

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • DECEMBER 2001

LIAHONA



LIAHONA



ON THE COVER

The Arrival, by Michael Albrechtsen.
Inset: Detail from *The Birth of Jesus*,
by Carl Heinrich Bloch, courtesy of
the National Historic Museum at
Frederiksborg in Hillerød, Denmark.



THE FRIEND COVER

No Room at the Inn, by Robert T. Barrett.

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December 2001 Vol. 25 No. 12
 LIAHONA 21992
 Official English International Magazine of The Church
 of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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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*, Floor 24,
 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223,
 USA; or e-mail: CUR-Liahona-IMag@ldschurch.org

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

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 Printed in the United States of America.

For Readers in the United States and Canada:
 December 2001 Vol. 25 No. 12. LIAHONA (USPS 311-
 480) English (ISSN 1080-9554) is published monthly by
 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 East
 North Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84150. USA subscription
 price is \$10.00 per year; Canada, \$15.50 plus applicable
 taxes. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah, and
 at additional mailing offices. 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.



"THE LEAST OF THESE"

When I read "The Least of These" in the December 2000 issue of *A Liahona* (Portuguese), I was touched by the project described in the article. I have a similar project, but I am trying to help improve the well-being of children—their self-worth and self-reliance—as Jesus Christ did in His ministry. Reading about the example of other people in *A Liahona* articles makes me feel even more motivated to help.

*Cleodeth Sena Macedo,
 Paraíso Branch,
 Macapá Brazil Amapá District*



MISSIONARY EFFORTS PRAISED

I want to congratulate you for your church's devotion to missionary efforts around the world. I had the wonderful opportunity to become friends with two missionaries in Carbonia, Italy. I was very impressed with their positive attitude, even though they were separated from their families.

I am not a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but I

eagerly read the *Liahona* (Italian). I admire your prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, and his counselors. The missionaries brought a cassette tape of your April 1999 general conference into our home, and I listened to the addresses with great interest.

The true Church promotes unity and acceptance of others. It teaches respect and kindness and love. The missionaries I met demonstrated these attributes.

*Angela Bratu,
 A friend of the Church in Carbonia, Italy*

Editors' note: We invite you to inform us of your concerns and suggestions regarding the *Liahona*. We also welcome letters for the Comment page, answers to questions posed in the Questions and Answers section, accounts of faith-affirming experiences, and insightful articles about gospel principles. Please contact us at *Liahona*, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to CUR-Liahona-IMag@ldschurch.org.

While we welcome your feedback and submissions, we do receive many letters and e-mails unrelated to our responsibilities with the *Liahona*. For instance, we are often asked to help contact members living in other countries or to provide special materials for lessons. We would be delighted to accommodate these requests, but doing so would hinder us in producing the *Liahona*. We therefore ask that you limit your communications to items related to the *Liahona*. Your local leaders are better prepared to direct you to resources and help you with other matters.



There were no presents that could be played with, but there were many wonderful gifts that could not be seen but could be felt.



PHOTOGRAPH OF PRESIDENT FAUST BY DON BUSATH; ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL MANN

FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

A Christmas with No Presents



By President James E. Faust
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

I have been thinking about what makes Christmas such a great time in our lives. I am old enough to remember many Christmases. They have all been glorious. But I have learned that it isn't just the presents that make them great.

THE HAPPIEST CHRISTMAS OF MY CHILDHOOD

When I was a young boy, our family was terribly poor. Father had no job because he was going through law school at the University of Utah. He had a wife and three young sons. Grandfather and Grandmother knew that we would have no Christmas if we did not come down to the farm in Millard County. So all of our family took the train from Salt Lake to Leamington, Utah. Where the money came for the tickets, I will never know.

Grandfather and Uncle Esdras met us at the railroad crossing in Leamington with a team of big horses to pull the open sleigh through the deep snow to Oak City. It was so cold that the huge horses had icy chin whiskers, and you could see their breath. I remember how old Jack Frost nipped my nose, and the extreme cold made it hard to breathe. Grandmother had heated some rocks and put them in the bottom of the sleigh to help keep us warm. We were wrapped and tucked into some heavy camp quilts with just our noses sticking out. Accompanied by the tinkle of bells on leather straps on the harnesses of the horses, we musically traveled from Leamington over the 10 miles (16 kilometers) to Oak City, where our beloved grandfather and grandmother lived. So many dear ones were there that we could hardly wait to arrive. When we got there it was warm and wonderful and exciting.

In the corner of the living room was the Christmas tree, a cedar cut from the hillside pasture. It was already partially decorated by Mother Nature with little berries that helped give it a strong smell. Our decorations were popcorn strings made by pushing a needle and thread through popcorn. The strings had to be handled carefully or they would break and strew popcorn all over the floor.

We also had paper chains to put on the tree, made by cutting up old Sears and Montgomery Ward catalogs, with the paper links pasted together with flour paste. The sticky flour paste got all over our hands, faces, and clothes. I wonder why they didn't put sugar in it! With cream it could also have been served for mush.

I do not remember any presents under the tree. Under the tree were popcorn balls made with strong, homemade molasses. When we bit into the popcorn balls, it felt like they were biting back.

On Christmas Eve we all gathered around the woodstove, enjoying the warm comfort of the fire and the pleasant aroma of the burning cedar wood. One of the uncles gave the opening prayer. We sang carols and hymns. One of our aunts read of the birth of Jesus and of

the “good tidings of great joy” (Luke 2:10). “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). Grandfather and Grandmother then told us how much they loved us.

The next day was Christmas, and we had a glorious dinner. But before we ate, we all got down on our knees for family prayer. I was so hungry. Grandfather prayed for the longest time. You see, he had much to pray for. He prayed for moisture because there was a drought in the land, and the crops had been meager. The fall grain had been planted in the dusty ground. What harvest there was could not be sold for much because of the low prices caused by the Great Depression. The taxes on the farm were delinquent because there was no money to pay them. He also prayed for our large family, his cattle and horses, pigs and chickens, turkeys—he prayed over everything.

During Grandfather's long prayer, my youngest uncle became restless and gave me an irreverent pinch, hoping that I would shout to make things more exciting.

For dinner we had a huge tom turkey stuffed with delicious dressing. There was no celery in the dressing because we had only the ingredients that could be produced on the farm. But the dressing had plenty of bread, sage, sausage, and onions. There was an abundance of potatoes and gravy and pickles, beets, beans, and corn. Because Grandfather could trade wheat to the miller for flour, there was always fresh baked bread. To stretch the food, we were encouraged to take one bite of bread for every bite of other kinds of food. We had chokecherry jelly and ground-cherry jam. For dessert we had pumpkin and gooseberry pie. It was all delicious.

GIVING AND RECEIVING PRESENTS

As I look back on that special Christmas over a lifetime, the most memorable part was that we did not think about presents. There may have been some handmade mittens or a scarf given, but I do not recall any presents.



The true gifts may be part of ourselves—giving of the riches of the heart and mind—and therefore more enduring and of far greater worth than presents bought at the store.

Presents are wonderful, but I found that they are not essential to our happiness. I could not have been happier. There were no presents that could be held and fondled and played with, but there were many wonderful gifts that could not be seen but could be felt.

There was the gift of boundless love. We knew God loved us. We all loved each other. We did not miss the presents because we had all these glorious gifts. It made me feel so wonderful and secure to belong and to be part of all that went on. We wanted nothing else. We did not miss the presents at all. I never remember a happier Christmas in my childhood.

We all enjoy giving and receiving presents. But there is a difference between presents and gifts. The true gifts may be part of ourselves—giving of the riches of the heart and mind—and therefore more enduring and of far greater worth than presents bought at the store.

Of course, among the greatest of gifts is the gift of love. When I was called to the holy apostleship, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) gave me a kiss on the cheek. I felt his whiskers. It caused a flood of

wonderful little boyhood memories of being held by strong arms and feeling Grandfather's whiskers as he kissed me on the cheek.

Some, like Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, have a hard time loving anyone, even themselves, because of their selfishness. Love seeks to give rather than to get. Charity towards and compassion for others is a way to overcome too much self-love.

He whose birth we celebrate has told us that all of the law and the prophets is contained in loving God and our fellowmen. James called this "the royal law" (James 2:8). The Apostle Paul said, "To know the love of Christ . . . passeth knowledge" (Ephesians 3:19). In the First Epistle of John we are told, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7).

Anciently the Wise Men came from afar to bring gifts to the baby Jesus. Would it not be marvelous this Christmas if we could personally give gifts to the Savior? I believe this is possible to do. Said Jesus:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all

the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. . . .

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

“Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

“When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

“Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:31, 34–40).

TRUE GIFTS

So as we help the sick and clothe the naked and attend to the stranger, we personally give gifts to our Savior.

Among these true gifts are some our family shared on that boyhood Christmas I told you about: the gift of peace, the gift of love, the gift of service, the gift of self, and the gift of faith.

All of us enjoy wonderful gifts from God which, if developed, can be enjoyed by others. At this Christmas season, so many of us have enjoyed the musical and literary gifts of Handel, Dickens, and many others. The sharing of these natural gifts blesses both the giver and the receiver.

This Christmas and every Christmas will be richer by sharing and enjoying gifts that cannot be held but only felt.

Many years ago I went to the hospital to give a blessing to a young man named Nick and his sister Michelle. Nick is a friend of mine and former home teaching companion, and his young life was threatened by a kidney disease. Nick had not been well for a long time. Nick’s older sister Michelle had offered to give him a precious gift to preserve his life: she offered one of her own kidneys.

The operation was successfully performed, but still in question was whether or not Nick’s body would accept this priceless gift from Michelle. You see, Michelle had given the gift not knowing if it would be accepted; fortunately it was. In like manner, our Heavenly Father has given us so many wonderful gifts not knowing if they would be accepted. He has offered us His peace, His comfort, His love. All we have to do to accept His gifts is to be obedient and follow Him.

There are so many problems facing us individually and collectively. Yet I have the simple faith that many, if not all, of them can be put into proper perspective by Paul’s sublime message to the Galatians: “Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

The message of this season that is applicable throughout the year lies not in the receiving of earthly presents and treasures but in the forsaking of selfishness and greed and in going forward, seeking and enjoying the gifts of the Spirit, which Paul said are “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22–23).

With gifts such as these, I am sure everyone could feel as I did that wonderful Christmas so long ago when we had no presents to hold and play with. I would not have wanted to trade places with any prince of the world with his room full of toys. The gifts of love, peace, service, self, and faith so generously given made me feel so fulfilled. It

The greatest gift of this or any other Christmas is the Atonement of Jesus as the Redeemer, the Son of God.



made me feel that I must be somebody special to be part of so much love. I wanted nothing besides more of these wonderful gifts that couldn't be handled nor touched but only felt.

Two days before Christmas we also honor the birthday of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who is singular in importance in our faith (see D&C 135:3). To Joseph we owe the knowledge of the appearance of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ; the Book of Mormon; the Doctrine and Covenants; the Pearl of Great Price; the priesthood; and the keys of the Restoration in its fulness.

As one of the special witnesses of Jesus and of the gospel restored to earth by God working through the Prophet Joseph Smith, I testify that the greatest gift of this or any other Christmas is the Atonement of Jesus as the Redeemer, the Son of God. Paul said this was a "free gift" (Romans 5:15). It is a gift we cannot handle or touch, but we can feel the immeasurable love of the Giver.

Through this gift we can all find the pathway to eternal life. My testimony of this is sure, real, and absolute, as is my sacred testimony of Him. I invoke the blessings of God upon us all at this special Christmastime. □

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

1. There is a difference between presents and gifts. True gifts may be part of ourselves, coming from the riches of the heart and mind.
2. Our Heavenly Father can give us so many wonderful gifts—the gift of peace, the gift of love, the gift of service, the gift of self, the gift of faith.
3. Above all, He has given us the gift of His Son.
4. The message of the Christmas season that is applicable throughout the year lies not in the receiving of earthly presents and treasures but in the forsaking of selfishness and greed and in going forward, seeking and enjoying the gifts of the Spirit in our lives.

THE ATONING SACRIFICE

Latter-day Prophets Testify

There would be no Christmas if there had not been Easter,” explains President Gordon B. Hinckley. “The babe Jesus of Bethlehem would be but another baby without the redeeming Christ of Gethsemane and Calvary, and the triumphant fact of the Resurrection” (“The Wondrous and True Story of Christmas,” *Liahona*, December 2000, 6).

The great fact of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the very heart of the gospel, is what makes our Savior’s birth—as well as His death—so significant. Here we present some of the teachings of this dispensation’s prophets—from Joseph Smith to Gordon B. Hinckley—on the centrality of the Savior’s sacrifice.



JOSEPH SMITH (1805–44)

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof

are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:22–24).

BRIGHAM YOUNG (1801–77)

“The Latter-day Saints believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father [in the flesh], who came in the meridian of time, performed his work, suffered the penalty and paid the debt of man’s original sin by offering up himself, was resurrected from the dead, and ascended to his Father; and as Jesus descended below all things, so he will ascend above all things. We believe that Jesus Christ will come again. . . .

“. . . There is not one thing that the Lord could do for the salvation of the human family that he has neglected to do; and it remains for



“The babe Jesus of Bethlehem would be but another baby without the redeeming Christ of Gethsemane and Calvary, and the triumphant fact of the Resurrection.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley



Joseph Smith



Brigham Young

the children of men to receive the truth or reject it; all that can be accomplished for their salvation, independent of them, has been accomplished in and by the Savior. . . . He is now King of kings and Lord of lords, and the time will come when every knee will bow and every tongue confess [see Mosiah 27:31], to the glory of God the Father, that Jesus is the Christ [see Philippians 2:10–11]. That very character that was looked upon, not as the Savior, but as an outcast, who was crucified between two thieves and treated with scorn and derision, will be greeted by all men as the only Being through whom they can obtain salvation” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 31–32).

JOHN TAYLOR (1808–87)

“We are told [in 2 Nephi 9:7] that the atonement must needs be infinite. Why did it need [to be] an infinite atonement? For the simple reason that a stream can never rise higher than its fountain; and man having assumed a fleshly body and become of the earth earthy, and through the violation of a law having cut himself off from his





LEFT: THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST, ARTIST UNKNOWN; INSET: SIMEON REVERENCING THE CHRIST CHILD © GREG K. OLSEN, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND MILL POND PRESS, INC.; RIGHT, FROM TOP: PORTRAITS BY A. WESTWOOD, H. E. PETERSON, LEWIS A. RAMSEY, ALBERT E. SALZBRENNER

association with his Father, and become subject to death; in this condition, as the mortal life of man was short, and in and of himself he could have no hope of benefitting himself, or redeeming himself from his fallen condition, or of bringing himself back to the presence of his Father, some superior agency was needed to elevate him above his low and degraded position. This superior agency was the Son of God, who had not, as man had, violated a law of His Father, but was yet one with His Father, possessing His glory, His power, His authority, His dominion” (*The Mediation and Atonement* [1882], 145).

WILFORD WOODRUFF (1807–98)

“When men are called upon to repent of their sins, the call has reference to their own individual sins, not to Adam’s transgressions. What is called the original sin was atoned for through the death of Christ irrespective of any action on the part of man; also man’s individual sin was atoned for by the same sacrifice, but on condition of his obedience to the Gospel plan of salvation when proclaimed in his hearing” (*Millennial Star*, 21 October 1889, 659).

LORENZO SNOW (1814–1901)

“Jesus, the Son of God, . . . had to make a great sacrifice. It required all the power that He had and all the

faith that He could summon for Him to accomplish that which the Father required of Him. Had He fallen in the moment of temptation, what do you suppose would have become [of] us? . . . But He did not fail, though the trial was so severe that He sweat great drops of blood. . . . He had in His heart continually to say, ‘Father, not my will, but Thine be done.’ It was a dark hour for Him: and every man and woman who serves the Lord, no matter how faithful they may be, have their dark hours; but if they have lived faithfully, light will burst upon them and relief will be furnished. . . .

“. . . The Lord has determined in His heart that He will try us until He knows what He can do with us. He tried His Son Jesus. Thousands of years before He came upon earth the Father had watched His course and knew that He could depend upon Him when the salvation of worlds should be at stake; and He was not disappointed” (*Millennial Star*, 24 August 1899, 531–32).

JOSEPH F. SMITH (1838–1918)

“The object of our earthly existence is that we may have a fulness of joy, and that we may become the sons and daughters of God, in the fullest sense of the word, being heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, to be kings and priests unto God, to inherit



John Taylor



Wilford Woodruff



Lorenzo Snow



Joseph F. Smith



Heber J. Grant



George Albert Smith



David O. McKay



glory, dominion, exaltation, thrones and every power and attribute developed and possessed by our Heavenly Father. This is the object of our being on this earth. In order to attain unto this exalted position, it is necessary that we go through this mortal experience, or probation, by which we may prove ourselves worthy, through the aid of our elder brother Jesus.

“Men can only be saved and exalted in the kingdom of God in righteousness, therefore we must repent of our sins, and walk in the light as Christ is in the light, that his blood may cleanse us from all sins, and that we may have fellowship with God and receive of his glory and exaltation” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 100–101).

HEBER J. GRANT (1856–1945)

“We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.’

“In other words, we do not believe that the mere confession of faith, when a man is dying, is going to save him. . . .

“ ‘We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—’ and when I say ‘faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,’ we want it distinctly understood that we believe



absolutely in Jesus Christ, that He was the Son of God, and that He did come to the earth with a divinely-appointed mission, to die as the Redeemer of mankind, on the cross. We do not believe that He was just a ‘great moral teacher,’ but that He is our Redeemer” (“Articles of Faith Explained,” *Deseret News*, 3 September 1938, 7).

GEORGE ALBERT SMITH (1870–1951)

“I thank [my Heavenly Father] for the knowledge that has been burned into my soul; I know that my Heavenly Father lives, I know that Jesus Christ is the Savior of mankind, and that there is no other name under heaven whereby men and women may be exalted, but the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. I do know that he came into the world in this latter day, that he bestowed divine authority upon a humble boy who was seeking the truth, and the result of that has been the organization of the Church with which we are identified; and there is with it the power of God unto salvation to all those who believe. Knowing that as I know that I live, I bear you witness of it” (in Conference Report, October 1927, 50).

DAVID O. MCKAY (1873–1970)

“In the meridian of the earth’s history came the Son of Man declaring the eternal truth so opposed to the promises of the earth, that *he that would save his life must lose it*. . . .

“His was a life of unselfish service—always helping those who were living incompletely to live completely—whether the incomplete living was caused by a physical defect such as blindness or deafness, or whether through a moral defect such as the woman taken in sin—His mission was to give them life. . . .

“In His life and death, therefore, Christ not only fulfilled the law of sacrifice but He fulfilled every conceivable condition necessary for man to know in order to rise or progress from earthly life to eternal life. ‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’ (John 12:32.)

“In this I think I glimpse, though ever so dimly, a reason for Christ’s shedding His blood—in addition to the one generally offered for the redemption of man from the Fall. I confess that the latter has moved me less than the realization that in His life He lived for His fellow men, and in His death, He triumphed over all earthly elements, over the power of *Death, Hell* and the Evil One, and arose from the grave, an



Joseph Fielding Smith



Harold B. Lee



Spencer W. Kimball

eternal Being—our Guide, our Saviour, our God” (“The Atonement,” *Instructor*, March 1959, 66).

JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH (1876–1972)

“Jesus did come into the world to ransom it. Through his atonement we were bought from death and hell. Death and hell were paid—paid in full—and Christ was the only one who could pay that debt. . . .

“ . . . He carried, in some way that I cannot understand and you cannot understand, the burden of the combined weight of the sins of the world. It is hard enough for me to carry my own transgressions, and it is hard enough for you to carry yours. . . . I have seen [people] cry out in anguish because of their transgressions—just one individual’s sins. Can you comprehend the suffering of Jesus Christ when he carried, not merely by physical manifestation but in some spiritual and mental condition or manner, the combined weight of sin? . . .

“ . . . This extreme suffering—which was beyond the power of mortal man either to accomplish or endure—was undertaken because of the great love which the Father and the Son had for mankind. . . .

*“We will never be able to pay the debt. The gratitude of our hearts should be filled to overflowing in love and obedience for his great and tender mercy. For what he has done, we should never fail him” (*Doctrines of**

Salvation, compiled by Bruce R. McConkie, 3 volumes [1954–56], 1:125–32).

HAROLD B. LEE (1899–1973)

*“The only thing the Savior expects from us in return for his suffering is that we repent of our sins and keep his commandments. Although his sufferings were so intense that he the Son of God was caused ‘to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that [he] might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink,’ ([D&C] 19:18) yet he . . . counts it all worth-while if, at the end of the earth, mankind, for whom he died, might gain eternal life and become his sons and daughters eternally through the acceptance of his gospel, which is God’s plan for man’s salvation” (*Youth and the Church* [1945], 117–18).*

SPENCER W. KIMBALL (1895–1985)

“When we think of the great sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ and the sufferings he endured for us, we would be ingrates if we did not appreciate it so far as our power made it possible. He suffered and died for us, yet if we do not repent, all his anguish and pain on our account are futile. . . .

*“Forgiveness of sins is one of the most glorious principles God ever gave to man. Just as repentance is a divine principle, so also is forgiveness. Were it not for this principle, there would be no point in crying repentance. But because of this principle the divine invitation is held out to all—Come, repent of your sins and be forgiven!” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 145, 360).*





EZRA TAFT BENSON (1899–1994)

“Because He was God—even the Son of God—He could carry the weight and burden of other men’s sins on Himself. Isaiah prophesied our Savior’s willingness to do this in these words: ‘Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: . . .

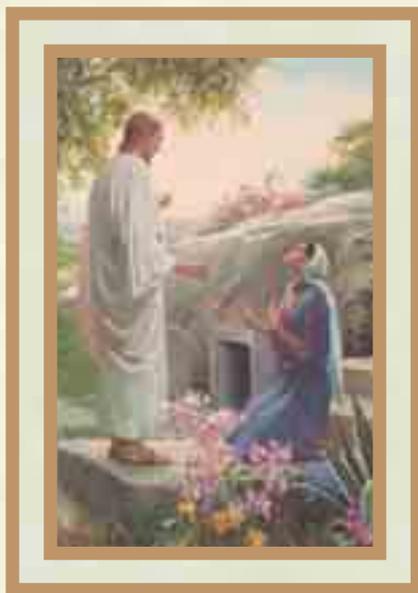
“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed’ (Isaiah 53:4–5).

“That holy, unselfish act of voluntarily taking on Himself the sins of all men and women is the Atonement. How *one* could bear the sins for *all* is beyond the comprehension of mortal man. But this I know: He did take on Himself the sins of all and did so out of His infinite love for each of us” (“Jesus Christ: Our Savior, Our God,” *Tambuli*, December 1991, 4).

HOWARD W. HUNTER (1907–95)

“Christ’s supreme sacrifice can find full fruition in our lives only as we accept the invitation to follow him. This call is not irrelevant, unrealistic, or impossible. . . .

“Let us follow the Son of God in all ways and in all walks of life. Let us make him our exemplar and our guide. We should at every opportunity ask ourselves, ‘What would Jesus do?’ and then be more courageous



to act upon the answer. We must follow Christ, in the best sense of that word. We must be about his work as he was about his Father’s. We should try to be like him. . . . To the extent that our mortal powers permit, we should make every effort to become like Christ—the one perfect and sinless example this world has ever seen. . . .

“We must know Christ better than we know him; we must remember him more often than we remember him; we must serve him more valiantly than we serve him. Then will we drink water springing up unto eternal life and will eat the bread of life.

“What manner of men and women ought we to be? Even as he is” (“He Invites Us to Follow Him,” *Tambuli*, October 1994, 4–6).

GORDON B. HINCKLEY (1910–)

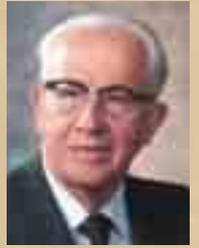
“When all is said and done, when all of history is examined, when the deepest depths of the human mind have been explored, nothing is so wonderful, so majestic,

so tremendous as this act of grace when the Son of the Almighty, the Prince of His Father’s royal household, He who had once spoken as Jehovah, He who had condescended to come to earth as a babe born in Bethlehem, gave His life in ignominy and pain so that all of the sons and daughters of God of all generations of time, every one of whom must die, might walk again and live eternally. He did for us what none of us could do for ourselves. . . .

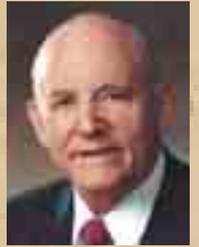
“This is the wondrous and true story of Christmas. The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea is preface. The three-year ministry of the Master is prologue. The magnificent substance of the story is His sacrifice, the totally selfless act of dying in pain on the cross of Calvary to atone for the sins of all of us.

“The epilogue is the miracle of the Resurrection, bringing the assurance that ‘as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (1 Corinthians 15:22).

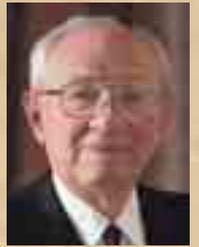
“There would be no Christmas if there had not been Easter. The babe Jesus of Bethlehem would be but another baby without the redeeming Christ of Gethsemane and Calvary, and the triumphant fact of the Resurrection” (“The Wondrous and True Story of Christmas,” *Liahona*, December 2000, 4–6). □



Ezra Taft Benson



Howard W. Hunter



Gordon B. Hinckley

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WISDOM AND ORDER

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

By Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



As precious and special assets of the Lord's kingdom, Latter-day Saints must recognize the wisdom of preserving their health and strength in order to serve more individuals and to serve them longer. "People fatigue" can over-

take us all if we are not wise.

Many persons, in dealing with the pressures of life, have developed their own ways of handling stress and "people fatigue." I offer some confirmation and encouragement for them to continue pacing themselves. Those who have worked out things reasonably well likely are aligned with scriptural counsel.

Each of us has different strengths and faces different circumstances that call for calibrations that are highly individual. Many things in life act upon us over which we have no control, but there is a zone—of differing size for each of us—in which we can act for ourselves, rather than merely be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:26). For example, this zone may include a certain amount of

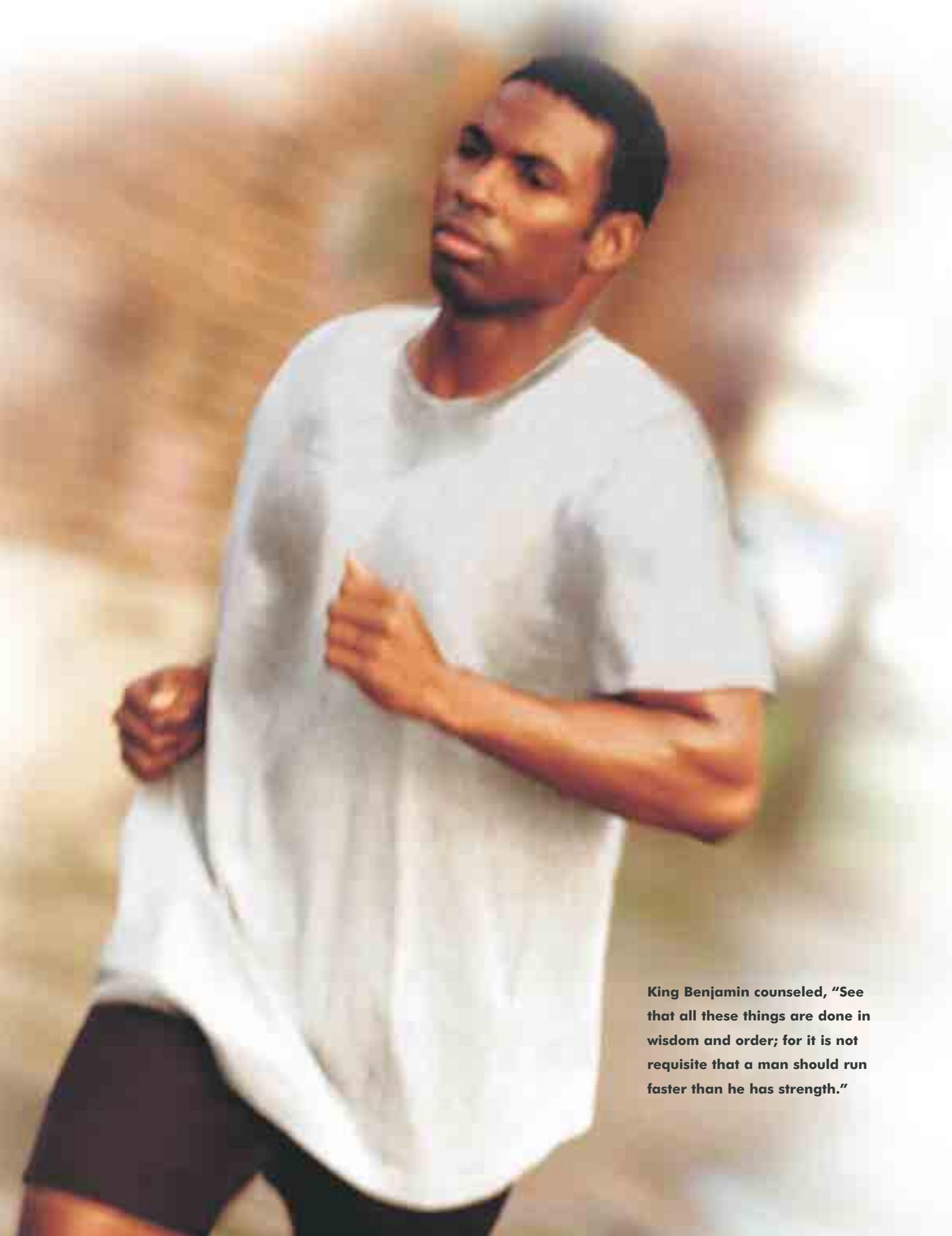
disposable income. What we do within that zone is especially up to us to determine.

USING THE SCRIPTURES AS OUR GUIDE

Basic scriptures can guide us as we seek to manage ourselves wisely. As King Benjamin counseled, "See that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength" (Mosiah 4:27).

A revelation was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith at a time when he must have been exceedingly anxious to finish the important and urgent translation of the Book of Mormon: "Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength and means provided to enable you to translate; but be diligent unto the end" (D&C 10:4).

Thus, the Lord has given us what might be called the "wisdom and order" and "strength and means" tests. Unwisely, we often write checks against our time accounts as we never would dare do, comparably, against our bank accounts. Sometimes we make so many commitments that they become like the vines in the



King Benjamin counseled, "See that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength."



allegory of Jacob, threatening to “overcome the roots,” including the “roots” of family relationships, friendships, and relationships with God (see Jacob 5:37, 48).

On my office wall is a quote from Anne Morrow Lindbergh: “My life cannot implement in action the demands of all the people to whom my heart responds” (*Gift from the Sea* [1955], 124). For me, it is a needed reminder. A few years ago, already weary, I foolishly went late one afternoon to two different hospitals to give blessings to three individuals who were dying of cancer. Not only was I worn out, but worse, the last person really didn’t get much from me. Things had not been “done in wisdom and order.” I was running faster than my supply of strength and energy on that occasion. Those blessings would have been better given over two or three days, and I would have had more empathy and energy.

FINDING RENEWING RETREATS

“And he said unto [the Twelve], Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

“And they departed into a desert place by ship privately” (Mark 6:31–32).

Jesus clearly recognized the weariness of His disciples, brought on by their conscientiousness. A renewing retreat can be difficult to arrange. But informal, brief retreats can be fashioned by providing greenbelts of time between busyness, even if these are only a few minutes long.

After one of the Brethren made a report to President Brigham Young (1801–77), he was anxious to leave so as not to impose. But President Young said, “Please sit a spell with me. I am weary of men and things.” How often do we “sit a spell” with spouse, children, colleagues, or friends? Unhurried time seems to be worth more than the same amount of time spent hectically.

CHOOSING “THE GOOD PART”

Another case study is usually used pertaining to delegation, but it involves more.

“And Moses’ father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good.

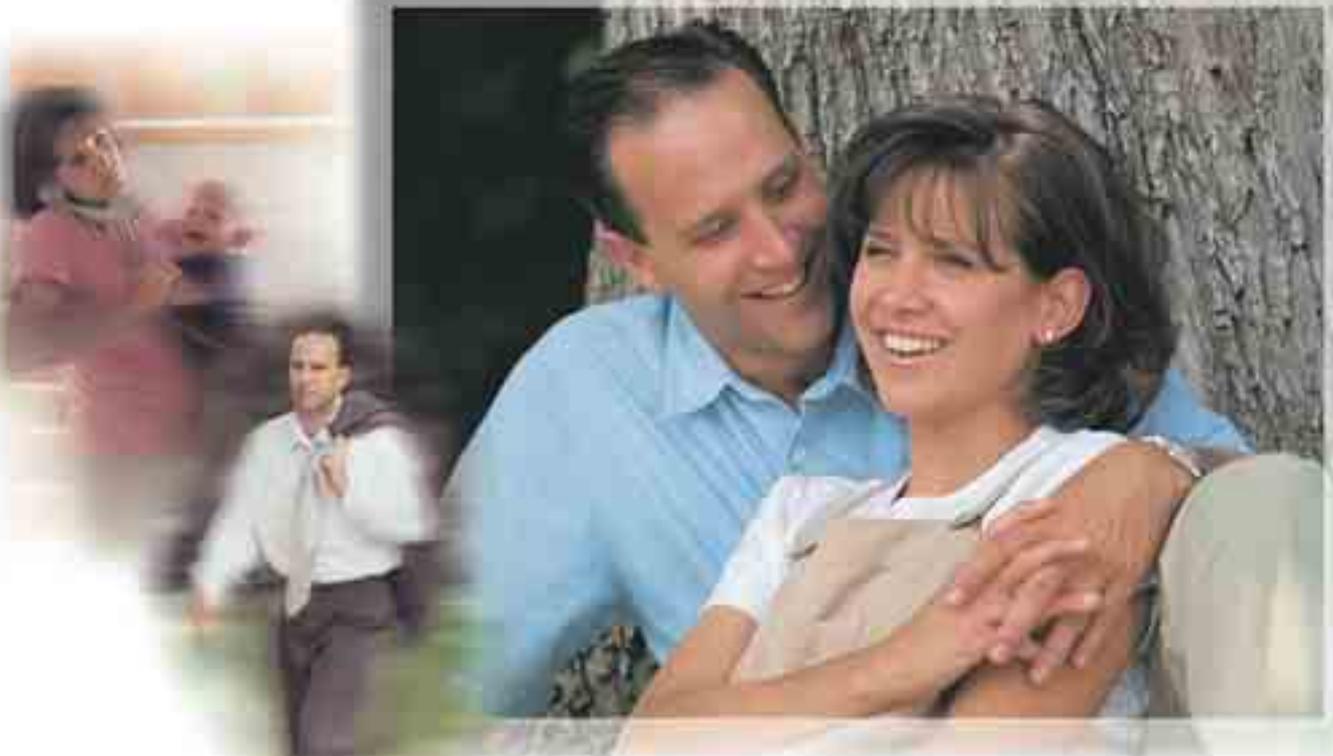
“Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone” (Exodus 18:17–18).

We generally see the need for Moses to apply the delegation dimension, and we note how both we *and those we serve*—including family—can “wear away.” Moses was hearing every case! Worse still, however, this pattern kept him from his real duties, which were to “teach them ordinances and laws, and . . . shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do” (Exodus 18:20).

The original Twelve were counseled that they were not to “serve tables” (see Acts 6:1–4). Actually, serving tables is easy. It is visible, measurable, and doable—compared to opening up the nations of the world to missionary work or to keeping wolves out of the flock. But if the Twelve were drawn away from their scriptural and constitutional duties, the whole Church would suffer. Being drawn away can happen to all of us, almost without our knowing it.

“Wisdom and order” recognize that there are seasons in life for certain extra chores. Professional responsibilities and formal callings come and go, but it is always in season to follow Jesus’ commandment: “What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27).

We can all try to watch out for Martha-like anxiety, which is genderless. It can also deprive us of special experiences if we are too “cumbered about much serving.” Conscientiousness is not an automatic guarantee that we will choose the “good part” which will “not be taken away from” us (see Luke 10:38–42).



Unhurried time seems to be worth more than the same amount of time spent hectically, especially when that unhurried time is shared with our spouse, children, colleagues, or friends.

Our most precious remembrances are concerned with the “good part.” These will remain with us, while many of our once pressing anxieties will be long since forgotten.

President Brigham Young, in periods when pressures could have filled him with Martha-like anxiety, instead made Mary-like choices: “In my experience I never did let an opportunity pass of getting with the Prophet Joseph and of hearing him speak in public or in private, so that I might draw understanding from the fountain from which he spoke, that I might have it and bring it forth when it was needed. . . . In the days of the Prophet Joseph, such moments were more precious to me than all the wealth of the world. No matter how great my poverty—if I had to borrow meal to feed my wife and children, I never let an opportunity pass of learning what the Prophet had to impart” (*Deseret News Semi-Weekly*, 15 September 1868).

The yield from President Brigham Young’s having “chosen [the] good part” by so listening has “not [been] taken away from” him or from us. Husbands and wives should have one gospel conversation at least once a

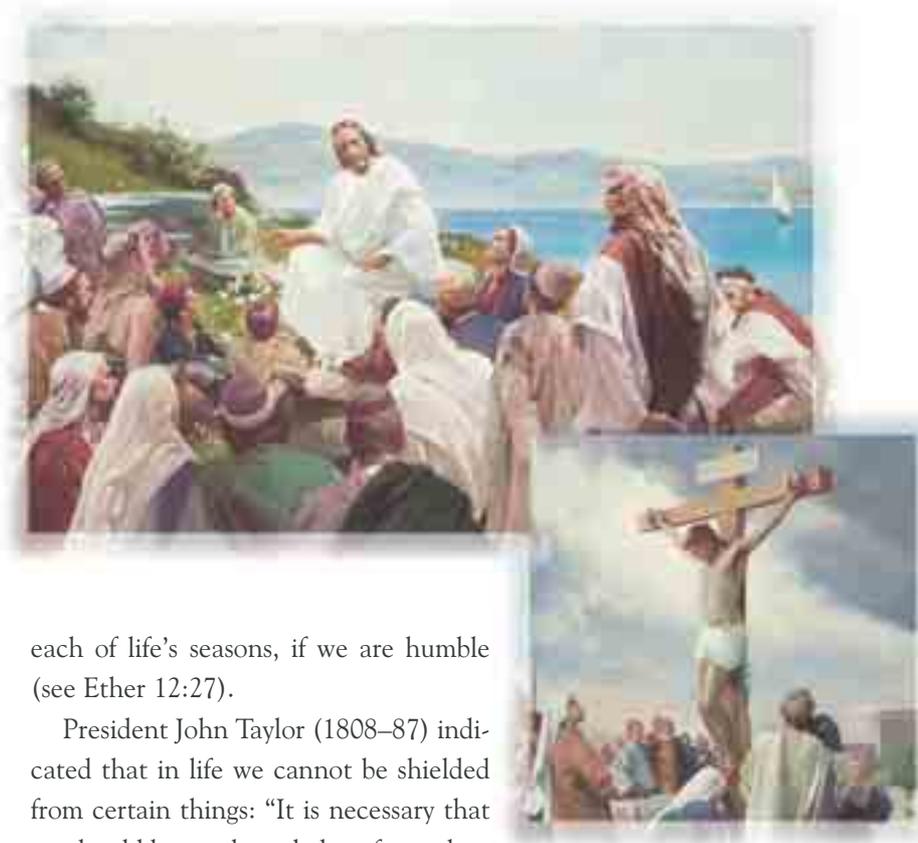
week—just between themselves. They should “sit a spell,” even though it may last only 10 or 15 minutes.

A growing intellectual excitement over the gospel that so often comes from scriptural study can do much to help counter fatigue and to renew us. So, too, can the joys of quiet, personal Christian service—outside the realm of our formal Church duties.

When we are perplexed and puzzled, and we will be at times, let us ponder Nephi’s example: “I know that [God] loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17). Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once said of worry: “It’s the Lord’s Church [so I] let him worry about it” (quoted in Lucile C. Tate, *LeGrand Richards, Beloved Apostle* [1982], 287). Some of us are not that spiritually poised yet!

FOLLOWING THE SAVIOR’S EXAMPLE

The Lord knows we “cannot bear all things now” (D&C 50:40). However, His grace is sufficient for us for



Jesus’ spiritual poise allowed Him to individualize and empathize, even though so much of His mortal messiahship was crowded into only three very busy years.

each of life’s seasons, if we are humble (see Ether 12:27).

President John Taylor (1808–87) indicated that in life we cannot be shielded from certain things: “It is necessary that we should have a knowledge of ourselves . . . and comprehend our strength and weakness, our ignorance and intelligence, our wisdom and our folly, that we may know how to appreciate true principles. . . . It is necessary that we should know our own weaknesses, and the weaknesses of our fellow men; our own strength as well as the strength of others; . . . and not to over value our own wisdom or strength, nor depreciate it, nor that of others; but put our trust in the living God, and follow after him” (*Deseret News Weekly*, 26 January 1854).

Many of our daily choices are not intrinsically hard, but we work hard to make them that way. Some choices are matters of preference, not principle. We have a way, at times, of exhausting ourselves and also of drawing down the supply of goodwill while struggling over what are *preferences*, not principles!

Consider the spiritual poise of Jesus, our Exemplar in all things.

First, as far as I can see, Jesus was never hectically involved. This is all the more marvelous when we realize that so much of His mortal messiahship was crowded into only three very busy years.

Second, Jesus had empathy for others even amid His agony in Gethsemane and on the cross. He restored a

severed ear. He made certain that His mother, Mary, would be cared for by the Apostle John. He reassured a suffering thief about tomorrow.

Third, Jesus individualized during what could have seemed to others to be repeated experiences.

He personalized His offer of living water to the woman of Samaria (see John 4:7–26). He stood by the jailed Apostle Paul, encouraging him to “be of good cheer” (Acts 23:11). Each of those was an audience of only one!

At the beginning of each year, it would be quite human for us to say resignedly, “Here we go again!” and to fail to personalize. I am so glad Heavenly Father doesn’t have such feelings. Even though His course “is one eternal round” (1 Nephi 10:19; D&C 3:2), as the plan of salvation is executed and re-executed, again and again, in realms beyond our purview, His love is constant and personal. I am so glad that Jesus did not view each healing resignedly as merely one more duty. For Him, such a duty was delight.

Gilbert K. Chesterton concluded that God has never grown tired of making all daisies alike, because God has never grown tired of daisies (see *Orthodoxy* [1959], 60). Nor must we grow tired of others.

KEEPING SPIRITUALLY INTACT

We must keep ourselves spiritually and otherwise intact. Keeping spiritually intact is vital for various reasons. Among these is the great value of being intact



even when things seem somewhat bleak. Imagine, for instance, what the feelings of Jesus' followers must have been as He was arrested in Gethsemane! Worse still, what was it like to see Him on the cross? Surely those would be the bleakest hours in Christian history!

The Prophet Joseph's imprisonment in Liberty Jail also would have been a bleak time. His followers had been driven from the state of Missouri, and he appeared to be finished. Even so, the Lord told him that "the ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name" (D&C 122:1). What a stunning declaration!

President John Taylor said of the time: "We were driven out of Missouri—we were driven from one place to another in Missouri, before we were driven out altogether; then we were driven from Illinois to this territory. But what of that. I know some men who thought the work was at an end. I remember a remark made by Sidney Rigdon, I suppose he did not live his religion—I do not think he did—his knees began to shake in Missouri, and on one occasion he said, 'brethren, every one of you take your own way, for the work seems as though it had come to an end.' Brigham Young encouraged the people, and Joseph Smith told them to be firm, and maintain their integrity, for God would be with his people and deliver them" (*Deseret News Weekly*, 4 January 1865, 107).

Then came bleak Carthage! It looked as though the work of Joseph was finished! President George A. Smith (1817–75), First Counselor in the First Presidency, said: "Some men in their hours of darkness may feel—I have heard of men feeling so—that the work is about done, that the enemies of the Saints have become so powerful, and bring such vast wealth and energy to bear against them that we are all going to be crushed out pretty soon. I will say to such brethren, it is very bad policy for you, because you think the old ship Zion is going to sink, to jump overboard" (*Deseret News Semi-Weekly*, 27 October 1874).

Those of little faith mistake local cloud cover for general darkness. Keeping spiritually intact results in our keeping precious perspective by seeing "things as they really are" (Jacob 4:13).

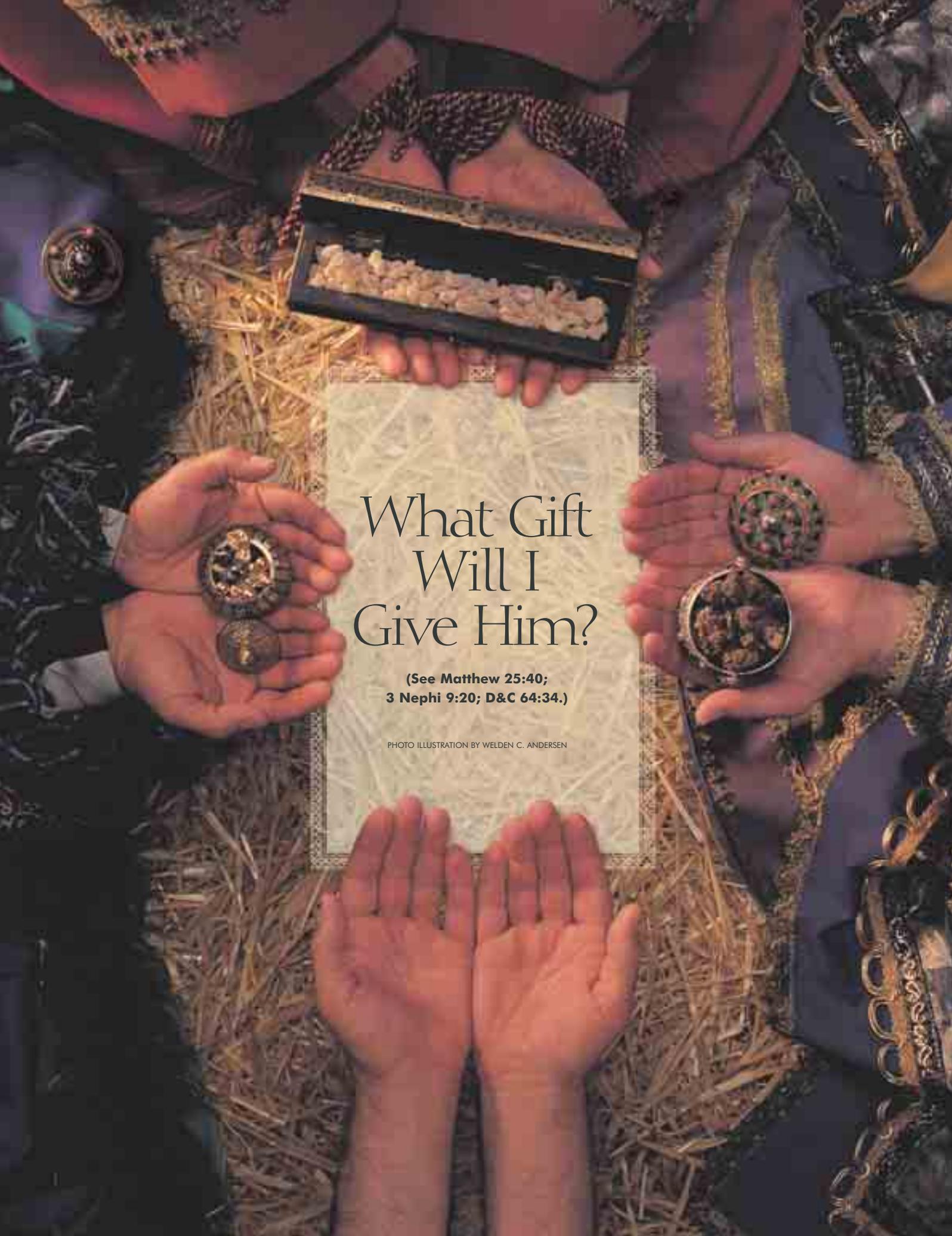
Wisdom and order help us cope with "people fatigue" and commitments beyond our strength and means. Wisdom and order prompt us to "sit a spell" with loved



Keeping spiritually intact results in our keeping precious perspective by seeing "things as they really are."

ones and colleagues, allowing us time for life's extra chores, and remind us that we cannot bear all things now. Wisdom and order help us to separate preferences from principles.

The demands and challenges of our day are great, but wisdom and order help us maintain our perspective. That perspective, in turn, allows us to do all things in "wisdom and order," that thereby we "might win the prize" (Mosiah 4:27), even exaltation and eternal life with those we have loved and with those we have served. □

A top-down photograph showing several hands holding various gifts around a central scroll. At the top, a hand holds an open box filled with small, light-colored stones. To the left, two hands hold several round, ornate coins. To the right, two hands hold more round, ornate coins. At the bottom, two hands are held open and empty. The central scroll is white with a gold border and contains text. The background is a bed of straw.

What Gift Will I Give Him?

**(See Matthew 25:40;
3 Nephi 9:20; D&C 64:34.)**

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How Can I Keep My Thoughts Centered on Jesus Christ during My Daily Activities?

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

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CRAIG DIMOND

LIAHONA'S ANSWER

When we were baptized, we covenanted that we would always remember Jesus Christ. Although it is easy to think of the Savior on Sundays at church, we are bombarded by distractions in our daily lives. There are, however, things we can do to focus our thoughts on Jesus Christ.

First, we can strive to be obedient. Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy testified “that obedience to the gospel plan is the only way to build a Christ-centered life” (“Living a Christ-Centered Life,” *Liahona*, December 1999, 21). Similarly, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, then of the Presidency of the Seventy, said that the “requirements [of the Christ-centered life] are actually quite simple: keep his commandments!” (“The Christ-Centered Life,” *Ensign*, August 1981, 13).

Why is obedience so important?

Simply put, obedience brings the Spirit of the Lord into our lives. Because the Holy Ghost bears testimony of Christ, it becomes easier to center our minds on Christ when we have the Spirit with us. In addition, when we yield “to the enticings of the Holy Spirit,” we become more Christlike (see Mosiah 3:19).

When we obey the commandments, we learn to love the Savior. Alma’s plea to “let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever” (Alma 37:36) describes a Christ-centered life. Obeying the Lord and loving Him are principles that reinforce each other. If our affections are centered on Christ, we are inclined to follow His commandments. Our increased obedience then brings the Spirit more strongly into our lives, making it easier to center our thoughts and affections on Christ.

The following are specific manifestations of obedience that can help us focus our thoughts on the Savior.

Pray. We have been commanded to “pray always” (2 Nephi 32:9) and to let our “thoughts be directed unto the Lord” (Alma 37:36). When we keep a prayer in our hearts, we eliminate the distractions of the world and focus on spiritual things.

Study the scriptures. The scriptures are rich with testimonies of and insights about the Savior. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught, “Let us continually reread the Book of Mormon so that we might more fully come to Christ, be committed to Him, centered in Him, and consumed in Him” (“Come unto Christ,” *Ensign*, November 1987, 85).

Serve. It is impossible to be Christ-centered as long as we are self-centered. When we serve



Hymns—“an Inspiration and a Protection”

You can replace thoughts of temptation, anger, disappointment, or fear with better thoughts—with music.

“I love the sacred music of the Church. The hymns of the Restoration carry an inspiration and a protection.

“I know also some music is spiritually destructive; it’s bad and dangerous! Young people, leave it alone! . . .

“Thoughts are talks we hold with ourselves. Do you see why the scriptures tell us to ‘let virtue garnish [our] thoughts unceasingly’ and promise us that if we do, our ‘confidence [shall] wax strong in the presence of God.’”

—President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (“The Spirit of Revelation,” *Liahona*, January 2000, 27)

others, we are also serving Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father (see Mosiah 2:17).

Attend the temple and other Church meetings. The spirit that comes from attending the temple as often as possible and Church meetings each week can help us focus our thoughts on Christ.

Focusing our thoughts on Christ is worth every effort. President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) said: “If our lives and our faith are centered upon Jesus Christ and his restored gospel, nothing can ever go permanently wrong. On the other hand, if our lives are not centered on the Savior and his teachings, no other success can ever be permanently right” (“Fear Not, Little Flock,” in *BYU 1988–89 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1989], 112).

READERS’ ANSWERS

Searching, pondering, and praying about the scriptures has helped me focus my thoughts on Christ. Studying with a grateful, humble heart helps us put God first in our lives.

*Lin Ching Yi,
Tainan Third Ward,
Tainan Taiwan Stake*

When we recognize the greatness of the role Jesus Christ plays in our lives and if we trust Him by obeying all His commandments, our thoughts will turn to Him during all our daily activities. The Spirit of

Christ will be planted in our hearts to remind us of Him.

*Paul Tshilenge Tshibuabua,
Mbuji Mayi Branch,
Democratic Republic of Congo
Kinshasa Mission*

We should pray and take time for the Lord first thing in the morning. Short prayers during the day will also strengthen us. In this way, the Holy Spirit can inspire our thoughts.

I am grateful for the holy scriptures. By reading and studying about Christ, we can make Him a greater part of our lives from day to day.

*Thomas Schramböck,
Vienna Fifth Ward,
Vienna Austria Stake*

As a Sunday School teacher and a stake missionary, I have learned much about the gospel. Stories and situations presented in the manuals remind me to do what is right. Attending church helps me center my thoughts on Christ.

*Myra May C. Temeras,
San Rafael Ward,
Montalban Philippines Stake*

We should always remember to be in the world but not of the world. To keep our thoughts centered on Christ, we should pray daily, think of His love for us, and ponder the scriptures during our daily activities.

*Elder Russel Subayi Mbaya,
Ivory Coast Abidjan Mission*

It isn't impossible to center our thoughts on Christ. The difficulty is often due to our associations and to what we read, hear, and see. We can chase out bad thoughts or flee from vile things by humming a hymn.

*Rousseline Buissereth,
Delmas Ward,
Port-au-Prince Haiti Stake*

The best way for me to center my thoughts on Christ is to keep the commandments and strive to be an example of what it means to be a member of His Church. It is also important as we partake of the sacrament to remember what Jesus Christ did for us.

*Marcela Catalano,
Longchamps Ward,
Buenos Aires Argentina Adrogué Stake*

I am 10 years old, and I remember Christ by always praying for my thoughts to be in tune with Him and by reading the scriptures before school and during rest periods. I have an adult friend who puts gospel posters in her office to help her remember Christ.

*Caleb Rossetti da Silva,
Planalto Ward,
São Bernardo Brazil Rudge Ramos Stake*

I always try to center my thoughts on Jesus Christ by remembering a hymn and singing it in my mind, thinking of happy moments I have

spent with a loved one, and asking God to guide me.

*Eduardo Daniel Barreiro Cuadra,
Sarandí del Yi Branch,
Durazno Uruguay Stake*

Putting Jesus Christ in our minds requires that we consecrate our deeds and desires to Him. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23).

*Niccolo Martin Antonni
Laurence C. Florencio,
Tacloban Second Branch,
Tacloban Philippines District*

You can make the QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS section helpful by answering the question below. Please mail your answer to arrive no later than 1 February 2002. Send it to QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 02/02, Liahona, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to CUR-Liahona-IMag@ldschurch.org. Your answer may be typed or clearly written in your own language. For your answer to be considered, it must include your full name, age, home address, and ward and stake (or branch and district). Please include a photograph of yourself; this photograph will not be returned. A representative selection of answers will be published.

QUESTION: *Why does the Church teach that we shouldn't date until we are 16? □*



Lin Ching Yi



Rousseline Buissereth



Paul Tshilenge Tshibuabua



Marcela Catalano



Thomas Schramböck



Caleb Rossetti da Silva



Myra May C. Temeras



Eduardo Daniel Barreiro Cuadra



Elder Russel Subayi Mbaya



Niccolo Martin Antonni Laurence C. Florencio

“GOOD TIDINGS”

Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would “preach good tidings unto the meek [and] bind up the broken-hearted” (Isaiah 61:1). There are many today in need of good tidings, including a wife whose husband lies ill, a missionary far from home, an elderly woman suffering with ill health, and those who are searching for the light of the gospel. ♡ As we celebrate the Savior’s birth this Christmas season, stories like the following remind us of



the many ways His life and Atonement bless our lives. The “good tidings of great joy” (Luke 2:10), which the shepherds received more than 2,000 years ago, are unto “all of the sons and daughters of God of all generations of time,” says President Gordon B. Hinckley (see this issue, page 16). Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, lives! “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14).

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Christmas Bells through the Fog

By Beth Dayley

Christmas dawned on a day as murky as my mood. A dense fog had crept into the Italian city where my husband’s military assignment had taken us. My two daughters were not very excited about the few gifts they had received. Their thoughts, like mine, were with their father, who was in a military hospital in Germany.

“It doesn’t seem like Christmas without Daddy here,” eight-year-old Diana commented. I nodded,

thinking about all the seasonal cheer we were missing—decorations, family parties, holiday feasts.

“Well, at least some of us are together,” said 17-year-old Athena quietly.

When my husband called from the hospital in Germany, I talked to him briefly and then handed the phone to Diana. To my surprise, she refused to speak to him, even though she hadn’t seen or talked to him in weeks. Confused by her reaction, I

ran the events of the past month through my mind.

Some weeks earlier my husband, Ed, began complaining of pain in his left forearm. In no time it swelled and became stiff. The doctors hospitalized him and gave him antibiotics intravenously. But his hand became useless.

I arranged for our oldest son to stay with his grandmother for Christmas instead of coming home from college. Our three other children tried to help me get ready for Christmas, but the

spirit of the season could not penetrate my anxiety.

One night was especially bad. I couldn't sleep, so at 3:30 A.M. I called the hospital. The nurse said Ed was in such pain he was pacing the floor. Suddenly I knew he needed a priesthood blessing. Since the hour was so early, I hesitated to call our home teacher, Bob DeWitt. But Bob arrived on his own at about

**Holding both daughters tightly,
I smiled through my tears.
Faintly, through the fog, the tolling
of Christmas bells reached us.
I reflected on our Savior, who made
eternal families possible.**

5:00 A.M. He called another priesthood holder and hurried to the hospital. Bob felt prompted to promise Ed he would eventually regain the full use of his hand.

Moments after the blessing, a group of doctors conferred around Ed's bed. They couldn't explain what was causing the damage to his arm. Although in pain, Ed commented that it was too bad the X ray couldn't show more than just the bone in his arm; it would help if they could see the tissue as well. Ed's words startled the doctors, and they decided to use an ultrasound

machine to look at his arm in a manner not

commonly used. The procedure was later written up in medical journals.

Using the ultrasound in this new way, they located a large pocket of infection deep within Ed's forearm. They operated immediately.

"It's lucky we located the abscess when we did," the surgeon explained to me later. "Even a few more hours could have cost Ed the use of his arm completely. As it is, I doubt he will ever be able to use his fingers again."

The doctors transferred Ed to a large hospital in Germany, and I accompanied him while friends took care of our children. Ed's condition became worse; the bone became infected, and antibiotics were unexplainably ineffective.



Days went by in a blur as Ed underwent multiple surgeries. Ed insisted I fly home to be with the children for Christmas.

So here it was Christmas morning. I held my youngest daughter close, still not sure why she had refused to speak with her father. Finally she hesitantly took the phone, and within seconds, her face was wreathed in a smile.

“I thought Daddy was dying,” she explained later. “He was so sick when he left.”

Holding both daughters tightly, I smiled through my tears. Faintly, through the fog, the tolling of Christmas bells reached us. I reflected on the gift we commemorate each Christmas—our Savior, who redeemed us from eternal death and made eternal families possible. I realized that through the Lord’s Atonement and the ordinances of the temple, we could be together forever.

Ed spent nine months in hospitals—and three long, difficult years passed before he recovered completely. But we never questioned that his priesthood blessing would be fulfilled or that our greatest blessings came through the Lord Jesus Christ.

As I listened to the bells that Christmas morning in Italy, I finally welcomed Christmas into my heart.

Beth Dayley is a member of the Parrish Canyon Ward, Centerville Utah Stake.

Papá Noel in Perú

By Jonathan Plowman

From the other side of the room, I could see the Bolívar Ward Primary presidency discussing something rather intently and occasionally glancing at Elder Megran and me. Soon, Sister Rojas, the Primary president, approached us. I thought perhaps a nonmember child had attended Primary that day, and the presidency had a referral for us.

“Elder, we were wondering if you would be Papá Noel at the stake Primary Christmas program,” she said.

“Sure,” I responded, before I could fully comprehend what was being asked of me. It was the last question I had expected.

A few days later I was wearing a red suit and hat, black boots, a fake beard, and a backpack stuffed with clothing and worn backward to give Santa some weight. After some of the other wards performed, the curtain opened to reveal the Bolívar Ward Primary children.

A chorus of angels dressed in white gowns and halos, Wise Men, shepherds with their sheep, and of course José and María sang “Angels We Have Heard on High” (*Hymns*, number 203). Each child required at least three breaths to get through each “gloria.” Baby Jesus lying in the manger was the center of it all.

Then, with a little shove from

Sister Rojas, I grabbed the reins and ushered my two little “reindeer” onto the stage. Amazingly, I managed to remember all the words I was supposed to say—“*Feliz Navidad!* Ho, Ho, Ho!” The audience cheered and applauded. What the audience didn’t see, after the curtain closed, was all 25 children tackling me and piling upon me, thanking me for being part of their Christmas.

Hearing these children sing praises to the Christ child, I thought of that wonderful scene almost 2,000 years before when the resurrected Christ gathered the children and took them “one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. And when he had done this he wept. . . . And they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; . . . and the angels did minister unto them” (3 Nephi 17:21–24).

These children helped me understand to a fuller extent why the Lord wept when He was with those little ones. They showed me what King Benjamin meant when he said we ought to become “submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit . . . even as a child” (Mosiah 3:19).

Santa Claus is well known in Perú because of North American movies and television specials. But it is the Savior who makes these children’s



The children thanked me for being part of their Christmas, and they taught me what it means to be “full of love . . . even as a child.”

holiday a holy day. He is the reason for the season. Indeed, He is the reason for all seasons. He makes Himself available year round, offering us His gifts of faith, of love, of hope in the Resurrection and eternal life.

Jonathan Plowman is a member of the Millstream Ward, Bountiful Utah Heights Stake.

Twelve Days of Christmas

By Yasna Sánchez

Something special happened when our stake in Santiago, Chile, assigned the young women and their leaders in La Florida Third Ward to participate in a “12 days of Christmas” activity. Each day for 12 days we went to visit Sister Brigida, a sister in our ward who is more than 80 years old and can no longer come to church. Each time we went, we took her and her young granddaughters

something different. To prepare for our visits, the young women and their mothers baked bread or cookies and made or purchased small gifts.

Sister Brigida’s home did not have many of life’s comforts, but it was full of love. The warmth and kindness she extended to us was touching, and it made a strong impression on the girls. They still remember how beautiful Christmas was and how good they felt as they gave of their time.

Even though I hadn’t asked the young women to bring a gift for our

visit on Christmas Eve, I saw with great joy that each one had prepared a small, personal gift for Sister Brigida and each of her granddaughters. Many of the young women cried that night as they embraced Sister Brigida. The gratitude and love on her face was her gift to us.

That Christmas Eve, we forgot about presents and shopping and found the real meaning of Christmas. We discovered that service to others is a celebration of love and life—the way the Savior lived His life.

Yasna Sánchez is a member of La Florida Third Ward, Santiago Chile La Florida Stake.

My Awakening to Truth

By **Pascal Aucordier**

I was born in 1964 near Paris to parents who helped me gain a basic understanding of Christianity. I remember one Sunday in particular when I was seven. On our way to church, my mother talked to me about Jesus Christ. As she described Him, I felt I had known Him for a long time. That was the beginning of my testimony—although it lay dormant for a time.

As the years passed, my parents stopped practicing their religion, and I became an atheist. I thought it beneath me to believe in God.

One day when I was 17, I was sitting alone, looking out the window. For some reason, I suddenly began to believe in God again. At the time I was not interested in religion, but there came into my heart a conviction that God did actually exist.

A week later my family moved to Clermont-Ferrand in central France. I began asking myself some difficult questions: *What is Jesus like? What is my relationship to Him?* One afternoon some young men gave me a paper that read: “Who is Jesus? Come to the Christian pub to discuss this question with other young people.” I told the young men that I had been asking myself that very question. I said I would stop by soon.

The next day I decided to go to the Christian pub. But as I walked up to it, I couldn’t bring myself to enter. In the days that followed, I went back several times, but for some reason I was afraid to go inside.

My inability to enter the pub left me feeling sad. I didn’t know what to do. But after I came home from one of my uncompleted trips, the thought came to me that Jesus Christ organized His Church almost 2,000 years ago; therefore that Church must exist today. As soon as the idea entered my mind, the doorbell rang. I opened the door and saw two missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

standing there. I was surprised—not by their sudden appearance at my door, but by my reaction. I felt as though I had been waiting for them.

Because my room was in disorder, I felt embarrassed to have the missionaries come in, so I asked where they held meetings. The following Sunday I attended church at the address they gave me. What I learned of Jesus Christ and of my relationship to Him felt right. I was soon baptized. I have always believed the Spirit converted me to the gospel before the missionaries ever contacted me.

About a year after my baptism, I became less active for a while as I served in the French army, but I never lost my testimony. After leaving the army, I became active again and obtained my patriarchal blessing. I received the Melchizedek Priesthood, served a full-time mission to New Caledonia, and later married.

I continue to have difficulties in my life. But I find the strength to endure by remembering how the Lord prepared me to hear the truth and how, at age seven, I received my first testimony through the power of the Holy Ghost. I’ve been amazed and grateful ever since for the many confirmations I’ve received of that first witness of the Spirit. □

Pascal Aucordier is a member of the Toulouse Capitole Branch, Carcassonne France District.

BLESSINGS OF TEMPLE WORSHIP

As we strive to draw closer to the Lord and receive answers to our prayers, we can seek His guidance through temple worship. In addition to rendering vital service to those in the spirit world, we also receive important personal blessings from attending the temple. The Lord promises, “I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house” (D&C 110:7).

John A. Widtsoe (1872–1952), who became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, testified that “the temple is a place where revelations may be expected.” If we attend the temple, he said, “at the most unexpected moments, in or out of the temple will come to [us], as a revelation, the solution of the problems that vex [our lives]” (“Temple Worship,” *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, April 1921, 63–64).

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

As the sun rose one June morning, a couple started their day with a prayer of thanksgiving. This day they were witnessing the answer to 13 years of earnest prayer. Their 27-year-old son and his wife had worked with loving bishops to put their lives in order so they might be worthy to enter the temple. That morning they would be sealed for all eternity.

This grateful mother reflects: “The joy we felt was unspeakable. As we sat in the temple with our son and his sweet companion, my mind was taken back to the time when this boy was 14 and began making choices that drew him away from the guidance of the Spirit. The time came when we needed extra help from a loving Heavenly Father.

“Attending the temple had always been important to us, and we felt prompted to pray for our son in this holy place. Each time we attended the temple, we placed our son’s name on the prayer roll.

“We wanted our prayers to be answered today—or tomorrow at the latest. But years passed, and our son remained less active. We were not left without hope, however. We often felt the comforting influence of the Holy Ghost. One evening while my husband and I were praying in the

temple, the Spirit let us know unmistakably that our son was being watched over and that he would eventually repent and return to Church activity. We were also taught that we must never give up and never stop loving him. Our faith was strengthened, and a great peace settled into our hearts.

“And then came that sacred day when our prayers were answered.”

PROMISED BLESSINGS

This couple’s experience was the joyous fulfillment of a prophetic statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley: “I make you a promise that if you will go to the house of the Lord, you will be blessed, life will be better for you. . . . Avail yourselves of the great opportunity to go to the Lord’s house and thereby partake of all of the marvelous blessings that are yours to be received there” (fire-side, Lima, Perú, 9 November 1996).

Some Church members live far from a temple. But all of us can live worthy of and receive a temple recommend. And we can help our ancestors receive temple blessings by researching and submitting their names for temple ordinances. Whatever temple service our circumstances will allow will bless us with increased peace, faith, hope, and spiritual guidance. □



Searching for

By Lindy Taylor

She was only 12, but she was wise enough to look toward heaven and believe.

My eyes begin to sting as I ride my bicycle through smoke drifting from the barbecue on the side of the street. I close them just long enough to hit a hole in the road, nearly knocking me from my bike. I again focus my attention forward, as we keep riding amid the glare of neon lights and the headlights of the oncoming traffic. Everything seems a little hazy on this hot, muggy December night in Bangkok, Thailand.

Sister Jones and I park our bikes in front of an apartment complex. As we head toward the stairs, I ask, “Who are we going to see?”

“Her name is Nóg,” Sister Jones answers. “She is a 12-year-old girl who was baptized last month.”

I remember hearing about Nóg. She had been referred to the missionaries by her mother, who was not interested in the Church but thought Nóg might like Christianity.

The missionaries had been hesitant to teach a 12-year-old, but as they began to tell Nóg of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, she was captivated. Her eyes never left their faces.

I am touched by the image of this little girl, who works in her family’s flower stand on the side of a busy street, learning about the Savior. I wonder how a little girl could accept the

gospel of Jesus Christ, which is so foreign to her Buddhist culture.

We knock on the pale green door and are invited in by Nóg’s mother. Removing our shoes, we enter the one-room apartment. Before we can ask where Nóg is, we hear her voice calling from the balcony, “Sisters, come quickly.”

We step onto the small balcony overlooking the busy street. Nóg grabs me by the hand, points to the sky, and asks, “Can you see them? Can you see the special stars?”

I look up and see a few breaks in the clouds through which stars shine faintly. “Which ones?” I ask.

“The five baby ones, right over there. You can see them only on certain nights,” she answers.

I look again and see a cluster of five tiny stars through the pollution and lights of the enormous city. I ask how she was able to see them twinkling so dimly.

Nóg answers simply, “I look for them every night, and tonight I found them.”

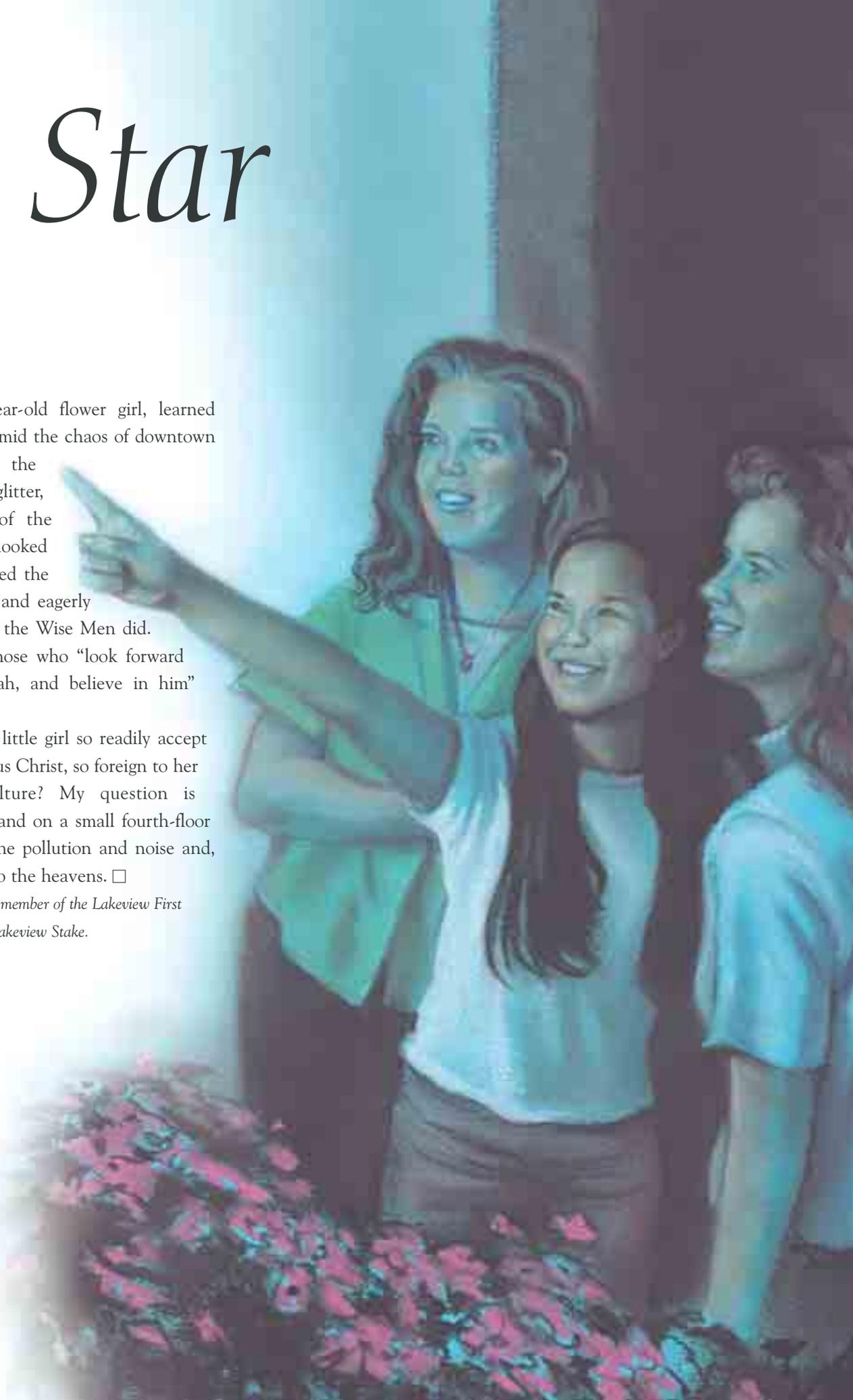
I glance at Nóg, who is gazing intently at the night sky. Her face is peaceful; her countenance shines. They are simple, childlike words, yet I think how similar they are to those spoken by wise, learned men—the Wise Men of old (see Matthew 2:2). How long those Wise Men must have searched the heavens looking for the star. How excited they must have been to see it.

the Star

Nóg, a 12-year-old flower girl, learned of Jesus Christ amid the chaos of downtown Bangkok, above the smoke, lights, glitter, and pollution of the world. Nóg had looked for and recognized the words of Christ and eagerly followed, just as the Wise Men did. She is among those who “look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him” (Jarom 1:11).

How could a little girl so readily accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, so foreign to her family and culture? My question is answered as I stand on a small fourth-floor balcony above the pollution and noise and, with Nóg, look to the heavens. □

Lindy Taylor is a member of the Lakeview First Ward, Orem Utah Lakeview Stake.



TEACHING OUR CHILDREN TO PAY TITHING

By C. Elmer Black Jr.

When our daughter was young, each Sunday my wife and I noticed the children in our ward line up at the ward clerk's office to give their tithing—usually just pennies—to a member of the bishopric, who then praised each child. By the time our daughter was three years old, she eagerly paid her tithing.

As parents, we exemplified this behavior by paying our own tithing, and we reinforced it through gospel discussions. In the process, we learned three lessons about teaching children to pay tithing.

■ *Teach through precept and example.* Children can learn much about tithing by attending Primary, but their most important teachers are their parents.

“Teaching is done by precept and example, and by word and deed,” President Ezra Taft Benson



(1899–1994) said. “A good model is the best teacher. Therefore, a [parent’s] first responsibility is to set the proper example” (“Worthy Fathers, Worthy Sons,” *Ensign*, November 1985, 35).

Lessons about tithing from the lives of parents, relatives, and Church leaders teach and reinforce the principle of paying tithing. Parents can supplement their teaching with lessons in the *Family Home Evening Resource Book* (item number 31106), and they can improve their efforts by incorporating teaching tips found in *Teaching—No Greater Call* (item number 36123). In addition, songs and hymns can reinforce the importance of paying tithing.

Asking children to give short lessons on tithing during family home evening further reinforces precepts. Repetition is essential, especially for young children.

■ *Teach through praise and encouragement.* We should generously praise our children as they attempt to live the precepts they are learning, regardless of their level of understanding.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “I will always be grateful for a father and a mother who, as far back as I can remember, taught us to pay our tithing. . . . We never felt that it was a sacrifice to pay our tithing. We felt it was an obligation, that even as small children we were doing our duty as the Lord had outlined that duty, and that

When children attend tithing settlement with their parents, they come to sense the importance of living the law of tithing.



“A TEST OF PRIORITIES”

we were assisting his church in the great work it had to accomplish” (“The Sacred Law of Tithing,” *Tambuli*, May 1991, 4).

When children attend tithing settlement with their parents, they come to sense the importance of living the law of tithing. A formal visit with their bishop or branch president can help young people resolve to become and remain faithful tithe payers. In addition, a priesthood leader’s encouragement can nurture faith and spark respect for priesthood authority.

■ *Teach through the Spirit.* When children gain knowledge through the Spirit, their willing obedience increases. Children, regardless of age, can be touched by the Spirit as they pray about the law of tithing and as their parents bear testimony of it.

Older children are capable of understanding that construction and maintenance of temples and chapels, printing and distribution of Church materials, and funding of worldwide missionary efforts are an extension of tithe payers’ faith. But with increased maturity and understanding comes increased temptation, including the temptation of materialism. For this reason, youth must be taught to recognize and respond to the guiding influence of the Spirit, which “will show unto [them] all things what [they] should do” (2 Nephi 32:5).

As parents faithfully and consistently teach their children about tithing, they will help their children receive a testimony of a divine law that will bless them throughout their lives. □

C. Elmer Black Jr. is a member of the Clinton Ward, Jackson Mississippi Stake.



Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles talked about teaching his children to pay tithing:

“My grandparents . . . taught me about tithing with examples

of one egg or one bushel of peaches out of ten. Years later I used those same kinds of examples to try to teach the principles of tithing to our own children.

“Parents are always looking for better ways to teach, and the results of their efforts are sometimes unexpected. Attempting to teach tithing to our young son, I explained the principle of a tenth. . . . When I finished what I was sure was a clear explanation, I wanted to test whether our seven-year-old had understood. I asked him to imagine that he was a farmer with a harvest of eggs and young animals. I supplied the figures and then asked our little boy what he would give to the bishop as tithing. He thought deeply for a moment and then said, ‘I would give him a very old horse.’

“We obviously had some further conversations on the principle of tithing, and I am proud of the way he and his brother and sisters learned and practiced that principle. But I have often thought of that little boy’s words as I have observed how some adult Church members relate to the law of tithing. I think we still have some whose attitude and performance consist of giving the bishop something like ‘a very old horse.’

“The payment of tithing is a test of priorities” (“Tithing,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 35). □





Walking by Faith in the Philippines



By Roger Terry

Bobby and Abigail Moreno of Baguio, Philippines, know something about faith. They also know something about Moroni's declaration that "God has not ceased to be a God of miracles" (Mormon 9:15). Their son, Kinjiro, was born with a cyst that prevented the left side of his brain from developing. He was near death, and the doctors didn't give his parents much hope.

Abigail comes from a strong Latter-day Saint home—her father is Elder Edison M. Cabrito, an Area Authority Seventy—but her non-member relatives were reproachful rather than reassuring in this time of trial. "It's because you belong to another church," they chided her. "You'd better come back to us. He will get well."

But she stayed strong in her faith. She told them her son had been

blessed by the priesthood and that members had prayed for him in the temple. "I won't lose hope," she said. "He's going to live."

And he did live. Kinjiro is now three years old, and even though the road to recovery has not been easy, he is a happy, loving little boy. When his parents first brought him home, the doctors didn't think he would live long. But his latest examination showed that his brain has developed, and the prognosis is now much more optimistic.

"He has lived for three years," his mother says, "and I know he will live longer, for I know he has a duty to serve our Heavenly Father."

Faith manifests itself in many ways. Sometimes, as with the Moreno family, the exercise of faith results in a miracle, but more often faith works in quiet ways. For instance, it may

Elder Edison M. Cabrito holds the children's section of the September 1991 International Magazine, featuring on its cover his daughter Jan Michelle. From left: Abigail Moreno, Florciele Cabrito, Kinjiro Moreno, Elder Cabrito, and Jan Michelle and Iris Yvonne Cabrito.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROGER TERRY



enable the Lord’s disciples to patiently endure trials and difficulties; it may help them remain humble in the face of worldly success; or it may give them strength to stand up for the right when such action is neither popular nor pleasant.

By any of these standards, faith is alive and well among Latter-day Saints in the Philippines—a country that was dedicated for the preaching of the gospel only 40 years ago. (In April 1961 Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, then an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, opened the islands for missionary work.) Life isn’t easy for most members here. Poverty is widespread, and the temptations and evil influences rampant in the world today have not bypassed this tropical nation. Still, many members lead exemplary lives of devotion and service, and behind each is a story of faith.

“THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH”

In Ether 12:6, Moroni speaks of “the trial of your faith.” No Latter-day Saint is exempt from this testing, for “my people,” the Lord says, “must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them” (D&C 136:31).

A good example of weathering this trial of faith is Yolanda Cantos of the Tolosa Branch, Tolosa Philippines District, on the island of Leyte. In 1985, when Yolanda was 22 years old,

she visited relatives on Samar, a neighboring island. Her relatives invited her to listen to the missionary discussions. She agreed, but because she was a devout member of another church her real intention was to challenge the missionaries. “I knew they were wrong,” she says. She listened, though, and despite her intentions, she says, “the Spirit worked with me, and I couldn’t find any fault in their teachings.” Fearing that they were misleading her, she returned home to Tolosa. But when she prayed, she couldn’t forget what the missionaries had taught her, so she returned to Samar to continue the discussions.

“I was challenged twice to be baptized,” she says. “I knew the Church was true, but it was hard for me because of my family and friends. They belonged to another church, and I was a member of the choir. But when I went to witness the baptism of a friend, I heard a voice asking me why I had rejected Him so many times. And when I saw my friend immersed in the water, it was as if I saw myself being baptized. After that I told the missionaries that, no matter what happened, I wanted to be baptized.”

Her baptism took place a week later. When her mother learned of it, she wouldn’t allow Yolanda in her home anymore. She said if Yolanda would deny her new faith, then she

would be welcome again. Yolanda assured her mother that someday she would understand her choice. Then she returned to Samar to live with her relatives and to fast and pray for her family. One month later her brother was baptized, and a year later her mother joined the Church. “It was through fasting and prayer,” explains Yolanda.

The path to the Lord’s Church wasn’t easy, but the rewards have been well worth the trial of faith Yolanda endured. She was married in the Manila Philippines Temple in 1993; her husband, Felix, a returned



missionary, is president of the Tolosa Branch; and they have two sons, Jed Ephraim and Russell Jacob.

Tolosa district president Jose Medina and his wife, Felicitas, had their own trial of faith. Felicitas was active in another church but had doubts about it and was searching for the Lord's true Church. She was praying fervently that she could find it while her children were still young, so she could teach them about it. Then one day while sweeping the floor, she found a pamphlet about Joseph Smith. To this day she doesn't know how it got there because their

house was located in a gated community missionaries were not allowed to enter. She read the pamphlet and wanted to know more about the Church, so she requested that the missionaries visit.

Her husband missed the first three discussions, but the missionaries told her to pray about what they had taught. Felicitas prayed, and she had a dream about the Savior. "It was as if it were the Second Coming," she says. "People were rejoicing, but we were not because we were not a part of them." She knew she had found the true religion, and she wanted

her husband to share in her discovery.

Jose listened to the missionaries, but he wasn't interested in baptism because he was a heavy smoker. He told the elders he believed in the Ten Commandments, and one of the missionaries asked him why he was not keeping all of them. The elder said one of the commandments was "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). "You're killing yourself little by little by smoking," he said.

Finally Jose agreed to be baptized, but because he was still smoking, the missionaries had to delay his baptism. Felicitas knew her husband needed extra motivation, so she told him she would fast one meal for every cigarette he smoked. "You will die then," he replied, "because I smoke five packs of cigarettes a day." But with the Lord's help, he quit smoking and was baptized 15 days later.

Within three months Brother Medina was called as branch president. Later he served as district executive secretary and district clerk. He now serves as district president. Sister Medina has served as Young Women

Yolanda Cantos's path to the Lord's Church wasn't easy, but the rewards have been well worth the trial of her faith. Left: Yolanda and Felix Cantos with their two sons, Jed Ephraim and Russell Jacob. Background: The Tolosa meetinghouse on the island of Leyte.





president and Relief Society president in both the branch and the district and has taught seminary for 10 years. “We love it,” she says. “It’s worth it. All the blessings we receive are from God.”

THE TRIAL OF WORLDLY SUCCESS

Poverty is a significant challenge in the Philippines and a very real trial for many Latter-day Saints. But in spiritual terms, worldly success may be even more troublesome for a few. The Book of Mormon is, among other things, a powerful testimony to the perils of prosperity. As Mormon observed, “Yea, and we may see at the very time when [God] doth prosper his people, . . . yea, then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity” (Helaman 12:2).

Some Latter-day Saints in the Philippines have been blessed—and tried—with worldly success, and yet they remember their covenants and serve the Lord with faith and humility. One of these is Evelyn Ibay of the Burnham First Ward, Baguio Philippines Stake.

Known as the summer capital of the Philippines because its mild climate and low humidity attract vacationers during the hottest months, Baguio is located in the

Luzon highlands some 210 kilometers north of Manila. This mountainous region is known for its silver mines, and Avelino and Evelyn Ibay own the Ibay Silver Shop, a business that creates and sells everything

commandments. “The only way we can try to repay the Lord’s goodness,” she says, “is by obeying His commandments.”

Sister Ibay has served in the ward Relief Society—first as president, then as a teacher, and now as a counselor in the presidency. She says the Church is essential in her life. “The Church is there for us. If I am not at church every Sunday, my spirit is very low. I have to recharge my spirit, feed my spirit every Sunday. I have to read the scriptures or the *Liahona* every day.”

Another Latter-day Saint who has experienced extraordinary success in his career is Ramon Del Rosario, president of the Quezon City Philippines Stake in Metro Manila. President Del Rosario is a physician who doesn’t practice medicine—his gift is music. “Mon” Del Rosario is a well-known composer and singer who has written nearly 300 film scores. “If you tune in to the local cable channel in the Philippines,” he admits, “it would be safe to say I have three to five films shown every day.”

He didn’t plan on a career in music. He was going to be a doctor. But during his third year of medical school, he submitted one of his compositions to a national song-writing contest and won first prize. “I was actually supporting my medical schooling through music,” he says.

THE PHILIPPINES TODAY

Islands: 7,107 (3,000 with names; 25 with towns)

Land area: 300,000 square kilometers

Population: 77 million

Members: More than 470,000

Stakes: 77

Districts: 73

Wards: 490

Branches: 667

Missions: 13

Temples: 1 (Manila Philippines Temple)

from rings, necklaces, and tie tacks to intricate models of *jeepneys* (highly decorated minibuses built on the frames of military jeeps and now used for public transportation).

The Ibays owned the silver shop before they joined the Church, but Sister Ibay says, “Our business is growing because we obey the law of tithing.” She feels strongly not only about tithing, but about all the



Lessons learned as a composer and musician have helped Ramon Del Rosario in his calling as president of the Quezon City stake.

But he never got around to practicing medicine. “When I got my diploma, I asked my dad, ‘Now can I do what I really like to do?’” His father said yes, and the rest is history.

Often creativity and deadlines are incompatible, but President Del Rosario says that when deadlines are coming and the inspiration is not, he tends to pray a great deal. “Sometimes,” he says, “I feel I’m running out of musical ideas, but then suddenly it comes—an idea for another song.”

President Del Rosario’s experience in the music industry has helped him in his Church callings. In singing, he says, even if you’re in tune and have a good voice, if your timing is off, the song doesn’t sound good. “I always remind myself that in leadership positions you may be using the right guideline or the right principle, but if you use it at the wrong time, it doesn’t work.” Regarding his calling as stake president, he says, “I look at a stake president as an orchestrator.

You don’t play every instrument. You’re there as a leader to see that others work well together.”

STANDING UP FOR YOUR PRINCIPLES

It takes faith for Latter-day Saints to speak out when staying silent would be so much easier. It takes faith to act when most people would do nothing. But Alma taught his followers that true believers “stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9).

Melanie Gapiz of the Pasay First Ward, Pasay Philippines Stake, has firsthand knowledge of this principle. The daughter of Elder Ruben G. Gapiz, an Area Authority Seventy, Melanie is a successful freelance producer of television commercials. For several years she worked as head of the production department for a prominent television commercial production company in Manila. In that position she faced a difficult dilemma when she found out some employees were embezzling.

“I discovered some irregularities involving some of the employees,” she says. “People were making money unethically within the company.”

She talked with her immediate boss and learned he was part of it. “So I went to the president. He wasn’t involved, but he somehow knew what was going on, and he couldn’t have cared less,” she says. This reaction left Melanie with a dilemma. She could turn her back and pretend the problem did not exist. But she knew if she kept working there, people might think she too was involved. “It was difficult,” she admits, “because I was earning monthly compensation and benefits.” But she knew what she had to do. After counseling with her parents—who reminded her of Church standards but told her it was her decision—she left the company and began working freelance.

“I left on good terms,” she explains. “Actually, when I talked



with the president, he told me he admired my principles, but he couldn't feed his people with principles." She has never regretted her decision, and the Lord has blessed her in her work.

"I've always believed in the gospel of Jesus Christ," says Sister Gapiz. "The law of tithing has helped me a lot. Fasting and prayer have helped. Every time there's an important decision to make, I fast and pray about it, and I receive help."

Abigail Moreno of the Burnham Second Ward, Baguio Philippines Stake, tells of an opportunity she had to stand up for what is right. A popular talk show in the Philippines has a regular segment called "By Heart" during which the hosts read letters from viewers. The letters are supposed to include seven "thank-yous." Abigail wrote a letter, but she didn't think the hosts would read it on the show because the first sentence of her letter read, "I like your show, but I'm offended." She explained that the hosts' frequent use of the Lord's name as profanity offended her. She wrote that her family and her church believe in respecting the name of Heavenly Father.

One day she and her husband, Bobby, were watching another channel, and she realized the talk show was on. She changed channels and heard her letter being read. She

missed the first part—they were already reading her sixth "thank-you"—but she noticed that throughout the remainder of the show, the hosts did not use the Lord's name in vain. She felt she had made a difference by writing the letter.

"A GOD OF MIRACLES"

Where there is faith, there will also be miracles, for "God has not ceased to be a God of miracles" (Mormon 9:15). Prophets teach that miracles and spiritual gifts follow those who believe (see Mormon 9:24; Moroni 10:8–19). In the Philippines, the fruits of faith are evident among the members.

Rene and Myra Holganza of the Taytay First Ward, Cainta Philippines Stake in Metro Manila, have strong testimonies that the Lord blesses those who keep His commandments. Because good jobs are hard to find in the Philippines, the Holganzas spent nine years working in Japan. When they returned to Manila, however, financial troubles came in waves. Because of serious health problems and the accompanying medical bills, they had to mortgage their home. Rene was unable to find employment for some time, so they couldn't make their mortgage payments, and the bank threatened to foreclose. Seeking assistance from the Church, they went to their bishop, who asked Rene



Fasting and prayer have helped Melanie Gapiz receive the Lord's help in making important decisions. Background: The Manila Philippines Temple.





if he was a full-tithe payer. “I said no,” Rene recalls. “He asked me if I intended to be a full-tithe payer. I said yes. So from that time on I did pay a full tithe and a little more to make up for the past.”

To pay their bills and avoid foreclosure on the mortgage, they tried to sell their home, but no one wanted to buy it. Because of a mudslide in a nearby neighborhood, nobody wanted to take a chance on property in the area, even though the price they were asking was below market value. Eventually they stopped trying to sell the house, expecting the bank to foreclose and sell the property at a very low price.

The Holganzas went to their bishop again, and he recommended that they fast and continue to pay tithing. He told them the Lord would bless them in their need.

“So we fasted,” says Rene, “and I continued to pay my tithes and

Faithful payment of tithes and offerings brought blessings into the lives of the Holganza family.

From left: Fritzie, Rene, Myra, and Justin.

Background: The Makati Philippines Stake Center in Metro Manila.

offerings, and I believed something would work out.”

Then one day a man approached the Holganzas unexpectedly and asked them if their house was for sale. They said yes, and he offered to buy it for more than their original asking price. With this money they were able to pay off their mortgage, eliminate almost all their debts, and pay the loan on the taxi Rene now drives to support his family. They see this blessing as a miracle and feel it is a direct result of keeping the law of tithes and offerings, exercising faith in the Lord, and following inspired counsel.

More than 30,000 convert baptisms will likely take place this year in the Philippines. Each will have a story—a story of faith, of a changed heart, of difficult choices, and of sacrifice. As the years pass, their faith will be tried and strengthened and refined. And as individual Church members persevere in their walk of faith, the Lord’s marvelous work will blaze forth as a bright sunrise across this tropical archipelago. The light of the restored gospel will touch uncounted lives, for it is indeed the light of truth, “and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24). □



CHURCH’S LIGHT IN PHILIPPINES “CANNOT BE HID”

By Elder Duane B. Gerrard of the Seventy

While serving in the Philippines Area Presidency, I saw a great increase in the faithfulness and devotion of the Filipino people. Convert baptisms increased. Temple attendance increased, especially first-time endowments. Sacrament meeting attendance went up. More people faithfully paid tithes and offerings, and the number of Melchizedek Priesthood holders increased every year. Youth attendance and activity increased, and seminary and institute enrollments went up.

All of these indicators suggest that increased blessings, promised and prophesied by living prophets and the Lord Himself, are being poured out upon the people in a wonderful way. As the faithfulness and devotion of the members increase, the Lord will continue to pour out blessings upon His people.

Surely the pleas of President Gordon B. Hinckley, offered in the dedicatory prayer of the Manila Philippines Temple on 25 September 1984, will continue to be heard. He pleaded with the Lord to “lift the blight of poverty from which so many suffer. Particularly bless thy faithful saints who live honestly with thee in the payment of their tithes and offerings. As was promised of old by thy prophet Malachi, open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings that there shall not be room enough to receive them [see Malachi 3:10]. Bless thy saints in their faith that they shall remain true as Thy covenant people. Bless them in their homes that there shall be love and peace. Bless them that neither they nor their generations after them will go hungry, nor naked, nor without shelter from the storms that beat about them. Open their minds that they shall grow in wisdom in matters both spiritual and temporal.

“May thy Church in this island nation grow and increase in numbers. May the evil designs of its enemies be frustrated. May thy work become as ‘a city set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid’” (quoted in “Temple Brings Philippines All Blessings,” *Church News*, 30 September 1984, 10).

Surely the prophecy of “a city set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid” (see Matthew 5:14) is being fulfilled here in this unique island nation. I am grateful to have personally witnessed this magnificent growth and blessing. □

Using the December 2001 *Liahona*

TEACHING IDEAS

■ “A Christmas with No Presents,” page 2: President James E. Faust explains the difference between presents and gifts. What gifts can you give the Savior this Christmas? What gifts can you give your family and friends? What gifts does the Lord offer that can bring us true joy and happiness?

■ “The Atoning Sacrifice: Latter-day Prophets Testify,” page 8: Use excerpts from the testimonies of our latter-day prophets to teach of the Savior’s great gift to us—His Atonement.

■ “Teaching Our Children to Pay Tithing,” page 36: Consider which ideas from this article will be most effective in helping you teach your children the importance of the commandment to pay tithing. Use these ideas during a special family home evening as you prepare family members to attend tithing settlement.

■ “Christmas Every Day,” page F14: Read Elder F. Enzo Busche’s account of the special spirit he felt as a child at Christmas. How does living the gospel help us feel the spirit of Christmas every day of the year?

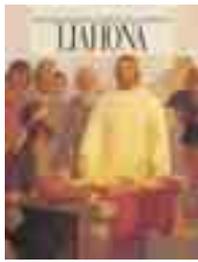
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CRAIG DIMOND

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION IDEAS

How does your family or your ward or branch keep the Savior as the center of your Christmas celebration? Send ideas, stories, photographs, and experiences to Christmas Celebration Ideas, *Liahona*, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to CUR-Liahona-IMag@ldschurch.org. Please include your complete name, address, telephone number, and ward and stake (or branch and district).

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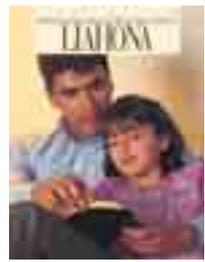
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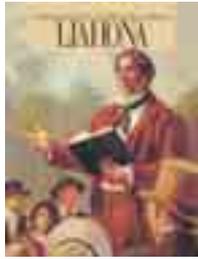
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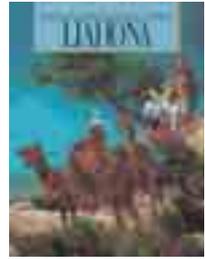
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This Great Millennial Year, Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 80

Dedication Day

- Thomas S. Monson, Jan, 77

Developing Our Talent for Spirituality

- Carol B. Thomas, Jul, 106

DeVictoria, Delores

- Joseph Smith's First Vision*, Feb, F2

Dew, Sheri L.

- Stand Tall and Stand Together*, Jan, 110

"Did Teacher Say I Could?"

- Janine Mickelson and Sheila Kindred, Nov, F14

DISABILITIES

- Luz Karina Sánchez de Yaguaron, Paraguayo*, Mary Ann Whetten Lyman, Feb, F4
Will to Soar, The, Jorge Flores, May, 26

DISCIPLESHIP

- Discipleship*, L. Tom Perry, Jan, 72
Living with Our Convictions, Gordon B. Hinckley, Sep, 2
Tugs and Pulls of the World, The, Neal A. Maxwell, Jan, 43

Disposition to Do Good Continually, A

- Spencer J. Condie, Jun, 14

DIVINE NATURE

- Doing What the Lord Expects*, Feb, 30
How Can I Become the Woman of Whom I Dream? Gordon B. Hinckley, Jul, 112
"Remember Who You Are," Jun, 46
"Them That Honour Me I Will Honour," James E. Faust, Jul, 53
Who Do You Think You Are?—A Message to Youth, James E. Faust, Jun, 2

DIVORCE

- "Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,"* Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 61
Pulling Together, Dane M. Mullen, May, 44
Strong for the Sake of My Children, Eliza M. Torres, May, 29

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

- Doctrine and Covenants Scripture-Story Grab Bag*, Corliss Clayton, Nov, F2
Inseparable Witnesses of Jesus Christ, John M. Madsen, Feb, 14
Latter-day Testament of Biblical Truth, A, Rex C. Reeve Jr., Mar, 26
"Search These Commandments," Feb, F16

Doctrine and Covenants Scripture-Story

- Grab Bag** Corliss Clayton, Nov, F2

Doing His Father's Work on Earth

- Oct, F4

Doing What the Lord Expects

- Feb, 30

Don't Live on the Edge

- May, 24

Dorsett, Ruth

- Hidden Book, The*, Nov, 42

Do What Is Right

- Richard G. Scott, Mar, 10

Dunn, Loren C.

- Testimony*, Jan, 15

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EASTER (see also ATONEMENT)

- Easter: A Story for You to Tell*, Apr, F2

Easter: A Story for You to Tell

- Apr, F2

Edgley, Richard C.

- Satan's Bag of Snipes*, Jan, 52

EDUCATION

- Building a Community of Saints*, L. Tom Perry, Jul, 41
Dedication Day, Thomas S. Monson, Jan, 77
"Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children," Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 61
Hallmarks of a Happy Home, Thomas S. Monson, Oct, 2
Perpetual Education Fund, The, Gordon B. Hinckley, Jul, 60
Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth, A, Gordon B. Hinckley, Apr, 30
Your Greatest Challenge, Mother, Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 113

Elder Duane B. Gerrard

- Mar, F4

Elder L. Tom Perry

- Aug, F4

Elder Lynn G. Robbins

- May, F10

Elder Wayne M. Hancock

- Oct, F2

Enders, Donald L.

- Faithful First Believers*, Feb, 38

ENDURANCE (see also ADVERSITY, OBEDIENCE)

- "Plow in Hope,"* Neal A. Maxwell, Jul, 72
"Remember Who You Are," Jun, 46
Tough Cowboy, A, Allan L. Noble, Sep, 46
"You Can't Give Up," Charlene Germaine Meyer, May, F7

Enemy Within, The

- James E. Faust, Jan, 54

Enhancing Our Temple Experience

- L. Lionel Kendrick, Jul, 94

ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

- Elder Wayne M. Hancock*, Oct, F2
In the Palm of His Hand, Emma Ernestina Sánchez Sánchez, Mar, 21
I Tried the Experiment, Lydie Zebo Bahie, Jun, 30
Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings, Russell M. Nelson, Jul, 37
Searching for the Star, Lindy Taylor, Dec, 34
Tugs and Pulls of the World, The, Neal A. Maxwell, Jan, 43
Why Does Our All-Loving Heavenly Father Allow Bad Things to Happen to Innocent People? Feb, 22
Wisdom and Order, Neal A. Maxwell, Dec, 18

EXAMPLE

- Ana Lucrecia Morales: The Gift of a Poet*, Don L. Searle, Sep, 26
Anchored by Faith and Commitment, M. Russell Ballard, Aug, 30
Angela Miller of Council Bluffs, Iowa, Julie D. Awerkamp, Jun, F2
Anne's Courage, Beverly J. Ahlstrom, Aug, F14

David, a Future Missionary, Darwin B. Christenson, Jul, 32
Luz Karina Sánchez of Yaguaron, Paraguay, Mary Ann Whetten Lyman, Feb, F4
Power of Example, The, Carlos Pérez, Feb, 46
Prophet's Example, A, Thomas S. Monson, Sep, F5
Ripples, Virginia U. Jensen, Jan, 107
Sometimes Different Is Good, Janice Porter Hayes, Feb, F7
Special Witnesses of Christ, Apr, 2
Teaching Our Children to Pay Tithing, C. Elmer Black Jr., Dec, 36
"Who Is This Prophet?" Jane McBride Choate, Sep, F2
"Witnesses unto Me," Jeffrey R. Holland, Jul, 15

Eyring, Henry B.

Finding Safety in Counsel, Nov, F7
Special Witnesses of Christ, Apr, 2
"Watch with Me," Jul, 44
"Write upon My Heart," Jan, 99

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FAITH (see also CONVERSION, TESTIMONY)

Anchored by Faith and Commitment, M. Russell Ballard, Aug, 30
Call to Serve, The, Thomas S. Monson, Jan, 57
Christmas Every Day, F. Enzo Busche, Dec, F14
Cradle of the Restoration, Sep, 10
Elder Duane B. Gerrard, Mar, F4
Faithful First Believers, Donald L. Enders, Feb, 38
Increasing Our Faith in Jesus Christ, Apr, 25
Lessons Learned in the Journey of Life, Joseph B. Wirthlin, May, 34
Lighthouse of the Lord: A Message to the Youth of the Church, The, Thomas S. Monson, May, 2
Miracle of Faith, The, Gordon B. Hinckley, Jul, 82
Miyako Tashiro of Osaka, Japan, Melvin Leavitt, Sep, F8
Nourishing the Spirit, Dallin H. Oaks, Aug, 10
Pioneering in Chyulu, Kenya, E. Dale LeBaron, Nov, 32
"Plow in Hope," Neal A. Maxwell, Jul, 72
Trusting the Rest to the Lord, Rondie S. Rudolph, Nov, 44
Walking by Faith in the Philippines, Roger Terry, Dec, 38
Your Mission—A Spiritual Adventure, David B. Haight, Oct, 12
Faithful First Believers
 Donald L. Enders, Feb, 38

FAMILY HISTORY (see also TEMPLES AND TEMPLE WORK)

Hidden Book, The, Ruth Dorsett, Nov, 42
Truth from Elijah, Vanja Y. Watkins, Oct, F10

FAMILY HOME EVENING

Family Home Evening Hunt, Jennifer Jensen, Jun, F10
Making Family Home Evening Even Better, May, 32
Strengthening Our Families through Family Home Evening, Aug, 25
Using the Liahona, Feb, 48; Mar, 48; Apr, 48; May, 48; Jun, 48; Aug, 48; Sep, 48; Oct, 48; Nov, 48; Dec, 48

Family Home Evening Hunt

Jennifer Jensen, Jun, F10

FAMILY RELATIONS (see also MARRIAGE, PARENTHOOD)

Be a Strong Link, David B. Haight, Jan, 23
Break in the Clouds, A. Ana Lima Braxton, Sep, 44
Building Family Unity through Temple and Family History Work, Sep, 25
Building the Kingdom, Bruce D. Porter, Jul, 97
Cho Kwang-Jin and Cho Young-Jin of Pusan, Korea, Melvin Leavitt, Nov, F4
Dedication Day, Thomas S. Monson, Jan, 77
Discipleship, L. Tom Perry, Jan, 72
Elder L. Tom Perry, Aug, F4
First Things First, Richard G. Scott, Jul, 6
Hallmarks of a Happy Home, Thomas S. Monson, Oct, 2
"His Word Ye Shall Receive," M. Russell Ballard, Jul, 79
I Never Looked Back, Cameron McCoy, Mar, 34
Japan: Growing Light in the East, Don L. Searle, Mar, 38
Making Family Home Evening Even Better, May, 32
Note from Michael, A. Camielle Call-Tarbet, May, 23
Obeying My Parents, Gustavo Adolfo Loaiza Vergara, Sep, F16
Pulling Together, Dane M. Mullen, May, 44
Ripples, Virginia U. Jensen, Jan, 107
Sharing the Gospel with Dad, Sheila R. Woodard, Feb, 26
Strong for the Sake of My Children, Eliza M. Torres, May, 29
"Them That Honour Me I Will Honour," James E. Faust, Jul, 53
"Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?" James E. Faust, Aug, 2
Wisdom and Order, Neal A. Maxwell, Dec, 18
FASTING
God of Miracles, A. Sydney S. Reynolds, Jul, 12
Increasing Our Spirituality through Fasting and Prayer, Jun, 25

Law of the Fast, The, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Jul, 88

FATHERHOOD (see PARENTHOOD)

Faust, James E.

Born Again, Jul, 68
Christmas with No Presents, A, Dec, 2
Enemy Within, The, Jan, 54
Growing Testimony, A, Jan, 69
Special Witnesses of Christ, Apr, 2
"Them That Honour Me I Will Honour," Jul, 53
Who Do You Think You Are?—A Message to Youth, Jun, 2
"Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?" Aug, 2

FELLOWSHIP (see also

ACTIVATION, FRIENDSHIP)

Member Missionary, A, Monahra L. de Q. Freitas, Mar, F9
Reaching Out in Rio, Barbara Jean Jones, May, 10
Sharing the Gospel, Robert C. Oaks, Jan, 95
Stand Tall and Stand Together, Sheri L. Dew, Jan, 110
"Watch with Me," Henry B. Eyring, Jul, 44

FICTION

Anne's Courage, Beverly J. Ahlstrom, Aug, F14
Family Home Evening Hunt, Jennifer Jensen, Jun, F10
Let's Make a Deal, T. S. Hettinger, May, F4
Robby's New Words, Patricia R. Roper, Mar, F6
Sometimes Different Is Good, Janice Porter Hayes, Feb, F7
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Living within Our Means, May, 25

Finding Safety in Counsel

Henry B. Eyring, Nov, F7

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Gifts of the Savior: A Christmas Message from the First Presidency to the Children of the World, Dec, F2

FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

"Behold Your Little Ones," Gordon B. Hinckley, Mar, 2
Christmas with No Presents, A, James E. Faust, Dec, 2
Hallmarks of a Happy Home, Thomas S. Monson, Oct, 2
Lighthouse of the Lord: A Message to the Youth of the Church, The, Thomas S. Monson, May, 2
Living with Our Convictions, Gordon B. Hinckley, Sep, 2
Pornography—the Deadly Carrier, Thomas S. Monson, Nov, 2
Preparing the Way, Thomas S. Monson, Feb, 2
Special Witnesses of Christ, Apr, 2
Who Do You Think You Are?—A Message to Youth, James E. Faust, Jun, 2

"Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?"
James E. Faust, Aug, 2

First Thing in the Morning
Janet Thomas, Jun, 10

First Things First
Richard G. Scott, Jul, 6

FIRST VISION (see also **RESTORATION**)
Joseph Smith's First Vision, Delores DeVictoria, Feb, F2
Sacred Grove, The, Joan D. and Hal K. Campbell, Apr, F9

Flores, Jorge
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Flórez, Juan Carlos Gómez
Fulfillment of Prophecy, A, Jun, 8

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Focus and Priorities, Dallin H. Oaks, Jul, 99

Focus and Priorities
Dallin H. Oaks, Jul, 99

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Rebecca Armstrong and Elyssa Renee Madsen, Aug, 6

FORGIVENESS (see also **ATONEMENT, REPENTANCE**)
Jesus Forgives a Woman, Aug, F6

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Joseph Smith's First Vision, Delores DeVictoria, Feb, F2

FREEDOM (see also **AGENCY**)
Freedom "from" or Freedom "to,"
F. Enzo Busche, Jan, 97

Freedom "from" or Freedom "to"
F. Enzo Busche, Jan, 97

Freitas, Monahra L. de Q.
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FRIENDSHIP (see also **FELLOWSHIPING**)
Always My Friend, Becky Prescott, May, 47
First Thing in the Morning, Janet Thomas, Jun, 10
"Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,"
Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 61
How Can I Help My Friends Understand Why I Want to Serve a Mission? Oct, 17
Lighthouse of the Lord: A Message to the Youth of the Church, The, Thomas S. Monson, May, 2
My Mentor, Joaquín Fenollar Bataller, Nov, 41
Your Greatest Challenge, Mother, Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 113

FRIEND TO FRIEND
Elder Duane B. Gerrard, Mar, F4
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Juan Carlos Gómez Flórez, Jun, 8

FUN PAGE
I Have Many Talents, Jennifer Cloward, Aug, F13

Packing the Handcart, Jun, F5
Prophets and Prophecies, Lois T. Bartholomew, Mar, F16

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Doctrine and Covenants Scripture-Story Grab Bag, Corliss Clayton, Nov, F2
I Can Be a Missionary Now! Corliss Clayton, Oct, F8
I Have Many Talents, Jennifer Cloward, Aug, F13

Gardner, Marvin K.
Albin Lotrič: The Worth of a Soul, Apr, 42
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Good-bye for Another Season, Gordon B. Hinckley, Jul, 102
Great Family in Reverence and Worship, A, Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 4
"Humble and a Contrite Heart, An,"
Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 102
Listen to a Prophet's Voice, Diane S. Nichols, Apr, F4

GERRARD, DUANE B. (about)
Elder Duane B. Gerrard, Mar, F4

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Oct, 24

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Kathy H. Stephens, Dec, F10

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Gifts of the Savior: A Christmas Message from the First Presidency to the Children of the World
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"Give Us a Blessing!"
Lesly Augusto Tobar Correa, Oct, 47

Giving Up My Graven Image
Manuel J. Rosario, Mar, 23

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Lessons Learned in the Journey of Life, Joseph B. Wirthlin, May, 34
Lighthouse of the Lord: A Message to the Youth of the Church, The, Thomas S. Monson, May, 2

"Go Check on Wendi"
Darlene Joy Nichols, May, 28
God of Miracles, A
Sydney S. Reynolds, Jul, 12

Good-bye for Another Season
Gordon B. Hinckley, Jul, 102
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GRATITUDE
Gratitude and Service, David B. Haight, Jul, 85
Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth, A, Gordon B. Hinckley, Apr, 30
Work Goes On, The, Gordon B. Hinckley, Jul, 4

Gratitude and Service
David B. Haight, Jul, 85

GREAT BRITAIN
Uncovering Gospel Roots in Britain, Janet Thomas, Feb, 8

Great Family in Reverence and Worship, A
Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 4

"Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children"
Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 61

Groberg, John H.
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Growing Testimony, A
James E. Faust, Jan, 69

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Ana Lucrecia Morales: The Gift of a Poet, Don L. Searle, Sep, 26

Guerrero, Rodolfo Barboza
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Living by Scriptural Guidance, Russell M. Nelson, Jan, 19
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Hales, Robert D.
Couple Missionaries: A Time to Serve, Jul, 28
Covenant of Baptism: To Be in the Kingdom and of the Kingdom, The, Jan, 6
Return with Honor, Nov, 10
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Hallmarks of a Happy Home
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Hallstrom, Donald L.
Cultivate Righteous Traditions, Jan, 34

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HAPPINESS (see also **JOY**)
First Things First, Richard G. Scott, Jul, 6
Lessons Learned in the Journey of Life, Joseph B. Wirthlin, May, 34

- Satan's Bag of Snipes*, Richard C. Edgley, Jan, 52
Who Do You Think You Are?—A Message to Youth, James E. Faust, Jun, 2
- Harward, Kelly A.**
Not Really Alone, Jun, 32
- Haueter, John L.**
Junior Companion, Nov, 28
- Hayes, Janice Porter**
Sometimes Different Is Good, Feb, F7
- HEALING**
Christmas Bells through the Fog, Beth Dayley, Dec, 28
David Led the Way, Sergio Arroyo, Apr, 28
I Needed a Blessing, Brandon J. Miller, Sep, 42
I Tried the Experiment, Lydie Zebo Bahie, Jun, 30
Jairus's Daughter Is Raised from the Dead, Jun, F14
Jesus Heals a Deaf Man, Dec, F11
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- Heavenly Father Prepares the Prophet**
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- HERITAGE**
Be a Strong Link, David B. Haight, Jan, 23
- He Takes Care of His Church**
Angie Bergstrom, Aug, F10
- Hettinger, T. S.**
Let's Make a Deal, May, F4
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- Hidden Book, The**
Ruth Dorsett, Nov, 42
- Higher View, A**
Hugo Ibañez, Jun, 29
- Hinckley, Gordon B.**
"Behold Your Little Ones," Mar, 2
Good-bye for Another Season, Jul, 102
Great Family in Reverence and Worship, A, Jan, 4
"Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children," Jan, 61
How Can I Become the Woman of Whom I Dream? Jul, 112
"Humble and a Contrite Heart, An," Jan, 102
Living with Our Convictions, Sep, 2
Miracle of Faith, The, Jul, 82
Perpetual Education Fund, The, Jul, 60
Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth, A, Apr, 30
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Special Witnesses of Christ, Apr, 2
This Great Millennial Year, Jan, 80
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- Work Goes On, The*, Jul, 4
Your Greatest Challenge, Mother, Jan, 113
- "His Word Ye Shall Receive"**
M. Russell Ballard, Jul, 79
- Holland, Jeffrey R.**
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"Witnesses unto Me," Jul, 15
- HOLY GHOST (see also INSPIRATION, REVELATION, SPIRITUALITY)**
Born Again, James E. Faust, Jul, 68
Building the Kingdom, Bruce D. Porter, Jul, 97
Comforter, a Guide, a Testifier, A, Margaret D. Nadauld, Jul, 109
Covenant of Baptism: To Be in the Kingdom and of the Kingdom, The, Robert D. Hales, Jan, 6
"Did Teacher Say I Could?" Janine Mickelson and Sheila Kindred, Nov, F14
"Go Check on Wendi," Darlene Joy Nichols, May, 28
I Felt Comfort—but Why? Alan L. Olsen, Feb, 34
Living by Scriptural Guidance, Russell M. Nelson, Jan, 19
My Awakening to Truth, Pascal Aucordier, Dec, 32
No Need to Fear, Betina Beatriz Salvatierra de Sánchez, Nov, 43
Not Really Alone, Kelly A. Harward, Jun, 32
Nourishing the Spirit, Dallin H. Oaks, Aug, 10
Pure Testimony, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Jan, 27
Seeking the Spirit of God, Douglas L. Callister, Jan, 38
Spirit of Christ: A Light amid Darkness, The, Daniel K. Judd, May, 18
"Spirit Took Over, The," Jill Pulsipher Jones, Nov, 39
Your Celestial Guide, Sharon G. Larsen, Jul, 104
- HOME TEACHING**
Junior Companion, John L. Haueter, Nov, 28
- HOMOSEXUALITY**
"Ye Are the Temple of God," Boyd K. Packer, Jan, 85
- HONESTY (see also INTEGRITY)**
Call to Serve, The, Thomas S. Monson, Jan, 57
"Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children," Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 61
Your Greatest Challenge, Mother, Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 113
- HONOR**
Return with Honor, Robert D. Hales, Nov, 10
"Them That Honour Me I Will Honour," James E. Faust, Jul, 53
- HOPE**
"Plow in Hope," Neal A. Maxwell, Jul, 72
- How Can I Become the Woman of Whom I Dream?**
Gordon B. Hinckley, Jul, 112
- How Can I Help My Friends Understand Why I Want to Serve a Mission?**
Oct, 17
- How Can I Keep My Thoughts Centered on Jesus Christ during My Daily Activities?**
Dec, 25
- How Can I Prepare to Receive My Patriarchal Blessing?**
Aug, 22
- How the Book of Mormon Found Me**
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Serving Any Way I Could, Aug, 44
- HUMANITARIAN AID (see WELFARE PROGRAM)**
- "Humble and a Contrite Heart, An"**
Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 102
- HUMILITY**
"Humble and a Contrite Heart, An," Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 102
Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth, A, Gordon B. Hinckley, Apr, 30
Retaining a Remission of Sin, Keith Crockett, Jan, 91
"To Walk Humbly with Thy God," Marlin K. Jensen, Jul, 9
- HYMNS (see MUSIC)**
- HYPOCRISY**
Enemy Within, The, James E. Faust, Jan, 54
- Ibañez, Hugo**
Higher View, A, Jun, 29
- I Can Be a Missionary Now!**
Corliss Clayton, Oct, F8
- I Can Follow the Prophet**
Diane S. Nichols, Sep, F6
- I Didn't Fit In**
Jeni Willardson, Nov, 31
- I Felt Comfort—but Why?**
Alan L. Olsen, Feb, 34
- I Have Many Talents**
Jennifer Cloward, Aug, F13
- Increasing Our Faith in Jesus Christ**
Apr, 25
- Increasing Our Spirituality through Fasting and Prayer**
Jun, 25
- INDIVIDUAL WORTH**
Albin Lotrič: The Worth of a Soul, Marvin K. Gardner, Apr, 42
Not Really Alone, Kelly A. Harward, Jun, 32
One by One, Ronald A. Rasband, Jan, 36
Your Celestial Guide, Sharon G. Larsen, Jul, 104

I Needed a Blessing

Brandon J. Miller, Sep, 42

I Never Looked Back

Cameron McCoy, Mar, 34

Inseparable Witnesses of Jesus Christ

John M. Madsen, Feb, 14

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Hidden Book, The, Ruth Dorsett, Nov, 42

How the Book of Mormon Found Me, Kwame Opare, Feb, 30

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Shape of Character: Classic Insights from President David O. McKay, The, Sep, 40

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Keith B. McMullin, Jul, 75

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First Thing in the Morning, Janet Thomas, Jun, 10

I Tried the Experiment

Lydie Zebo Bahie, Jun, 30

It's Your Call

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Jairus's Daughter Is Raised from the Dead

Jun, F14

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Japan: Growing Light in the East, Don L. Searle, Mar, 38

Miyako Tashiro of Osaka, Japan, Melvin Leavitt, Sep, F8

Japan: Growing Light in the East

Don L. Searle, Mar, 38

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Family Home Evening Hunt, Jun, F10

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"To Walk Humbly with Thy God," Jul, 9

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JESUS CHRIST (see also ATONEMENT, NEW TESTAMENT STORIES)

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Appreciating the Savior's Sacrifice, Jun, 26

Christmas Countdown, Hilary Hendricks, Dec, F8, F16

Christmas with No Presents, A, James E. Faust, Dec, 2

Doing What the Lord Expects, Feb, 30

Easter: A Story for You to Tell, Apr, F2

Gifts of the Savior: A Christmas Message from the First Presidency to the Children of the World, Dec, F2

God of Miracles, A, Sydney S. Reynolds, Jul, 12

Growing Testimony, A, James E. Faust, Jan, 69

How Can I Keep My Thoughts Centered on Jesus Christ during My Daily Activities? Dec, 25

Increasing Our Faith in Jesus Christ, Apr, 25

Inseparable Witnesses of Jesus Christ, John M. Madsen, Feb, 14

Latter-day Testament of Biblical Truth, A, Rex C. Reeve Jr., Mar, 26

"Lead, Kindly Light," Virginia U. Jensen, Jan, 75

Living with Our Convictions, Gordon B. Hinckley, Sep, 2

One by One, Ronald A. Rasband, Jan, 36

Redemption of the Dead and the Testimony of Jesus, The, D. Todd Christofferson, Jan, 10

Special Witnesses of Christ, Apr, 2

"To Bear Testimony of Mine Only Begotten," L. Aldin Porter, Jul, 34

Too Old to Pass the Sacrament? Wayne B. Lynn, May, 8

United in Love and Testimony, John K.

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Visitor, The, Ken Merrell, Nov, 46

"Watch with Me," Henry B. Eyring, Jul, 44

What a Joyful Day! Diane S. Nichols, Dec, F4

Jesus Commands the Winds and the Waves

Aug, F9

Jesus Feeds 5,000 People

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Jesus Forgives a Woman

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Jesus Heals a Deaf Man

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Preparing the Way, Thomas S. Monson, Feb, 2

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"Spirit Took Over, The," Nov, 39

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"Sanctify Yourselves"
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- "Watch with Me," Henry B. Eyring, Jul, 44
We Are Instruments in the Hands of God,
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- Stand Tall and Stand Together**
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- Growing Testimony, A*, James E. Faust, Jan, 69
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- He Takes Care of His Church*, Angie Bergstrom, Aug, F10
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- Special Witnesses of Christ*, Apr, 2
- Testimony*, Loren C. Dunn, Jan, 15
- "To Bear Testimony of Mine Only Begotten,"* L. Aldin Porter, Jul, 34
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- To the Rescue**
Thomas S. Monson, Jul, 57
- "Touch of the Master's Hand, The"**
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- Tough Cowboy, A**
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- Blessings of Temple Worship*, Dec, 33
- Building Family Unity through Temple and Family History Work*, Sep, 25
- Increasing Our Faith in Jesus Christ*, Apr, 25
- Increasing Our Spirituality through Fasting and Prayer*, Jun, 25
- Living within Our Means*, May, 25
- Putting on the Whole Armor of God*, Feb, 25
- Safety in Keeping Divine Covenants*, Oct, 25
- Strengthening Our Families through Family Home Evening*, Aug, 25
- "That I May Heal You,"* Mar, 25
- Visitor, The**
Ken Merrell, Nov, 46
- W**
- Walking by Faith in the Philippines**
Roger Terry, Dec, 38
- Wang, Shu-chuan**
Caught by Surprise, Oct, 46
- Watchmen on the Tower**
Diane S. Nichols, Aug, F2
- "Watch with Me"**
Henry B. Eyring, Jul, 44
- Watkins, Vanja Y.**
Truth from Elijah, Oct, F10
- We Are Instruments in the Hands of God**
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Perpetual Education Fund, The, Gordon B. Hinckley, Jul, 60
- What a Joyful Day!**
Diane S. Nichols, Dec, F4
- What Gift Will I Give Him?**
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- Who Do You Think You Are?—A Message to Youth**
James E. Faust, Jun, 2
- "Who Is This Prophet?"**
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- "Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?"**
James E. Faust, Aug, 2
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- Why Should I Worry about Paying Tithing?**
Jun, 22
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- Will to Soar, The**
Jorge Flores, May, 26
- Winning My War**
Trisha Swanson Dayton, Aug, 26
- Wirthlin, Joseph B.**
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Lessons Learned in the Journey of Life, May, 34

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“Witnesses unto Me”

Jeffrey R. Holland, Jul, 15

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No Bulls in the Ditch, Oct, F14
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Your Greatest Challenge, Mother,
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Tugs and Pulls of the World, The, Neal A.
Maxwell, Jan, 43

WORSHIP

Enhancing Our Temple Experience, L. Lionel
Kendrick, Jul, 94
Thirsting for the Living Water, Victor Manuel
Cabrera, Aug, 43

“Write upon My Heart”

Henry B. Eyring, Jan, 99

Y

“Ye Are the Temple of God”

Boyd K. Packer, Jan, 85

“You Can’t Give Up”

Charlene Germaine Meyer, May, F7

You Can’t Pet a Rattlesnake

David E. Sorensen, Jul, 48

Your Celestial Guide

Sharon G. Larsen, Jul, 104

Your Greatest Challenge, Mother

Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 113

Your Mission—A Spiritual Adventure

David B. Haight, Oct, 12

YOUTH

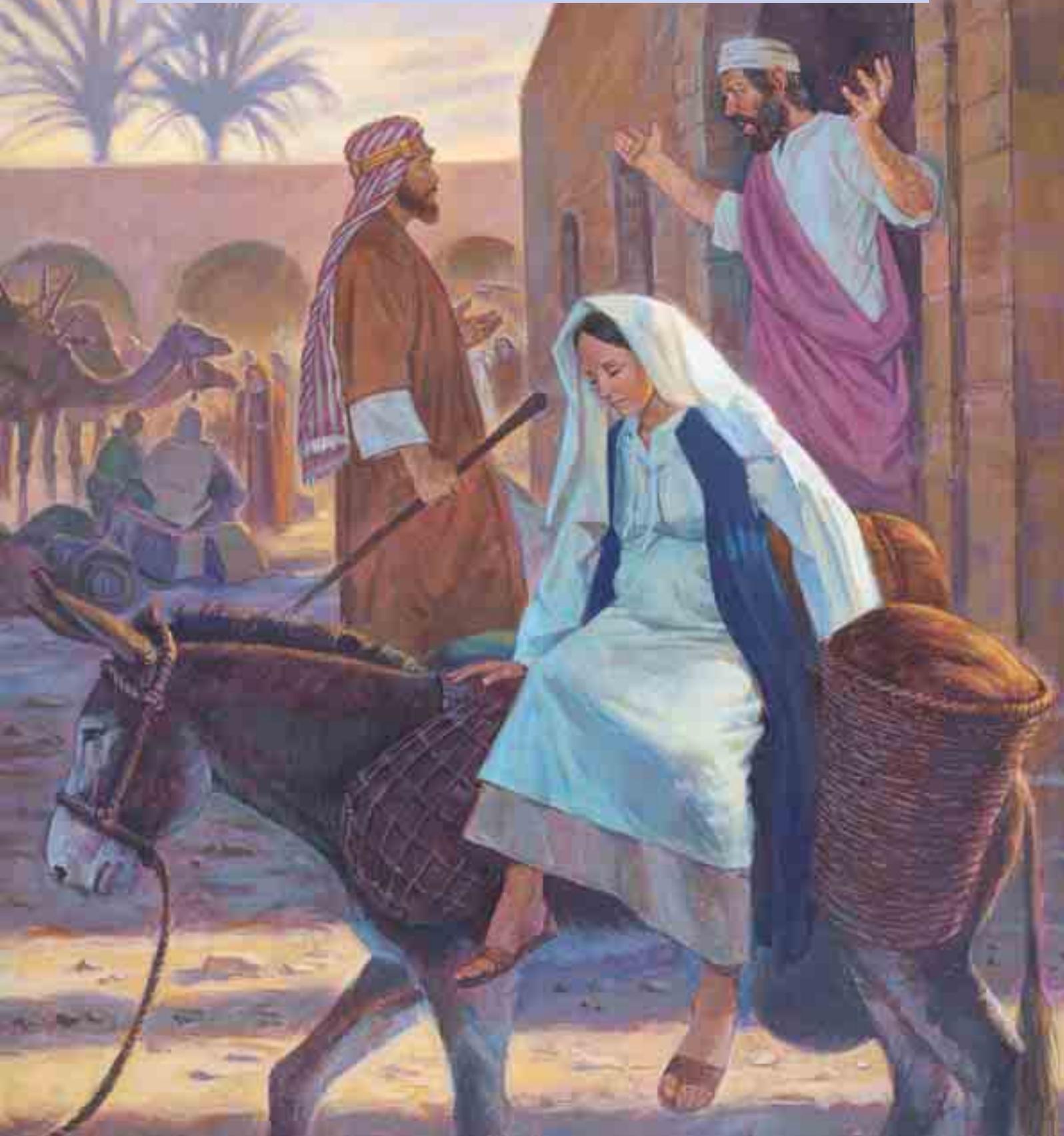
First Thing in the Morning, Janet Thomas,
Jun, 10
“*Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children*,”
Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 61
“*His Word Ye Shall Receive*,” M. Russell
Ballard, Jul, 79
Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth, A,
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Nov, 25
“*Ye Are the Temple of God*,” Boyd K. Packer,
Jan, 85
Your Greatest Challenge, Mother, Gordon B.
Hinckley, Jan, 113

Z

ZION (see KINGDOM OF GOD)

The Friend

FOR CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS ■ DECEMBER 2001



A Christmas Message from the First Presidency
to the Children of the World

Gifts of the Savior

Christmas is a wonderful time of friendliness, caring, and love. It is a time when all the world rejoices. It is a time of service and the giving of gifts.

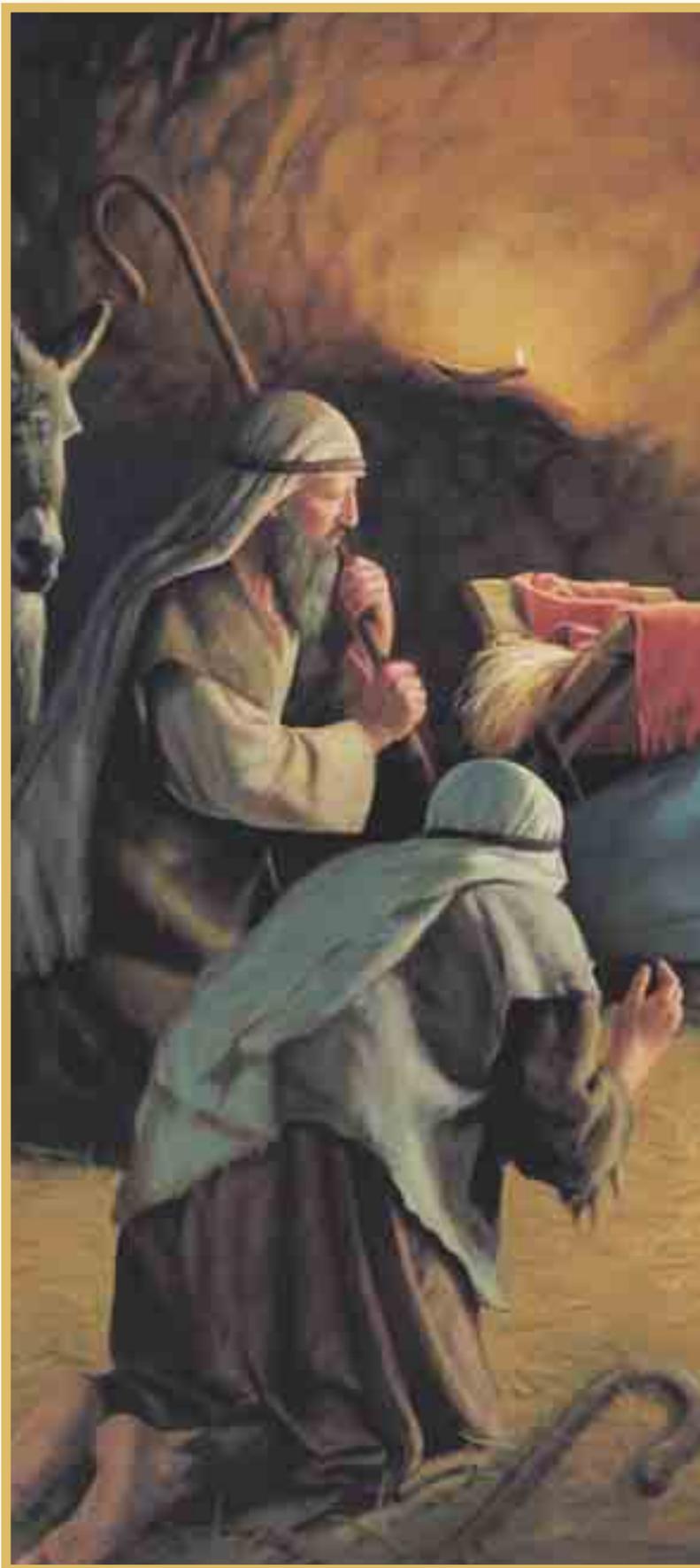
The gifts of the Savior were precious and rare. He blessed the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk. He gave light in place of darkness, forgiveness to the repentant, and hope to the despairing.

This is a season of the year when we can bring gifts of joy and happiness to others. Like the Savior, we can visit the sick, give to the poor, and cheer the lonely.

At this time of remembrance and gratitude, we testify that Jesus Christ was born into the world as our Savior and Friend. We witness that He lives. May our Heavenly Father bless children everywhere with the peace that comes through the gift of His Son.

With love,
The First Presidency

George A. Lundberg
Thomas S. Monson
James E. Faust





THE NATIVITY, BY DAVID LINDSLEY

What a Joyful Day!

By Diane S. Nichols



“And he also spake concerning the prophets, how great a number had testified . . . concerning this Messiah, . . . this Redeemer of the world” (1 Nephi 10:5).



Imagine that you lived more than 2,000 years ago in Zarahemla, a Nephite city surrounded by a high wall. Imagine that one day, while walking through the city with your parents, you hear a lot of commotion. You see a man standing upon the city wall. He is prophesying of the Messiah and explaining the things that will happen in Zarahemla and in the land of Jerusalem as signs of His birth.

You and your parents listen to the man’s message. He is Samuel, a Lamanite prophet. The Lamanites have been your enemies for many years, but as you listen, you feel that Samuel’s words are true. In five years, he says, the Messiah will be born in the land of Jerusalem, and when He is born, a new star will appear. In Zarahemla, he continues, there will be a day and a night and a day without darkness.

Some of the people around you do not believe Samuel and are very angry. They throw stones at him and try to shoot him with arrows, but he escapes.

Your parents tell you Samuel is a prophet of God. You and your family are baptized and prepare for the coming of the Messiah (see Helaman 16:1–5). You study the scriptures together, pray, and obey the prophets. In five years, a new star does appear and there is a night without darkness. You know the Savior has been born. What a joyful day!

Just as prophets testified of the Savior’s birth, they have prophesied that He will come again. At His Second Coming, Jesus Christ will rule and reign forever.

Everyone will know He is the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world.

We can prepare for His Second Coming just as the righteous people in Zarahemla prepared for His birth. We can follow the words of the prophets. We can study the scriptures and pray. We can keep our baptismal covenants and heed the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

If we follow the prophet, we will be prepared for the Second Coming. What a joyful day it will be!

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Ask the children how they would send an important message to the world today. Explain that 2,000 years ago something wonderful happened—Jesus Christ was born. Heavenly Father wanted people all over the earth to know about it, so He sent prophets to tell them the signs of the Savior’s birth. Tell the story of Samuel the Lamanite (see Helaman 13:1–16:8). Have children role-play the story. Show a map of the world. Ask where people saw the new star on the night of the Savior’s birth. Explain that although Bethlehem was far from Zarahemla (which was located somewhere in the Americas), people in both places saw the star. In the East, Wise Men knew it was a sign the Savior had been born. They traveled a long way to worship Him (see Matthew 2:1–12). Explain that just as people prepared for the Savior’s birth, we need to prepare for His Second Coming. Have the children write or draw something they can do to prepare. Ask them to share their ideas with their families.

2. Make a picture of the Nativity into a puzzle. On the back of each puzzle piece, write a scripture reference that prophesies of the birth of the Savior. Possible scriptures: Isaiah 7:14; 1 Nephi 11:13, 15, 18; 2 Nephi 25:19; Helaman 14:2–5. Place the puzzle pieces on the floor. Have a child choose one of the pieces. Have another child read the scripture aloud. Discuss what the prophecy or sign was and where and when it would take place. Have the children put each puzzle piece in place. Sing a song or hymn about Jesus’ birth. Testify that prophets have told us the Savior will come again. □



Section A



I can pray daily.



**I can keep my
baptismal covenants.**



**I can follow
the prophet.**



**I can study the
scriptures.**

Glue tab

Section B

Instructions

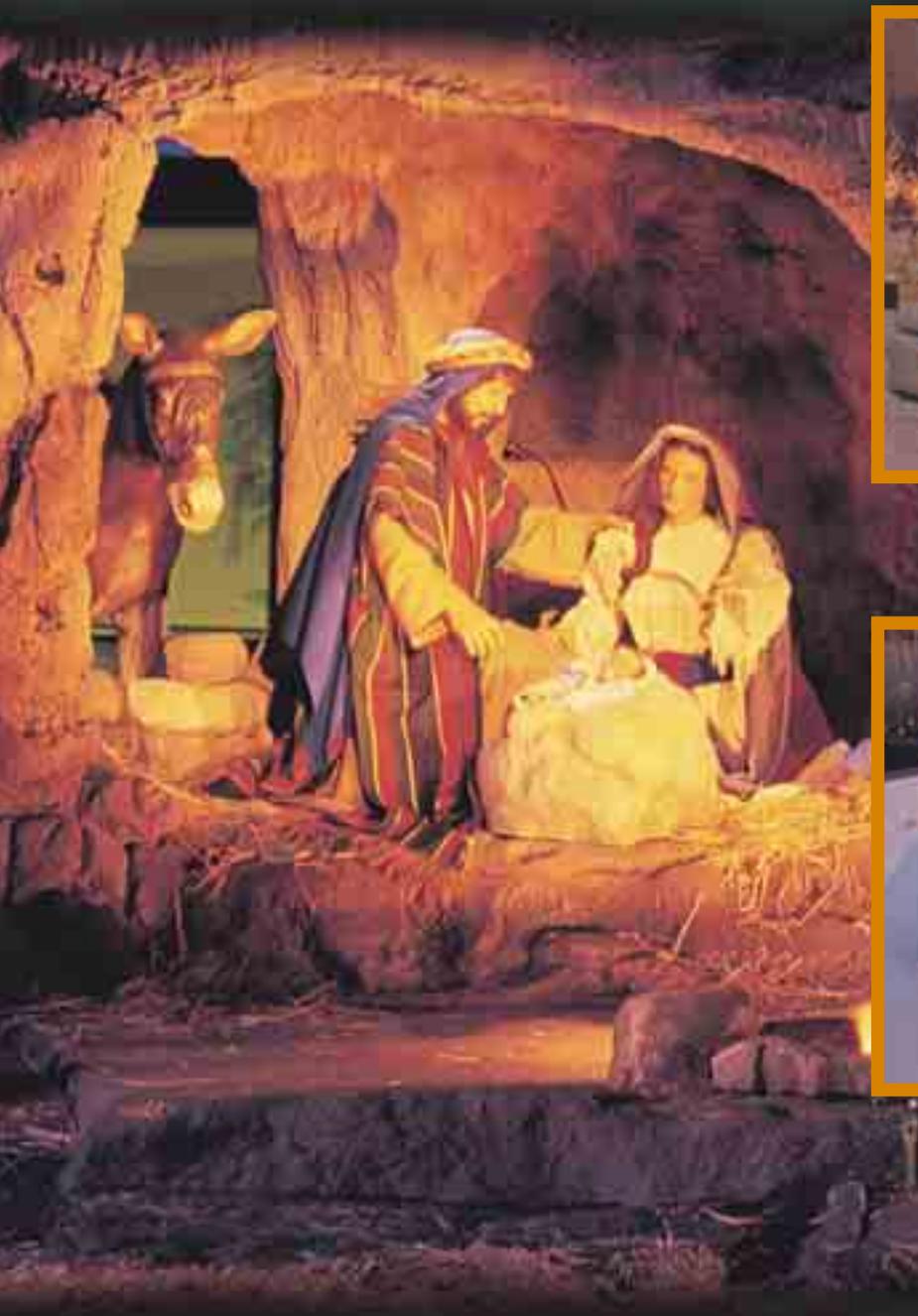
1. Glue this page onto heavy paper.
2. Color the pictures of things you can do to prepare for the Second Coming.
3. Cut out sections A and B and the window in section A.
4. Form each section into a tube by gluing the

tabs to the back of the opposite edge.

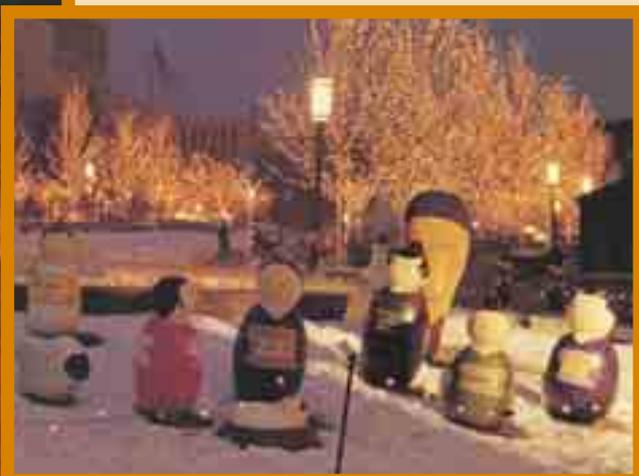
5. Place section B inside section A. As you turn section B, pictures will appear in the window to remind you of things you can do to be ready for the Second Coming. Each week, choose one thing you will try to do better to help you be prepared.

A Temple Square Christmas

By Rosalyn Collings



PHOTOGRAPHY BY KELLY LARSEN, EXCEPT AS NOTED;
LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND



Mary and Joseph in traditional Japanese clothing watch over the baby Jesus.



Above: These wood sculptures were carved by a member of the Church in Poland. Left: Realistic figures of baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.



Children all over the world love Jesus Christ. They know He is their Savior and that He loves them. Every year at Christmas, children around the world celebrate the birth of Christ.

Last year at Christmastime, Church workers set up beautiful Nativity scenes on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. They spent hundreds of hours creating realistic figures of baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the Wise Men to place on the lawn near the temple. These figures helped visitors remember that the birth of Christ in Bethlehem was a real event and that real people, not so very different from us, honored Him after His birth.

Four smaller Nativities surrounded the reflecting pool near the Salt Lake Temple. Each of the four Nativity scenes came from a different area of the world. These Nativities were designed especially for children, to show how children all over the world imagine the Savior's birth.

Hundreds of little lanterns were set up on a plaza near the temple. The glow from these lanterns reminded visitors that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. The lanterns bore the words *joy*, *peace*, *hope*, *light*, and *love* in many languages.

Even though the Nativities showed different representations of Christ and the lanterns were decorated with words from different nations, they all told the same story. Jesus Christ was born to be the Savior of the world. His birth, His life, and His Atonement bring joy, peace, hope, light, and love to all people. □



Figures in colorful fabric from Africa worship the Savior at His birth.



These Native American figures are wearing costumes of the Tlingit Tribe in Alaska in the United States.

CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN

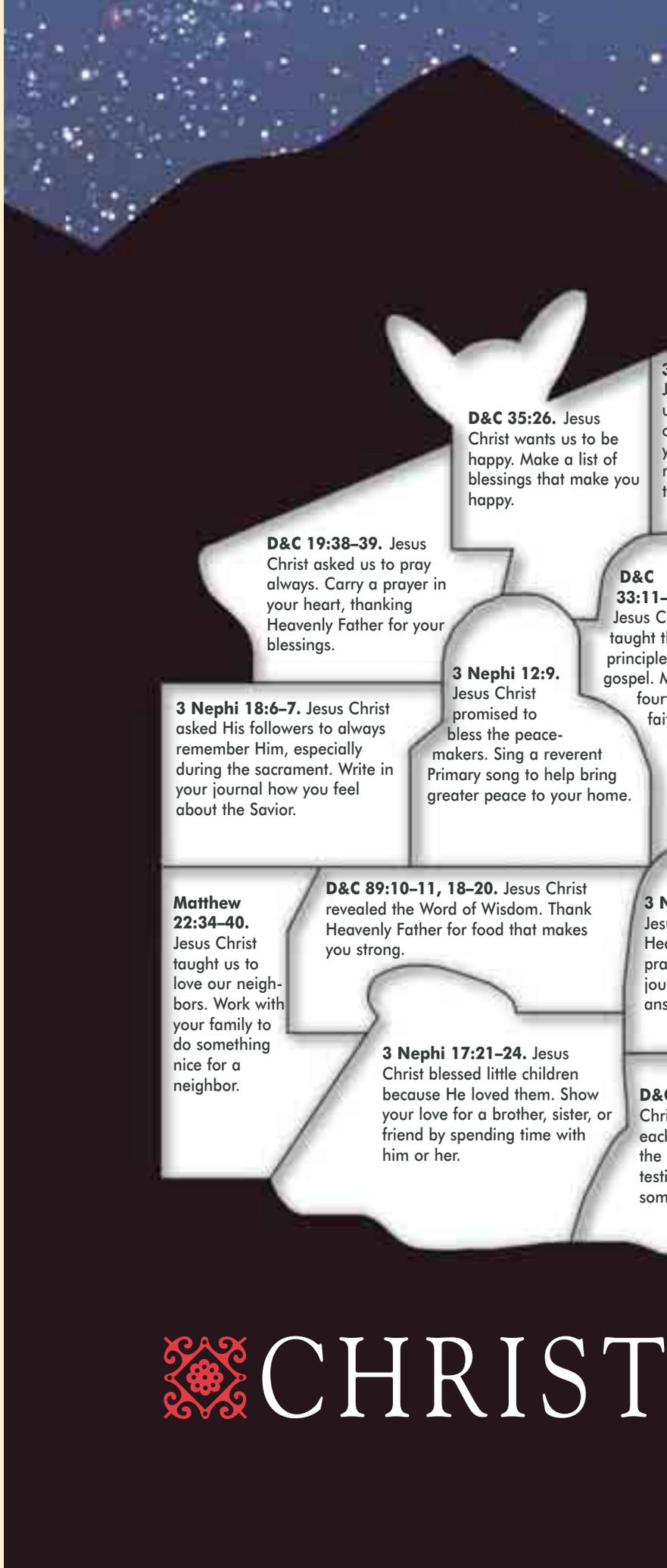
By Hilary Hendricks



Instructions

Christmas is a time to remember Jesus Christ. Complete this Christmas picture to learn some ways to follow Him.

Remove these two pages from the magazine, and glue them onto heavy paper. Cut this column of instructions off the accompanying poster. Cut out the puzzle pieces on page 16, and place them in an envelope. Starting on 1 December, remove one piece from the envelope each morning. Find the place where the piece belongs in the Christmas picture. Read the scripture and do the activity; then glue the piece in place. By 25 December, you will have done many things to be like Jesus, and your picture of Christmas will be complete! □



D&C 35:26. Jesus Christ wants us to be happy. Make a list of blessings that make you happy.

D&C 19:38–39. Jesus Christ asked us to pray always. Carry a prayer in your heart, thanking Heavenly Father for your blessings.

D&C 33:11–
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3 Nephi 18:6–7. Jesus Christ asked His followers to always remember Him, especially during the sacrament. Write in your journal how you feel about the Savior.

3 Nephi 12:9.
Jesus Christ promised to bless the peace-makers. Sing a reverent Primary song to help bring greater peace to your home.

Matthew 22:34–40.
Jesus Christ taught us to love our neighbors. Work with your family to do something nice for a neighbor.

D&C 89:10–11, 18–20. Jesus Christ revealed the Word of Wisdom. Thank Heavenly Father for food that makes you strong.

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3 Nephi 17:21–24. Jesus Christ blessed little children because He loved them. Show your love for a brother, sister, or friend by spending time with him or her.

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CHRIST

3 Nephi 18:21. Jesus Christ taught us to pray with our families. Help your family remember to pray today.

Mark 10:13–14. Children are very important to Jesus Christ. As you pray, tell Heavenly Father about your day and ask for His help with your problems.

3 Nephi 12:6. Jesus Christ taught that we will be blessed for seeking righteousness. Read the scriptures or a scripture story.

12. Christ the Savior of His people. Memorize the 12th article of faith.

D&C 25:12. With your family or friends, sing Christmas hymns or songs about the Savior.

D&C 1:37. Jesus Christ counseled us to study His commandments. Think of a commandment you keep and a blessing you enjoy.

John 13:34–35. We show that we want to follow Jesus Christ when we love others. Show your parents you love them by helping without being asked.

3 Nephi 27:7. Jesus Christ told His disciples to call the Church in His name. Talk about the name of the Church and what it means (see D&C 115:3–4).

D&C 21:1, 4–5. Our prophet tells us what Jesus Christ wants us to do. Talk with a parent about President Gordon B. Hinckley's counsel from general conference.

3 Nephi 25:5–6. Jesus Christ said the hearts of children should turn to their parents. Ask your parents to tell you about Christmas when they were young.

3 Nephi 23:1. Jesus Christ commanded the Nephites to study the words of Isaiah. Ask a parent to read and talk about Isaiah 53:3–5 with you.

3 Nephi 27:29. Jesus Christ promised that Heavenly Father will answer our prayers. Write in your journal about a prayer He answered.

3 Nephi 12:16. Jesus Christ asked us to be examples to those around us. Set an example of service by doing chores at home.

D&C 76:22–24. Even though Jesus Christ was born more than 2,000 years ago, He has appeared to prophets of this dispensation. As a family, read and discuss today's scripture.

Matthew 6:3–4. Jesus Christ taught that we should quietly help other people. Write a kind note for someone.

Luke 17:11–19. Jesus Christ praised the leper who returned to thank Him. Write a note or draw a picture to thank someone who has helped you.

D&C 108:7. Jesus Christ asked us to help one another be strong in the gospel. Share your testimony with someone.

CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN

Gift Box

By Kathy H. Stephens

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RANDALL J. PIXTON

To make this gift box, you will need a pencil, tracing paper, scissors, colored paper or wrapping paper, lightweight cardboard, crayons, glue or tape, and any other decorations you'd like to use.

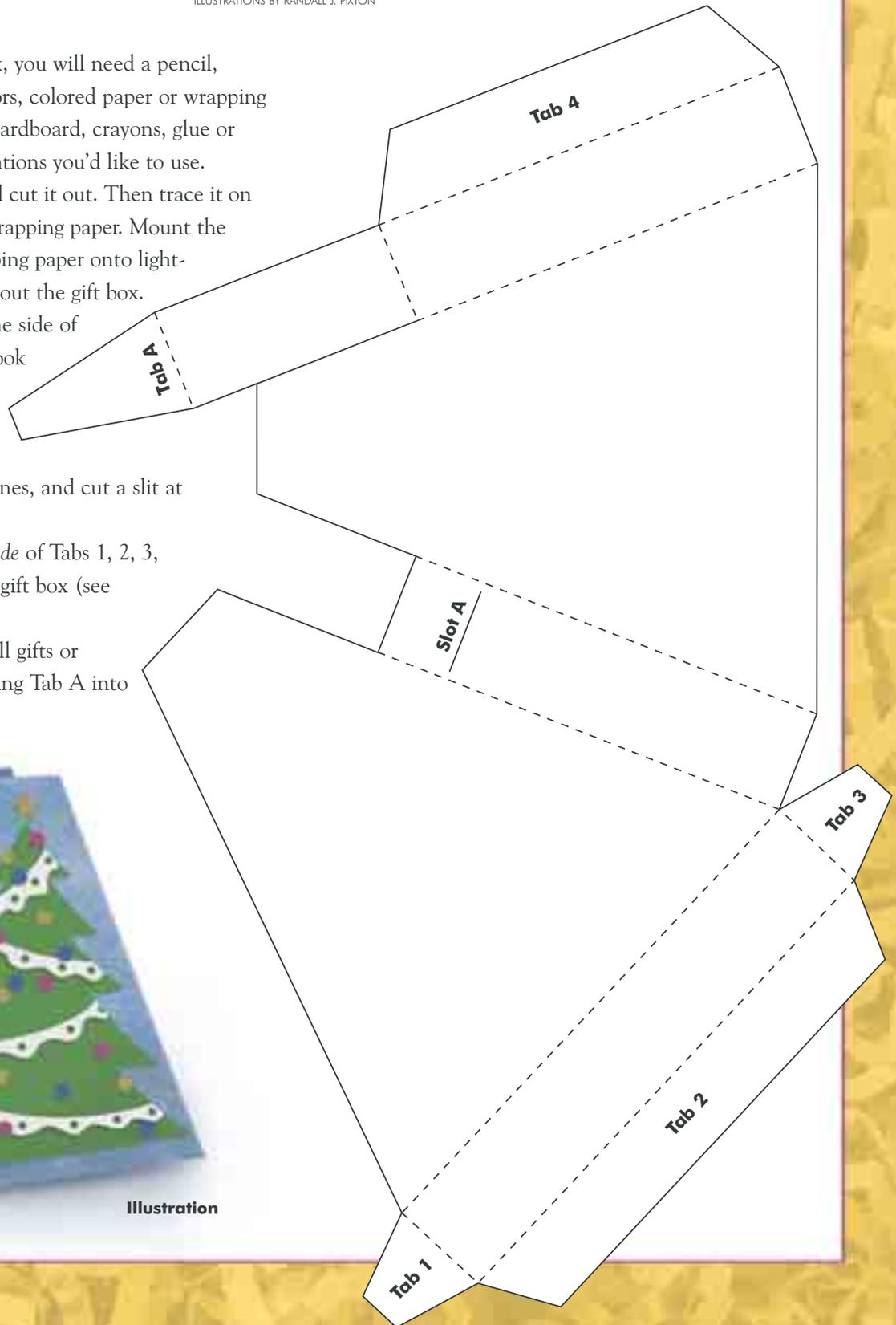
1. Trace the pattern and cut it out. Then trace it on the colored paper or the wrapping paper. Mount the colored paper or the wrapping paper onto lightweight cardboard, and cut out the gift box.

2. Draw a picture on one side of the box or decorate it to look like a Christmas tree with lace, ribbons, stickers, or other decorations.

3. Fold on the broken lines, and cut a slit at Slot A.

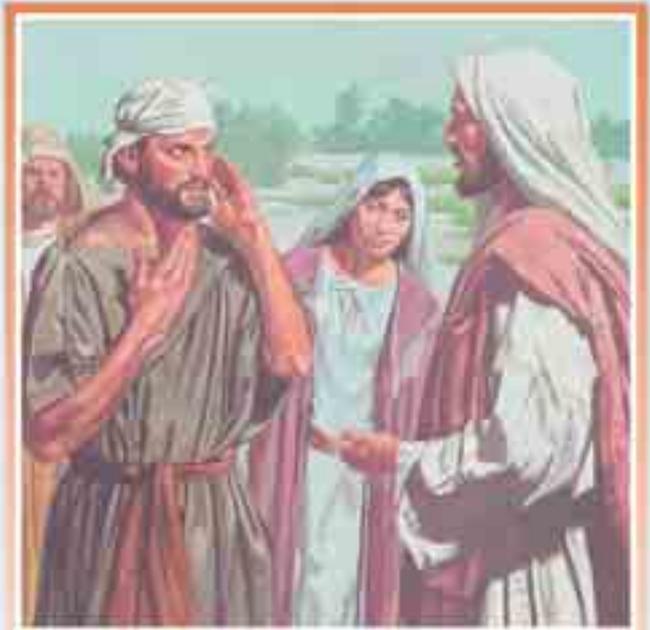
4. Tape or glue the *outside* of Tabs 1, 2, 3, and 4 to the *inside* of your gift box (see illustration).

5. Fill the box with small gifts or treats. Then close by slipping Tab A into Slot A. □



Illustration

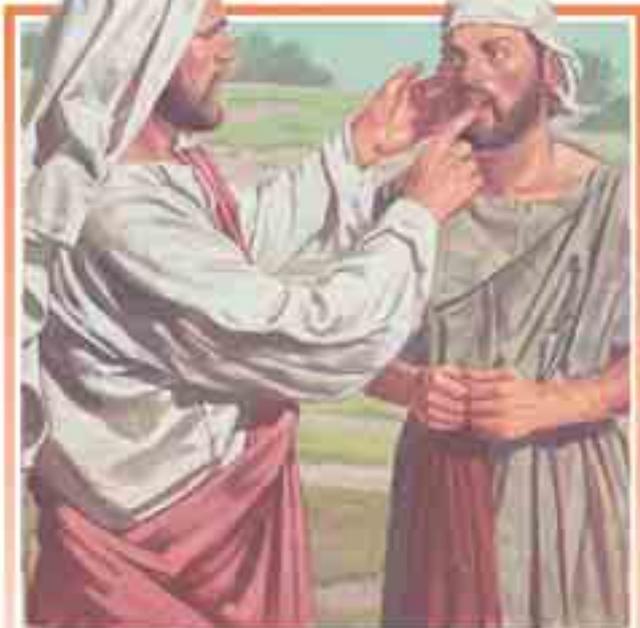
JESUS HEALS A DEAF MAN



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

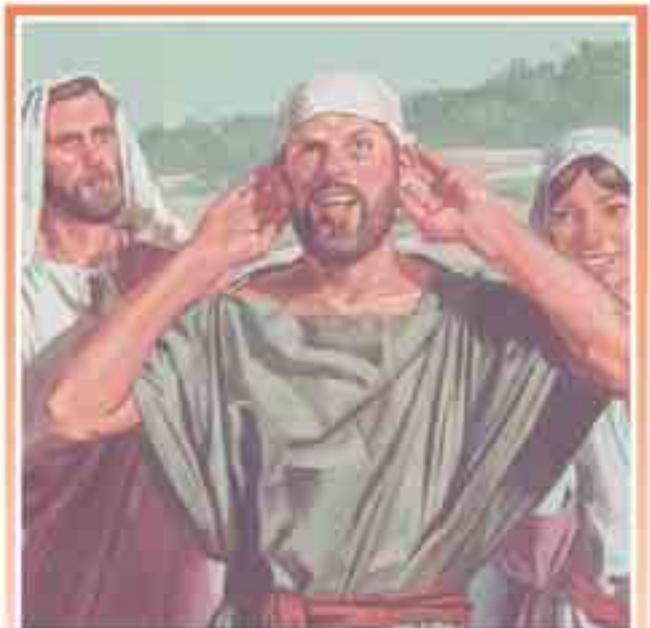
Some people brought a deaf man to Jesus. The man could not hear, nor could he talk very well. The people wanted the Savior to heal him.

Mark 7:32



Jesus and the man walked away from the others. Then Jesus put His fingers in the man's ears and touched the man's tongue and blessed him.

Mark 7:33-34



Now the man could hear and talk, and the people could understand him. Jesus asked them not to tell anyone what had happened, but they told everyone.

Mark 7:35-36

APOSTLES' TESTIMONY OF CHRIST



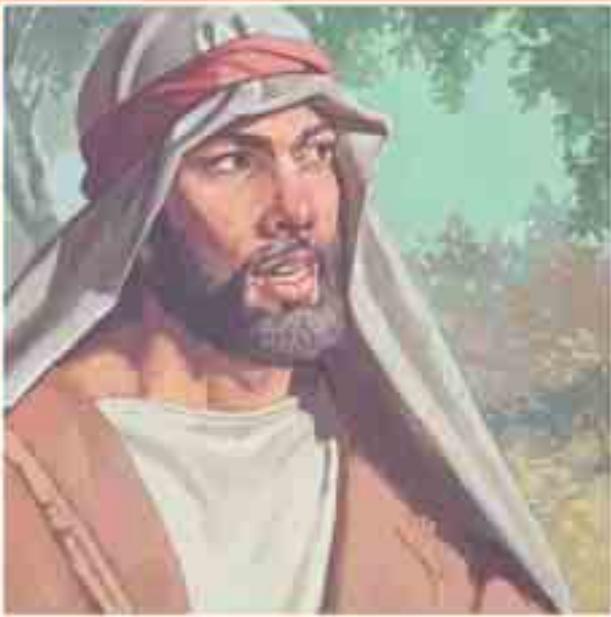
Jesus was with His disciples in Caesarea Philippi. He asked His disciples who people thought He was.

Matthew 16:13; Mark 8:27; Luke 9:18

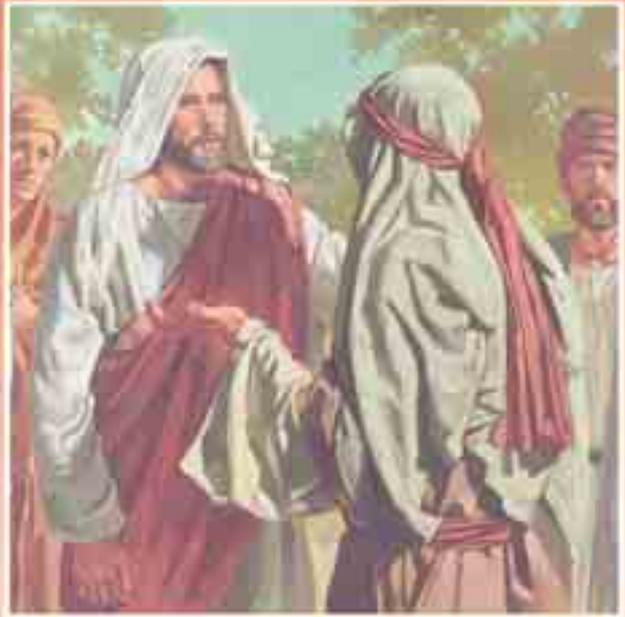


The disciples said some people thought He was John the Baptist. Others thought He was Elias or another Old Testament prophet and had come back from the dead.

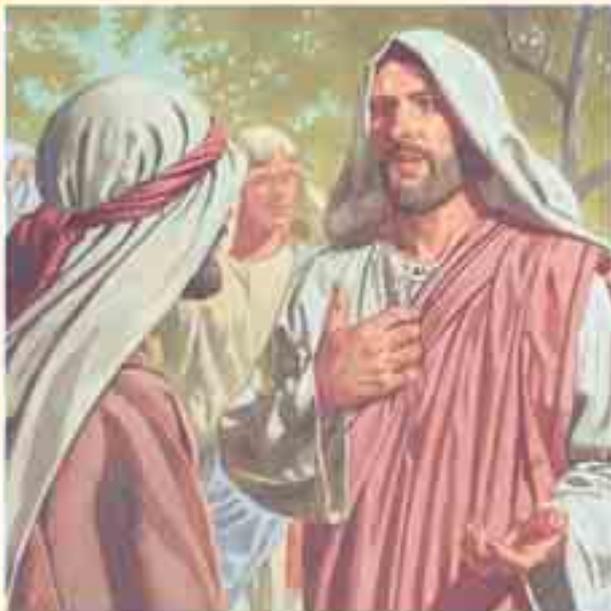
Matthew 16:14; Mark 8:28; Luke 9:19



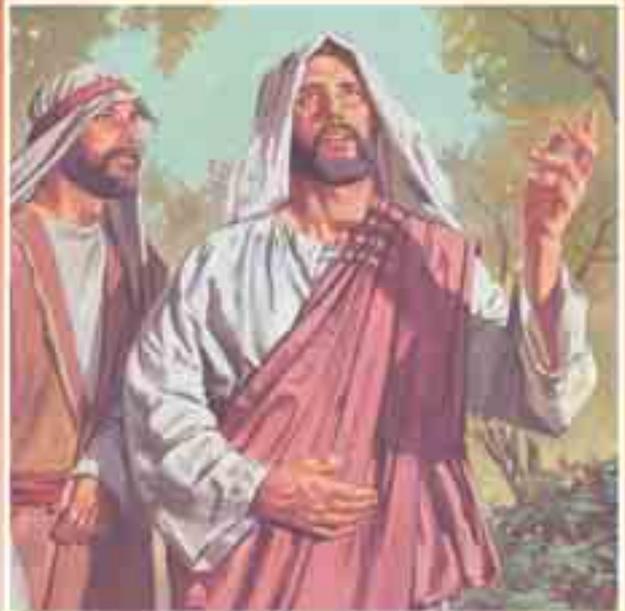
Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was. Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."
Matthew 16:15-16; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20



Jesus explained that a testimony does not come from the learning of men. A testimony comes by revelation from God. Revelation was how Peter knew who Jesus was.
Matthew 16:17



Jesus also said the true Church would be founded upon Him and His teachings. He promised His disciples He would give them the priesthood so they would have the authority to lead His Church.
Matthew 16:18-19



He told them not to tell anyone that He was the Christ. First He needed to suffer many things, to be rejected by the leaders of the Jews, to be slain, and to rise from the dead on the third day.
Matthew 16:20-21; Mark 8:30-31; Luke 9:21-22



CHRISTMAS



By **Elder F. Enzo Busche**, Emeritus Member of the Seventy

When I was a child growing up and learning about life, I did not have the security of my father and mother telling me who I was, how I could find lasting happiness, and what would happen to me if I were to die. My parents did not have the gospel of Jesus Christ, so my childhood was very uncertain in many ways and I was often full of fear.

But in all the memories of my childhood, there is at least one of peace and joy. This memory is of Christmas. Christmastime was celebrated in the traditions and customs of my home country of Germany, and it was specifically for the children.

Four Sundays before Christmas Day, preparations for something holy and beautiful could be felt in our home. A little wreath with four candles on it was placed on the family table.

On the first Sunday, the first candle was lit. As a family we sat around the table, singing Christmas songs and preparing little gifts that each of us would give to each member of the family.

On the fourth Sunday, the last candle was lit, and expectations for the coming joyous events grew intense.

A Christmas tree did not appear in our home until 24 December. On that day, we children had to stay outside, go on errands, and play by ourselves. I still remember how time seemed not to pass at all.

We children were taught that the Christmas tree and all of its glory and beauty, along with presents and food and cookies, came from the little Christ child.

This lack of logic did not bother us children. We believed that there was a Christ-child person of a supernatural existence who cared for us in such a way that once a year He would

come in person to fulfill all of our hopes and dreams.

In preparation, we cleaned the rooms where we slept. We put on our best clothes. We had our gifts ready to give. When the sun started to set on that special day, we were invited to get ready to enter the living room.

As was the custom, the doors to the living room had been locked because we children were not to go into that room. It became a place of great mystery. Once in a while we heard some rustling of papers, and once in a while the more courageous of us tried to peek in the keyhole—only to learn that the key was in it from the inside and the door was locked.

When Mother finally decided that we were clean, orderly, dressed, our hair groomed, and had our rooms in order, we were asked to listen carefully. Suddenly we heard a little bell ringing, and our hearts beat close to explosion. This was it! This was the moment when the doors were unlocked and we were allowed to go into the living room. And there it was—a Christmas tree standing from the floor to the ceiling! We became aware of its beautiful, fresh-cut smell and that it was glowing with candles. Our father, who happened to be already inside the room when we walked in, was watching it carefully so that nothing caught on fire.

The Christmas tree had many decorations that we as children would see only at Christmastime. In the center of the tree was a wax sculpture of a little Christ child surrounded by glowing angels of gold paper and silk.

Our family gathered around the tree and sang four or five Christmas songs. Then we children were invited to find our own corner of presents, which had been covered by a blanket.



EVERY DAY



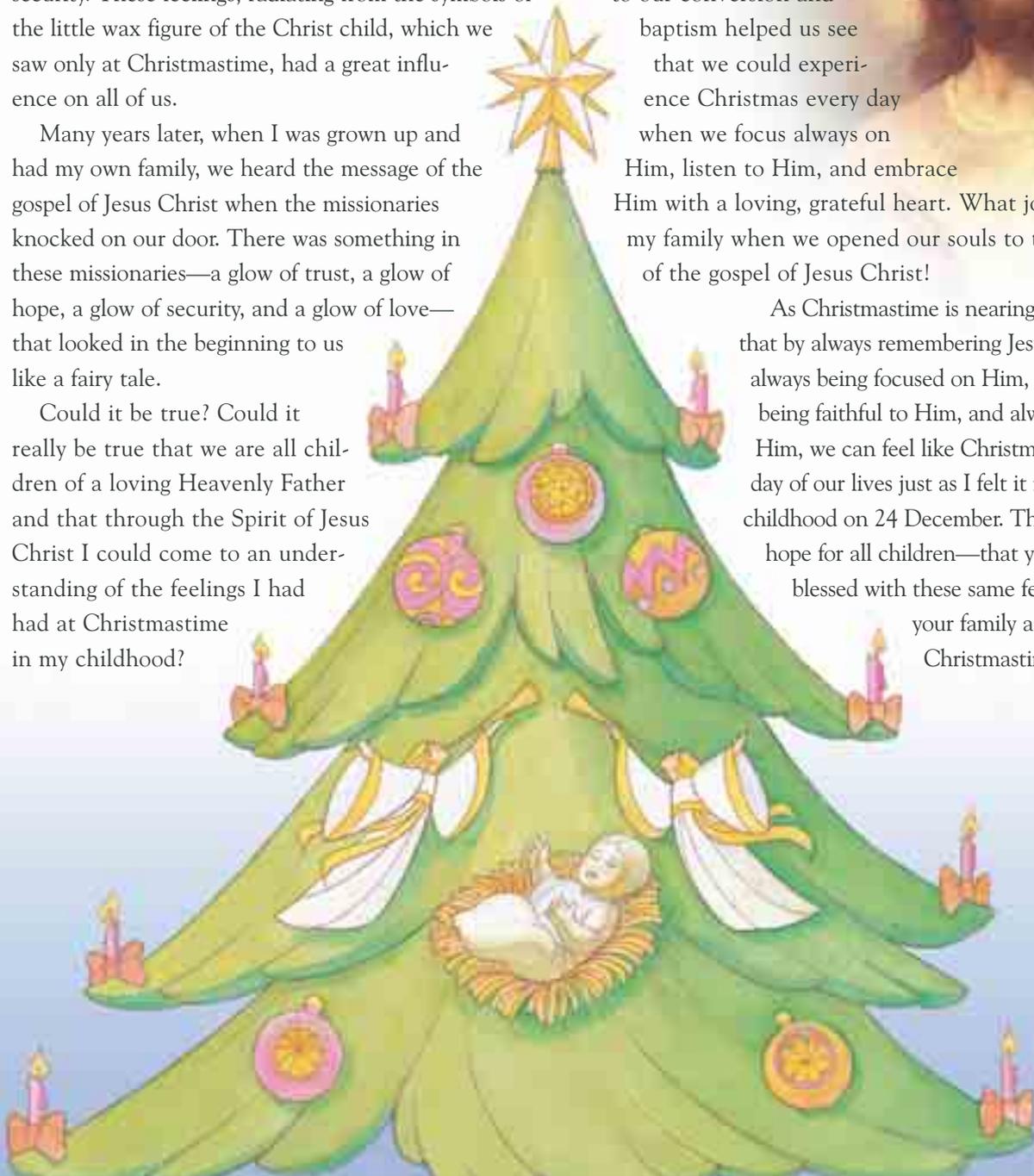
This Christmas Eve tradition developed in us powerful feelings of holiness, joy, love, gratitude, and security. These feelings, radiating from the symbols of the little wax figure of the Christ child, which we saw only at Christmastime, had a great influence on all of us.

Many years later, when I was grown up and had my own family, we heard the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ when the missionaries knocked on our door. There was something in these missionaries—a glow of trust, a glow of hope, a glow of security, and a glow of love—that looked in the beginning to us like a fairy tale.

Could it be true? Could it really be true that we are all children of a loving Heavenly Father and that through the Spirit of Jesus Christ I could come to an understanding of the feelings I had had at Christmastime in my childhood?

Because this door opened, the understanding that led to our conversion and baptism helped us see that we could experience Christmas every day when we focus always on Him, listen to Him, and embrace Him with a loving, grateful heart. What joy came to my family when we opened our souls to the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

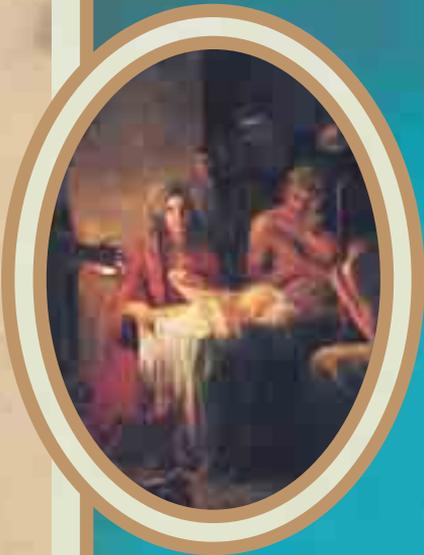
As Christmastime is nearing, I know that by always remembering Jesus Christ, always being focused on Him, always being faithful to Him, and always loving Him, we can feel like Christmas every day of our lives just as I felt it in my childhood on 24 December. This is my hope for all children—that you may be blessed with these same feelings in your family at this Christmastime. □





Joseph and Emma Dancing, by Douglas M. Fryer

Of Christmas in 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith recorded, "A large party supped at my house, and spent the evening in music, dancing, &c., in a most cheerful and friendly manner" (*History of the Church*, 6:134).



The Temple— I'm Going There Someday



"For behold, this is my work and my glory—
to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life
of man" (Moses 1:39).

DECEMBER

**When Jesus comes again,
He will come to the temple.**

"And if you are faithful, behold, I am
with you until I come—And verily,
verily, I say unto you, I come quickly"
(D&C 34:11–12).

NOVEMBER

**I am thankful for temple
blessings.**

"Let the hearts of all my people rejoice,
who have . . . built this house to my name"
(D&C 110:6).

OCTOBER

**I prepare to go to the temple
as I follow Heavenly Father's
plan for me.**

"We believe that the first principles and
ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in
the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance;
third, Baptism by immersion for the
remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of
hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost"
(Articles of Faith 1:4).

SEPTEMBER

**I will live now to be worthy to
go to the temple and serve a
mission.**

"He that hath my commandments, and
keepeth them, he it is that loveth me"
(John 14:21).

MAY

My body is a temple.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of
God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth
in you? . . . For the temple of God is holy,
which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians
3:16–17).

JUNE

**Temples are a sign of the true
Church.**

"I command you, all ye my saints, to build a
house unto me" (D&C 124:31).

JULY

**Temples bless Heavenly
Father's children throughout
the world today.**

"And many nations shall come, and say,
Come, and let us go up to the mountain of
the Lord, . . . and he will teach us of his
ways, and we will walk in his paths"
(Micah 4:2).

AUGUST

**We serve others through
temple work.**

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers
to the children, and the heart of the children
to their fathers" (Malachi 4:6).

APRIL

**The temple brings the
blessing of heaven to earth.**

"And, if you keep my commandments and
endure to the end you shall have eternal life,
which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of
God" (D&C 14:7).

MARCH

**The temple is the house of the
Lord.**

"Establish a house, even a house of
prayer, a house of fasting, a house of
faith, a house of learning, a house of
glory, a house of order, a house of God"
(D&C 88:119).

FEBRUARY

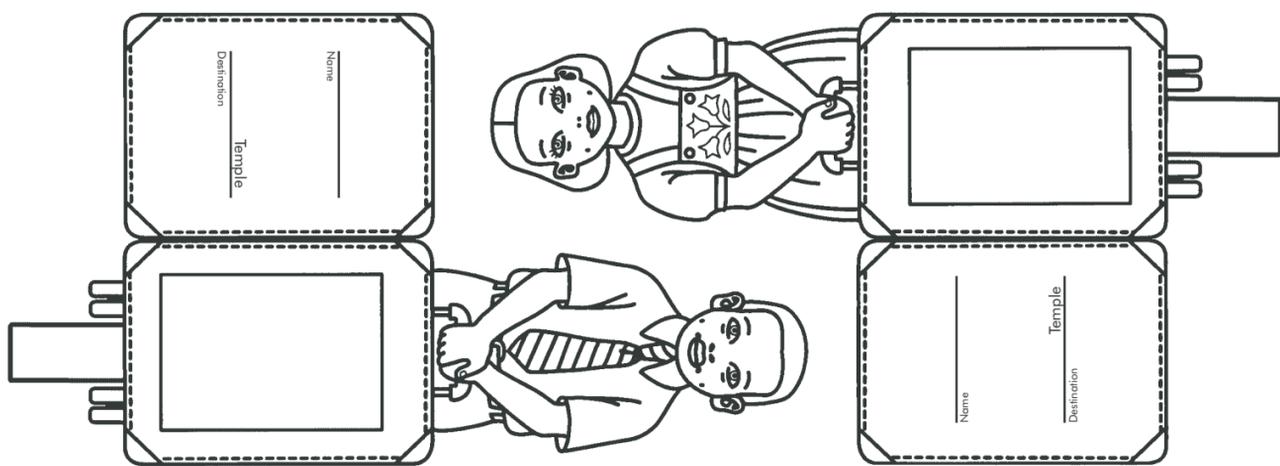
**My family can be together
forever through the blessings
of the temple.**

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

JANUARY

I love to see the temple.

"Who shall stand in his holy place? He
that hath clean hands, and a pure heart"
(Psalm 24:3–4).



January
President Gordon B. Hinckley loves to see new temples built.

February
Elijah restored the sealing keys (see D&C 110:13–16).

March
The temple is the house of the Lord.

April
Samuel received revelation in the temple (see 1 Samuel 3:1–18).

May
I'll keep my body pure.

June
Solomon built a temple (see 1 Kings 8:12–21, 55–61).

July
President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) prophesied that temples would be built throughout the earth.

August
Malachi taught that the hearts of the children would be turned to their fathers.

September
The bishop or branch president guides us to be worthy to go to the temple.

October
Knowledge and understanding of the plan of salvation were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

November
My family can be together forever.

December
The Savior will come again to His temple.



In recent years, the Church has been building more and more temples. Temples are places of love and beauty. Heavenly Father wants all of us, His children, to have the opportunity to go to His temples and receive all that is necessary to be with our families forever and to return to live with Him someday. In temples, we are taught Heavenly Father's plan for us. There we can be sealed together as eternal families, and we can perform the ordinances necessary to provide our ancestors with these same blessings.

You can begin preparing now to go to the temple by increasing your faith in Jesus Christ, learning to recognize and follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost, and keeping the commandments. As you memorize and learn about the scriptures on the poster, be prayerful. Your love for temples and your desire to live worthily to go there someday will grow.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Remove the poster from the magazine. Cut along the dotted lines above the name of each month.
2. Cut out the pictures at the side of the poster and place them in an envelope.
3. Cut out and color one of the two figures holding a suitcase. Cut out the window in the front of the suitcase. On the back of the suitcase, fill in your name and the name of the temple you are preparing to attend. Fold the suitcase in half and glue the side and the bottom edges together. Leave the top open.
4. If possible, glue the poster onto lightweight cardboard. Be careful not to put glue around the slots in the poster where the suitcase will go. If you wish, glue a picture of the temple closest to your home over the illustration of the Salt Lake Temple. Hang up the poster.
5. Starting in January 2002, at the beginning of each month, read the theme and memorize the scripture on the pathway. Pack the picture for the month in your suitcase, with the picture showing through the window. Slide the suitcase into that month's slot on the pathway to the temple. As the year progresses, your suitcase will become filled with things that will teach you more about the temple and help you prepare to go there someday.

Additional copies of the poster are available from Church distribution centers.

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