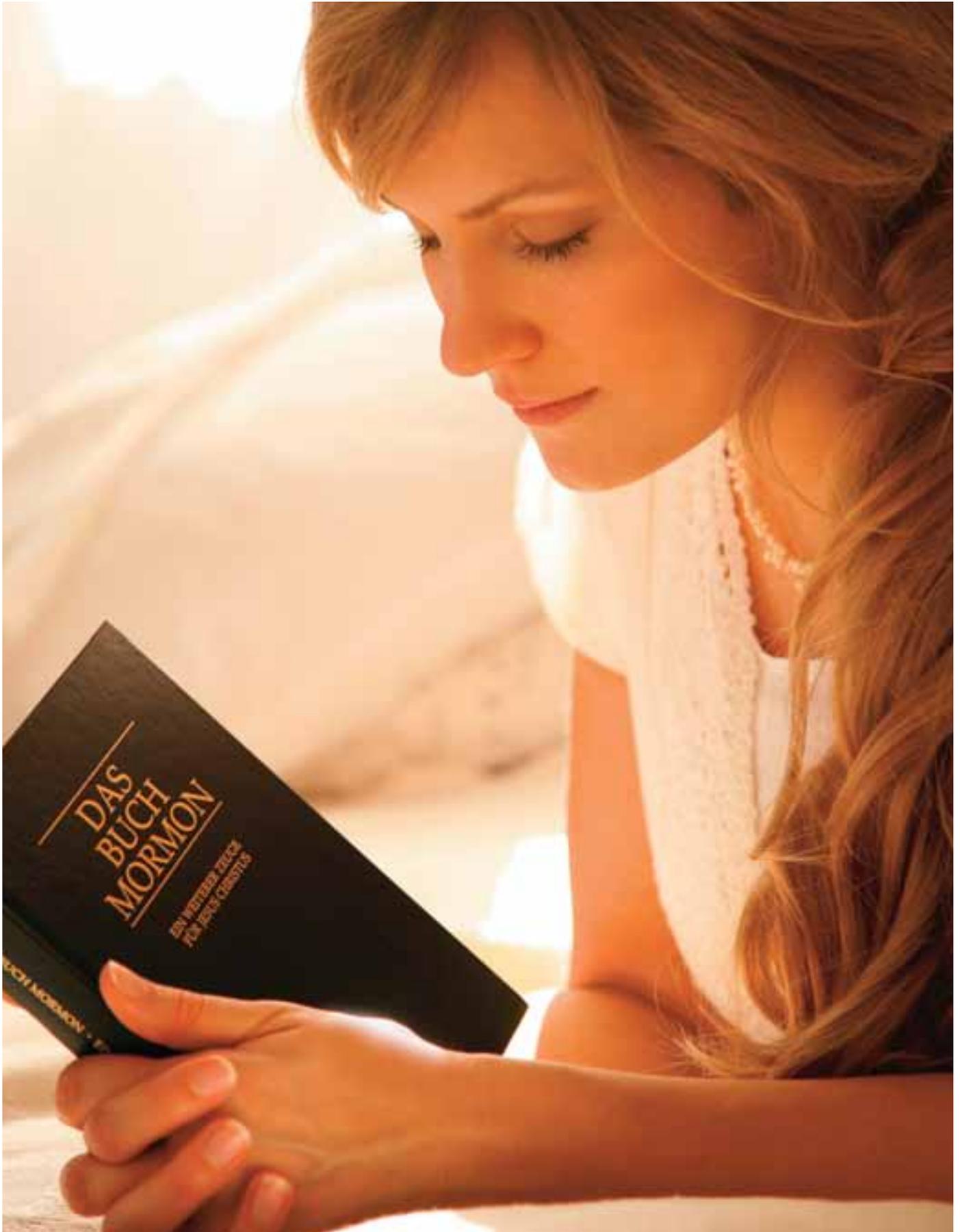
## **Escaping the Noise and the Tumult**

The Prophet Joseph Smith once made this interesting observation about opening the heavens: “The manifestations of the gift of the Holy Ghost, the ministering of angels, or the development of the power, majesty or glory of God were very seldom manifested publicly, . . . but most generally when angels have come, or God has revealed Himself, it

has been to individuals in private, in their chamber; in the wilderness or fields, and that generally without noise or tumult.”<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, modern life is filled with noise and tumult. Our society provides so many distractions that unless we make the time and effort to extract ourselves from them, the voice of the Spirit may not get through to us. That is why on a spring day in 1820, Joseph Smith left his home early to enter a grove of trees so he could pray in quiet seclusion about a question of religion. The answer came with astonishing clarity when both Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him, ushering in the dispensation of the fulness of times (see Joseph Smith—History 1:14–19).

In similar ways, the key to gaining the spiritual strength we need lies in what President Thomas S. Monson once described as entering a “sacred grove” of our own. He was teaching bishops, but the counsel applies to all members of the Church: “Every bishop needs a sacred grove to which he can retire to meditate and to pray for guidance. Mine was our old ward chapel. I could not begin to count the occasions when on a dark night





at a late hour I would make my way to the stand of this building where I was blessed, confirmed, ordained, taught, and eventually called to preside. The chapel was dimly lit by the streetlight in front; not a sound would be heard, no intruder to disturb. With my hand on the pulpit I would kneel and share with Him above my thoughts, my concerns, my problems.”<sup>2</sup>

Of course, these “sacred grove” moments do not duplicate what happened to the Prophet Joseph in the Sacred Grove. We don’t enter into these devotional times expecting to see the Father and the Son any more than Joseph Smith did. But we can trust that Heavenly Father will answer our prayers; how He answers them, however, is up to Him.

There is great power in setting aside quiet, prayerful, meditative time. In the stillness that accompanies our pondering, we can come to know the Father and His Son (see Psalm 46:10; D&C 101:16).

### **The Power of Morning Prayer and Scripture Study**

When I served as a mission president in Hawaii, I had many opportunities to speak with young elders and sisters struggling to become better missionaries. I remember one missionary who became deeply discouraged. His missionary work had become unbearable to him, and he started doubting his testimony. He came to me with the request to send him home.

Instead, I asked him to follow the example of Nephi in pondering and praying about his concerns and desires (see 1 Nephi 10:17; 11:1). This is a practice I have followed for many years and a practice many other General Authorities of the Church follow.

I asked the missionary to go to his apartment and do the following:

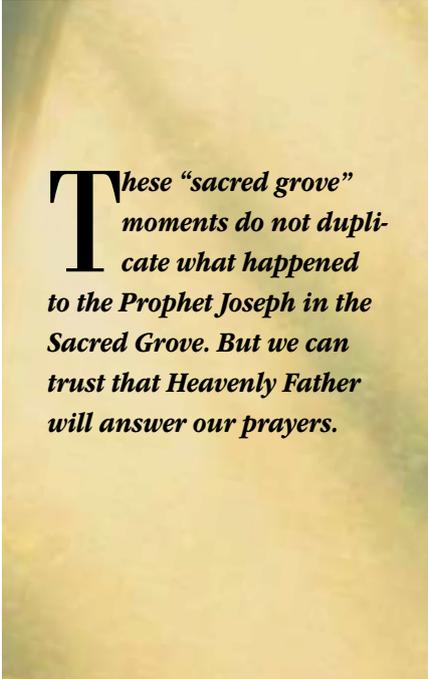
- Rise from his bed early—in his case, a few minutes before 6:30 a.m.
- Exercise for a few minutes.
- Wash his body and shave—make himself clean.
- Dress for the day.
- Go to a quiet place inside his apartment.
- Kneel, subdue his spirit before Heavenly Father, and call upon Him. Talk with Him in reverent prayer.
- Wait for His holy inspiration, pondering the scriptures or a recent general conference talk and think about the specific problems he faced.

I promised this young elder that if he did this and immersed himself in the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, for a few minutes every day, he would experience feelings of joy and would receive strength to go on.<sup>3</sup>

A few days later he came to see me. His eyes filled with tears as he told me of his experiences during his early-morning devotional time. He served wonderfully as a servant of the Lord and completed an honorable mission. His wife recently told me that he continues to rise early to have private time with his Heavenly Father.

I taught this same principle to each of the missionaries over whom I had the privilege to preside. I was concerned that we were not doing all we could to bring the light of the gospel to the Hawaiian people. Within a relatively short time after the missionaries started this practice, the number of referrals we received from members increased, teaching opportunities went up, and the number of baptisms in our mission doubled and then tripled. All of this happened because the missionaries' efforts were magnified by power of the Holy Spirit.

I know from personal experience the spiritual power that can flow into your life if you follow this practice.



**T**hese “sacred grove” moments do not duplicate what happened to the Prophet Joseph in the Sacred Grove. But we can trust that Heavenly Father will answer our prayers.

You will feel the love of God and a cleansing, purifying regeneration of your spirit (see 1 Nephi 11:22–25; D&C 50:28–29). You will experience moments of revelation, when the Spirit whispers to your spirit what you need to do to be a better father, a better mother, a better son or daughter, a better disciple of Jesus Christ.

#### **Finding Solutions to Everyday Problems**

I know a good member of the Church who has a successful marriage and six beautiful children. She is trying to be the best companion she can be to her husband and the best mother she can be to her children. She is an

effective Young Women leader in her ward. But sometimes she feels she isn't good enough. She becomes discouraged and feels an emptiness of soul.

She came to me one day with her husband and described the powerlessness she feels at such times. She had discussed her concern with her priesthood leaders and especially her husband but had yet to find relief. I suggested that after her husband left for work and their children were in school, she find a place in her home and there reverently and humbly visit with Heavenly Father. I suggested that she express her gratitude to God for her blessings and then wait for His holy inspiration. She committed to do this daily.

Sometime later I received a letter from her. She said that as she went to her knees in those quiet moments each day and dropped her burden at Heavenly Father's feet, He took her concerns away. She felt of her great worth to Him and learned more of “the healer's art”<sup>4</sup> as He healed her soul.

#### **Greater Understanding of the Atonement**

As we use daily devotional time to gain greater spiritual strength, we will be blessed to better understand

*As we use daily devotional time to gain greater spiritual strength, we will better understand Heavenly Father and the Savior and His Atonement. We will taste of “the goodness of Jesus” and feel “with exceedingly great joy” the power of His eternal love.*



Heavenly Father and the Savior and His Atonement. We will taste of “the goodness of Jesus” (Mormon 1:15). We will feel “with exceedingly great joy” (1 Nephi 8:12) the power of His eternal love. We will come to love the Savior even more for what He did for us during His mortal ministry—particularly in Gethsemane, on the cross, and in the Resurrection—and for what He continues to do for us today (see John 6:51; Alma 7:11–12).

A number of years ago, Elder Melvin J. Ballard (1873–1939) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had an experience while visiting the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana, USA. At the time, he needed inspiration and strength to help the people in that community.

One night he had a dream in which he was ushered into a room, where he saw “the most glorious being I have ever conceived of, and was taken forward to be introduced to Him. . . . He smiled, called my name, and stretched out His hands toward me. If I live to be a million years old I shall never forget that smile. He put His arms around me and kissed me, as He took me into His bosom, and He blessed me until my whole being was thrilled. As He finished I fell at His feet, and there saw

the marks of the nails; and as I kissed them, with deep joy swelling through my whole being, I felt that I was in heaven indeed. The feeling . . . then was: Oh! If I could . . . go into His presence and receive the feeling that I *then* had . . . , I would give everything that I am and ever hope to be!

“I know—as I know that I live—that He lives.”<sup>5</sup>

I don’t know if you will have that same kind of experience in this life. But I do know that if you continue to meet daily with Heavenly Father in the private chambers of your home, you will come to know Him and our Savior in ways you couldn’t otherwise (see 3 Nephi 19:16–23, 25–29). May you do so and have the heavens open to you in whatever glorious ways your Heavenly Father has prepared for you. ■

#### NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2007), 121; see also *History of the Church*, 5:30–31.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Bishop—Center Stage in Welfare,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 90.
3. See “Thy Spirit, Lord, Has Stirred Our Souls,” *Hymns*, no. 157.
4. See “Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” *Hymns*, no. 220.
5. In Melvin R. Ballard, *Melvin J. Ballard: Crusader for Righteousness* (1966), 66.

# TOO MUCH INFORMATION?

TRY LIFE UNPLUGGED.  
(SEE D&C 101:16.)

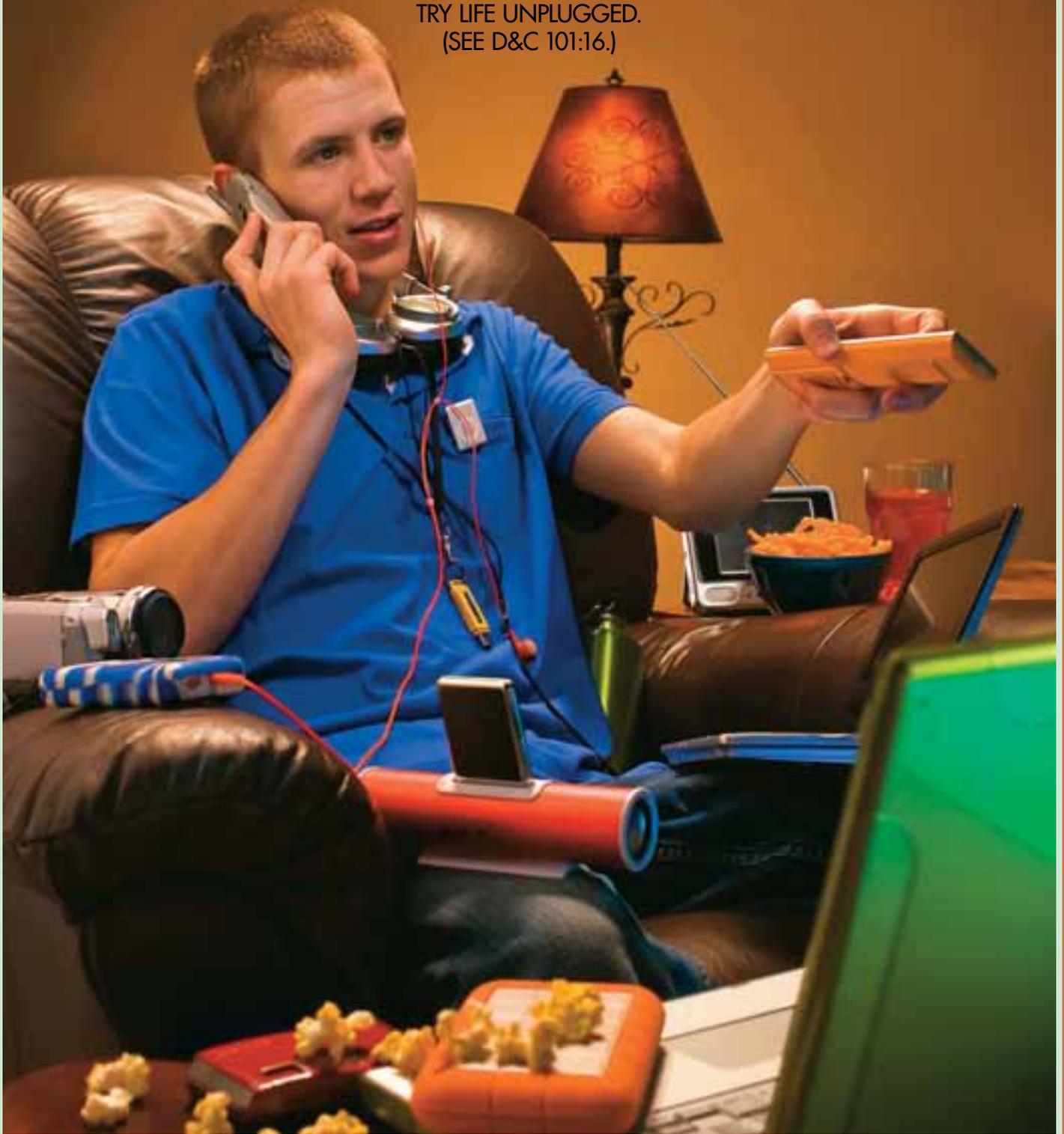


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN LUKE

# Guarding against Danger from Within

## The Legend of Mixco Viejo

BY ADAM C. OLSON  
Church Magazines

Taking a break from the welding work he is doing, Byron Iquic raises his visor and wipes the sweat from his brow. President Iquic, president of the San Juan Branch, Guatemala City Florida Stake, is building a new home for his wife, Etelvina, and their four children.

He loves his family and wants the house to be comfortable, but he also wants it to be safe and strong. Locks, lights, and a sturdy roof and walls are just some of the features meant to protect his family from man and nature.

As he talks about protecting his precious family, he pauses. Because President Iquic is familiar with the legend of Mixco Viejo, he understands that regardless of how well the house keeps things out, the greatest dangers to his family could come from what the family lets in.

### The Fall of Mixco Viejo

Mixco Viejo, a ruined city near the Iquics' home, had its beginning as early as A.D. 900. Before its fall nearly 500 years ago, it must have been an impressive sight. The fortified city sat atop a series of high hills with steep approaches on all sides. Archaeologists estimate that at one time the city was home to more than 1,500 people, with another 7,000 in the surrounding valleys.



GUATEMALA  
• Mixco Viejo

Parts of the history of Mixco's fall are uncertain, but the legend is instructive. In 1525 the Spanish conquistador Pedro Alvarado laid siege to Mixco Viejo. The Spanish and their indigenous allies tried for more than a month to take the city, suffering heavy losses. However, Mixco Viejo remained a seemingly impenetrable home for its people.

But legend says there was another way in—a secret passage that led into the city from a cave some distance away, a passage the people of Mixco Viejo may have seen no need to defend because it was small and so well hidden.

The Spanish found it. They took advantage of the small opening the people had left in their defenses, surprising the city's inhabitants from the inside and destroying Mixco Viejo.

### Identifying Weaknesses

President Iquic believes homes and families are like Mixco Viejo—under a spiritual siege in which Satan “maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasseth them round about” (D&C 76:29).

“The enemy is always searching for a way in,” says President Iquic. “We must not be caught sleeping.”

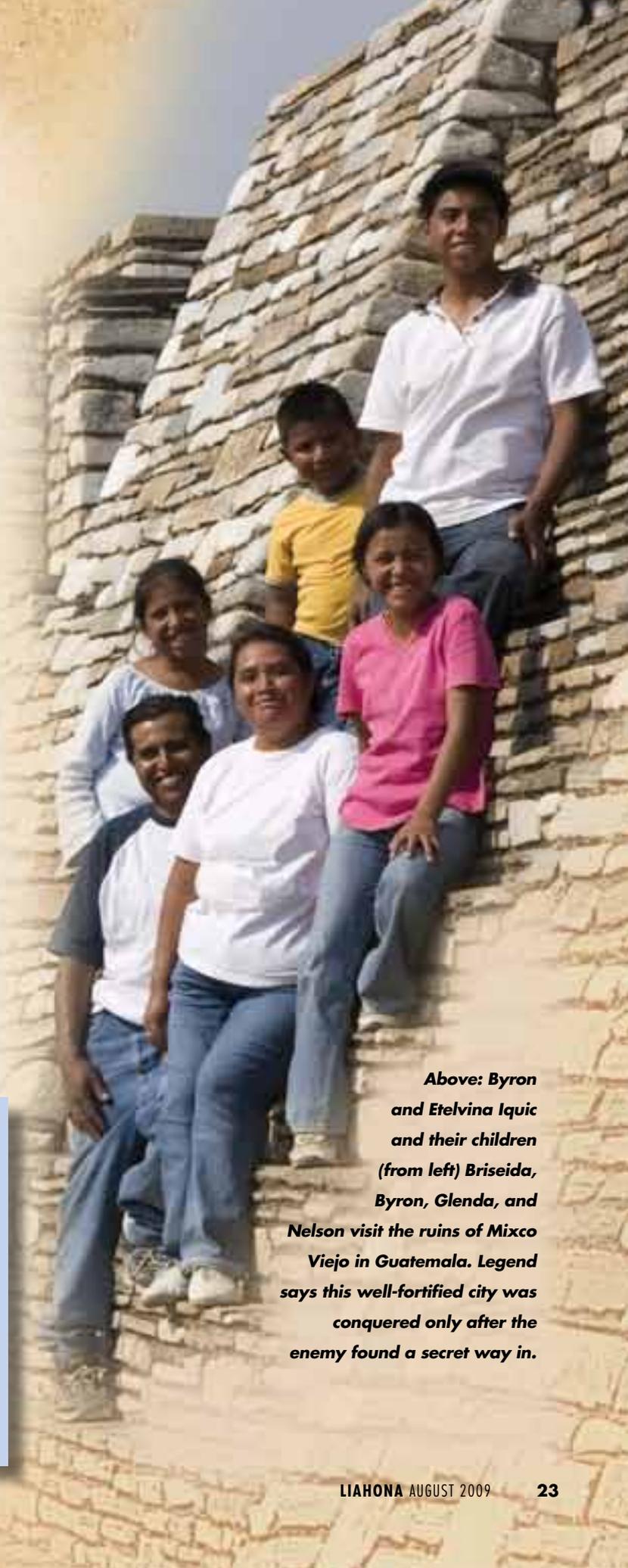
No physical or spiritual wall can keep out an enemy who finds a door unguarded. Prophets of God have warned of dangerous openings through which the enemy may enter no matter how strong the wall. Many of these

### PROTECTING OUR HOMES

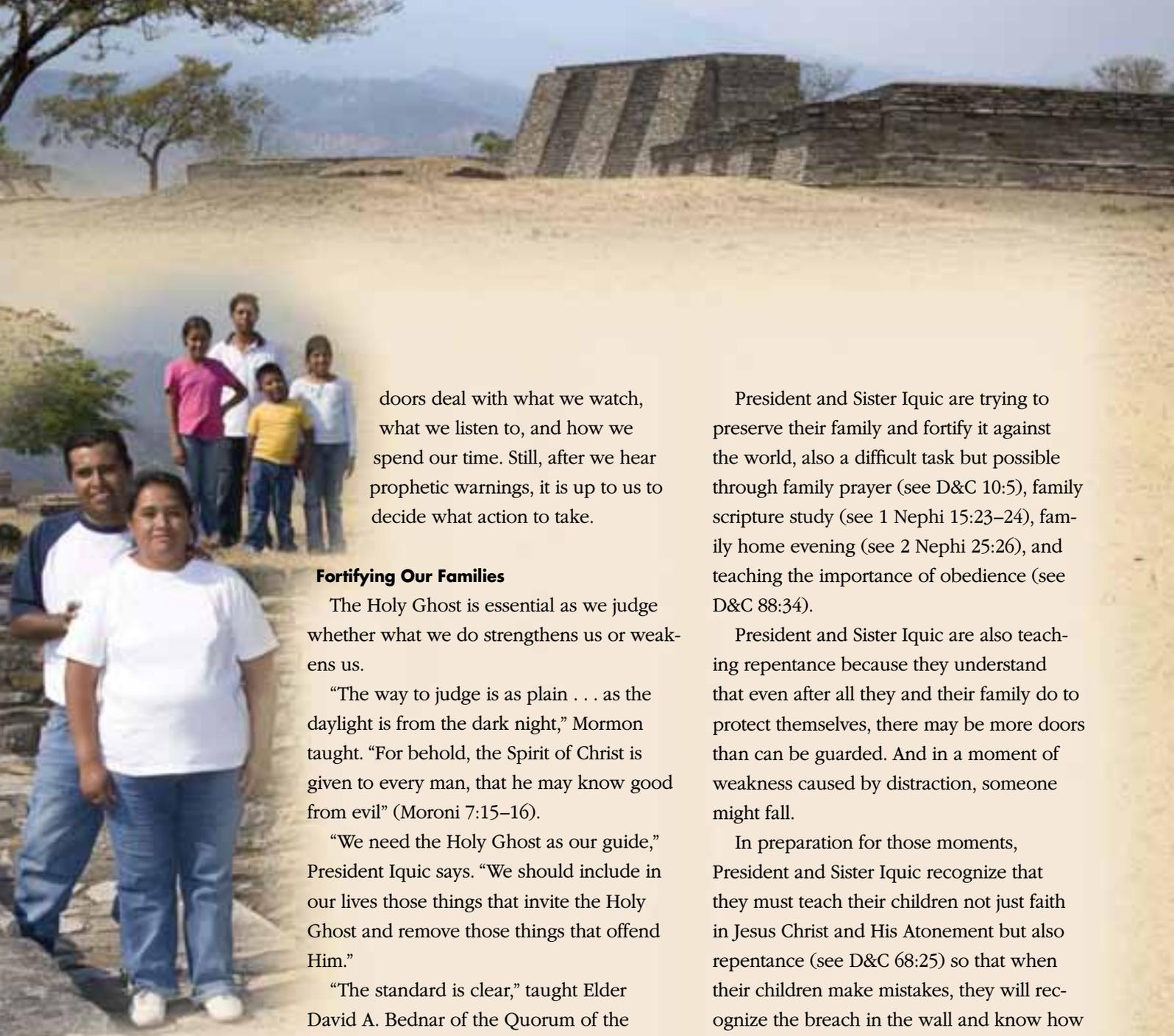


*“We need to make our homes a place of refuge from the storm, which is increasing in intensity all about us. Even if the smallest openings are left unattended, negative influences can penetrate the very walls of our homes.”*

**Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Importance of the Family,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2003, 40.**



**Above: Byron and Etelvina Iquic and their children (from left) Briseida, Byron, Glenda, and Nelson visit the ruins of Mixco Viejo in Guatemala. Legend says this well-fortified city was conquered only after the enemy found a secret way in.**



**Along with trying to protect their children from spiritual danger, Byron and Etelvina Iquic are teaching them about repentance in case the enemy slips past the family's defenses.**

doors deal with what we watch, what we listen to, and how we spend our time. Still, after we hear prophetic warnings, it is up to us to decide what action to take.

### **Fortifying Our Families**

The Holy Ghost is essential as we judge whether what we do strengthens us or weakens us.

“The way to judge is as plain . . . as the daylight is from the dark night,” Mormon taught. “For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil” (Moroni 7:15–16).

“We need the Holy Ghost as our guide,” President Iquic says. “We should include in our lives those things that invite the Holy Ghost and remove those things that offend Him.”

“The standard is clear,” taught Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “If something we think, see, hear, or do distances us from the Holy Ghost, then we should stop thinking, seeing, hearing, or doing that thing. . . . Taking ‘the Holy Spirit for [our] guide’ (D&C 45:57) is possible and is essential for our spiritual growth and survival in an increasingly wicked world.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Rebuilding the Walls**

Today, people are trying to preserve and rebuild the ruins of Mixco Viejo—a difficult task after 500 years.

President and Sister Iquic are trying to preserve their family and fortify it against the world, also a difficult task but possible through family prayer (see D&C 10:5), family scripture study (see 1 Nephi 15:23–24), family home evening (see 2 Nephi 25:26), and teaching the importance of obedience (see D&C 88:34).

President and Sister Iquic are also teaching repentance because they understand that even after all they and their family do to protect themselves, there may be more doors than can be guarded. And in a moment of weakness caused by distraction, someone might fall.

In preparation for those moments, President and Sister Iquic recognize that they must teach their children not just faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement but also repentance (see D&C 68:25) so that when their children make mistakes, they will recognize the breach in the wall and know how to fix it.

“Temptation will always be there,” President Iquic says. “We must recognize our mistakes and repent quickly, or they will impede our progress and keep us from the protection of the Spirit.”

With daylight fading and the legend of Mixco Viejo in mind, President Iquic puts his tools away and calls his family together for evening prayer against the gathering darkness. ■

### **NOTE**

1. David A. Bednar, “That We May Always Have His Spirit to Be with Us,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 30.

# Seek Education and Lifelong Learning



*Teach these scriptures and quotations or, if needed, another principle that will bless the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you visit to share what they have felt and learned.*

## Why Should I Continually Seek Spiritual and Secular Education?

**D&C 93:36–37:** “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one.”

**Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president:** “The Lord has told us that our time should ‘be devoted to the studying of the scriptures’ (D&C 26:1) and that ‘the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures are given . . . for [our] instruction’ (D&C 33:16). Every woman can be a gospel doctrine instructor in her home, and every sister in the Church needs gospel knowledge as a leader and teacher. If you have not already developed the habit of daily scripture study, start now and keep studying in order to be prepared for your responsibilities in this life and in the eternities” (“My Soul Delighteth in the Scriptures,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 107–8).

**President Thomas S. Monson:** “Beyond our study of spiritual matters, secular learning is also essential. . . . I

urge you to pursue your education—if you are not already doing so or have not done so—that you might be prepared to provide if circumstances necessitate such.

“Your talents will expand as you study and learn. You will be able to better assist your families in their learning, and you will have peace of mind in knowing that you have prepared yourself for the eventualities that you may encounter in life” (“Three Goals to Guide You,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 119).

## How Can I Be a Lifelong Learner?

**President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency:** “We will have to make some hard choices of how we use our time. . . . But remember, you are interested in education, not just for mortal life but for eternal life. When you see that reality clearly with spiritual sight, you will put spiritual learning first and yet not slight the secular learning. . . .

“ . . . And since what we will need to know is hard to discern, we need the help of heaven to know which of the myriad things we could study we would most wisely learn. It also means that we cannot waste time entertaining ourselves when we have the chance to read or to listen to whatever will help us learn what is true and

useful. Insatiable curiosity will be our hallmark” (“Education for Real Life,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2002, 18, 19).

**Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:** “A few of the basic attributes needed to become a lifelong learner are courage, faithful desire, humility, patience, curiosity, and a willingness to communicate and share the knowledge that we gain. . . .

“My dear sisters, don’t ever sell yourself short as a woman or as a mother. . . . Do not let the world define, denigrate, or limit your feelings of lifelong learning and the values of motherhood in the home—both here mortally and in the eternal learning and benefits you give to your children and to your companion.

“Lifelong learning is essential to the vitality of the human mind, body,



and soul. It enhances self-worth and self-actuation. Lifelong learning is invigorating mentally and is a great defense against aging, depression, and self-doubt” (“The Journey of Lifelong Learning,” in *Brigham Young University 2008–2009 Speeches* [2009], 2, 8–9). ■





# Managing Postpartum Depression

## A GOSPEL PERSPECTIVE

*When a woman is struggling with postpartum depression, it's important that she have support from her husband, family members, and others.*

**BY LYNN CLARK CALLISTER**

Brigham Young University professor, College of Nursing

**A**fter four years of trying to have another baby, Anna (names have been changed) and her husband were grateful for the birth of a daughter. But Anna found that adapting to the needs of a newborn, in addition to caring for her sons, was overwhelming. She found herself sinking into depression in spite of her best attempts to manage everything and maintain a sense of normalcy. Anna was struggling with postpartum depression.

All mothers, including Anna, know that having a baby is “supposed” to be a happy time and new mothers are “supposed” to be grateful for this incredible blessing in their lives. Yet for some women, postpartum mood disorders detract significantly from these happy feelings. Postpartum depression is manifested in many ways and can have physical, emotional, and even spiritual implications for the women who suffer from it. For instance, these women might have unrealistic expectations for themselves at a time of great transition, feeling that they should be able to do everything immediately for themselves and

their newborn because they should be “super-mom” and “super-wife.”

It is important that these women—and their families—understand what postpartum depression is (and what it is not), recognize symptoms, find effective ways to manage it, and, most of all, know that there is hope for normal functioning while dealing with feelings of depression.

A woman’s experiencing postpartum depression does not mean that she is weak, that she has done something wrong, or that she is to blame for her overwhelming feelings. In most cases the state is temporary. Suffering from postpartum depression, like facing other trials, can bring us closer to the Savior as we find ways to obtain spiritual strength. As former Young Women general president Ardeth G. Kapp explained: “We know about our Savior, but it is often in our adversities that we truly find Him and know Him and love Him. . . . I can testify from my own experience in life that some of our heaviest burdens, disappointments, and heartaches can in time be replaced with ‘the peace of God,

which passeth all understanding' (Philippians 4:7) while we 'wait upon the Lord' (Isaiah 40:31)."<sup>1</sup>

### **More Than Just the "Baby Blues"**

For some women, giving birth creates temporary feelings of sadness that are often referred to as the "baby blues." Symptoms—which usually appear within the first week after giving birth and can last up to 10 days—may include tearfulness, irritability, fatigue, anxiety, and emotional sensitivity with highs and lows. Baby blues are most often attributed to physical changes the mother is experiencing, but these symptoms can be aggravated by sleep deprivation, inadequate nutrition, a challenging infant, and lack of support. The baby blues are observed in all cultures across the world and affect up to 80 percent of women who give birth.

In contrast, postpartum depression is an illness with a biochemical basis. Although no one is sure what the exact cause is, researchers believe that the hormone-level shifts that occur during pregnancy and after childbirth may contribute to chemical changes in the brain. That, combined with the stresses and fatigue that accompany having a new baby, can lead to depression. About 10 percent of women who have a baby will experience postpartum depression, which typically occurs within four weeks after giving birth but can occur anytime during the following year. Many women who experience postpartum depression have had a previous encounter with depression; new mothers in this category should closely monitor their feelings so they can get help if symptoms appear and escalate.

Some women experiencing postpartum depression start to feel better within a few weeks, while others don't feel "like themselves" for several months. But help is not out of reach: identifying symptoms is the first step to starting to feel good again.

### **Symptoms**

Often, a new mother assumes that feeling depressed demonstrates weakness. She may even worry that others will think less of her if they know how she is feeling. For

these and other reasons, she might not discuss her symptoms, leaving the postpartum depression to go undiagnosed and untreated.

John, speaking of his family's experience with postpartum depression, said, "My wife, Carolyn, hid her symptoms from everyone, even me. It was hard for me to know how much she was truly suffering. I think she thought that as the bishop's wife she couldn't let anyone—not me, not her friends, not her mother—know what was going on."

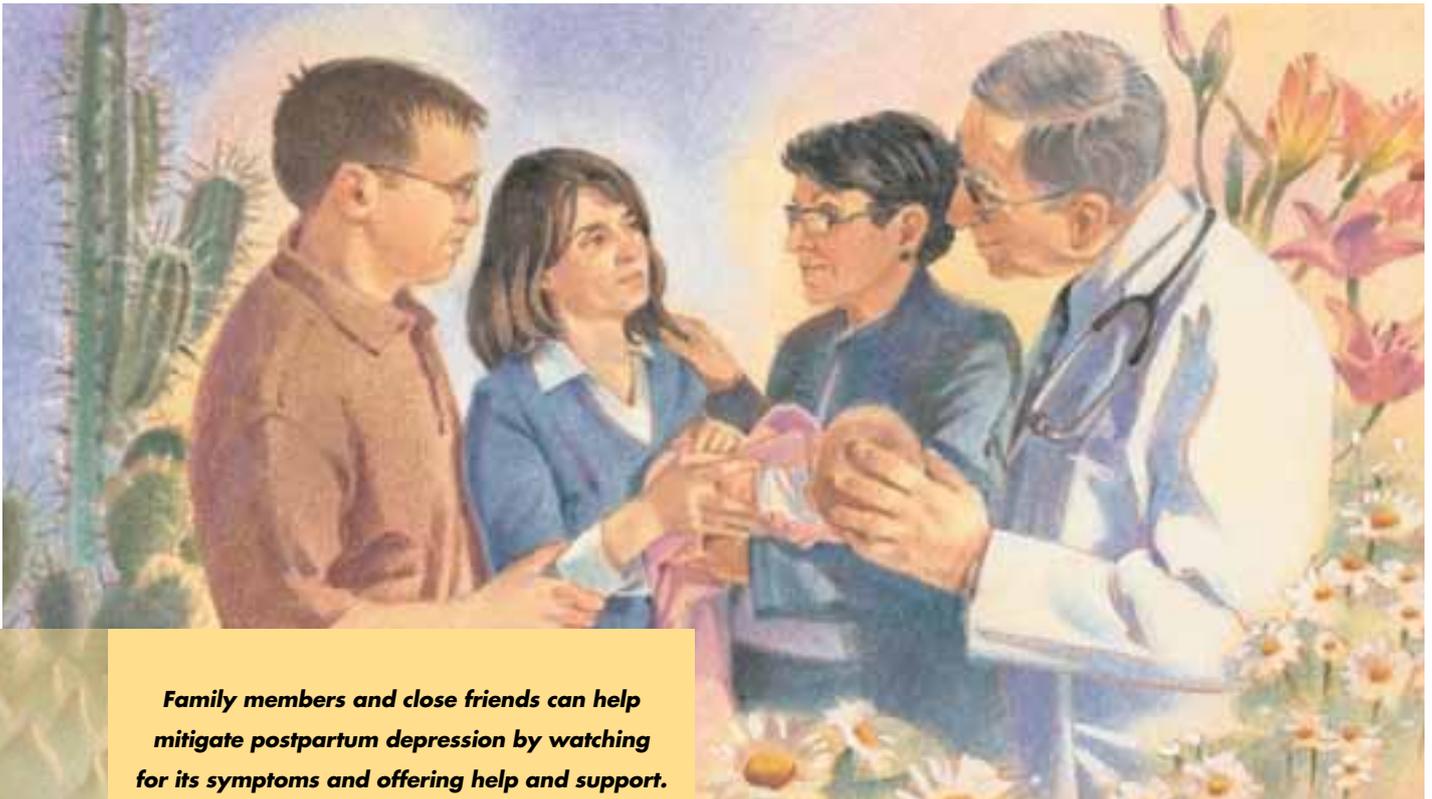
Dr. Cheryl Tatano Beck, a noted nurse-researcher, calls postpartum depression "a thief that steals motherhood."<sup>2</sup> But family members and close friends can help mitigate this "theft" by watching for its symptoms. They may notice behavioral changes in the new mother, including the following:

- A depressed mood lasting most of every day.
- The absence of laughter or play with the infant.
- A downcast or blank facial expression.
- Persistent sadness.
- Comments about flaws she perceives in herself or the infant.
- Indications of feelings of guilt or inadequacy.
- Indecisiveness about ordinary matters.
- Noticeable irritation, especially related to the infant's fussing or crying. (See "Symptoms of Postpartum Depression" sidebar on page 30 for more internal signs that only mothers themselves may notice.)

If family members and close friends think they detect some of these symptoms but aren't sure, they can sensitively ask the mother such questions as "Are you feeling down [or depressed or hopeless]? How long have you been feeling that way?" or "Do you feel a lack of joy in your life?" Once the mother and those closest to her recognize the symptoms, they can begin to get a handle on the depression.

### **Managing Postpartum Depression**

Managing postpartum depression is important not only for the woman's welfare but also for that of the infant and the rest of the family. Because the mother is often the center of her child's social environment, her mood affects the child. And the mother's and



**Family members and close friends can help mitigate postpartum depression by watching for its symptoms and offering help and support.**

the baby's well-being affect the family's well-being.

Because this condition affects the entire family, the management of the postpartum depression is a family concern. It is important for the woman to have support from her husband, family members, and others.

**Support from Family and Friends.** According to "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," "husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children."<sup>3</sup> The primary strategies for meeting the challenge of postpartum depression are to strengthen the couple's relationship and increase the husband's sensitivity. It is essential that the new mother have help and support from her husband in activities like these:

- Taking over household tasks and the care of other children.
- Limiting the number of visitors to foster a peaceful environment. (For some women, however, having visitors may help alleviate symptoms of depression.)
- Helping the mother get enough rest, appropriate nutrition, and exercise.
- Assisting with infant care.
- Becoming educated about postpartum depression.

- Giving priesthood blessings as appropriate.
- Offering the gift of presence—listening, caring, and just being with her. Accompanied by a hug, a healing conversation may be just one sentence long: "This must be very hard for you."
- Encouraging the new mother to get professional assistance as appropriate.

Rachel, who experienced postpartum depression after the birth of her third child, said, "The smallest task seemed insurmountable because I lacked emotional and physical energy. I was so grateful that my husband was understanding and compassionate and assisted me in getting the help I so sorely needed."

Postpartum depression may be difficult for a husband to understand, and sometimes he may react with confusion, frustration, anger, guilt, anxiety, or embarrassment. It may be helpful for him to engage in counseling or reading to increase his understanding of postpartum depression and to learn how he can be most helpful. His doing so can benefit both him and his wife.

Johanna, who suffered postpartum depression after having preterm twins, said, "Although the experience was challenging for Sam and me, our marriage became stronger. We became closer in our relationship than we had ever been before. We worked together to resolve issues.

## SYMPTOMS OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

**M**others experiencing postpartum depression may have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Struggling for perfection.
- Feeling overwhelmed or feeling a sense of failure.
- Experiencing shattered expectations.
- Plunging into despair.
- Having difficulty focusing and concentrating.
- Feeling lonely.
- Panicking.
- Having difficulty sleeping.
- Lacking appetite.
- Feeling as though she is losing her mind.
- Struggling to survive.

I relied on him for priesthood blessings. We truly communicated with each other and the Lord.”

Extended family and the Church community can augment the support of the father. Kathleen H. Hughes, former counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, spoke about her experience with postpartum depression and the help she received from others:

“After the birth of our son . . . , I sank into a horrible depression. Many of the women in my family suffer from postpartum depression and, as you may know, in those days medical professionals did very little to help women with this condition. I was left to fight my way out of the darkness.

“But those hard times for me were often tempered and lightened by wonderful sisters in the ward who cared for my children and who cared for me physically, emotionally, and spiritually—helping me through that emotional battle.”<sup>4</sup>

Women might find additional support through organizations for new mothers. Christine, who lived far from

extended family and felt alone after she had her first baby, reported, “As I talked to other young mothers in my housing complex, I found a lot of commonalities in our struggles. It really helped—and I even found myself laughing instead of crying.”

**Professional Treatment.** New mothers might consider seeking professional assistance, including counseling from LDS Family Services (see [www.ldsfamilyservices.org](http://www.ldsfamilyservices.org)) or from an appropriate source recommended by a health care provider. For some, medication may be necessary, as prescribed by a psychiatrist or other clinician.

**Taking Care of Yourself.** It is vital that new mothers care for themselves by resting as much as possible, eating a nutritious diet, and taking “time out” with mothers’ groups or children’s play groups.

In addition, because motherhood is physically and emotionally demanding, mothers should set realistic goals that allow for flexibility, remembering that “to every thing there is a season” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Elizabeth, who gave birth to four daughters in a period of just a few years, said, “It isn’t feasible to quit doing housework and cooking when there are other children needing clean clothes and lunch. I found it helpful to do just a little bit each day—one load of laundry, cleaning the bathroom sink (instead of the whole bathroom), planning the meals, and having my husband do the shopping. Feeling productive, even if it’s just a little each day, is very encouraging.”

**Other Helpful Outlets.** Other activities might also be helpful in managing and overcoming postpartum depression:

- Listening to uplifting music.
- Reading the scriptures and other inspiring books. Anna reported that she especially enjoyed reading 2 Nephi 4, which documents Nephi’s feelings of discouragement and doubt, then his growing recognition of the love of the Lord for him: “My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions” (2 Nephi 4:20).
- Keeping a journal. Rachel said, “As I wrote in my journal, I was able to articulate my feelings of deep despair. It helped me to become more aware of



**Recognizing that we can learn from our trials can strengthen our faith, even as we are in the midst of adversity.**

what seemed to trigger feelings of depression. It also helped me begin to count my blessings.”

- Praying for help and comfort. Anna said, “Being depressed made it harder for me to feel the comfort of the Holy Spirit I so desperately needed. I tried to challenge the negative voices that left me feeling weaker and doubting my capacity to overcome my negative emotions.” Johanna asked herself and the Lord this question as she engaged in personal prayer and contemplation, “Heavenly Father, what am I supposed to learn from this?”

### **The Place of Trials in Our Lives**

Recognizing that we can learn from our trials can strengthen our faith, even as we are in the midst of them. God does not leave us alone in our struggle to find hope. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled: “To any who may be struggling to see that light and find that hope, I say: Hold on. Keep trying. God loves you.”<sup>5</sup> And He does. Sister Patricia Holland, Elder Holland’s wife, once invited us to return to “the wholeness of our soul, that unity in our very being that balances the demanding and inevitable diversity of life.”<sup>6</sup>

Anna explained the process she went through: “As I struggled to overcome postpartum depression, I sought

to get beyond the darkness and into the light, the light of the Son of God. I wept as I read Isaiah 53:3–4, understanding fully for the first time that the Savior was ‘a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.’ I held on to the promise that the Savior was my personal Savior, that He had been sent to ‘give unto [us] beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness’ (Isaiah 61:3). As I looked toward the Savior, I realized more fully that He knew my pain, that He could sensitively succor me as I reached out to Him.” ■

### **NOTES**

1. Ardeth G. Kapp, “Pray Not for Light Burdens but for Strong Backs,” *The Joy of Our Salvation: Talks from the 2004 BYU Women’s Conference* (2005), 116.
2. Cheryl Tatano Beck, “Postpartum Depression: It Isn’t Just the Blues,” *American Journal of Nursing*, vol. 106, no. 5 (May 2006), 40.
3. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
4. Kathleen H. Hughes, “Serving and Supporting One Another,” *The Rock of Our Redeemer: Talks from the 2002 BYU Women’s Conference* (2003), 52.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, “An High Priest of Good Things to Come,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2000, 42; *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 36.
6. Patricia Holland, “‘One Thing Needful’: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1987, 30.

# “My friend has started smoking. How can I offer to help her quit without offending her?”

**Y**our friend probably knows it's not healthy to smoke. And if she's a member of the Church, she knows smoking is against the Word of Wisdom. So the best way to help her is not to criticize her but to encourage her to overcome the habit.

When you discuss this problem with her, let her know you are doing so because you care about her, her health, and her spiritual well-being. If you find that she wants to quit smoking, be supportive and encouraging. You may want to read *Preach My Gospel*, page 189, which gives several ideas for helping people overcome addictions.

Many investigating the Church have been able to quit smoking when they learned about the Word of Wisdom. This change came not only because of their increased motivation but also because of spiritual blessings. The Lord blessed them to lose the desire to smoke and to gain the desire to be obedient. Consider inviting your friend to fast and pray with you for this blessing.

## Ask How You Can Help



Tell her that you love and care about her. In a nice way, remind her that smoking is not healthy for the body. Tell her that you would love to help her in any way you can, and ask what you can do.

**Alysha S., 13, Utah, USA**

## Be an Example

When I was in high school, many of my friends started smoking. I was the only member of the Church who belonged to that group of friends. They knew that I am a member of the Church. One time they asked me why I didn't smoke. I just smiled and humbly answered, "We know that the Bible says our body is a temple, and it is a special gift given to us. Therefore, we need to love and care for the gift given to us because it comes from God." They responded by saying that maybe I was right and that we need to care for our bodies. I shared my testimony about the Word of Wisdom with them. If we show care for our bodies, we will be blessed with good health and knowledge. I knew because of the expressions on their faces that they believed what I had shared with them. Since that day I have seen an improvement in them. Sharing your testimony with those who struggle with smoking can help them to choose the right.

**Michael T., 18, Palawan, Philippines**

### Encourage Her to Pray



First, I would pray to Heavenly Father to touch her heart, to help her understand the importance of the Word

of Wisdom, and to help her change. I would remind her of the adverse effects of smoking, both spiritually and physically. I would also remind her of her worth as a potential mother and that her body is the temple of God and that Heavenly Father will not be happy if she defiles it. I would encourage her to pray for help.

**Daniel C., 17, Rivers, Nigeria**

### Gain Trust



I've always thought that talking with friends about problems they are facing is the best way for them to trust you. Showing concern lets them know that you care about them and what they are going through. Once you have a better knowledge of what they're facing, you can give suggestions and offer to help. This will show your friends that someone cares enough to tell them to stop harming themselves.

**Blaine L., 18, Arizona, USA**

### Show Love

The first thing you need to do is show your love for and sincere interest in her. Once she knows that you care about her, you need to speak with her politely and humbly about her decision to start smoking. Remind her who she is and her worth as a person and the harm that smoking will bring her. You could

also quote the scripture passage that talks about the Word of Wisdom and the blessings that it brings (see D&C 89). If we avoid judging, it will be easier to reach people's hearts.

**Mariana S., 18, Buenos Aires, Argentina**

### Care for Our Bodies



A friendship is such a delicate area to impose your personal feelings and opinion on. It is even more difficult

when matters of the gospel are involved. I encourage you to express your care for your friend and explain to her that smoking is unhealthy. Express that you wish no harm to come to her on the physical level; and when the moment presents itself, share your personal feelings regarding the Word of Wisdom. Heavenly Father blesses us when we take care of one of His most precious gifts to us: our bodies.

**Kent P., 21, Alberta, Canada**

## NEXT QUESTION

***"How should I react when I'm ridiculed for being a member of the Church and for trying to maintain my standards?"***

**Send your answer by September 15, 2009, to:**

**Liahona, Questions & Answers 9/09  
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420  
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA  
Or e-mail: [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org)**

**Include the following information and permission in your e-mail or letter:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
FULL NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
BIRTH DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
WARD (OR BRANCH)

\_\_\_\_\_  
STAKE (OR DISTRICT)

***I grant permission to print response and photo:***

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT'S SIGNATURE (IF YOU ARE UNDER 18)



### EXTEND A HELPING HAND

*"Many of our young people are tugged in the wrong direction and enticed to partake of the sins of the world. Yearningly such individuals seek for the strength of those who have the ability to stand firm for truth. Through righteous living and by extending the helping hand and the understanding heart, you can rescue, you can save. How great will then be your joy. How eternal will be the blessing you will have conferred."*

**President Thomas S. Monson, "An Example of the Believers," *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 98.**

# When Should I Get My Patriarchal Blessing?

BY ROBERT K WAGSTAFF

Patriarch, Springville Utah West Stake

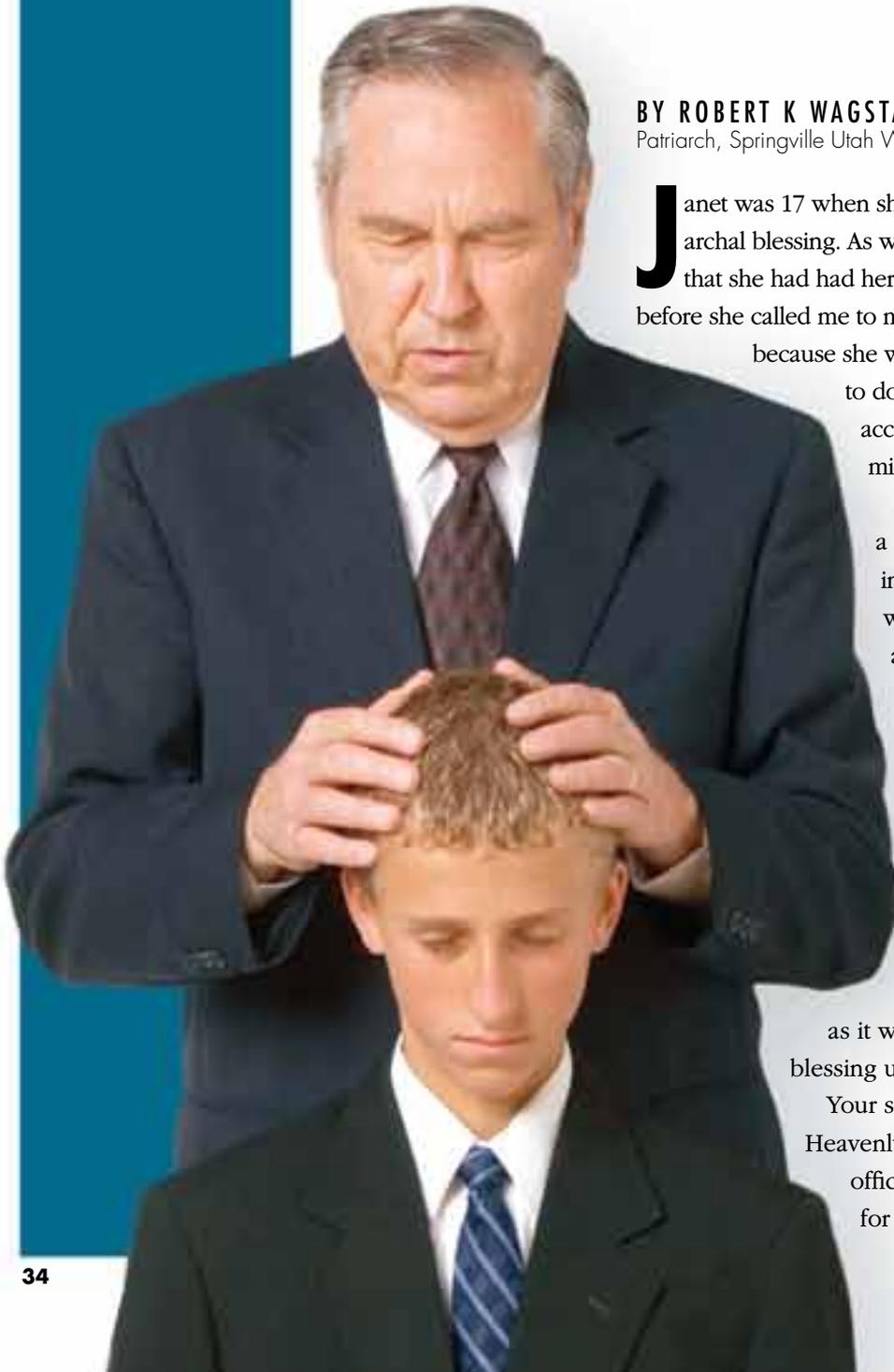
Janet was 17 when she came to my home to receive her patriarchal blessing. As we talked before her blessing, I learned that she had had her bishop's recommend for a few months before she called me to make the appointment. She had waited because she was afraid that her blessing would ask her to do things that would be too hard for her to accomplish. She was also worried that she might not be ready.

"A promise from Heavenly Father is not a commandment," I told her. "The promises in your blessing will be fulfilled only if you want and work for them to happen." I also assured her that as a patriarch, I would not judge her or reprimand her. I would give her a blessing.

## What Is a Patriarch?

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained, "Wherever the Church of Christ is established in the earth, there should be a Patriarch for the benefit of the posterity of the Saints, as it was with Jacob in giving his patriarchal blessing unto his sons."<sup>1</sup>

Your stake patriarch is a dedicated servant of Heavenly Father. He has been ordained to the office of patriarch and will hold that office for the rest of his life. He is usually an



older man who knows many things that you will face as you grow older.

His calling is to give blessings. He is not a counselor, so he does not counsel. He is not a bishop, so he does not judge. When he places his hands on your head to give you a blessing, Heavenly Father, through the promptings of the Holy Ghost, gives the patriarch ideas, concepts, and sometimes even specific words for you. The patriarch then includes those concepts and ideas in your blessing.

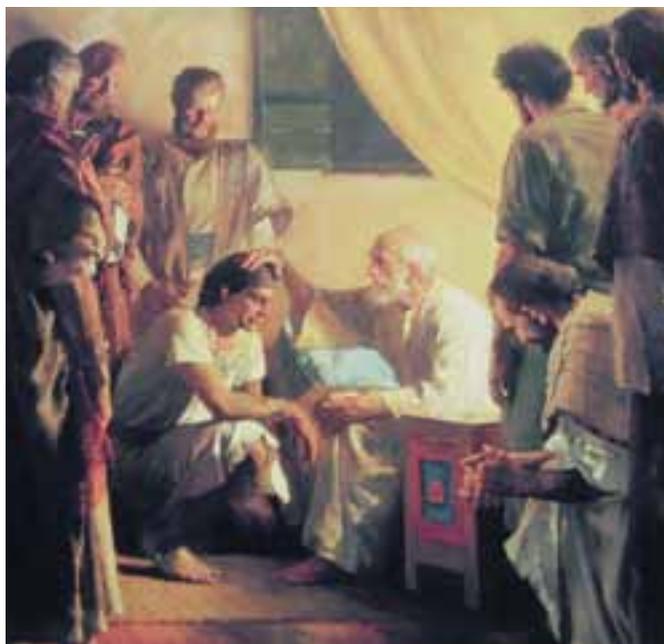
### What Is a Patriarchal Blessing?

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) described a patriarchal blessing as a “[paragraph] from the book of your possibilities.”<sup>2</sup> As your patriarch places his hands on your head, you will find that your blessing will usually include:

#### ***A statement of the authority of the patriarch.***

Blessings are given by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood and through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

***A declaration of lineage.*** Each member of the Church inherits spiritual blessings and responsibilities through one of the twelve tribes of Israel. By inspiration from the Spirit, the patriarch declares the tribe through which you will receive these blessings. This lineage is not



### A BLESSING AND TESTIMONY

*“A patriarchal blessing is a very unique and remarkable privilege that can come to the faithful members of the Church having sufficient maturity to understand the nature and the importance of such blessings. These privileged blessings are a powerful witness of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ in bringing exaltation to each of us. . . . Our testimonies can be strengthened and fortified and our lives given greater purpose every time we read and reread our patriarchal blessings.”*

**President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Patriarchal Blessings,” *Tambuli*, June 1983, 30; “Your Patriarchal Blessing,” *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 4.**

determined simply by your race or nationality. Members of the same genetic family can be from different tribes of Israel. This lineage often has to do with your responsibilities in the Lord’s kingdom. Many members of the Church are of the lineage of Ephraim, Manasseh, or Judah, which are the most common tribes of Israel at this time in our progress of preaching the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.<sup>3</sup>

***A personal blessing.*** In this portion of your blessing, you will receive inspired and prophetic statements about your life. Your blessing may also include various accomplishments to be realized, promises the Lord has for you, and admonitions and warnings to help protect you from harm or adversity. Your blessing will not include every event that will happen to you, but it will include those that you need to be especially mindful of. If fulfilling a mission is not mentioned, it does not mean that you cannot fulfill a mission. It may indicate only that fulfilling a mission is something God feels you can do without special emphasis in your patriarchal blessing.

Your blessing may be long or short. The length of your blessing is not a measure of your worthiness.

Reading your blessing is much like reading the scriptures. As you read it, new ideas about what you should do and good feelings about your life will come to you. The more you read your blessing, the more you will understand its meaning for you.

Your patriarchal blessing is a revelation given just to you.

It is personal, sacred, and confidential. You should not share it just to satisfy another's curiosity. "It is given under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and should be read and interpreted under the influence of that same Spirit."<sup>4</sup>

### **When Should I Get a Patriarchal Blessing?**

Simply stated, the best time for you to receive a blessing is when you are ready. Being

"ready" means being emotionally as well as spiritually prepared. This will probably be during your teenage years. This is when you start to become independent and begin to wonder about life and what will happen to you.

You will reach the point when you truly desire to have a blessing—not

because your friends are getting theirs but because you desire it for yourself. This may happen when you see others do things that you know are wrong. It may happen when a friend or relative dies. It may happen when you hear a

talk in church that touches your heart. It may happen as you read the scriptures and learn more about the Savior. It may happen when you are alone and begin to feel God's love for you. It may happen as you approach the age to serve a mission, go away to college, enter military service, or marry in the temple.

### **How Do I Get a Patriarchal Blessing?**

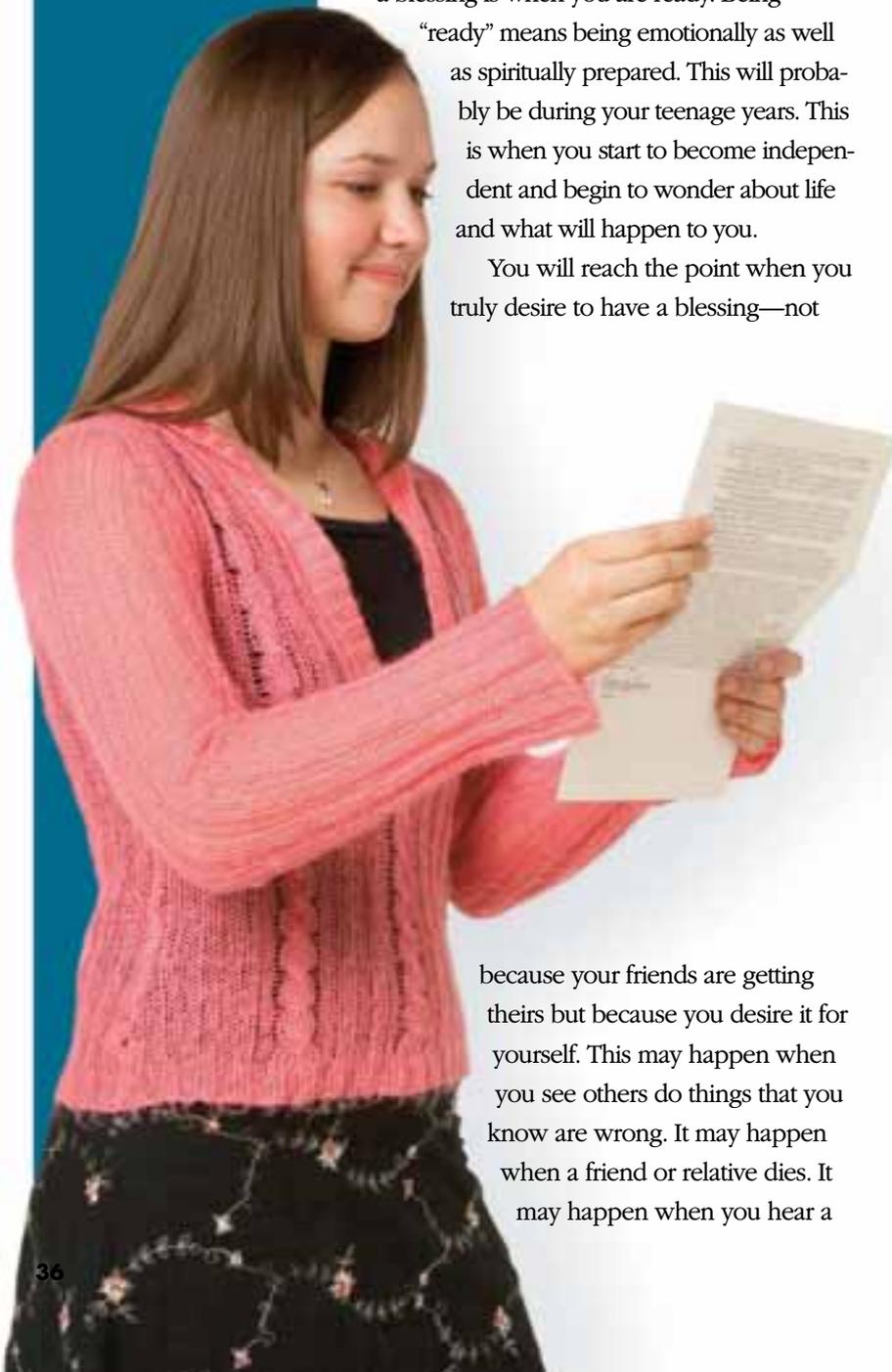
When you are ready to receive a patriarchal blessing, you will be interviewed by your bishop or branch president. He will ask you questions about your worthiness, such as whether you live the Word of Wisdom, pay a full tithe, live a morally clean life, and are an active member of the Church. However, you do not need to be perfect to be worthy. Desiring a blessing and wanting to know how you can live closer to your Heavenly Father are also as important as being worthy. You can increase your desire for a blessing by personal prayer, gospel study, and by striving to listen to the Spirit.

After you receive your blessing, the patriarch will provide you with a written copy. Keep this copy in a safe place. Do not lose it. However, if you ever need to obtain a copy, you can contact Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.

A patriarchal blessing is available to every worthy member of the Church. It is a personal gift to you from your loving Heavenly Father, who desires to enhance and guide your life and to help you return to live with Him. ■

### **NOTES**

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2007), 140.
2. Karl G. Maeser, quoted in Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places* (1975), 117.
3. See Dallin H. Oaks, "Patriarchal Blessings," *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 8, 2005, 8.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, "Patriarchal Blessings," 10.



# Too Holy?

*Ian Caloobanan changed when he joined the Church. His friends noticed.*

BY R. VAL JOHNSON

Church Magazines

**Y**ou're too holy."

Twelve-year-old Ian Caloobanan was astounded at his friend's words. He didn't consider himself holy.

His friend continued, "Ever since you joined the Mormons, you've become a killjoy. You don't drink with us anymore. You don't have fun with us on Sunday. You're too holy."

The words hurt, and yet . . . what else could he do? He had been baptized and now held the Aaronic Priesthood. He had changed, and as far as Ian was concerned, he had changed for the better. But holy? Well, maybe not yet.

Ian, who lives in the Las Piñas Philippines Stake, was baptized when he was 10. When the elders gave him the lessons, they asked him to pray to know that the Church was true. He did. "I felt happy and very light," he says. He realized later that it was the Holy Ghost bearing testimony of the truth to him.

Before he joined the Church, Ian used to drink tea with his friends. He also went to cheering practice on Sundays, preparing to lead cheers at his school's sporting events. But he stopped doing those things. Instead, he started going to church, even though he is the only one in his family who does. His father supports Ian in his Church attendance, and his stepmother, who is not a member, takes him to church and then picks him up afterward.

When asked why he comes to church when it would be easier to stay home, he says simply, "I come because I want to keep my faith strong."

"Ian is a good example of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ," his bishop says. "He faithfully comes to church, and he doesn't get upset. He has many friends here. He was excited to receive the priesthood and asked his father to buy him a white shirt so he could wear it when he passes the sacrament." Ian's joy at finding the gospel is hard to contain. He has given one of his teachers a copy of the Book of Mormon and invited him to meet with the missionaries. Some of his schoolmates respect him for his new standards and have asked him questions about the gospel. Others ridicule him.

Ian just keeps on keeping the commandments the best he can.

Having experienced a measure of joy as well as persecution in joining the Church, Ian has wise counsel for all of us: "Keep the faith. Study the scriptures. Pray. Trust in Jesus Christ. Commit yourself to living the gospel. Change for the better."

And isn't that what Church membership is supposed to do? Help us change for the better. Help us, eventually, become what Jesus wants us to be—holy. ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY EDWIN REDRINO



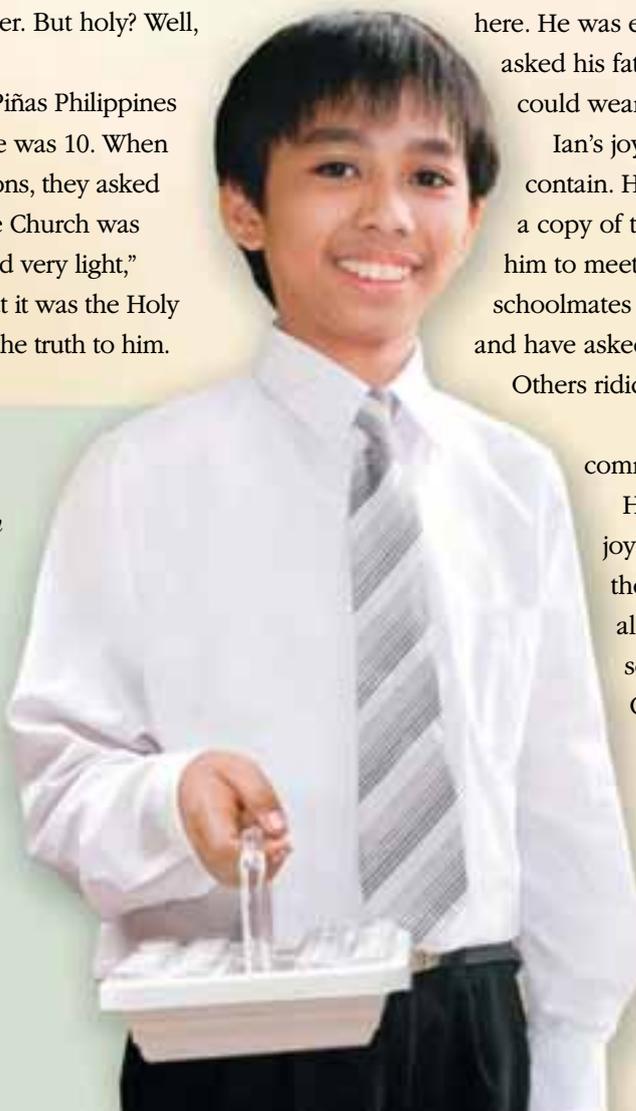
## IT STARTS WITH FAITH

*"Spiritual rebirth originates with faith in Jesus Christ, by*

*whose grace we are changed.*

*More specifically, it is faith in Christ as the Atoning One, the Redeemer, who can cleanse from sin and make holy."*

**Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Born Again," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2008, 78.**





*Who shows you how to live the gospel? You may have more examples than you realize.*

BY ELDER BENSON E. MISALUCHA  
Area Seventy, Philippines Area

**M**ost testimonies don't happen in a blinding flash of light. You gain gospel knowledge over time, and you learn to rely on good feelings prompted by the Holy Ghost. Along the way, there are many people who serve as role models: those who inspire us to live as we should live. You will strengthen your testimony and learn to be obedient by following their examples.

#### **Missionaries**

The first role models who presented the gospel to me were the missionaries who taught my family in the Philippines. Their example had a lot of influence in our decision to join the Church. They were patient



# ROLE

with us, and they always brought a wonderful spirit with them.

While we were still new members, we encountered a man who had left the Church. He gave us a lot of anti-Mormon literature, and I was shocked. It was my first encounter with opposition to the Church, and my testimony was still tender. While he was confronting us and attacking everything the missionaries had taught us, I was filled with fear. But when the missionaries were with us, they brought peace. Because of the missionaries, our family learned to tell the difference between faith and fear, and we chose faith.

#### **Mission Presidents**

My father and I were soon assigned as home teaching companions. One of our first assignments was to visit the mission president and his wife. They were very gracious. My father brought a lot of traditions from our previous faith. But they were kind, not critical, in explaining why things were done in different ways in the true Church. We were the home teachers, but we learned a lot from the example of our mission president.

Later, when I became a full-time missionary, I continued to learn from mission presidents. My first president always had a firm belief that things would eventually go well, even when times were tough. From him, I learned to be positive.

My second mission president was a former fighter pilot, but as a Church leader, he

# MODELS



was tenderhearted and sensitive, filled with Christlike love for his fellow servants. While I was an assistant to him, I felt that some missionaries were abusing certain privileges and taking advantage of his kindness. I suggested we create stricter rules with stronger enforcement. He said he felt it would be better to trust the missionaries to choose the right rather than doubting their intentions. From this role model, I learned to follow Joseph Smith's advice to teach correct principles and let people govern themselves.



**Left: Missionaries can be great examples to those they teach. Above: King Benjamin was a role model to his people. After he spoke to them, the people had a mighty change of heart.**

### Other Church Leaders

I remember watching Elder Dallin H. Oaks when, as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, he served as Area President in the Philippines. I saw him counsel with others about the challenges facing the Church in our country. I saw the great love he has for building the Church and creating opportunities to bless members' lives. From his example I learned that Apostles care not only about the Church as a whole but also about individuals.

Our current Area President, Elder Keith R. Edwards of the Seventy, says that although there is an administrative side to Church work, the Lord wants us to focus on the heart. He reminds us about King Benjamin's experience talking from the tower and how the people responded with a mighty change of heart. They had "no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually" (Mosiah 5:2). From Elder Edwards, I have learned to look at my own heart, to make sure my intentions are pure.



### Captain Moroni

The scriptures are full of great role models. Captain Moroni is one of my personal heroes. Mormon admired Moroni so much that he named his son after him. Mormon wrote of Captain Moroni: "If all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men" (Alma 48:17). Mormon also said that he admired the sons of Mosiah and Alma and his sons because "they were all men of God" (Alma 48:18). Let your role models be men and women of God!

### Nephi

Another great example from the scriptures is Nephi. From him, I learned to trust the Lord rather than complain. Let me explain. When I left the Philippines to get a master's degree at Brigham Young University, I promised that I would come back. When the time came for my family and me to return, the decision was not easy because I thought that opportunities in my home country were not as promising or rewarding as those in the United States. But because I had given my word, my wife and I decided to exercise faith as Nephi and do what the Lord would have us do.

Even though I had already worked before, I had to start over financially. Money was scarce, and opportunities took time to bear fruit. Then all three of our children got sick, and our savings disappeared. It was one of the toughest times of our lives.

Our youngest son developed a type of tuberculosis. He had to have medicine that was expensive, and he had to take it for nine months. I remember looking in my wallet, and there was no money. My wife asked me how we would be able to feed the children.

During those times, you ask questions. And if you're not careful, you can become like Laman and Lemuel and start murmuring and become bitter. You feel like life is unfair. It would have been easy for me to think: "I'm a returned missionary. I served the Lord. We pay our tithing. We serve in the Church. Where are the blessings?" But we remained active, we served in our callings, and we got by. My brother and his wife helped us financially, and I finally found a job. It was barely enough, and it paid less than what I had earned before I left for school. I felt I was a failure.

Finally, after several years, my wife and I decided that wondering and worrying weren't helping. We said, "Let's stop murmuring, trust in the Lord, and be happy with what we have." And right after that, things turned around. I got several job offers and was able to choose the best one. I was called as the bishop of our ward. It seemed the blessings just flowed.

As bishop I discovered how the difficult times I had been through helped me help others. In particular, I remember listening to a member who was going through tough times financially, and I felt compassion. I could not have had that compassion if I had not gone

through similar things myself. And I remembered what Nephi said: "As the Lord liveth, and as we live, we will not go down unto our father in the wilderness until we have accomplished the thing which the Lord hath commanded us" (1 Nephi 3:15).

I remembered how, when they were in the ship coming to the promised land, that even though he had been bound for days and had swollen wrists and ankles, Nephi said, "Nevertheless, I did look unto my God, and I did praise him all the day long; and I did not murmur against the Lord because of mine afflictions" (1 Nephi 18:16). So I told the member that most of us have a long way to go to become like Nephi, but he is a good role model. I was able to help that member see that the answer is not in murmuring but in doing what the Lord has commanded, because He will surely prepare a way (see 1 Nephi 3:7).

**Left: Captain Moroni was such a strong leader that Mormon later wrote, "If all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever." Below: Nephi's example teaches us to trust the Lord rather than complain.**





***The ultimate role model for our mortal lives is the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. All of our righteous behaviors and actions spring from our faith in our Redeemer.***

### **Parents**

Like Nephi, I was certainly fortunate to be born of goodly parents. My mother was a virtuous and strong woman. I am the kind of person I am today because of the solid gospel foundation she established in our home. My father too, though not perfect, was a great role model for me. He would make sure we were on the right track, but he would always ask us, “What do you think?” And he would listen.

He became interested in the Church because he saw a sign that said “No other success can compensate for failure in the home.” He really believed that. He loved his family and worked hard to provide for our needs.

There was a time when the large pharmaceutical company he worked for kept giving him more and more responsibilities, and that meant more and more travel. It got to the point that he was home only three days a month. Then all of a sudden, we learned that

he had resigned from his longtime job and promising career opportunities.

I remember that at our next family council meeting he said we would need to tighten our belts for the next few months while he looked for a new job. We asked him why he had resigned, and his response will stay with us forever: “You all are growing up to be teenagers already, and that’s a very important time in your lives. I never would like a time to come when you would tell me, ‘Where were you when we needed you?’” He put his family first.

### **Following My Father’s Example**

Because of that example from my father, years later I was able to make a similar decision. I had just been hired by a consulting company, and they flew six of us employees from the Philippines to Sydney, Australia, to join with 400 managers from all over the world for training. We flew first class.

A limousine picked us up at the airport and whisked us away to a five-star hotel, where each room had a big basket of goodies. The company wanted to show us that this was a good company to work for, and it wanted its new hires to stay.

After the first day of meetings, we had a gala dinner, a formal affair. We sat about 12 to a table, each with 10 managers and 2 managing partners who were to be our role models in the company. They told us stories about how they started in the company and grew in their careers with it. They told us of multimillion dollar deals they had closed, important businesspeople they had worked with, and major projects they had directed. I heard the names of Fortune 500 CEOs mentioned frequently and was in awe of these men because of the work they did.

We were all feeling great about our opportunities until one of the people at the table asked, “How does your wife handle all of your traveling? You’re constantly gone.” And one of the partners answered, “I was just divorced two years ago.” And the other partner at our table said, “I’ve been divorced for five years.”

I remember my thoughts: “These are not the men I want to be. I don’t think I want to work for this company because I don’t care much about worldly accomplishments if my family is in disarray.” The example of my father made it easy for me to decide to put my family first, and I found another job that allowed me to do so.

### **The Savior**

The ultimate role model for our mortal lives is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was perfect in every way and who gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. All of our righteous behaviors and actions spring from our faith in our Redeemer, and that faith springs from our testimony of who He is and what He has done for us. I am truly grateful for His sacrifice. I testify that He lives and that He wants each one of us to live a worthy life so that we can return and live with our Heavenly Father. If we follow the Savior and become more like our Father in Heaven, we will certainly be blessed.

### **Why Role Models?**

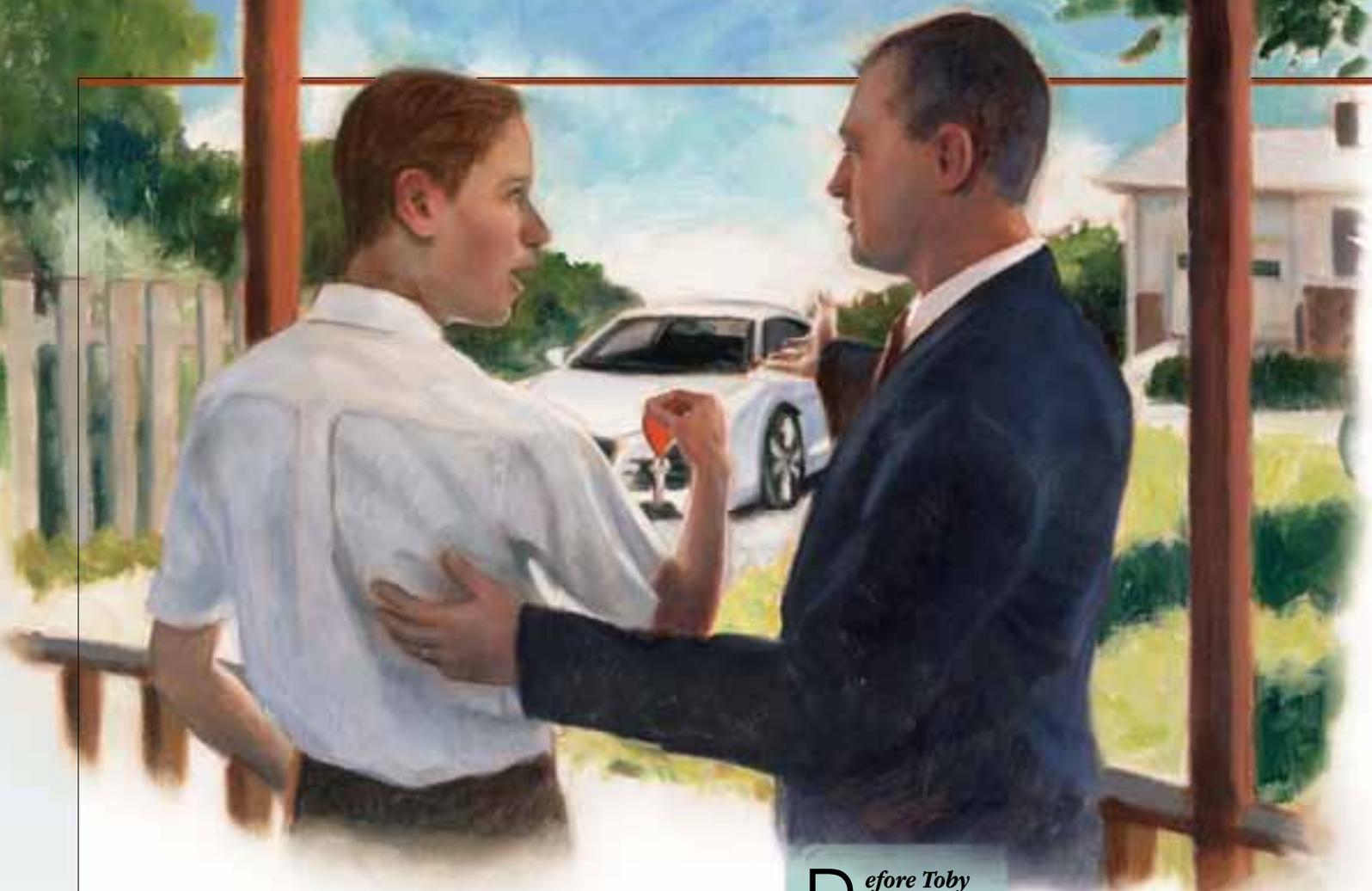
Following good role models is a key to your future. You will end up being like those you look up to, so find good heroes, and try to live as they would live. Consider eternal things as the measurement of who your role models should be. Look to the good examples in your own family, and pattern yourself after them. Look at others who pattern their lives after the Savior, and pattern your life after them.

Choose your role models wisely because they become your heroes. You will remember what they would do, and that becomes your pattern, enabling you to make wise decisions. And before you know it, others will be looking up to you and patterning their good behavior based on a role model they admire—you. ■

## **NINE LESSONS I LEARNED FROM MY FATHER**

**O**ne of my best role models was my father. Here are some of the things he taught me:

1. *Believe in God.* Faith in Him will get you through life’s storms.
2. *Be honest and upright.* Live a clean life, true to your principles and without deceit.
3. *Dream and dream big.* Righteous dreams do come true.
4. *Share inspiring stories.* Stories move us and connect us as human beings.
5. *Read a lot.* If knowledge is power, reading is your access to that power.
6. *Work hard.* Work is a blessing.
7. *Give freely.* What you give or how much matters little, only that you give often and give what you can.
8. *Enjoy clean humor.* Laughter unlocks your heart and makes life fun.
9. *Let music soothe you.* Worthy music speaks to your soul.



## I'm Never Going Home Teaching Again!

**M**y 15-year-old son was excited about the many things going on in his life—friends, skateboards, cars, and his learner's driving permit. He was not, however, excited about his responsibilities as a home teacher.

My heart sank one Sunday when he said, "Home teaching is a waste of time. I'm going to call my adviser and tell him that he needs to get someone else because I'm never going home teaching again!"

Before he had the opportunity to find his priesthood adviser's name in the ward directory, however, the telephone rang. It was his newly

assigned home teaching companion, Brother Bernd Suckow, who spoke with a thick German accent.

"Toby, I'm coming to get you right now," he said. "You are my new companion, and I thought we could make a few visits. It is good? OK. Good-bye."

Brother Suckow was either inspired not to wait for a response, or he assumed that Toby's surprised silence was synonymous with consent. Either way, 10 minutes later there came a knock at the door. Before Toby could protest, an ebullient man had pulled him outside and

**B**efore Toby could protest, an ebullient man pulled him outside and stuffed a set of car keys into his hand.

stuffed a set of car keys into his hand.

"Your name is Toby? Nice to meet you," Brother Suckow said. "Toby, it is the Sabbath, and I test-drive cars for a living. I think it is not so

good for me to drive on the Sabbath since it is my vocation. Can you help me out? Do you have a driving permit? Can you drive us to our home teaching appointments?"

Toby's jaw dropped as he saw the late-model sports car that Brother Suckow was test-driving that week. He quickly realized that he had almost lost what promised to be a memorable home teaching assignment.

When they returned a short while later, Toby showed Brother Suckow some new computer equipment, and they were soon talking about the latest trends in technology. When he left, Brother Suckow said, "I think it is good if we finish up our home teaching visits next Sunday. What do you think, Toby?"

Toby's little brother blurted out, "Can I be a home teacher too?"

Toby never hesitated when it came time to home teach with Brother Suckow. After a few months, home teaching was no longer about the nice cars he had the opportunity to drive. Rather, Brother Suckow had become a genuine friend, and Toby learned how important home teaching was to the families they visited.

Brother Suckow and his wife, Barbara, eventually returned to Germany. Our stake misses them greatly. I will never forget Brother Suckow's powerful example of love for a young man whose testimony of home teaching needed a jump start. ■

*Christine Francom,  
California, USA*

## A Long-Lost Treasure

Not long ago, as I sat waiting for the opening exercises of priesthood meeting, my home teaching companion mentioned that my scriptures were in the ward lost and found.

When I looked to my side, however, I saw that I still

had my new set of scriptures, which my wife had given me. As for my old set, they were sitting in a

basket next to a chair in our front room. I was puzzled.

"What's your middle initial?" my companion asked.

"R," I said.

"That's what the name said," he replied. "I'll go get them for you."

He returned a moment later and handed me a Bible with my name in faded gold letters on the front. I recognized it immediately. I struggled to unzip the old black cover. The book fell open to the first page, which bore a note in my father's handwriting. I was holding the Bible



that my parents had given me for my 12th birthday.

I was now living in Arizona, and the last time I had seen this Bible, I was living in Utah, preparing for a mission. I took my seminary set of scriptures with me to the mission field and left this Bible home. I found the odds staggering that my old Bible could have somehow made its way, over the course of 30 years, from my parents' home in Utah to my ward building in Arizona.

My father, a student of the scriptures, instilled in me at an early age a desire to read and study the word of God. A portion of the note he wrote in my Bible gave me counsel as a preface to my receiving the Aaronic Priesthood:

“David, on this, your 12th birthday, you will receive the priesthood of Aaron as a deacon and become a servant of the Lord, even as your namesake, David the king. As he behaved himself wisely, the Lord blessed him.

“So shall it be with you. If you will behave yourself wisely and follow the Lord, He will bless you and call you to serve Him.

“Be strong and faithful, Son. Study this book diligently, and it will give you strength.”

My father's words are as meaningful to me now as they were 30 years ago, perhaps even more so. How grateful I am to have again received the gift of my first Bible with the timeless counsel of my father. ■

*David R. Hanks, Arizona, USA*

## I Remembered the Savior

Some time ago I went through a period in which I was plagued with many personal problems and felt that I had nobody to help me solve them. I was attending church regularly but had not been successful in finding solutions to my difficulties. Fear often overcame me, especially during the night. I was very unhappy.

One day when I was feeling particularly distraught, I tried to get in touch with the mission president. On another day I had a strong desire to reach the President of the Church. I thought if I could just speak with or write to him, he would give me the answers I sought.

While in this troubled state of mind, I attended a session of district conference in Cúcuta, Colombia. I found the answer I needed during a talk by the mission president. When President Canals asked, “When is the last time you had a spiritual experience?” I realized that I had been so preoccupied with trying to find someone to help me solve my problems that I had forgotten

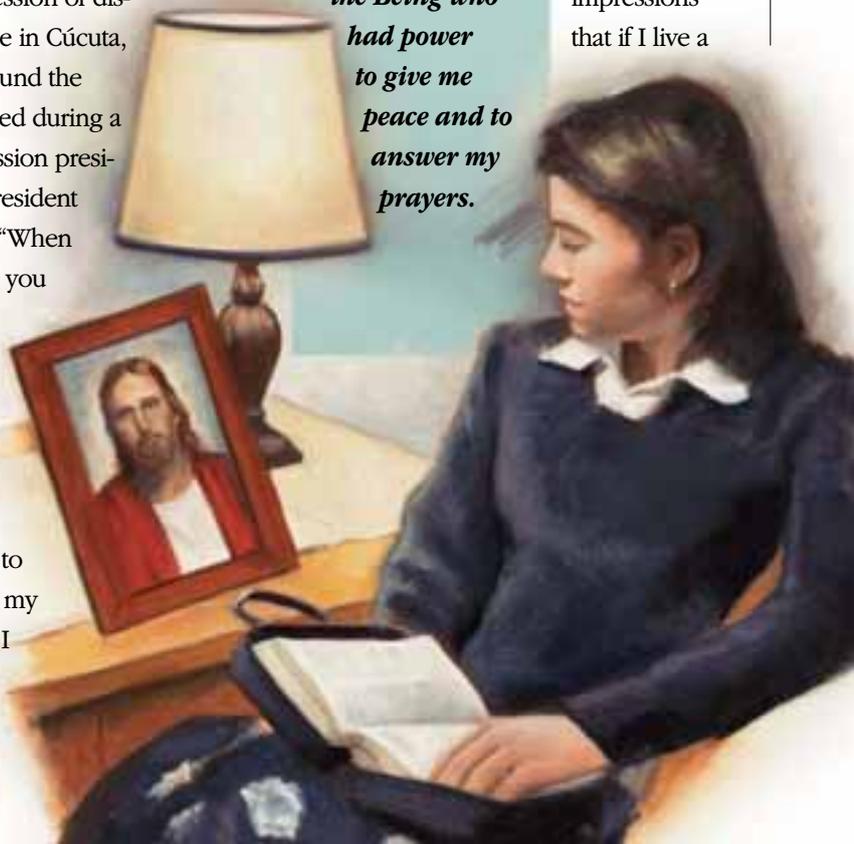
the Savior's call to draw near unto Him (see D&C 88:63). In my rush to find a solution, I had forgotten the Being who had power to give me peace in my afflictions and to answer my prayers.

That very day I started the process of drawing nearer to my Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. I told Heavenly Father of my fear and anguish, and I prayed in the name of Jesus Christ that I might have His Spirit to be with me. I dropped all of my burdens at the Savior's feet, remembering His promise: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

I still don't have all the answers to my personal problems, but I have

***In my rush to find a solution, I had forgotten the Being who had power to give me peace and to answer my prayers.***

received strength and comfort. I have also received impressions that if I live a



righteous life, keep the commandments, and serve the Lord with all my heart, He will help me solve my problems or give me strength to endure them (see Mosiah 24:14). ■

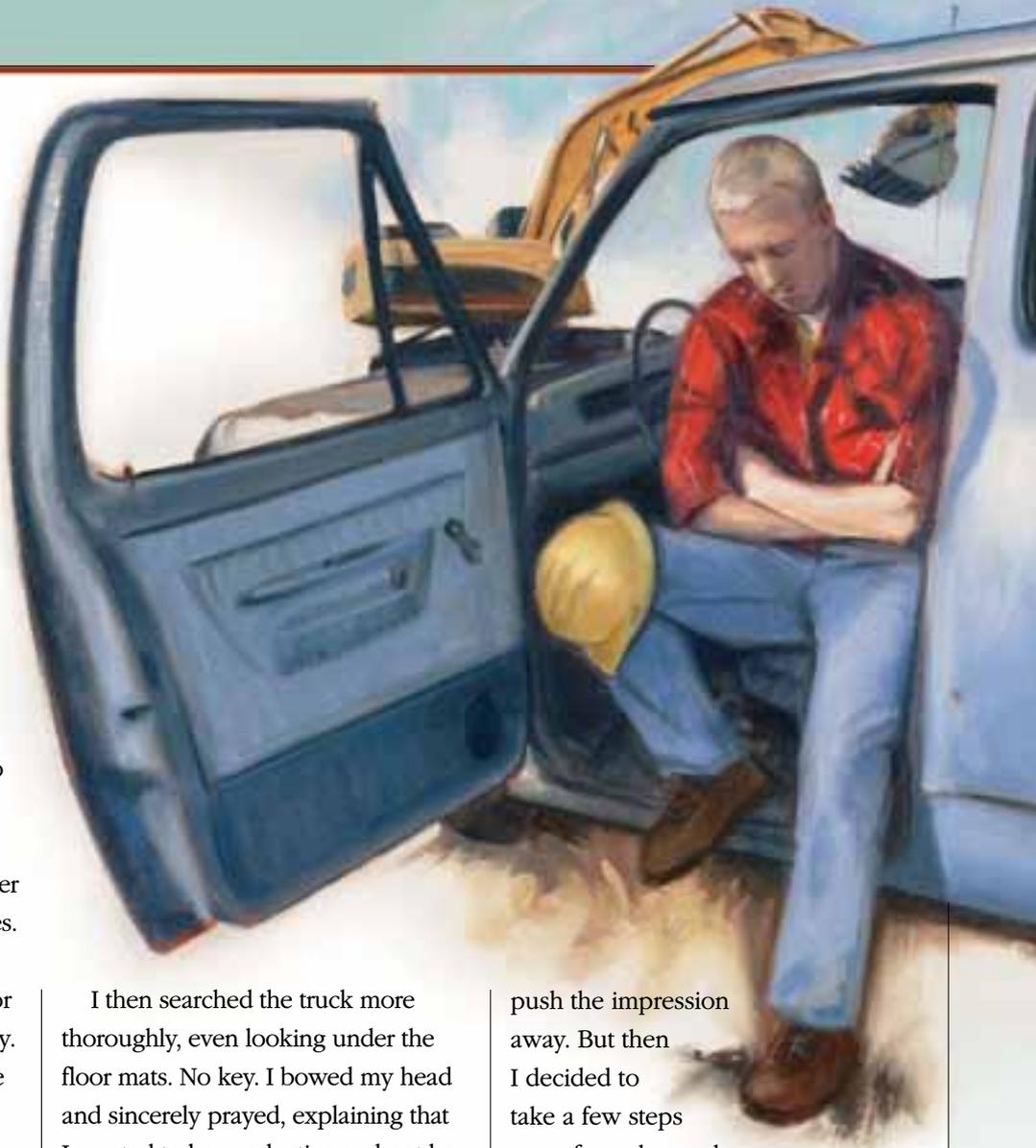
*Iris Adriana Leal Castilla, Colombia*

## The Key to Prayer

I had recently returned home from a full-time mission and was blessed to find a job that would enable me to save money for college tuition. I was eager to be productive so my employer would hire other returned missionaries.

My work was simple: I did whatever odd jobs needed to be done for a construction engineering company. This often meant performing simple laboratory tests. On one particular day, I was scheduled to pick up samples of construction materials from several sites and return them to the lab. I was given an old truck to make my rounds, and off I went.

I arrived at the first site, greeted the foreman, and quickly found the samples of concrete and steel. After placing them in the truck, I reached into my pocket for the truck key. To my alarm, my pocket was empty. I checked the ignition and took a quick look around the truck cab but did not find the key. It occurred to me that I might have dropped it while walking through the construction site. As I retraced my steps, I said a silent prayer, but I still couldn't find the key.



I then searched the truck more thoroughly, even looking under the floor mats. No key. I bowed my head and sincerely prayed, explaining that I wanted to be productive and not be delayed at the first stop of the day. I began searching again while listening for an answer to my prayer. I felt an impression to look under the truck, so I took a quick, doubting glance at the ground near my feet. I still saw no key, so I decided to make another trip around the construction site.

When I returned to the truck, I was still empty-handed. How could I tell my new employer that I had lost the key and hadn't been able to complete such an easy task? I quietly said one more prayer, and the impression to look under the truck came again. I gave another quick glance, and when I didn't see the key, I was about to

push the impression away. But then I decided to take a few steps away from the truck and look again.

Suddenly I saw it! It must have fallen when I got out of the truck. It was just far enough under the truck that I hadn't seen it the first two times I looked. I was ashamed that I hadn't listened better to the promptings of the Spirit.

That day and many times since, I have reflected on how patiently and lovingly the Spirit works with me. When we sing, "I know my Father lives and loves me too" ("I Know My Father Lives," *Hymns*, no. 302), my heart swells. I am amazed that our Father loves us so much that He will answer our simplest prayers. ■

*Mark Burns, Utah, USA*

## FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

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



### **“Opening the Heavens,”**

p. 16: After summarizing the article for your family, brainstorm how your family can create a sacred environment in your home. If family members are not doing so already, try implementing the counsel given by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi. Share your experiences the following week.

**“Guarding against Danger from Within,”** p. 22: Give family members some blocks. As you tell the story, have them build a wall to represent protecting the family. Discuss what you can do to strengthen the spiritual walls of your home. Make a list of “secret passages” the enemy may try to use, and discuss how to protect against invasion. Read the section

“Fortifying Our Families,” and conclude by reading Elder L. Tom Perry’s quote.

**“Too Holy?”** p. 37: Summarize the article, and have family members identify how Ian changed in order to keep his faith strong. Referring to the second-to-last paragraph, discuss how Ian’s counsel can help your family “become what Jesus wants us to be—holy.”

**“Role Models,”** p. 38: Begin by asking family members to list their role models or to draw a picture of a person they admire. Share examples of role models from Elder Benson E. Misalucha’s article, and discuss the qualities a role model should have. End by reading the last three paragraphs of the article.

**“Jason’s Escape,”** p. F10: Have a fire drill with your family, meeting

## TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

*Number represents first page of article.*

F = <i>The Friend</i>	Prayer, 2, 16, 34, 46, 47
Depression, 26	Preparedness, 2, 34, F10
Example, 14, 38, 44, F2, F14	Primary, F8
Family, 2, 14, 22, 26, 37, 38, F8, F13, F14	Priorities, 14, 25, 38
Friendship, 32, 37	Protection, 2, 22, F10
Happiness, F2	Revelation, 2, 16, 34
Health, 26	Sabbath, 37
Holy Ghost, 22	Scripture study, 16, 25, 45
Home teaching, 44	Service, 37, F2, F4, F6
Jesus Christ, 16, 46	Smith, Joseph, F6
Leaders, 8, 38, 46	Spiritual strength, 16
Learning, 14, 25	Support, 26, 32
Media, 21	Teaching, 2
Missionary work, 38, F2	Temple, F8, F13
Motherhood, 26	Trials, 26, 46
Obedience, 22	Visiting teaching, 25
Ordinances, F8	Word of Wisdom, 32, 37
Parents, 2, 38, 45	Work, F6
Patriarchal blessing, 34	

at a designated place outside (you could whistle or ring a bell to simulate the alarm). Afterward, ask how the alarm helped your family know when to escape. Read the story. Ask what kinds of spiritually dangerous situations family members might encounter. Read President Henry B. Eyring’s quote, and discuss how faith and the Holy Ghost can help us know when to escape.

## A Lesson on Forgiveness

As our family discussed our most memorable family home evening, what stuck out had nothing to do with a fun activity, clever object lesson, or special treat. It was a simple but profound experience that began with a lesson our 17-year-old son, Fielding,

prepared about forgiveness.

After the lesson, everyone had an opportunity to express his or her feelings about what we liked about each other and what we wished we could improve in ourselves. We talked about the challenges we each faced and helped each other find solutions. We

cried together, asked forgiveness of each other, and set goals to be better.

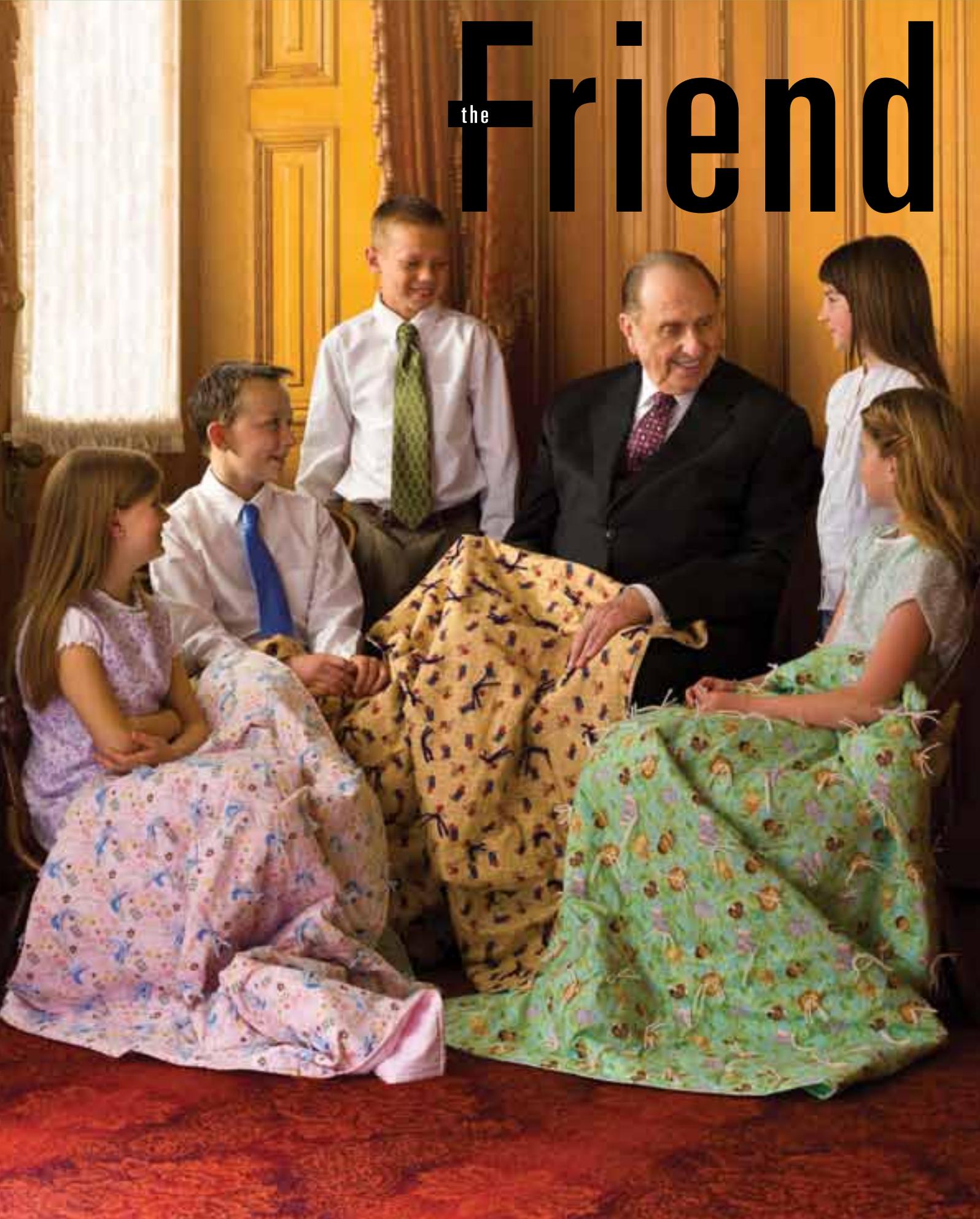
Family home evening has become one of our favorite times. We love how it allows our children to express themselves more freely and with confidence.

Carlos and Jenny Comena Guzman,  
Ica, Peru

## YOUR FAVORITE HOME EVENING

Send a description of your favorite family home evening to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org).

# the Friend



COME LISTEN TO  
A PROPHET'S VOICE



**President Monson teaches that we can be happy when we reach out to others.**

# Reach Out to Others

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

To find real happiness, we must focus outside ourselves. Many have come into the Church—or at least have come to know and respect the Church—because someone made the effort to reach outward. I share with you a treasured family experience which had its beginning back in 1959, when I was called to preside over the Canadian Mission in Toronto.

Our daughter, Ann, turned five shortly after we arrived in Canada. She saw the missionaries going about their work, and she too wanted to be a missionary. My wife demonstrated understanding by permitting Ann to take to class a few copies of the *Children's Friend* [now called the *Friend*]. That wasn't sufficient for Ann. She also wanted to take with her a copy of the Book of Mormon so that she might talk to her teacher, Miss Pepper, about the Church.

Just a few years ago, long years after our return from Toronto, we came home from a vacation and found in our mailbox a note from Miss Pepper which read:



*Dear Ann:*

*Think back many years ago. I was your schoolteacher in Toronto, Canada. I was impressed by the copies of the Children's Friend which you brought to school. I was impressed by your dedication to a book called the Book of Mormon.*

*I made a commitment that one day I would come to Salt Lake City and see why you talked as you did and why you believed in the manner you believed. Today I had the privilege of going through your visitors' center on Temple Square. Thanks to a five-year-old girl who had an understanding of that which she believed, I now have a better understanding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*

Miss Pepper died not too long after that visit to Salt Lake City. How happy Ann was when she attended the Jordan River Utah Temple and performed the temple work for her beloved teacher to whom she had reached out so many years ago. ●

*From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on November 13, 2007.*

## A LITTLE GIRL GROWN UP



**A**nn Monson has grown up and married now, and her name is Ann M. Dibb. She was just four years old when her father became a mission president. She can still remember what the carpet and the furniture in the mission home looked like. She remembers kneeling and praying beside her bed when she was seven and feeling the Spirit tell her that the Lord knew her. When she was nine, her father became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. She has two brothers, so she is the only daughter in

President and Sister Monson's family.

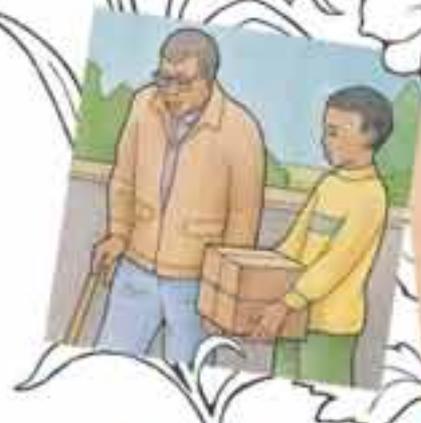
Sister Dibb has a beautiful, warm smile, and she still loves to reach out to others. She likes to write notes and make cakes and pies for people. In general conference in April 2008, Sister Dibb was sustained as second counselor in the Young Women general presidency. She travels all over the world, meeting young women and inspiring them to follow the Savior's example and reach out to others.



**President and Sister Monson in 1961 with Ann and her brothers, Tom (left) and Clark (middle).**

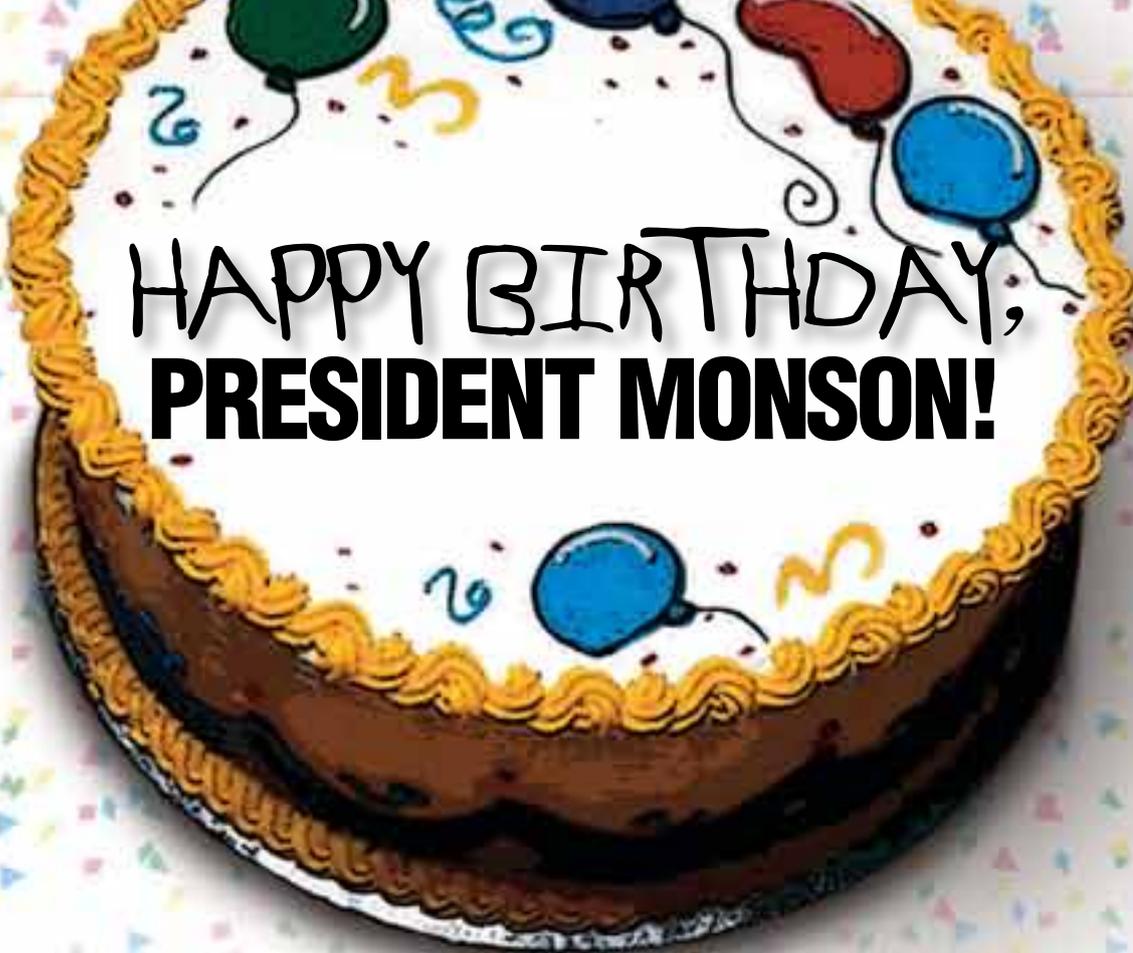
### PLANTING GOSPEL SEEDS

**R**eaching out to others is one way you can share the gospel every day. Each time you tell the truth, are helpful and kind to your friends, or live the gospel standards, you are sharing the gospel. When you do these things, you are planting tiny seeds of the gospel in people's hearts. Some of those seeds may someday grow into beautiful, strong testimonies of the gospel. Look at the scenes below. On each seed, write a word that tells one way the child is sharing the gospel. One is done for you. Then color the beautiful flowers that grow from each seed.



Helping





# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PRESIDENT MONSON!

Last August, when asked what his ideal birthday gift would be, President Thomas S. Monson encouraged us to “find someone who is having a hard time, . . . and do something for them.”<sup>1</sup> This year children around the world have turned their hearts and hands towards others to give President Thomas S. Monson what he wanted most. Many, many children responded to President Monson’s encouragement to do an act of service for someone else. We can print only a few of the letters we received. But all of you kind children have shared a gift of service with your beloved prophet, and all wish him a very happy birthday this month!



I helped a family by giving them things that I didn’t use and toys that were in good shape. I felt very good when I did this. It is like what Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ do for us. They help us in our challenges and give us many blessings.

*Alma V., age 11, Capital District, Colombia*



Children in the Oakridge Farms Ward, Farmington Utah Oakridge Stake, gathered for an activity where they tied quilts. The quilts were later donated to the Church’s Humanitarian Center.

My friend is from Peru, but she has been living in Italy for a few years. Four of her brothers and sisters were baptized, and last October her mom became a member of the Church too. Now my friend would like to be baptized. The missionaries asked me to help them prepare her for baptism. So I was there every time they met with her to talk about the gospel. I hope she will be baptized soon.

*Eleonora A., age 11, Piedmont, Italy*



During our vacation, we were thirsty. I asked my mom for some money to buy water. When I was coming out of the store, I saw a man looking at the trash for some water. I looked at my hand. I had some change, so I bought him a bottle of water.

*Orson B., age 10, Sonora, Mexico*



My daddy helped my brother, Maximo, and me to make some fishing poles for my friends from Primary. We love to go fishing as a family. Each time I invite some

of our friends to go fishing, they don't have anything to fish with. Seeing how happy many of them are because they now have their own poles makes me happy too.

*Luciano N., age 9, Entre Ríos, Argentina*

The town where I live is very cold. To help the missionaries keep warm, I knitted a muffler with the help of my mom.

*Mirai H., age 10, Hokkaido, Japan*



My friend Jonah broke his leg. He was in a wheelchair for a long time. Every day I would help him by pushing his wheelchair to lunch, recess, or anyplace he needed to go. I felt really happy to help my friend.

*Emma S., age 8, Arizona, USA*



I learned to read when I was five years old. Now I am doing with my younger cousin what my parents did with me—teaching him to read by using the scriptures.

*Nicolas N., age 7, São Paulo, Brazil*



I am a small boy who loves to give service. I like to cook a lot, and I like to make waffles with my grandmother. I also like to offer the waffles to my neighbors.

*Jonas V., age 5, Wallonia, Belgium; with help from his mother*

**NOTE**

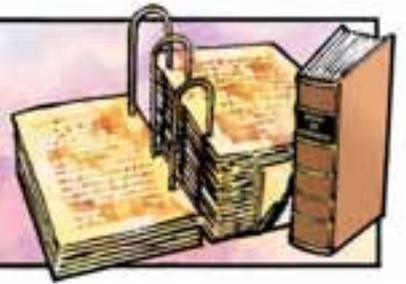
1. In Gerry Avant, "Prophet's Birthday: Milestone of 81," *Church News*, Aug. 23, 2008, 4.

PHOTOGRAPH OF NOISEMAKER BY TAMARA HAMBUN; PHOTOGRAPH OF CAKE © GETTY IMAGES; PHOTOGRAPH OF QUILTING ACTIVITY BY CHRISTINA SMITH



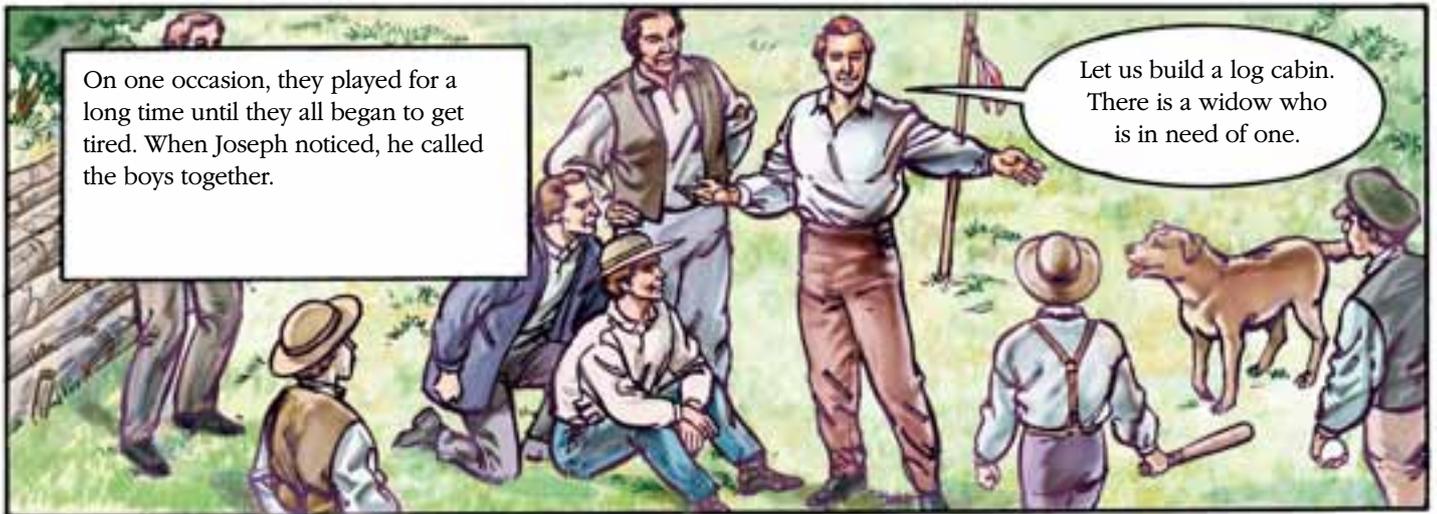
FROM THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

# Hard at Work, Hard at Play



Joseph often played ball and other games with the young men in town.

Give the ball a good toss.



On one occasion, they played for a long time until they all began to get tired. When Joseph noticed, he called the boys together.

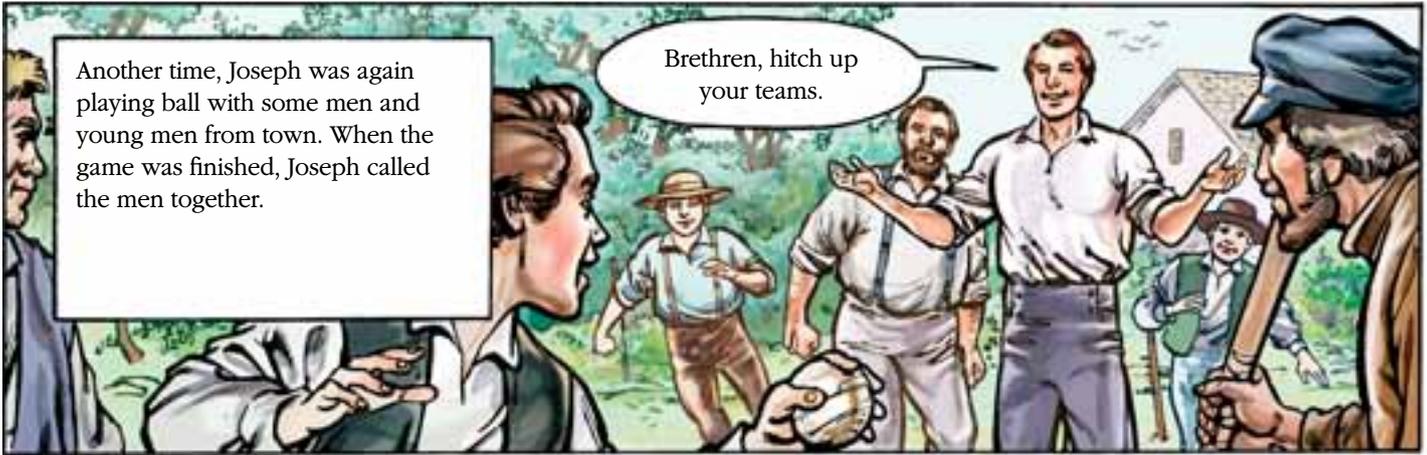
Let us build a log cabin. There is a widow who is in need of one.



I sure am tired. I don't know how Joseph does it.

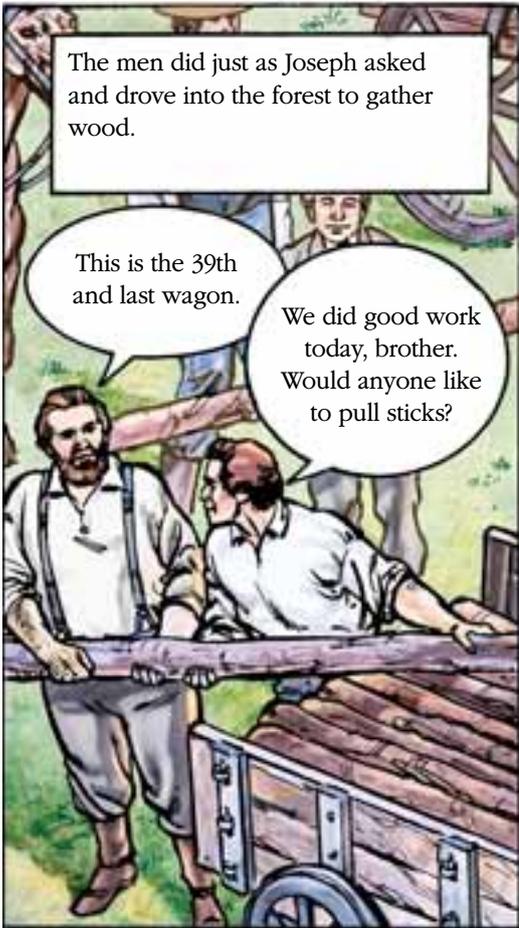
He's always like this—serving whenever he can.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAL VELLUTO AND EUGENIO MATTOZZI



Another time, Joseph was again playing ball with some men and young men from town. When the game was finished, Joseph called the men together.

Brethren, hitch up your teams.

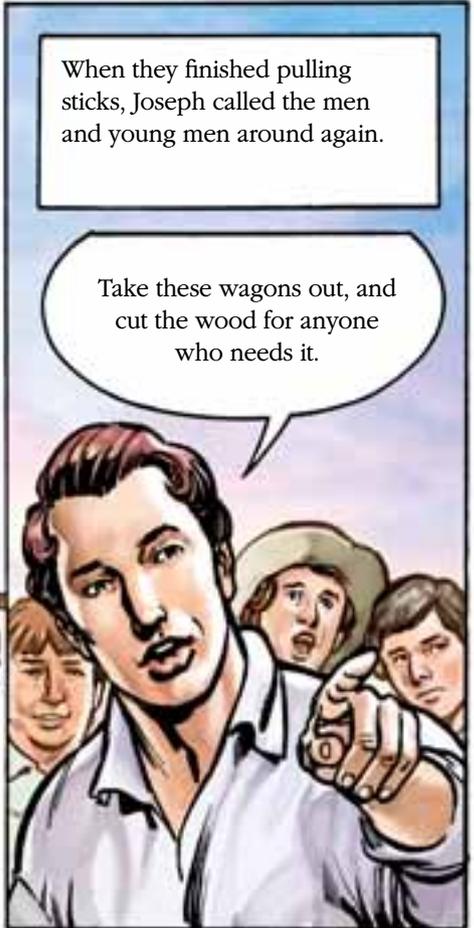


The men did just as Joseph asked and drove into the forest to gather wood.

This is the 39th and last wagon.

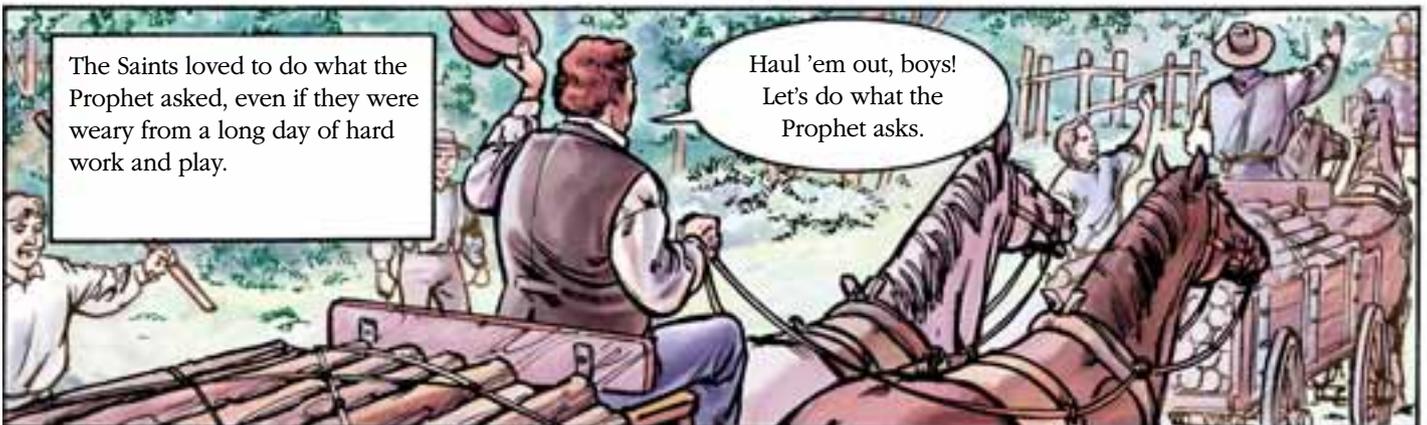
We did good work today, brother. Would anyone like to pull sticks?

Joseph was strong and good at a game called pulling sticks. He pulled up each opponent, one after another.



When they finished pulling sticks, Joseph called the men and young men around again.

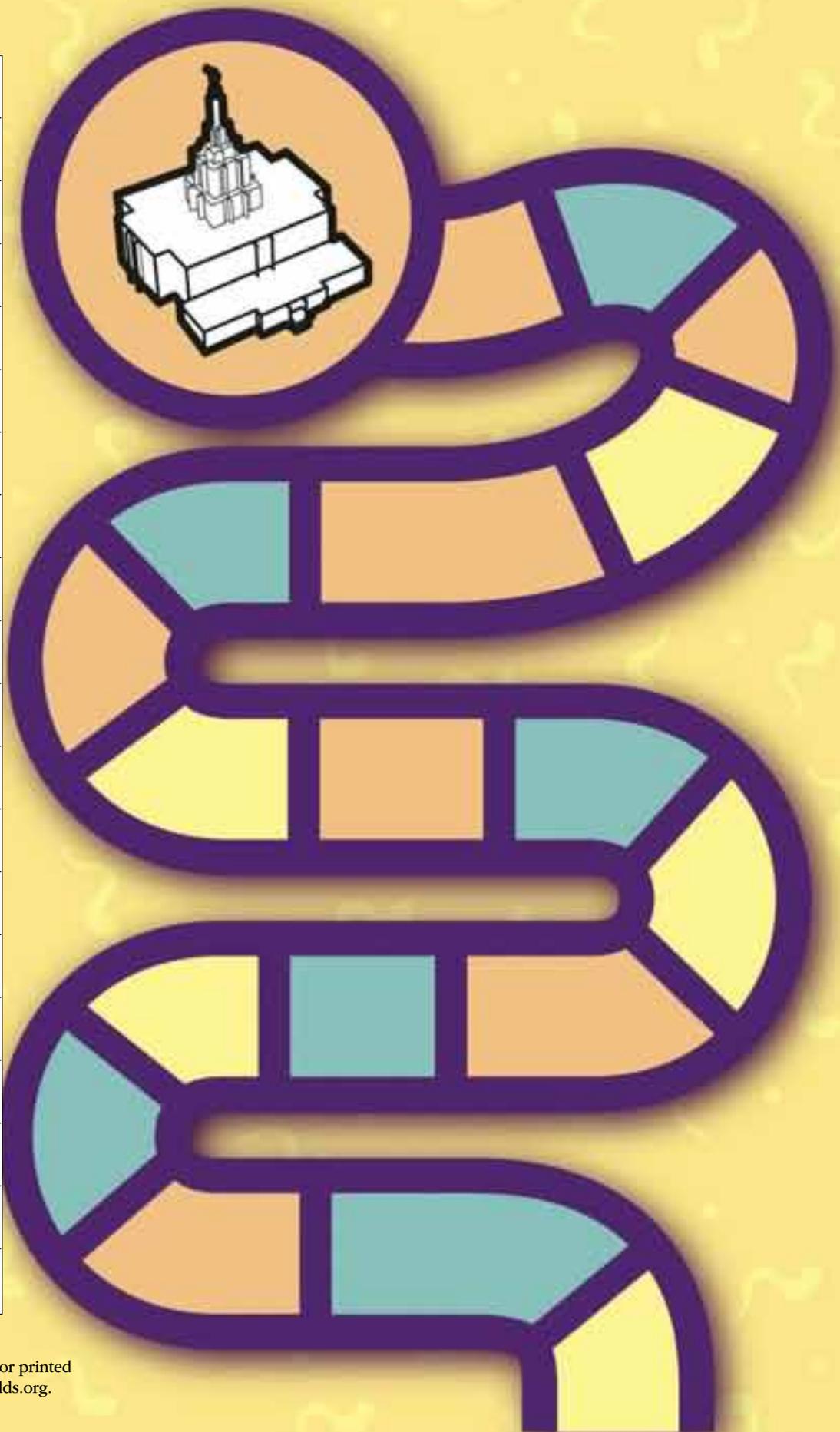
Take these wagons out, and cut the wood for anyone who needs it.



The Saints loved to do what the Prophet asked, even if they were weary from a long day of hard work and play.

Haul 'em out, boys! Let's do what the Prophet asks.

<b><i>Be baptized and confirmed</i></b>
<b><i>Attend church</i></b>
<b><i>Take the sacrament</i></b>
<b><i>Repent</i></b>
<b><i>Follow the prophet</i></b>
<b><i>Be obedient</i></b>
<b><i>Be kind</i></b>
<b><i>Have good thoughts</i></b>
<b><i>Pay tithing</i></b>
<b><i>Study the scriptures</i></b>
<b><i>Pray</i></b>
<b><i>Obey the Word of Wisdom</i></b>
<b><i>Be honest</i></b>
<b><i>Forgive others</i></b>
<b><i>Honor your parents</i></b>
<b><i>Have faith in Jesus Christ</i></b>
<b><i>Show love to your family</i></b>
<b><i>Love the Lord</i></b>
<b><i>Serve others</i></b>
<b><i>Keep the Sabbath day holy</i></b>



**Note:** This activity may be copied or printed from the Internet at [www.liahona.lds.org](http://www.liahona.lds.org).

# The Temple—I'm Going There Someday

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

BY CHERYL ESPLIN



One Sunday in testimony meeting, nine-year-old Angie told the congregation that her favorite song was “Families Can Be Together Forever.” Angie said how great it is that Heavenly Father has a wonderful plan for us to be together forever.

Angie’s parents had not been sealed in the temple. Soon after that day, Angie’s sister Katie left a letter on their parents’ pillow, urging them to go to the temple.

Angie and Katie wanted so much for their family to be sealed together. Their parents prayed about going to the temple. Their family worked hard to prepare. When the time was right, their family was able to go to the temple and be sealed together forever.

Even if your family has not been sealed, someday you will be able to go to the temple. After you turn 12, you can perform baptisms for the dead in the temple. You can begin preparing now by keeping the commandments and living My Gospel Standards.

## Activity

Cut out the wordstrips on page F8, and put them in a bowl, bag, or jar. Use pebbles or buttons for game pieces. Taking turns, choose a wordstrip, and read it out loud. Then count how many words it has, and move your game piece that many spaces. Continue until everyone’s game piece has reached the temple.

## Sharing Time Ideas

**1. My family can be together forever through the ordinances of the temple.** While you read Doctrine and Covenants 138:48, have the children listen for what work is done

in temples that would make it possible for families to be together forever (“sealing of the children to their parents”). Show Gospel Art Picture Kit 417 (*Elijah Restores the Power to Seal Families for Eternity*). Teach about the prophet Elijah’s appearing in the Kirtland Temple to restore the sealing power (see D&C 110:13–15). To help the children understand “sealing power,” show a picture of the temple in your area and explain that if couples are married in the temple and keep the promises they make there, they will still be married after they die. Tell the story of Angie and Katie’s family’s being sealed in the temple (at left). Have each child draw a large picture of a temple. Then have them turn their papers over and draw a small picture of their family or their future family. When they have finished, have them hold their pictures up to the light so they can see their families in the temple. Share your testimony that families can be together forever.

**2. Family history and temple work bless all the generations of my family.** Have seven children come to the front of the room. Tape the label Me on the child in the center. Label the children on his or her left Parent, Grandparent, Great-grandparent. Label the children on his or her right Child, Grandchild, Great-grandchild. Explain that each person represents a family generation. Tell the children that when Heavenly Father established families, He planned for us to help each other return to live with Him forever. Read Malachi 4:6. Explain that turning “the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” means to seal all the generations of our family together forever through temple ordinances. That verse also refers to the love we feel for our ancestors when we learn about them. With the bishop’s or branch president’s permission, invite a grandfather or grandmother of one of the children to come to Primary. Beforehand, write questions on pieces of paper, and let the children take turns choosing and asking a question for the grandparent to answer. Start each question with “When you were my age . . .” (Possible questions: What was your favorite family tradition? What did you and your friends do for fun?) Encourage the children to ask their parents and grandparents questions to learn more about them. ●

# Jason's Escape

*"Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Mark 14:38).*

BY CAROLYN LEDUC

Based on a true story

**Z**ZZZZ . . ." Eight-year-old Jason faked a snore, then burst into giggles. Lying in his bed, he pulled the blanket over his eyes and pretended to sleep. Across the dark room, his six-year-old brother snuggled into his pillow, then let out a long, dreamy sigh before he started to laugh as well. "Shh!" Jason whispered, pulling the blanket off his head. "We're supposed to be sleeping!"

"I'm sleeping. I'm sleeping!" his brother whispered back. Both boys giggled again, then pulled the sheets up under their chins, squeezed their eyes shut, and lay as stiff as possible while they waited.

In the next room, their sister also waited, pretending to sleep. Down the hall, their brother waited, pretending to sleep. Even their mom, they knew, was lying in her dark bedroom, curled up under her covers, pretending to sleep.

A floorboard creaked in the shadowy hallway. Dad was somewhere nearby. Any moment now they would hear the signal. Jason listened intently, hardly breathing as he tried to guess where Dad might be standing at that moment. He was definitely coming closer. Any second now . . .

"BEEEEEP!" A screech blared throughout the house. Jason dropped to the floor and crawled toward the door on his hands and knees.

"Go, go, go!" his brother yelled, bumping into Jason's side. "We have to get out!"

"Fire!" Jason shouted, crawling into the hallway. "Everyone out!"

"Everyone out!" Mom called. "Stay low!"

Dad joined them on the floor as they crawled down the hallway, into the kitchen, and out the back door. Once outside, they stood up and ran to the maple tree.

"Are we safe?" Dad asked. "Is everyone here?"

"We all made it," Mom said, counting heads.

Dad looked at his stopwatch. "That was our best time yet," he said. "Now everyone back to bed—for real this time."

The next morning, as the family gathered for breakfast, Jason thought about the fire drill. "I'm glad we have an escape plan," he said. "I feel safer with a fire alarm in our house."

"Me too," Mom agreed. "Having an alarm helps keep us safe—as long as we respond quickly when we hear it go off."

Jason finished his breakfast. "Can I go over to Brett's house now?" he asked. Brett was Jason's next-door neighbor and one of his best friends.



*“You must have faith to do those things and go to those places which invite the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Ghost.”*

**President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Walk in the Light,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2008, 125.**

**FIRE!**

“Yes,” Mom said. “Be safe and have a good time.”  
Next door, the boys played with Brett’s dog, ran through the sprinklers, and built stick forts in the mud. Then Brett suggested they go inside. “I’m hot,” he said. “Let’s play video games.”

“OK,” Jason agreed. “Maybe I can beat you this time.”  
“We can try a new game,” Brett said as the boys went inside. “Have you ever played this one before?” He held up the case for a game Jason didn’t recognize. “I don’t think so. What’s it like?”



“You’ll see,” Brett said, sliding the disc into the game console.

Brett handed Jason a controller and sat down in front of the TV. Jason sat down beside him. As the game started, a screeching alarm went off in Jason’s conscience. The characters in this game looked like real people, and

the clothes they were wearing—particularly the women’s clothes—didn’t cover very much of their skin. Jason felt uncomfortable. He knew he needed to escape.

“We need to play a different video game, or I need to go home,” Jason said. “I’m not comfortable with how those people are dressed.” Jason knew his friend might think he was weird for saying that, but he also knew he needed to pay attention to his feelings.

“No big deal,” Brett said. “We can play a different game.” Brett got out a car racing game. The alarm in Jason’s mind quieted as he heard the roar of the engines in the game. For Jason, nothing could have sounded better. ●

## ARE YOU MEDIA SMART?

**C**omputers, TV, and movies can help you learn and have fun. But there are also bad things about them that can hurt you. Here are 10 ways to stay safe when you use the computer or watch TV:

1. Always ask a parent for permission before you use the Internet or watch TV, and use computers or televisions only in an open area of your home, within the view of your parents.

2. Go only to Web sites that you and your parents know are good for children. Ask your parents to set your TV and Web browser to block bad content.

3. Don’t be afraid to leave the room or ask someone to turn off movies, video games, or music that makes you feel uncomfortable.

4. If you have a page on a social-networking Web site, ask your parents to help you make sure that people you don’t know can’t see your page.

5. When you are on the Internet, don’t give someone you don’t know personal information like your name, address, or phone number.

6. Don’t send someone you don’t know a photograph of yourself.

7. Never agree to meet in person someone you “met” on the Internet. If someone asks to meet you, tell your parents.

8. Don’t give anyone your passwords.

9. Don’t open an e-mail from someone you don’t know. If you get an e-mail you’re unsure about, check with your parents.

10. Look for fun activities on the *Friend* Web site at [www.friend.lds.org](http://www.friend.lds.org)!



**TEMPLE BLESSINGS UNITE FAMILIES**

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



# Love Your Country

Children all over the world love their country and obey the law—just like you! This month, let's meet Nicole Ritfield of Paramaribo, Suriname.

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY

Church Magazines

**E**leven-year-old Nicole Ritfield enjoys living in the countryside. Her family lives near fields and forests full of bushes, trees, and flowers. Nicole likes to ride her bicycle, and she pedals quickly over dirt and grass alike, dodging puddles.

But Nicole also enjoys the bustle of nearby Paramaribo, the capital city of Suriname. She likes seeing the houses that are crowded close together and the cars, scooters, and bicycles that jostle each other for space. In the center of town is a park called the *Palmentuin* (Palm Gardens), where the flag of Suriname waves in the sun and statues are often decorated with flowers.

## A Winning Essay

Nicole loves Suriname. So when she heard about a national contest to write an essay about her country, it seemed like a good thing to do. The contest rules said to describe what she would do if she were the Minister of Tourism. In her essay she suggested that historical buildings in Suriname should be cleaned up and beautified and that citizens of Suriname should be friendlier to visitors.

Nicole won the contest for her age group and traveled to Puerto Rico to compete with winners from other countries. Nicole

**Left: Nicole won a contest for writing about her country, Suriname. Right: Nicole is the youngest in her family. She likes to keep an illustrated journal.**



really enjoyed her trip to Puerto Rico. "It is a beautiful country," she says. "The people there are very kind, and I made lots of friends. But after all, home is home." She was eager to be with her parents and her four older sisters again. And she was anxious to see her pet cat, Rosy!

Nicole attends the Wanica Branch of the Paramaribo Suriname District. At church, people know her as a Primary girl who is kind and nice, always setting an example of reverence.

#### **Favorite Scriptures**

One of Nicole's favorite scriptures is 1 Nephi 8:30, which talks about the iron rod. "I know that if we keep holding on to the iron rod, we can have eternal life with our Heavenly Father," she says.

The twelfth article of faith also has special

#### **MORE ABOUT NICOLE**

Nicole likes to write songs and write in her journal. She joins in Primary activities and likes to work with others.

She has a strong testimony. "I know Heavenly Father lives," she says. "I know I am a child of God. And I know the Church is true."



meaning to Nicole. She recites, “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.”

### Honor and Obey

Families also have rules that family members should honor and obey. Nicole says her mother, father, and sisters have helped her learn to choose the right. “They correct me when I’m wrong and praise me when I do good,” she says.

Being the youngest isn’t always easy. It’s especially challenging when she sees her sisters go somewhere and she has to stay home. But she knows her family loves her and that they work well together.

One example is when they sing. Nicole loves music. She likes to lead the music, and she has a natural ability to keep everyone on beat and in harmony.



MAP BY THOMAS S. CHILD; GLOBE © MOUNTAIN HIGH MAPS

### Country and City

At night  
Nicole likes to

listen to the chirping crickets and the croaking frogs and the sounds of life in the woods around her house. She also likes to think of the city, with its government buildings and street signs, flower stalls and food markets. She is happy to be where she is.

And she is grateful that, by writing down her thoughts, she was able to share her love for her country with people throughout the world. ●

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS PARAMARIBO, SURINAME?





**Treasure the Word, by Elspeth Young**

*“Treasure up these words in thy heart. Be faithful and diligent in keeping the commandments of God, and I will encircle thee in the arms of my love” (D&C 6:20).*



**“There is great power in setting aside quiet, prayerful, meditative time. In the stillness that accompanies our pondering, we can come to know the Father and His Son,” writes Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi.**

**See “Opening the Heavens,” page 16.**

