

# Liahona

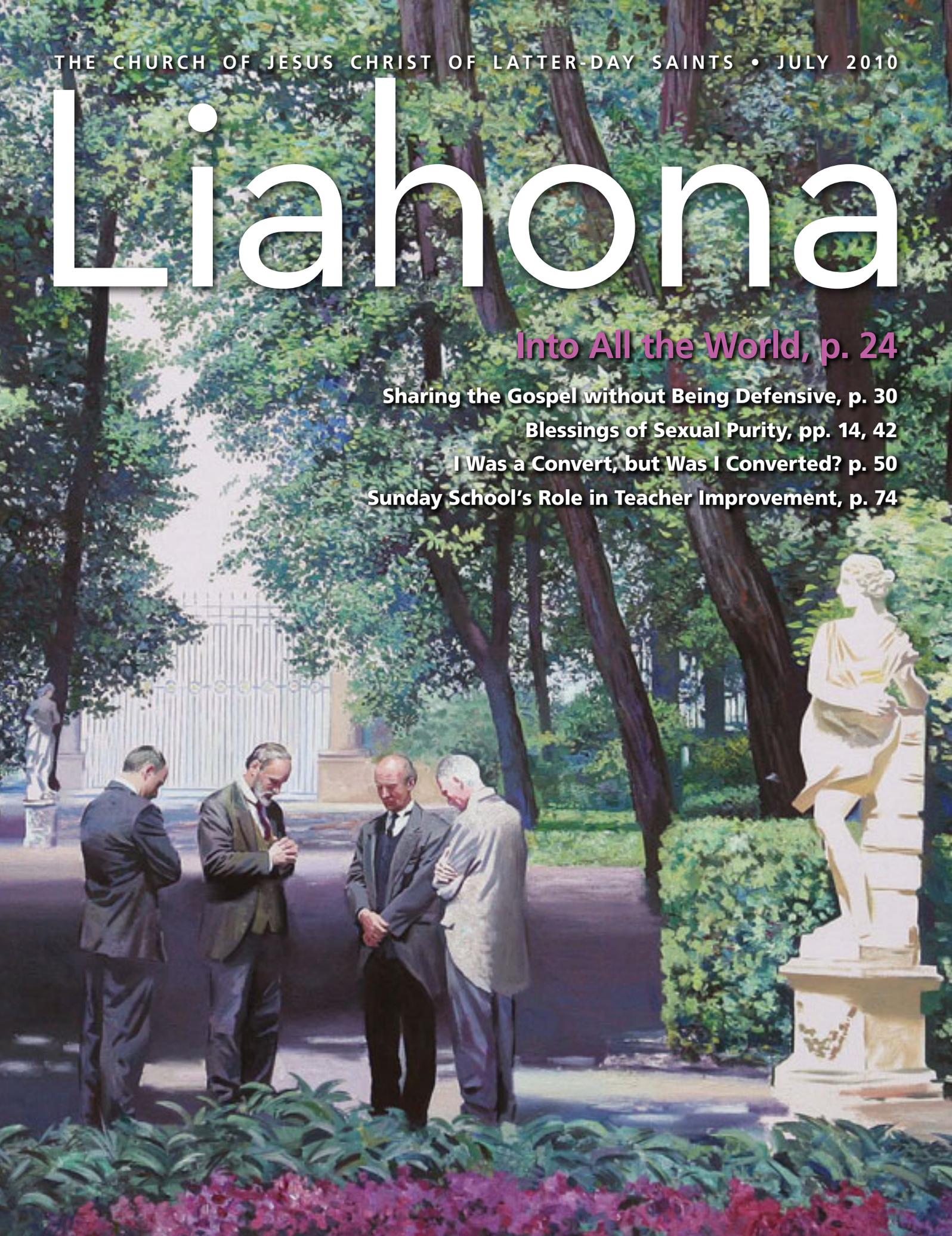
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COURTESY OF FIRST INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION

**Benbow Farm and Pond, by Frank Magleby**

*In March 1840, Elder Wilford Woodruff of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles arrived in Hanley, England, where he met recent converts William and Ann Benbow. Elder Woodruff and Brother Benbow traveled to the Herefordshire area to teach William's brother, John, and his family. The Benbow brothers then invited the neighbors to join them in hearing what the missionary had to say. As a result, 13 people were baptized in this pond on the Benbow farm.*

*They also introduced Elder Woodruff to their former congregation: over 600 people who had formed their own church, the United Brethren. All but one was eventually baptized. Later that year they deeded their Gadfield Elm chapel to the Church. See "To Fill the Earth," page 24.*



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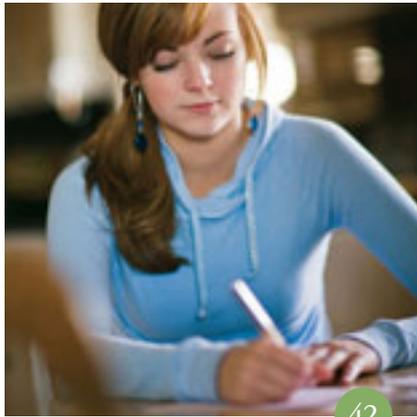
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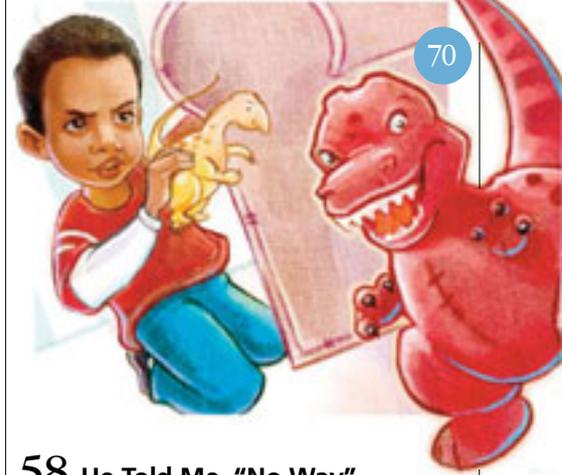
*I held on to my testimony, and it helped me stay active, especially in my youth.*

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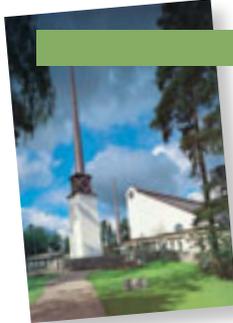
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## FOR ADULTS

"Choose the Temple" (page 18) is about **Latter-day Saints in India** who enjoy the blessings of the temple. To **view more photos** from this story, visit [www.liahona.lds.org](http://www.liahona.lds.org).

## FOR YOUNG ADULTS



In "Dear Frieda" (page 42) **young adults in Scandinavia** write letters to a young woman who is tempted to move in with her boyfriend. To **learn more** about this topic, visit [www.gospeltopics.lds.org](http://www.gospeltopics.lds.org) and **click on "Chastity."**



## FOR YOUTH



If you enjoy reading "To the Point" (page 46), you can **view more questions and answers** (in English) at [www.newera.lds.org](http://www.newera.lds.org). Click on "Got a Question?"

## FOR CHILDREN



**Print out** a pioneer coloring book at [www.liahona.lds.org](http://www.liahona.lds.org).

**Color the picture** of David and Goliath on page 72. Then read the scripture story of David and Goliath (in English) at [www.friend.lds.org](http://www.friend.lds.org).

## IN YOUR LANGUAGE



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



**By President  
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in the  
First Presidency

# Faithful Friends

One of the great tributes the Savior can give is to call us “friends.” We know that He loves with a perfect love all of His Heavenly Father’s children. Yet for those who have been faithful in their service with Him, He reserves this special title. You remember the words from the 84th section of the Doctrine and Covenants: “And again I say unto you, my friends, for from henceforth I shall call you friends, it is expedient that I give unto you this commandment, that ye become even as my friends in days when I was with them, traveling to preach the gospel in my power” (D&C 84:77).

We become His friends as we serve others for Him. He is the perfect example of the kind of friend we are to become. He wants only what is best for His Heavenly Father’s children. Their happiness is His happiness. He feels their sorrow as His own because He has paid the price of all their sins, taken upon Himself all their



***The perfect friend,  
Jesus Christ, is  
completely selfless in  
offering happiness to  
others. We become  
His friends as we  
serve others for Him.***

infirmities, borne all their troubles, and felt all their longings. His motives are pure. He seeks no recognition for Himself but to give all glory to His Heavenly Father. The perfect friend, Jesus Christ, is completely selfless in offering happiness to others.

Each of us who has made the baptismal covenant has promised to follow His example to bear one another’s burdens as He would (see Mosiah 18:8).

In the next few days you will have many opportunities to be a friend for Him. It may be as you walk on a dusty road. It may be as you sit down in a railroad car. It may be as you look for a place to sit in a Church congregation. If you are watching, you will see someone carrying a heavy burden. It may be a burden of sorrow or loneliness or resentment. It may be visible to you only if you have prayed for the Spirit to give you eyes



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN LUKE; GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BY HARRY ANDERSON

to see into hearts and have promised to lift up the hands that hang down.

The answer to your prayer may be the face of an old friend, one you have not seen in years but whose needs suddenly come into your mind and heart and feel as if they are your own. I've had that happen to me. Old friends have reached out to me across the miles and the years to offer encouragement when only God could have told them of my burden.

Living prophets of God have asked us to be faithful friends to those who come into the Church as converts and to go to the rescue of those who have drifted away. We can do it, and we will do it if we always remember the Savior. When we reach out to give succor and to lift a burden, He reaches with us. He will lead us to those in need. He will

bless us to feel what they feel. As we persist in our efforts to serve them, we will more and more be given the gift of feeling His love for them. That will give us courage and strength to reach out again and again in faithfulness.

And, in time and in eternity, we will feel the joy of being welcomed to the company of His faithful friends. I pray for that blessing for all of us and for those we will serve. ■

#### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

**F**amily members are more likely to participate meaningfully when they are asked to look for something as they search the scriptures and the words of the prophets (see *Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 55). As you read the article, ask family members to identify principles that will help them be worthy to be called the Lord's friend.

*Teaching, No Greater Call* states: "If you have Christlike love, you will be better prepared to teach the gospel. You will be inspired to help others know the Savior and follow Him" (12). Identify from the article principles that could help you be a better home teacher. Discuss these with your companion, and prayerfully consider how to be "faithful friends" to those you serve.

# CHILDREN

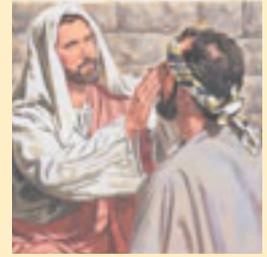


He wants what is best for us.

## Jesus Christ, Our Perfect Friend

President Eyring said that Jesus is our perfect friend. Here are some ways that Jesus shows His perfect friendship for us.

He feels sorrow when we are sad or hurt.



He is happy when we are happy.

He suffered for our sins so we can return to Heavenly Father.



### Being a Friend for Jesus

President Eyring said we can become Jesus’s friend by being a friend to others for Him.

These pictures show some of the ways we can be a friend.

Write the letter of the picture next to the sentence that describes the picture.

- \_\_\_\_\_ We can invite someone to come back to church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We can be a friend to someone who is lonely.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We can help someone who is sad.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We can always remember Jesus.



# YOUTH

## New Guy

By Matthew Okabe

I was having a hard time feeling like I fit in. My family had recently moved clear across the country. The ward we moved into had a large youth group, but this was the first time I would be the “new guy.” The worst part was that I had to go to a new school, and the thought immediately flashed through my mind, “Who am I going to sit with at lunch?” Maybe I would see someone from church, but I didn’t want to barge in on someone else’s lunch table, especially since I didn’t know if they would even want me there!

The first day at school seemed to drag on forever. Finally the lunch bell rang. As I slowly entered the lunchroom, I prayed to Heavenly Father to help me find someone I knew. I glanced around to see if I could recognize anyone. No one.

So I made my way to a table on the far side of the lunchroom and ate my lunch.

Later that day during math class, I recognized a familiar face. I had seen David at seminary that morning. He asked to see my schedule and discovered that we both had the same lunch period. “Hey, where were you at lunch today?” he said.

“I ate on the far side of the room,” I responded.

“Well, tomorrow come and sit with me at lunch,” he said.

I’m grateful for a loving Heavenly Father, who knows each of our needs and who answers each of our prayers. I’m also grateful for someone who was willing to extend a hand of friendship. Something as simple as an invitation can make all the difference.



# Strengthening Families and Homes

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

**From the Scriptures:** Genesis 18:19; Mosiah 4:15; D&C 93:40; Moses 6:55–58

## Strengthening at Every Opportunity

“Each of us is in a different family situation. Some families have a mother and father with children at home. Some couples no longer have children at home. Many members of the Church are single, and some are single parents. Others are widows or widowers living alone.

“No matter what our family looks like, each of us can work to strengthen our own families or help in strengthening others.

“[Once] I stayed in the home of my niece and her family. That evening before the children went to bed, we had a short family home evening and a scripture story. Their father told about the family of Lehi and how he taught his children that they must hold fast to the iron rod, which is the word of God. Holding fast to the iron rod would keep them safe and lead them to joy and happiness. If they should let go of the iron rod, there was danger of drowning in the river of dirty water.

“To demonstrate this to the children, their mother became the ‘iron rod’ that they must cling to, and their father played the role of the devil, trying to pull the children away from safety and happiness. The children loved the story and learned how important it is to hold fast to the iron rod. After the scripture story it was time for family prayer. . . .

“Scriptures, family home evening, and family prayer will strengthen families. We need to take every opportunity to strengthen families and support one another to stay on the right path.”<sup>1</sup>

**Barbara Thompson, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency.**

## What Can We Do?

1. What ideas for strengthening families and homes will you share with your sisters? As you ponder their individual circumstances, the Spirit can bring ideas to your mind.
2. What priorities can you change this month to better strengthen your own family and home?

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

## From Our History

From the beginning Relief Society has had a charge to strengthen families and homes. The Prophet Joseph taught sisters at an early Relief Society meeting, “When you go home, never give a cross or unkind word to your husbands, but let kindness, charity and love crown your works henceforward.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1914 President Joseph F. Smith told Relief Society sisters, “Wherever there is ignorance or at least a lack of understanding in regard to the family, . . . there this organization exists or is near at hand, and by the natural endowments and inspiration that belongs to the organization they are prepared and ready to impart instruction with reference to those important duties.”<sup>3</sup>



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT CASEY

## NOTES

1. Barbara Thompson, “His Arm Is Sufficient,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2009, 84.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 482.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 186.

# Small & Simple Things

“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).

## TEMPLE SPOTLIGHT

### Copenhagen Denmark Temple

Originally dedicated as the Priorvej chapel near the heart of Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1931, this beautiful redbrick edifice became the 118th temple of the Church when it was dedicated as such on May 23, 2004. It was described as “a new temple in an old shell.”<sup>1</sup>

The original exterior—including a façade with impressive columns flanking the wooden door—was preserved and restored while the interior went through extensive reconstruction. Murals and paintings of scenes from local landscapes exemplify the temple’s distinctively Danish and Swedish



*This meetinghouse, built by members, was dedicated in 1931 and later used as a bomb shelter during World War II. After the building was renovated, it became the 118th temple (below).*

influences. Five tall windows made of art glass run along each side of the building, which has a unique roof made of copper with a copper-clad dome.

At the temple dedication President Hinckley prayed that Heavenly Father would “touch the hearts of all who serve herein with an understanding of Thy divine purposes and of Thy glorious work in bringing ‘to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’” (Moses 1:39).<sup>2</sup>

#### NOTES

1. See “2004: Year in Review,” *Church News*, Dec. 25, 2004, 13.
2. See “Dedicatory Prayer,” [ldschurchtemples.com/copenhagen](http://ldschurchtemples.com/copenhagen).



#### HOW TO GET MORE FROM SUNDAY LESSONS

- During the week, read the scriptures, and review the class member study guides or manuals. Look at the questions at the end of each lesson, and ask yourself how they apply to your life.
- Make a goal to learn something new in each class you attend. New insights could come from the Spirit, the teacher, or other class members.
- Pray for understanding of the material.
- Go to class prepared to participate in the lesson by sharing personal insights and testimony.



## CHURCH HISTORY AROUND THE WORLD

# India

In 1849 two Mormon sailors set sail for India. In Calcutta they unofficially started preaching the gospel. In 1851 Joseph Richards arrived to begin formal missionary efforts in the country. He baptized the first members of the Church in India and organized a branch. By 1852 there were 189 members. They soon built a small chapel—the first Church building in Asia.

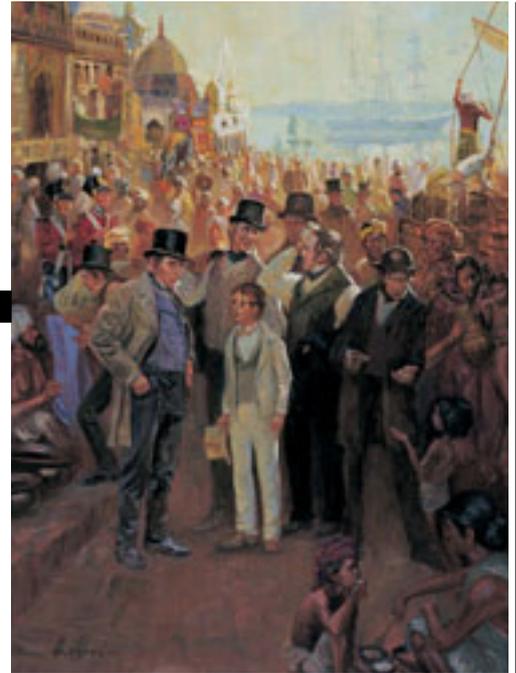
Over the next century, however, missionary efforts struggled. But in 1978 a couple missionaries began serving as Church representatives to help the Church be recognized and to strengthen members.

Since then the Book of Mormon

has been translated into 5 of India's 20 major languages: Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, and selections in Bengali. The India Bangalore Mission was created in 1993. In 2007 the India New Delhi Mission was created to cover northern India and several nearby countries.

The Church has received national recognition for its work with over 50 humanitarian groups in the country.

The Church in India	
Membership	8,200
Missions	2
Districts	6
Branches	30



*Twelve-year-old Henry McCune, a convert, greets some Latter-day Saint missionaries upon their arrival in Calcutta, India, in 1853.*

*Below: Gideon and Hansen Prabhudas from the Bangalore Second Branch. Right: A gathering of priesthood holders from the Hyderabad Fourth Branch.*





*I decided to take to heart the advice I had been given and find out what it truly meant to put my faith in the Savior.*

# HE CAN HEAL ANY WOUND

By Sylvia Erbolato Christensen

**I**t happened on December 16, 1991—our eighth wedding anniversary. On that day our first son died as the result of a baby-sitter’s actions. He was only two and a half months old.

The following months and years were clouded by sadness, anger, disappointment, and hopelessness. The personal turmoil that overcame me is indescribable. Nothing anyone said or did eased my pain.

I read many books and scriptures, but none of them satisfied my cry for answers.

I had the rare opportunity to counsel with Elder James E. Faust (1920–2007), then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, because of his friendship with my parents. (He met my mother, Flavia, and her family while serving his mission in Brazil.) I was certain Elder Faust would be able to comfort me.

I asked many questions while he patiently listened. Elder Faust acknowledged that what I had experienced was certainly painful and extremely difficult. He shared several scriptures and talked about the need to work through my grief and find total submission to the Lord’s will in order to be reunited with my son again. He said, “Sylvia, this is about you now. I realize you are worried about your son, but in reality, you should be worried about yourself and how to rebuild your life. It won’t be easy, but you can mend your heart through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.”

He then gave me a blessing that I would be able to understand the vital role Jesus

Christ plays in our existence and allow Him to be the source of strength I needed.

I left our meeting still discouraged; his counsel seemed so simple and yet so unattainable. My mother felt hopeless as well since nothing she said to me seemed to help. I recall her saying, “Please have faith and hope in our Savior, and allow time to heal your wounds.”

In my personal journey to attain joy once again, I decided to take to heart the advice I had been given and find out what it truly meant to put my faith in the Savior. Things didn’t change immediately. But day by day and year by year, with the help of prayer and a growing testimony, I came to know without a doubt that the Savior can heal our wounds.

I realize that not everyone can have the opportunity to meet with an Apostle, as I did. But everyone can—and does—have the opportunity to know the Savior and to cast his or her burdens on Him. And yes, the presence of Jesus Christ in our lives can ease *any* pain.

I know that having the Lord in our lives can bring joy to our existence. He is our friend, our teacher, and an example of enduring to the end. He truly endured all things, and He knows what we are suffering (see Alma 7:11–12). His Atonement has brought about the miracle of putting broken pieces back together in this life in preparation for the next.

I will always be grateful for Elder Faust’s and my mother’s words. They helped me realize that whatever my hardship may be, Jesus Christ is the one constant source of support and hope I have. ■

# Blessed by My Calling

By Judith Castillo Martelo

**T**he Lord has called you to serve as president of our Primary,” the branch president told me. It had been only a year since I had left the Laurel class and only two years since I had been baptized into the Church. I was incredulous.

“I don’t have the patience required to teach children,” I told him.

“Do you believe your calling came from God?” he asked. “When He calls us, He qualifies us.”<sup>1</sup>

His words filled me with confidence, and immediately I knew that the Lord must need me in Primary. I had no idea how to fulfill my new calling, but I knew He would guide me.

I desired to do the best job I could, but a few months later my mother was diagnosed with cancer. In addition, I was studying systems engineering. I found it difficult to meet all of my responsibilities at home, at the university, and in Primary. My spirits began to flag, and one Sunday at church everything came to a head, and the tears began to flow.

A fellow ward member noticed and gave me some wonderful advice: “Judith, the best way to get through trials is to lose yourself in the gospel and in service to others,” he said. “By doing so, you will see how the Lord will ease your burdens.”

As I followed his encouraging advice, my attitude changed, my faith was strengthened, and I was filled with a determination to serve the Lord. My trials continued, but I dedicated myself to my calling and looked forward to seeing the children each Sunday. They taught me something every week as they showed me their testimonies through their actions. As the

months passed, I saw how the Lord was molding my character and how I was developing gifts and talents I didn’t know I had.

The following year I left Barranquilla, Colombia, to go to Bogotá for a month with my mother because she needed chemotherapy. During that time I prayed constantly and felt close to the Lord. I decided to change my university major, and through inspiration, I learned that the Lord wanted me to devote my life to teaching children. When I returned to school, I began working on a degree in special education.

I knew that Heavenly Father had given me my calling in Primary to prepare me. As I served, I discovered my true vocation, and as I lived the gospel and lost myself in service, I felt that I was in the Lord’s arms.

The testimony I gained while serving in the Primary presidency and later in a stake Primary presidency has sustained me as a member of the Church. I have learned how to teach with love, to see with the eyes of a child, and to seek the Lord for guidance and inspiration.

Each day when I teach at a bilingual school in my city, I think about the efforts, challenges, and blessings of those years. The children who were in Primary back then are now teenagers, but their eyes still shine with love for the Savior and His gospel.

I know that when the Lord calls us, He teaches and trains us and places leaders in our path to help us live this beautiful gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

#### NOTE

1. See Thomas S. Monson, “Duty Calls,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 44.



#### AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW

“Every calling provides an opportunity to serve and to grow. The Lord organized the Church in a way that offers each member an opportunity for service, which, in turn, leads to personal spiritual growth. Whatever your calling, I urge you to see it as an opportunity not only to strengthen and bless others but also to become what Heavenly Father wants you to become.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Lift Where You Stand,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 56.

# Finding a Home in the GOSPEL

By Rozelle Hastwell Hansen

As I grew up in Perth, Australia, religion was hit-and-miss for me. I was christened a Methodist, attended denominational schools, and sporadically attended a Baptist congregation with my grandmother. Despite this spiritual inconsistency, praying seemed natural to me—thanks to my grandmother, who shared her faith and taught me to read from the Bible. I am grateful for her consistent influence in my life because, despite my worldly pursuits, I intuitively began to build a belief in Jesus Christ. As I reflect back, I realize that Heavenly Father was preparing my heart to receive the restored gospel.

One preparatory event happened when I was in an auto accident while visiting France. Moments after I was strongly prompted to fasten my seat belt, the car skidded and plummeted down a 20-foot (6-m) embankment. Because of the warning voice and because I regained use of my feet and legs while others with similar injuries are often left permanently paralyzed, I began to understand that a divine power much greater than I was in control.

Two years later, while I was back in France as an exchange student, Kayla Barth, a fellow student from California,

boldly invited me to attend church with her. Kayla's unbounded enthusiasm for the gospel fascinated me. I hung on to every word as she shared the plan of salvation. It all sounded so familiar, as if I had heard it before.

When I walked into the Angoulême chapel for the first time, it was like being wrapped in a warm blanket. I had come “home.” That same day, in the Gospel Essentials class, the missionary who was teaching shared a powerful testimony of the First Vision. As he explained how the Holy Ghost testifies to us, warmth radiated from my heart and filled my entire body. This powerful witness left an indelible impression on me, one that has carried me through trials that have tested my faith.

About a month after first stepping into the Angoulême chapel, I decided to be baptized. I was 18 and didn't need parental permission. But when I called my family in Australia with the joyous news, I was shocked and disappointed to discover they had a negative attitude about the Church and opposed my desire to be baptized.

This weighed heavily on my heart. Should I go ahead against the wishes of my family, whom I loved dearly? Or should I delay baptism until I returned to Australia, where I faced

the possibility of greater opposition?

Matthew 19:29 helped me make the decision: “And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” Was I willing to put the Savior first—even before my family? The answer was yes, and on December 16, 1989, I was baptized and confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My remaining time in France was filled with a peaceful joy I had never known before.

When I returned to Perth, my family welcomed me with open arms. But my attempts to share the gospel with them were met with stiff opposition. They even made arrangements for me to see religious “experts” who could “enlighten” me and help me to see the “error” of my chosen path. This was a great test of faith for me, and after an onslaught of anti-Mormon propaganda, I found myself questioning my decision.

Yet in the quiet chambers of my heart, I could not deny that what I had experienced in France was from God, so I sought the Lord's Spirit to strengthen me. I fasted and prayed

every Sunday for weeks, I buried myself in the scriptures, I received priesthood blessings for guidance and strength, and I attended church weekly to associate with the Saints. Instead of dwelling on what I couldn't understand or didn't know, I focused on those things that I did know: I am a child of God, Jesus is the Christ, Joseph Smith restored the Lord's Church, the Book of Mormon and the Bible are the word of God, and families are forever. With this new perspective, my testimony began to grow and strengthen again.

The last challenge I had to face that year was the issue of being married in the temple without the presence of my family. A young man I had met in France and with whom I had been corresponding came from California to visit me for three weeks. It became clear to us both that we wanted to be married, but I was faced with another difficult decision: do I get married in the temple to be sealed for time and all eternity, or do I get married elsewhere so that my family can be a part of the ceremony?

I followed the counsel of my stake president and married in the temple in February 1991. At the time, my family felt deeply hurt, but they have come to recognize the Church

as a blessing in my life. As they have watched our children grow in the gospel, they have expressed gratitude for the things that we are teaching them and for the kind of people they are becoming.

Recently one of my children expressed gratitude for the decision I made to accept the gospel and raise a family unto the Lord. Her sincerity moved me to tears because I realized that the decision to live the gospel had blessed not only my life but hers.

I am eternally grateful to Heavenly Father for the miracles and the influence of earthly angels who led me home to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Twenty years later I realize that all the trials, heartache, and risk of offending my family were worth it. The gospel is everything to me. It is true. It is my home. ■

*When I walked into the Angoulême chapel for the first time, it was like being wrapped in a warm blanket. I had come "home."*



# SEXUAL PURITY BLESSES OUR LIVES

**C**hastity means being morally clean in our thoughts, words, and actions. This sexual purity is “pleasing unto God.”<sup>1</sup> Our Heavenly Father has given us the sacred powers of procreation for the purpose of bringing forth children and for the expression of love within marriage between a man and a woman. He has also given us the law of chastity to protect us from the damage that comes from sharing physical intimacies outside of marriage.

Heavenly Father has set clear boundaries for chastity. He commands us not to have any sexual relations before we are married. After we are married, we are commanded to be completely faithful to our spouse.<sup>2</sup> If we break the law of chastity, we have committed a grievous sin.<sup>3</sup> The prophet Alma taught that sexual sins are more serious than any other sins except murder or denying the Holy Ghost.<sup>4</sup>

Satan makes a mockery of chastity

and of the sanctity of marriage when he tempts us to believe that sexual intimacy outside of marriage is acceptable as long as a man and a woman are in love. This is not true. It is a serious sin that defiles the power God has given us to create life.<sup>5</sup>

Our Father in Heaven has commanded all of us to live the law of chastity. The blessings for obeying this commandment and the consequences for breaking it are the same for each of us, regardless of our impulses, desires, or sexual temptations.

If we have committed sexual sins, the Lord will forgive us if we truly repent.<sup>6</sup> The despair of sin can be replaced with the sweet peace of forgiveness.<sup>7</sup>

As we keep ourselves sexually pure, we will become more sensitive to the Holy Ghost’s guidance and receive strength, comfort, and protection.<sup>8</sup>



*1. You can decide now to be chaste and never waver. Some may feel that they can commit sexual sins with the idea that they will simply repent later. This attitude shows irreverence for the Lord’s commandments and a lack of understanding of repentance and righteousness.<sup>9</sup>*

**“**Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”  
(1 Corinthians 6:19–20).



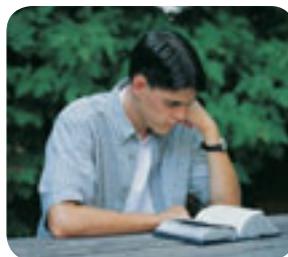
2. Through modesty in dress and appearance, you show God that you know your body is a sacred creation from Him. Modesty promotes chastity.<sup>10</sup>



3. Pornography is addictive and destructive. It will rob you of your self-respect and self-control and often leads to more serious sexual sins.<sup>11</sup>



4. If you find yourself struggling with sexual temptations, including feelings of same-gender attraction, you can choose to resist those temptations. The Lord will “make a way to escape” so that you will “be able to bear it.”<sup>12</sup>



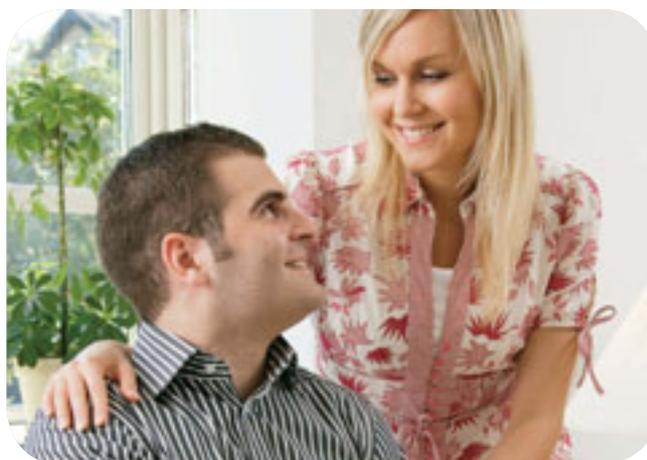
5. If you have committed sexual transgressions, speak with your bishop or branch president. He will help you through the process of repentance.<sup>13</sup>



6. If you have been a victim of rape, incest, abuse, or other sexual crimes, you are not guilty of sin. Your bishop or branch president can help guide you through the process of emotional healing.<sup>14</sup>



7. If single and dating, treat your date with respect, plan constructive activities, and refrain from conversations or activities that arouse sexual feelings.



8. If married, be faithful to your spouse in thought, word, and action.<sup>15</sup> Flirting with others is not appropriate. Stay away from situations where temptation may develop.<sup>16</sup> ■

*“We declare that God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.”<sup>17</sup>*

#### NOTES

1. Jacob 2:7.
2. See D&C 42:22.
3. See Exodus 20:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:3.
4. See Alma 39:5.
5. See 1 Corinthians 7:2–5.
6. See Isaiah 1:18.
7. See D&C 58:42–43.
8. For more information, see *For the Strength of Youth* (2001), 26–28; *Gospel Principles* (2009), 225–32; and *True to the Faith* (2004), “Chastity,” 29–33.
9. See Alma 42:30.
10. See *True to the Faith*, “Modesty,” 107.
11. See Alma 39:9; 3 Nephi 12:28–30; D&C 42:23; 121:45.
12. 1 Corinthians 10:13; see also Genesis 39:1–12.
13. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 38, 41–42, 44; see Mosiah 26:29.
14. See *True to the Faith*, “Abuse,” 7.
15. See Ephesians 5:28; D&C 42:22–23.
16. See 1 Thessalonians 5:22.
17. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.

# What Did the PIONEERS BRING?



*President Stephen L Richards was born on June 18, 1879, in Mendon, Utah. He was called as an Apostle in 1917 and as First Counselor in the First Presidency in 1951. The following is an excerpt of an address he delivered at the April 1947 general conference, 100 years after the pioneers' arrival in the Salt Lake Valley.*

**By President Stephen L Richards (1879–1959)**

First Counselor in the First Presidency

To understand the pioneers and their accomplishments, we must examine their motives. . . . They came for freedom and peace, as others have done. They came to make homes for themselves, as others have done. They came to worship God and practice their religion to the satisfaction of their consciences, as others have done; but here is one thing they came for which, so far as I know, has no counterpart in any other pioneer movement: they

came with the avowed purpose of establishing a society so that they would be able to take back to the civilization from which they had fled, yes, even to their persecutors, the principles of life and conduct which were the source of their own inspiration, cohesion, success, and happiness. . . .

What then did the pioneers bring? They brought industry in a measure that has seldom been equaled. They taught and practiced the gospel of work as

the foundation for success and happiness. . . .

They brought education and a love for the artistic and beautiful. . . .

They brought with them a high order of loyalty and a great capacity for firm devotion to the cause they espoused. . . .

I come now to the greatest thing of all which the pioneers brought with them, and that I characterize as wisdom, wisdom about the important things in life. . . .

First, consider the body of man. . . . The pioneers brought a new concept of the body which invested it with sacred significance. They taught that the body is the earthly tabernacle wherein the spirit of man, the literal child of God, is housed and that the body cannot be defiled or polluted or otherwise abused by taking into it poisons and deleterious substances without offering affront to God, whose Spirit dwells therein. . . . They brought with them a code of health rules. . . .

Second—character or personality. . . . [The pioneers] taught not only that man is the child of God, of the most noble lineage but that he is destined also, if he lives for it, to be associated with his Heavenly Father in carrying forth His eternal works in all time to come. . . .

Next—the family. . . . What was the wisdom the pioneers brought about the family? Why, they invested it with the noblest and most exalted attributes which have ever come to it in all the history of the world. They taught that it is not only

***The greatest thing of all which the pioneers brought with them [was] wisdom.***

a basic unit for happy life and progress here on this earth but that it constitutes also the very foundation of our hope for supreme exaltation in the celestial kingdom of our God. Indeed, the heaven we seek is little more than the projection of our homes into eternity. How

at variance with these lofty concepts of home and family are the tragic evils in domestic life today—divorce, broken homes, neglected, wayward children more to be pitied than abused because of the disintegration of family life.

. . . Oh, if the wisdom which these humble pioneers brought could only find application in the families of the world, what a boon it would be to the comfort and the happiness and the progress of humanity.

Lastly, . . . brotherhood. They taught, in the most realistic way, the concept of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples belonging to the family of God. . . . They believed . . . that the only substantial hope for universal

peace lay in the extension of this doctrine of brotherhood throughout the world. . . .

. . . These wise contributions of which I speak and many more were but principles of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which had been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. . . . It was because of the pioneers' implicit faith in this transcendent message of life and truth that they established the Lord's house in "the top of the mountains" [Isaiah 2:2]. It was a great thing to set up a commonwealth and transform a desert into cities, towns, and villages with the homes, schools, and facilities we now enjoy. It was a vastly greater accomplishment to establish the kingdom of God and send forth from Zion that salutary message of hope and faith and divine, eternal wisdom to all mankind. This was the real heritage our noble pioneers brought with them and left to us and our friends. . . . It is the most precious gift in life. God help us to prize it, to live it, and to spread it. ■

**Punctuation, spelling, and capitalization modernized.**



# Choose the Temple

*That's the advice from an increasing number of Latter-day Saints in India, who know that blessings come from going to the house of the Lord.*

**By Richard M. Romney**  
Church Magazines



**Y**ou notice it most when you look in their eyes. There is joy there, hope and belief, an optimism that ignites a smile when you say, “Tell me how you feel about the temple.”

For Latter-day Saints in India, temple marriage brings a depth of understanding, a sense of fulfillment, and a commitment to keep covenants forever as they cherish the promises of eternity. Although the nearest temple is thousands of miles away in Hong Kong, increasing numbers are finding their way to the house of the Lord. Guided by prayer, faith, and the Spirit, they are choosing to be sealed in the temple. Here are some of their thoughts and stories.

## **Finding Strength**

William Prabhudas of the Bangalore Second Branch works in a courthouse. He knows how heart wrenching it can be to see marriages torn apart. That’s one of the reasons he and his wife were so eager to find strength in the temple.

“Like most couples, sometimes we have small issues to work out,” he says. “But working them out is so much easier when we both have an eternal perspective.”

His wife, Sheela, says that going to the temple has helped not only her and her husband, but it

*“We were sealed as a family. It was a good feeling. We forgot the outside world, and it was like heaven for us. We talk about it all the time.”*

**Sheela Prabhudas**



has also helped their children: Celesta, age 13, and Doris, 7. “We were sealed as a family,” Sheela says. “It was a good feeling. We forgot the outside world, and it was like heaven for us. We talk about it all the time.”

“What a blessing to be sealed to my wife,” Brother Prabhudas says. “And then they brought our daughters in, dressed in white, to join us. It reminded me of cleanliness—cleanliness in our lives and in our homes. Cleanliness and the temple go hand in hand. When we are clean, the Lord promises—in His house of promises—to bless us.”

Celesta recalls that her family worked, planned, and saved for two years to be able to travel to the temple. But most of all, she remembers being in the temple with her parents and that her aunt and uncle and cousins

***Above: The Prabhudas family traveled to the Hong Kong China Temple (left) to be sealed. It is the temple nearest to India.***

were also there to see her family sealed. “Afterward, we all held hands together. We looked in the mirrors and thought about eternity,” she recalls. “It was beautiful. I knew I wanted to belong to my family forever.”

### **Two Times Two Together**

Over the years the Thomas brothers of the Hyderabad Fourth Branch have done a lot to set good examples for each other. As teenagers, they became members of the Church at the same time. They worked together to encourage their mother until she also joined the Church. Both brothers served in the India Bangalore Mission. Both helped comfort their mother when their father passed away. And both recently married.

Now Rejjie and his wife, Metilda, have been sealed in

the temple, and Rennie and his wife, Keerthi, following their good example, soon will be.

“From the time I joined the Church, it has been a process of changing and improving, learning the plan of salvation and following it,” Rejjie says. “But the actual goal is to go back and live with Heavenly Father, our loving Father, who wants us to come back to Him so much that He gave us a Savior, His Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from sin and everlasting death. I’m grateful that the gospel of Jesus Christ changed me and my family, and going to the temple is the culmination of all of that.”

Rejjie explains that one of the challenges he and Metilda faced in getting their parents’ approval for marriage was that they are from different regions and speak different dialects. “But in the

temple there are no differences,” he says, “and that was a great reminder for us.” He feels the future of India belongs to the young. “We are the ones who are going to make a difference,” he says, looking at Metilda.

“That’s the kind of vision we both have. We need to conduct family home evenings, have family scripture study and family prayer, and stay focused on the temple. That is our future.”

Metilda agrees: “When I ask him how he can be so understanding and loving, he says it is because the gospel makes him better. On his mission he saw the example of the mission president treating his wife with respect and love. And in the temple we see that same pattern. As we show that same



*“The gospel of Jesus Christ changed me and my family, and going to the temple is the culmination of all of that.”*

**Rejje Thomas**

***Above, from left: Rejje, Metilda, Keerthi, and Rennie Thomas. Below: Rennie and Keerthi enjoy Sunday School each week.***

was investigating the Church. “I wanted to play cricket instead, but the seminary teacher said, ‘You need to put God first,’ so I did. Even though I was shy, I came and sat on the back row.” On the front row he saw Keerthi, who at that time had been a member for just six months. Though they became friends, it wasn’t until Rennie returned from his mission that they started dating. Keerthi remembers how, when they finally decided to get married, they went to their

and Keerthi’s father was very impressed with their wedding. Once he saw their good example, he agreed to our marriage, and in that way we honored our parents and also got our marriage properly arranged.”

Rennie says his experience with Keerthi is a good example of how the understanding of marriage in the Church is becoming more widespread. “When I first joined the Church, it was a big thing if a member married a member,” he says. “And if they got to the temple, that was even bigger. But now we understand how to get married within the Church. We make sure we’re ready for the temple. The temple is the key.”

### **The President’s Example**

Enter the apartment of Venkat and Lynda Dunna of the Hyderabad Fourth Branch, and there are plenty of clues that these newlyweds are crazy about each other. A handmade birthday banner from him to her is taped to the wall. An album with their wedding photos



pattern in our lives and someday to our children, that influence will strengthen the Church in India.”

Rennie talks about how he met his future bride while attending seminary when he

parents to convince them the choice was right.

“We learned in seminary that we should honor our parents, and we remembered that,” she says.

Rennie adds, “They counseled us that we should

finish our education and that I should wait for my brother to be married first. So we worked and waited, and the best part was that, just as we finished our education, my brother got married,

sits on the table near the sofa. As they talk, he puts his arm around her, and she smiles so often it's contagious.

They describe how they met through Church-sponsored activities and how happy

want to say no, but they did want us to wait many months, maybe a year," recalls Venkat.

"What helped us was the Spirit," he continues. "I felt prompted to tell everyone that Lynda and I were both working,



*"We just kept thinking, 'The Lord's going to help us,' and He did."*

**Venkat Dunna**

Lynda's mother was when they got engaged because she knew Venkat from church. But there was a problem. Venkat had an older brother who was single, and in India some still hold to the tradition that older siblings should be married before younger siblings. His parents, who are friendly to the Church but are not members, were also building a house and didn't want a wedding until the house was finished. "My parents didn't

so we would help take care of everything but that it was important to get married as soon as possible and that it was important to start by going to the temple. We just kept thinking, 'The Lord's going to help us,' and He did."

A new Latter-day Saint chapel was opened just in time for them to have their wedding and reception there, and then they left immediately to be sealed in the Hong Kong China Temple.

***Above: Venkat and Lynda Dunna remember traveling to the temple in a group of seven. The same day they were sealed, Lynda was also sealed to her deceased father.***

"Seven of us traveled to the temple together," Lynda says. "On the same day Venkat and I were sealed, my mother, my sister, and I were able to be sealed to my deceased father. It was a wonderful day in every way."

Venkat, who is now serving as branch president, says one of his greatest desires is to see a temple in India some day. "That will be a great blessing," he says. "It will help us to build Zion where we are."

*“We were brought together by our families and friends but also by the Spirit. We hope the Spirit will always guide our marriage.”*

**Barat Powell**

### **A Guided Marriage**

The story of Barat and Ishla Powell of the Chennai Second Branch actually begins with Barat’s parents, Sathiadhas Powell and Suriya Kumari, who were married in 1981 and joined the Church in 1991. In 1993 Sathiadhas was called as branch president. After years of saving and preparing and before the Hong Kong Temple was dedicated, they traveled to the Manila Philippines Temple to be sealed.

As their family grew and matured in the gospel, they taught their two sons about the importance of going to the temple. (Their youngest son is currently serving a mission.) The Powells were thrilled that when their oldest son, Barat, got engaged, temple marriage was immediately part of the plan. Ishla, his fiancée, was a new member of the Church. “From the first day I met with the missionaries, I knew the gospel was true, and I loved it,” she says. She grew close to the current branch president’s family, the Isaacs,

***Right: The story of Barat and Ishla actually begins with Barat’s parents (next page). “We are teaching the younger generation the importance of the temple,” says Barat’s father, Sathiadhas.***



who had been introduced to the Church by the Powells.

At the time of her baptism, Barat had four months remaining on his mission. “The Isaacs kept saying he would be the right match for me, but I wanted to postpone marriage and serve a mission myself,” Ishla says. Even though the branch and mission presidents approved her missionary application, Ishla explains, “Suddenly and unexpectedly my mind was

completely changed. I wanted to pray for marriage.”

When he returned from his mission, Barat was surprised when several people told him that Ishla would be right for him. A short time later they met briefly at the wedding of President Isaac’s daughter but never talked much. Indian society is quite formal about men and women getting acquainted, and both Barat and Ishla wanted to behave appropriately.



Three weeks later Ishla was praying and wondering what to do, and so was Barat. “The Lord showed me through so many ways that Barat was the right one,” Ishla says. “But I was very reserved. I prayed, ‘Lord, if this is the way, then show me how I can speak to him.’”

Barat says, “I had talked to several people about her, and they all had nothing but good to say. Suddenly I thought, ‘I need to talk to her right now,’ but I didn’t know how. I called President Isaac’s sister and asked if she thought it was all right to call.”

Ishla continues, “As I was praying, the branch president’s sister telephoned and said, ‘Barat wants to talk to you. Can I give him your number?’” Half an hour later they were talking. Barat says, “It was as if we had known each other for years.”

Ishla had learned about temple marriage at institute and knew she wouldn’t settle for anything less. Barat felt the same way. But they would have to save money to travel to the temple, and it meant many friends and family members, including Barat’s mother and father, wouldn’t have enough money to travel with them.

“It’s a long way to go, and traveling is very expensive, but we all agreed they

should go,” Sathiadhas recalls. “We told them we would celebrate with them at the legal ceremony before they left, and we asked them to take lots of pictures after they were sealed. Then we would celebrate again when they returned.

“We are teaching the younger generation the importance of the temple,” Sathiadhas explains. “We encourage all people to go to the temple, and we wanted our children to go there too.” He says he is particularly pleased with the way Barat and Ishla respected their parents, the customs of their people, and their own agency.

“In India people refer to ‘arranged marriages’ and ‘love marriages,’” Barat says. “We feel we have both.” In fact, Barat and Ishla prefer to call their marriage a “guided marriage.” “We were brought together by our families and friends but also by the Spirit,” he says. “We hope the Spirit will always guide our marriage.” ■



#### LOCAL CULTURE AND GOSPEL CULTURE

“The purpose of the gospel is to transform common creatures into celestial citizens, and that requires change. . . .

“The traditions or culture or way of life of a people inevitably include some practices that must be changed by those who wish to qualify for God’s choicest blessings. . . .

“There is a unique gospel culture, a set of values and expectations and practices common to all members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This gospel way of life comes from the plan of salvation, the commandments of God, and the teachings of the living prophets. It is given expression in the way we raise our families and live our individual lives.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Repentance and Change,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 37, 39.

**Below:** President Heber J. Grant dedicated the Cardston Alberta Temple on August 26, 1923—the first temple to be dedicated outside the United States. **Right:** The silver trowel used by Elder David O. McKay in laying the temple cornerstone in 1915.



# To Fill the Earth



**Left:** Samuel H. Smith, brother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, was among the first missionaries to preach the gospel in the United States. **Above:** Early missionaries to England found great success in spreading the gospel, as did missionaries to Scandinavian and other European countries.

President Thomas S. Monson has called upon Latter-day Saints to continue in our faith and prayers that “areas where our influence is limited and where we are not allowed to share the gospel” will be opened (see sidebar on page 25). He was present at the landmark meeting in 1974 when President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) called upon Church leaders to lengthen their strides and enlarge their vision in magnifying the missionary program worldwide and “in finding the keys that have apparently been lost to many nations wherein we can open those worlds.”<sup>1</sup>

President Monson promises that miracles can occur as we continue in our faith and prayers. He knows from experience that this is true. In the years following President Kimball’s plea, he saw a dramatic increase in the number of missionaries and convert baptisms.<sup>2</sup> He witnessed the opening of many areas as Latter-day Saints obeyed President Kimball’s request to pray that the nations of the world would open their doors to the preaching of the gospel. President Monson was instrumental in the construction of the Freiberg Germany Temple. He witnessed the opening of many countries



**Left and above:** The Gadfield Elm chapel in Malvern, England, is the first and oldest Latter-day Saint chapel. In 1840 Elder Wilford Woodruff converted the 600 members of the United Brethren who met here. They donated their chapel to the Church, and it became the focal point of missionary work in the area. Later they sold it to help pay for local members to gather to Zion.



*"I would ask that your faith and prayers continue to be offered in behalf of those areas where our influence is limited and where we are not allowed to share the gospel freely at this time. Miracles can occur as we do so."*

President Thomas S. Monson, "Welcome to Conference," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 6.



*The ship Ellen Maria prepares to sail from Liverpool, England, for America on February 1, 1851. At the time, over 50,000 Latter-day Saints lived in the*

*British Isles. Emigration was possible as the result of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, which loaned money to impoverished Latter-day Saints on the promise*

*they would repay the loan so others could emigrate. Thousands of converts emigrated to join the Saints in America.*



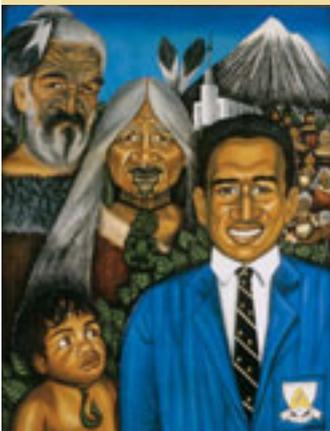
to the gospel after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.<sup>3</sup>

He and all latter-day prophets since the Restoration of the gospel know that these words written by the Prophet Joseph Smith in March 1842 are true: “The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every



LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH OF 1882 MEETINGHOUSE COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM; ABOVE: *THE PROMISE*, BY AL ROUNDS; BELOW LEFT: *BUILDING NOW FOR ETERNITY*, BY SYLVIA HUEGE DE SERVILLE, FOURTH INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION; BELOW: *LEHI'S DREAM*, BY ARACELI ANDRADE, SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION

Many “isles of the sea” were among places where the gospel began to take root in the 19th century. **Far left:** The site of this 1882 meetinghouse in Hawaii became the site of the Laie Hawaii Temple, which was finished in 1919 (left). **Below left:** After missionaries went to New Zealand in 1854, the gospel blossomed. **Below:** This replica of Stela 5—one of 80 monuments in Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico—is known as the *Tree-of-Life Stone*. Some have suggested that it might depict Lehi’s dream (see 1 Nephi 8).



**Right:** In the 1960s many in Nigeria and Ghana gained testimonies by reading Church literature. When missionaries arrived in 1978, hundreds of Africans were ready to be baptized. Within a year, some 1,700 people had been baptized and confirmed.



## I BELIEVED

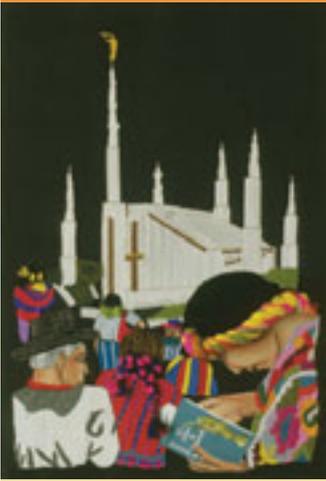
In 1964 Joseph William Billy Johnson read the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon and found them to be the true word of God. Soon he was constrained by the Spirit to go from door-to-door sharing the message. Eventually he built up 10 congregations with over 1,000 believers. In June 1978 he had a strong impression to listen to the British Broadcasting Corporation on the radio. He recalled, "I heard the message of President Spencer W. Kimball that all worthy males in the world could receive the priesthood. I burst into tears of joy."

See E. Dale LeBaron, "Steadfast African Pioneer," *Ensign*, Dec. 1999, 45.



TOP: PHOTOGRAPH OF NIGERIAN BAPTISMS IN 1978 BY JANATH CANNON;  
 ABOVE: ORDINATION IN SIERRA LEONE BY LATTER-DAY SAINTS, BY EMILE WILSON;  
 RIGHT: BAPTISM IN SIERRA LEONE, BY EMILE WILSON





**Left:** The colors and textures of this embroidery capture the energy of the tremendous growth of the Church in Mexico, Central America, and South America over the past 50 years. These members love the Book of Mormon and are drawn to the temple, represented here by the Guatemala

City Guatemala Temple. **Below:** Today more than 1,500 members live in Poland, a country profoundly affected by World War II. Their testimonies are rooted in the same beliefs as are all Latter-day Saints'—such as the First Vision (depicted below by a Polish artist).

country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.”<sup>4</sup>

Let us unite our faith and prayers so that areas now closed will open and miracles will occur as we accept the challenge from President Monson. ■

**NOTES**

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 3.
2. See “Status Report on Missionary Work: A Conversation with Elder Thomas S. Monson, Chairman of the Missionary Committee of the Council of the Twelve,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1977, 8.
3. See Garold and Norma Davis, “Behind the Wall: The Church in Eastern Germany,” *Tambuli*, Feb. 1992, 12; *Ensign*, Apr. 1991, 22.
4. *History of the Church*, 4:540.
5. “President Hinckley Visits Asian Saints, Dedicates Hong Kong Temple,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1996, 74.



TOP LEFT: THE LAMANTIES BLOSSOM LIKE THE ROSE IN THE DESERT, BY MARIA GLADIS BARRIENTOS DE MONTEROSO, THIRD INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION; LEFT: JOSEPH SMITH'S FIRST VISION, BY JANUZA MOSTYL, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM; TOP RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH OF PRESIDENT HINCKLEY BY GERRY JAVANI; TOP CENTER: UNFADING MISSIONARIES, BY JUEJING CHEN, FOURTH INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION, MAY NOT BE COPIED; TOP FAR RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH OF MISSIONARIES IN JAPAN COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM; RIGHT: DEDICATION OF RUSSIA, BY EMIN ZUFGAROV



## JAPAN: THE CHURCH GROWS IN ASIA

At a fireside in Tokyo, Japan, in 1996, President Gordon B. Hinckley told members about the visit of Elder Heber J. Grant, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, to Japan in 1901: “He and three other missionaries . . . went to a quiet and secluded place and dedicated Japan for the preaching of the gospel.”

After noting the growth of the Church in Japan (home to more than 123,000 members today), President Hinckley said, “If President Grant were here now, he would weep with gratitude.”<sup>5</sup>



**Top:** Asians celebrated the 1996 visit of President Gordon B. Hinckley and his wife, Marjorie. **Top center:** Asian and Latter-day Saint images surround these Taiwanese members,

showing how the gospel can work in any culture. **Top right:** Elder Heber J. Grant (center), with missionaries, dedicated Japan for missionary work at this site on September 1, 1901.

**Above:** Elder Francis M. Lyman, an Apostle, gathered with other Church leaders in August 1903 in St. Petersburg, Russia, to dedicate Russia for the preaching of the gospel.



**By Elder  
M. Russell Ballard**  
Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles



# Sharing the Gospel with Confidence

*We don't have to defend or justify anything when we base our position on the teachings of the Son of God and do our best to keep His commandments.*

**W**e are in a titanic struggle. From the dawn of mankind's history, it has always been so. Good and evil have always been with us and so has the right to choose between them. I want to share some thoughts about standing firm for the truth.

Recently I saw some research about how other people see members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I have long been interested in this subject because I have had a lot to do with missionary work in my Church assignments. Knowing how people see us is an important part of understanding how best to explain ourselves. This particular piece of research made an interesting observation. It suggested that members of the Church sometimes appear very defensive to those who are not members of the Church. One respondent went as far as to say that when Mormons are explaining their beliefs, they couch their

language in terms that suggest they are expecting criticism.

This was not the first time I had heard that kind of observation. But the more I have thought about it, the more I understand how easy it is, if we are not careful, to convey a sense of defensiveness in our communication with others.

I think I understand something of the reasons. From the time Joseph Smith walked out of the Sacred Grove in the spring of 1820, there have been those who have reacted negatively, even with hostility, to our message. Joseph tells us in his own words that the first time he attempted to share what he had seen with someone outside the family, it wasn't a pleasant experience. The Protestant minister with whom he shared his message told him that it "was all of the devil" and "that there were no such things as visions or revelations" anymore (Joseph Smith—History 1:21).

If Joseph thought that was bad, it was because he hadn't yet realized the relentless power of the adversary. The more the Church grew, the more it seemed to attract hostility. The small band of faithful Saints was driven from one place to another. It must have seemed to Joseph that it could not get much worse than the governor of Missouri issuing an extermination order against members of the Church, followed by the Prophet's and others' terrible suffering at Liberty Jail. Of course, it *did* get worse, and Joseph and Hyrum paid for their work, testimonies, and faith with their lives. That was the final act that launched the great trek west, led by Brigham Young, across the American wilderness to a place of refuge among the Rocky Mountains of the United States.

Latter-day Saint stories of hardship and sacrifice are now an indelible part of history. Even converts to the Church who had no ancestors who survived those times embrace the people and events of our early history as part of their own heritage. The stories both inspire and motivate us, as

they should, and I hope and pray that in our relative comfort we will never forget those sturdy and faithful Latter-day Saints and the lessons we can learn from them.

And yet this isn't 1830, and there aren't just six of us anymore. Could part of the defensiveness that others sometimes see in us suggest that we still expect to be treated as a disliked minority, forced to flee to the West? In our interactions with others, are we expecting always to have to defend ourselves? If so, I think we need to make a course correction. Constantly anticipating criticism or objections can lead to an unhealthy self-consciousness and a defensive posture that doesn't resonate well with others. It is inconsistent with where we are today as a church and as a great body of followers of Jesus Christ.

### Look to the Savior's Example

As in all things, we can look to the Savior as our exemplar. He faced tremendous hostility from the outset of His ministry. When He first preached in the synagogues at

Nazareth, some wanted to throw Him off a cliff (see Luke 4:28–29). Yet He did not allow Himself to be intimidated. He knew that for the most part He would be misunderstood. Yet He was fearless in declaring His gospel, using such phrases as “Ye have heard that it was said . . . , but I say unto you . . .” (Matthew 5:21–22).

He knew what He wanted to say, and He said it without apology. As the scriptures say, “He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7:29).

If we want to be respected today for who we are, then we need to act confidently—secure in the knowledge of who we are and what we stand for and not as if we



had to apologize for our beliefs. That doesn't mean we should be arrogant or overbearing. Respect for others' views should always be a basic principle for us—it's built right into the Articles of Faith (see Articles of Faith 1:11). But when we act as if we are a persecuted minority or as if we expect to be misunderstood or criticized, people will sense it and respond accordingly.

I invite returned missionaries to be especially sensitive to this.

You spent two years knocking on doors and dealing with every conceivable question and objection. It is easy in your conversations to think you are still knocking on doors. You're not. If you are in a position to share what you

believe, there's no need to tread so carefully that you look like you are being evasive or anticipating criticism. The Apostle Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 1:16), and neither should any of us be. I look forward and greatly appreciate every opportunity I have to share my testimony of the marvelous message of the Restoration. And I cannot ever remember offending anyone in the process.

One of the reasons that this subject is relevant today is because the Church is getting stronger. In the United States, we are now the fourth largest church. Latter-day Saints are everywhere—in communities from coast to coast and from north to south. While our numbers may be more concentrated in the West, it is becoming more and

more common for people in the country to know a Latter-day Saint personally. In addition, many members of the Church have achieved social prominence. A recent *Time* magazine article about the Church noted this fact and ran several photographs of prominent Latter-day Saints.<sup>1</sup>

This prominence alone ensures that the Church is going to be talked about more and more and that Latter-day Saints are going to

find themselves in more and more gospel discussions. We need to be honest, open, forthright, engaging, respectful of others' views, and completely nondefensive about our own.

Here are two suggestions for how to engage in conversations nondefensively.

**If we want to be respected today for who we are, then we need to act confidently—secure in the knowledge of who we are and what we stand for.**

### **1. Don't let irrelevant issues drown out more important subjects.**

Our Church members have often allowed others to set the conversational agenda. An example is plural marriage. This ended in the Church as an official practice in 1890. It's now 2010. Why are we still talking about it? It was a practice. It ended. We moved on. If people ask you about polygamy, just acknowledge that it was once a practice but not now and that people shouldn't confuse any polygamists with our church. In ordinary conversations, don't waste time trying to justify the practice of polygamy during Old Testament times or speculating as to why it was practiced for a time in the 19th century. Those may be legitimate topics for historians and scholars, but

I think we simply reinforce the stereotypes when we make it a primary topic of conversations about the Church.

I realize that sometimes these conversations are triggered by stories that appear in the media. That doesn't change anything. In 2009 a cable TV network series about polygamists depicted the sacred temple ceremony. That portrayal caused great concern among Church members, which is understandable. We were all offended by it.

But I refer you to an article in response to that depiction that was placed by the Public Affairs Department of the Church on its newsroom Web site. As I quote from it, notice the tone. There is nothing defensive about it, yet it responds to an inappropriate portrayal of one of our most sacred religious ceremonies:

"Like other large faith groups, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sometimes finds itself on the receiving end of attention from Hollywood or Broadway, television series or books, and the news media. Sometimes depictions of the Church and its people are quite accurate. Sometimes the images are false or play to stereotypes. Occasionally, they are in appallingly bad taste.

"As Catholics, Jews and Muslims have known for centuries, such attention is inevitable once an institution or faith group reaches a size or prominence sufficient to attract notice."

The article then goes on to discourage the idea of an organized boycott of the network

or affiliated business, which was being actively promoted among some of our members:

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as an institution does not call for boycotts. Such a step would simply generate the kind of controversy that the media loves and in the end would increase audiences for the series. . . . Latter-day Saints should conduct themselves with dignity and thoughtfulness.

"Not only is this the model that Jesus Christ

taught and demonstrated in His own life, but it also reflects the reality of the strength and maturity of Church members today. . . .

*"If the Church allowed critics and opponents to choose the ground on which its battles are fought, it would risk being distracted*

*from the focus and mission it has pursued successfully for nearly 180 years. Instead, the Church itself will determine its own course as it continues to preach the restored gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world."*<sup>2</sup>

Here's another example. In 2007 an independent film producer released a movie about the Mountain Meadows Massacre. To describe this as a really bad movie would be generous. Frankly, it was just awful—even Hollywood critics panned it. The promoters did everything they could to provoke the Church into making it a major topic of conversation. In fact, we completely ignored it. We refused to allow them to set the agenda. The result was a big flop at the box office and a lot of red ink in the producer's bank account. Meanwhile, we continue to respond to and reach out in

**The most important thing about us and our testimony is that we base our beliefs on what Jesus Christ taught and that we try to follow Him.**

constructive and intelligent ways with the descendants of those who were involved in those terrible events at Mountain Meadows.

Recently Oxford University Press published a well-researched book titled *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* that documents the facts surrounding this tragedy.

## **2. Emphasize that Latter-day Saints teach and live what Jesus Christ taught and that we try to follow Him.**

When all is said and done, the most important thing about us and our testimony is that we base our beliefs on what Jesus Christ taught and that we try to follow Him by living our life in a way acceptable to Him and to our Heavenly Father.

This is our foundation. It was Joseph Smith's foundation. He said, "The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it."<sup>3</sup>

Whenever we are having a conversation about the Church, we should try to make this a point. We follow Jesus Christ. We try to live as He taught. That's the basis of our faith and our lives, and that's the strongest nondefensive position we can take. We don't have to defend or justify anything when we base our position on the teachings of the Son of God and do our best to keep His commandments.

It is a great blessing to have the doctrines of Jesus Christ, which are clear to those who study the scriptures and embrace

His teachings. As we follow His doctrine, we come to know that all of us are the children of God and that He loves us. By following Christ, we know where we came from before our birth, we know our purpose for being here on the earth, and we know where we will go when we leave this earth life. The plan of salvation is clear; it is God's plan for the eternal happiness of His children.

There are commandments that God has given us to live. They are His commandments, and no one is authorized to change them except it be by direct revelation to God's chosen prophet.

People throughout the world are drifting further and further away from the teachings of the Lord toward a secular society that the Apostle Paul described:

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth"  
(2 Timothy 4:3-4).



## Save Kathy

By Darwin Richardson

In January 1976, I received a telephone call from a friend who worked for social services. He asked if my wife and I would be willing to take in a foster child. At the time we had two young children of our own, but we agreed to open up our home to 17-year-old Kathy.

Soon after arriving in our home, Kathy asked if she could attend church with us. Of course we said yes, and soon Kathy was attending church regularly. Many of Kathy's friends from her former congregation noticed her absence, and they were unhappy to find out that she was attending the LDS Church.

One day after school, Kathy told us that her former church was planning to stage a "Save Kathy" night for their youth ministry meeting. Kathy asked if I would accompany her to that meeting and help her defend the Church. I reluctantly agreed because although I didn't want to argue with her friends about doctrinal

differences, I knew that she didn't yet know enough about the Church to defend it. I decided to bring another guest, Richard Jones, who had just returned from his mission.

The day of "Save Kathy" night was a day of fasting and prayer for all of us. I prayed that the Spirit would be present at the meeting and that there would be no contention.

When we arrived at the church that evening, we sensed some animosity, but the youth minister welcomed us warmly and invited us to tell the group about the Church and our beliefs. As Richard shared what was then the first missionary discussion and taught about the Restoration, the 15 or so young people in the room listened carefully. Even the youth minister was captivated.

We then spent the rest of the evening answering questions and having a wonderful discussion about the gospel. The animosity we



Today is the time Paul saw. There is an ever-growing number of people who believe that there is no God, no Christ, no plan of redemption, no Atonement, no repentance, no forgiveness, no life after death, no resurrection, no eternal life, and no eternal families sealed together forever.

How empty life must be without the blessings of the fulness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. As Latter-day Saints, we follow Jesus Christ. We know the plan of happiness, the great plan of redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ. We know the doctrines of Jesus Christ. We must strive now and always to live by them. Upon the Church's younger generation will rest the responsibility to teach the doctrines of the Lord and to know how to build up His Church. Please remember that you do not need to feel that you must justify your beliefs; you simply need to explain

them in a spirit of love and kindness. The truth always prevails when true doctrine is taught.

Here are a few examples:

1. We follow Jesus Christ's doctrine of service to our fellowman. We serve members of our Church as well as those who are not. The great work we do in humanitarian service throughout the world relieves suffering and hardship. We do all we can in sharing our resources of time and money to meet the needs of both our members and those of other faiths, recognizing that "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).
2. We follow Jesus Christ's doctrine of striving to live the Word of Wisdom, which is a sound way to enjoy a healthy physical body. We avoid drug abuse of all



had felt at first quickly subsided as we calmly explained our beliefs. There was respect on both sides. The Holy Ghost filled the room as we shared our testimonies and responded to questions.

At the end of the discussion, the minister thanked us for coming. Then, as we turned to leave, a young woman rose and said she wanted to tell us something. She said that before we came, she didn't think Mormons were Christians, but now she believed we might have been better Christians than she was.

We could not have scripted a better ending to our discussion. I know the meeting would never have gone so well if we had not fasted and prayed, pleaded for the Spirit to be present, and petitioned the Lord that there be no contention. Only with the Holy Spirit present can we be effective in sharing the gospel message.

kinds because our bodies house our eternal spirits and because happiness in this life is obtained by being spiritually strong and physically healthy.

3. We follow Jesus Christ by living the law of chastity. God gave this commandment, and He has never revoked or changed it. This law is clear and simple. No one is to engage in sexual relationships outside the bounds the Lord has set. This applies to homosexual behavior of any kind and to heterosexual relationships outside of marriage. It is a sin to violate the law of chastity.
4. We follow Jesus Christ by adhering to God's law of marriage, which is marriage

between one man and one woman. This commandment has been in place from the very beginning. God said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). God instructed Adam and Eve to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28).

Modern-day prophets and apostles reaffirmed this command in "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," issued in 1995:

"God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife. . . .

"The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan."<sup>4</sup>

5. We follow Jesus Christ and teach the first principles of the gospel and all of the other wonderful doctrines of the Restoration that, when embraced and lived, bring peace, joy, and happiness to the sons and daughters of God. It is just this simple.

May God bless us in our pursuits for happiness by knowing and following the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and by engaging others in conversations about the restored gospel without being offensive. ■

*From a commencement address delivered at Brigham Young University on August 13, 2009. For the full text in English, visit [www.newsroom.lds.org](http://www.newsroom.lds.org) (click on "News Releases & Stories").*

#### NOTES

1. See David Van Biema, "The Church and Gay Marriage: Are Mormons Misunderstood?" *Time*, June 22, 2009, 49–53.
2. "The Publicity Dilemma," [newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/the-publicity-dilemma](http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/the-publicity-dilemma); emphasis added.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49.
4. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.

## GETTING TO THE TEMPLE

Since the time of our baptism in 2001, my husband and I had many conversations about traveling to the temple with our family to be sealed together for eternity. However, our plans came to a halt when he was diagnosed with liver disease and passed away before we could go.

I was heartbroken, but my desire for our family to be sealed for eternity grew even stronger after my husband's death. As a widowed mother of four children, however, I knew it would not be easy to raise the money needed to take my family from Cambodia to the Hong Kong China Temple—roughly 1,000 miles (1,600 km) away.

Despite our meager income, my children and I knew that we needed to get to the temple so we could be sealed as a family for eternity. I continued to work hard doing laundry at a hotel while my children worked odd jobs. We slowly began

to save a little money for our trip, but we soon realized that we might never be able to save enough.

Because we knew an eternal family was more valuable than anything we could have on earth, we decided to sell the only thing of value that we owned—my late husband's

motorbike. After we sold it for a significant amount of money, our hearts rejoiced to know that we would soon be able to be sealed to our beloved father and husband.

But our happiness was short-lived. One week after selling the motorbike, we returned from church to

**We slowly began to save a little money for our trip to the temple, but after our home was burglarized, we realized that we might never have enough.**

find that our home had been burglarized. When we discovered that the money from the sale of the motorbike was gone, we were grief stricken. For months

after the break-in, we continued to pray that we could find a way to go to the temple.

After several months our prayers were answered when we were told that we could receive help from the Church's General Temple Patron Assistance Fund.\* My children and I rejoiced at the news and soon made our hoped-for trip to the temple.

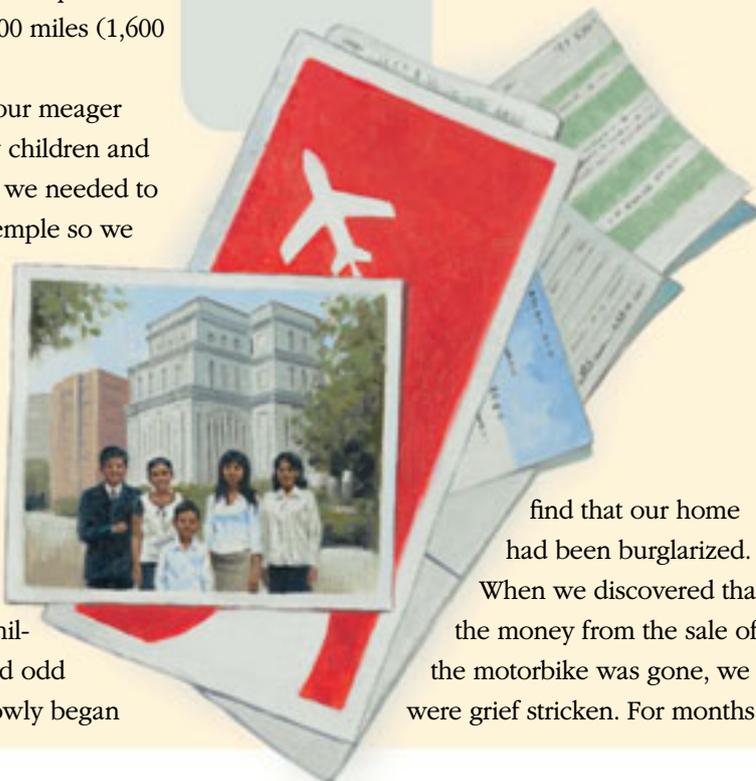
Thanks to the generosity of other Latter-day Saints, we are now an eternal family. ■

Chhom Koemly, Cambodia

*\*The General Temple Patron Assistance Fund was created to give financial assistance to Church members who otherwise could not afford to attend the temple.*

## A FAN, A VACUUM, AND A PLATE OF COOKIES

One summer our young family traveled 2,000 miles (3,200 km) across the country for my husband's new job. We were excited for our new adventure, but we felt very far from our home, our families, and everything else we knew. We pulled up to our new home during a downpour, and in an attempt to protect our home's newly laid carpet, we unloaded the truck with umbrellas overhead and sheets underfoot. We knew that heavy rains had been causing basements to flood, and we nervously kept an eye on ours after everything was unloaded.





***At midnight, the doorbell rang. Pulling the door open, I was met by Brother Lindsay Sewell, the only person we knew in the ward.***

All seemed well that night, and with our three young children finally asleep, Greg and I hurriedly made our bed. We were both exhausted, and falling into bed sounded so good. For some reason, though, Greg felt that he should unpack another box.

“Please,” I said, “let’s just go to sleep. We can unpack in the morning.”

He shook his head and headed to the basement. After a few moments, I heard him scream. Panicked, I ran to the basement only to be met by a miniature flash flood. We stood there shoulder to shoulder as cold rainwater began pooling around our ankles. Instantly we snapped into action and began dragging box after box up the steep staircase. I felt completely and hopelessly lost, my tears mixing with

the floodwater on the floor.

I called the only member of the Church we knew in our new ward, Brother Lindsay Sewell, to ask for instructions on running our sump pump to drain the water. Brother Sewell gave some quick advice, and then I went back to work trying to save our belongings. At midnight, the doorbell rang. Pulling the door open, I was met by Brother Sewell, his arms laden with a fan, a wet vacuum, and a plate of chocolate-chip cookies.

“Sounds like you guys could use some help,” he said with a bright smile. Suddenly, I didn’t feel so far from home.

All through the night, Brother Sewell stayed with us, trying to

conquer the flood. When the water level in the basement rose to more than a foot (30 cm) deep, he suggested that we call the fire department; they brought large pumps that eventually solved the problem.

The next morning Sister Sewell and other members of our new ward arrived with food, extension cords, and more vacuums. We were overwhelmed by their goodness. In the end we saved all of our belongings.

I am so grateful to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. No matter where I go, I have brothers and sisters waiting with open arms to welcome my family and to help in times of need. ■

Rindi Haws Jacobsen, Utah, USA

## **WAS I TOO BUSY TO SERVE?**

**I**n 1997 our branch president announced that the branch would do a service project in the neighborhood surrounding our meetinghouse. We were doing this activity to join with Church members all over the world in commemorating the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Latter-day Saint pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley.

The activity involved cleaning roads and filling potholes. The branch president said we would get dirty but that the activity might give us an opportunity to talk with others about the Church.

I didn't think I would go because my professor had scheduled extra lectures at the same time as the activity. I felt that everybody would understand, but then I came across a pamphlet titled *Faith in Every Footstep*. When I read excerpts about the travails of the Saints on their trek to the western United States, I was moved to tears. Some Saints left their comfortable homes to go to a desert, unsure of what they would find. Others forged ahead even after every other member of their family had died along the way. In the midst of sickness, pain, hunger, and poverty, they had faith that if they migrated to the West, they would be free from oppression.

I felt bad that the early Saints had to make great sacrifices, even their own lives in some cases, to see that the Church continued moving forward. Because of their sacrifice and faith, I now enjoy the blessings of the gospel.

I then realized how small a sacrifice I would be making by comparison. I was being asked to give a mere two hours of service and to share the gospel with a few people, and I was making excuses for not attending.

I forgot about the lectures and participated in the activity. I got dirty, but people did come and ask about the Church. I felt happy for being involved, and I have since graduated from the university—despite missing a few lectures. ■

Ngozi Francisca Okoro, Nigeria

## FORGETTING OURSELVES IN SICILY

**M**y name is Omar Interdonato," the e-mail began. "I'm the son of Fiorella Italia. I hope you still remember her baptism."

Thirty years before, my missionary companion and I had been assigned to the island of Sicily and were serving in Siracusa, a beautiful city on the Mediterranean coast. On Sundays we met with the few Latter-day Saints in the area in an old villa, holding sacrament meeting in the villa's living room.

Missionary work was difficult, and we had few baptisms. Sixteen full-time missionaries labored in the city, which had been tracted over and over. But as my companion and I studied a map of the city one day, we noticed a small village located a few miles from our apartment on the edge of the city.

We hiked through the fields to this village, knelt on the edge of a ridge overlooking a valley, and offered up our hearts and souls to God. We then began tracting in a group of tenement-type buildings that made up most of the village.

We were eventually greeted at a door by a woman in her 40s dressed all in black—a tradition in Italy following the death of a loved one. We changed our door approach to emphasize the plan of salvation. The

woman invited us in, and we met with her, two of her teenage daughters, and one of their friends. We learned that the woman was recently widowed and had four teenage children to care for. We showed the filmstrip *Man's Search for Happiness* and were invited to return the following week.

The mother, along with her oldest son and two teenage daughters, their grandmother, and their friend were eventually baptized. Following my mission, I kept in touch with the family, but until I received the e-mail,

I had wondered what had happened to Fiorella, the daughters' young friend.

"My mother has been faithful to the gospel all

**M**y companion and I knelt on the edge of a ridge overlooking a valley, offered up our hearts and souls to God, and began tracting.



her life and in 1983 married a good Church member from the Messina Branch and got sealed in the temple,” her son wrote. “I was born in 1984 and my sister, Veronica, in 1987. We are all active in the Church. I served a mission in the Italy Rome Mission from 2005 to 2007, hoping to repay the Lord for all the struggles of two missionaries who decided to preach the gospel in the small town of Florida!”

There were times during my mission when I wondered if the two years of sacrifice were worth it. But how great is my joy (see D&C 18:15–16) to learn that Fiorella’s life was changed forever because my companion and I made the decision to go forth and forget ourselves in the service of others on the island of Sicily. ■

Louis Menditto, Nevada, USA

## WHERE DID I COME FROM?

**A**s a young child I often wondered, “Where did I come from?” Deep within my heart I knew I had lived somewhere before I became who I am now, but I had no idea where.

For many years I was afraid to tell anyone—even my parents—for fear they would think I was crazy. But one day while I was in my early teens, I was brave enough to ask the pastor of our church, “Where did we live before we came to earth?” He told me I should not think about such things. He said no one lives anywhere before they are born; we simply do not exist in any way before.

I was afraid he was right and that I *was* crazy, but I still could not put these thoughts out of my mind. I kept searching, but no one had any answers.

When I was 18 years old, our family moved. I thought the preachers in our new town might know more than our last preacher, so I decided to ask one of them my question. His response was the same: he told me it was not normal to think of such things and suggested that I see a psychiatrist.

Soon after that I stopped going to church. I got a job, met a young man, and got married. Five years later

the marriage ended in divorce. So I packed up all of my belongings, two children in tow and one on the way, and returned home.

Sometime during those five years, my mom had joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She had mentioned the Church when I visited her and had asked me to talk to the missionaries. I finally consented, but before our meeting, I made up my mind that I would agree to take the missionary discussions only if the elders could tell me where I had lived before I came to be who I am now.

To my surprise, they not only answered my question but also gave me the answer straight from the Bible (see Job 38:4–7; Jeremiah 1:5; Jude 1:6). After that, they had my undivided attention! Their answer helped me understand why all my life I had felt that I had lived before. Now I understood that I had lived in a premortal existence with my Heavenly Father.

It wasn’t long before I became a member of the Church. For the first time in my life, I felt like somebody and that I had a destination to pursue—to return home to my Heavenly Father.

I am grateful that the missionaries were able to answer the question that no one else could. ■

Betty Hollowell, Indiana, USA



# Dear Frieda

*Young adults write letters of counsel to a young adult woman who is questioning whether to move in with her boyfriend.*

**I**n a world of shifting values, staying true to our standards is critical to spiritual survival. Sincerely committing ourselves to honoring our covenants can strengthen us against temptation.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of a decision that can help us stay true: “Joshua didn’t say choose you next year whom you will serve; he spoke of ‘this day,’ while there is still daylight and before the darkness becomes more and more normal. (See Josh. 24:15.) . . . Act now, so that a thousand years from now, when you look back at this moment, you can say this was a moment that mattered—this was a day of determination.”<sup>1</sup>

Frieda,\* a young adult member of the Church in Europe, faces just such a moment of decision. She says she wants to be married in the temple someday, but she is contemplating moving in with her nonmember boyfriend. She plans to repent and return to Church activity after a few years and marry someone else in the temple, but for now, she says, she just wants to have a good time.

Young adults in Scandinavia were invited to write letters to Frieda. They didn’t know her real name or where she lived, but they shared

testimonies and real-life experiences to help her make the correct choice. Following are excerpts from letters Frieda’s peers wrote and agreed to share.

## **Decide to Marry in the Temple**

**B**efore my friend Erika\* moved in with her boyfriend, who is not a member of the Church, she assured her family that she’d stay close to the gospel. But since Erika got into the situation, it is hard for her to get out. She thinks it’s simply too painful and difficult to get back on the right track.

Unfortunately, I have many friends who, like Erika, have fallen away because they thought they could stay in control of themselves even while living outside Church standards. In reality, ignoring the guidelines makes it easier for Satan to gain control.

I learned from my friends’ experiences. When I was 17, I decided to gain a rock-solid testimony because I knew I’d need it if I wanted to survive spiritually. Gaining a strong testimony and coming to know that Heavenly Father has a plan for me are what saved me.

There is one thing I’m sure of: I’m determined to marry in the temple. The temple is the only way to true happiness and the only way we



If you and your boyfriend are so crazy about each other, take him to the temple grounds. Tell him about your dreams of an eternal marriage. Tell him about your faith. If he is not interested in learning why temple marriage is so important to you, he's not for you. Hold on to your dream of temple marriage.

**Steen Hylander, Denmark**

I know it can be almost irresistible to be with the one you love. I also understand that sometimes we just want to do the same things as everyone else. It is easy to think that there is time to repent later on, but there's not. As we continuously disregard what the Spirit tells us, we lose the ability to hear Him—as I did. If it continues, we will no longer feel that what we're doing is wrong and we will not feel the need for repentance.

**Name withheld**

My testimony to you is that our Shepherd can supply every need. My Shepherd has supplied my need when I have yielded to His ways.

You can be complete. You can be eternally happy beyond description because Jesus Christ atoned for you.

**Anna Palm Gerrbo, Sweden**

I've done things I'm ashamed of. I believed Heavenly Father would forgive me, and I feel He has. But I cannot forgive myself. I always thought that forgiving myself would be easy, but I have come to understand that it is not so.

Name withheld

I know how it feels to be in love with someone and not able to pursue the relationship because it would not lead to a temple marriage. It is hard—heart-breaking even—but this temporal heartache is nothing compared to the eternal sorrow you would have from breaking your covenants with your Father in Heaven. There is hope, and something better is waiting.

Marie Bertilson Olsson, Sweden

Today as I am looking for a wife, my sins from the past haunt me. I wish I could say to my future wife: "I loved you even before I met you. I saved myself for you." But I cannot. I would not wish for my worst enemy to go through the pain I have felt over the last three years as I have repented of my sins. I wish I'd had the strength to stay close to God and keep His commandments in the first place.

Name withheld

can live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ someday. If I want to go to the temple, I *need* to follow the guidelines of the gospel. I've decided to live the gospel because I know it's the right thing to do, even though it might be hard.

Take some time to figure out where you're going, and think about where your choice today will take you tomorrow.

Amanda Bernskov, Denmark

### Find What You Really Need

I think more than anything in the world we all want to be loved. But true love is so much more than mere attraction. It is trust and wanting what is best for the other person. It is unselfish and warm and sometimes sacrificial, meaning we are willing to give and suffer for it if we have to.

Frieda, your life and the lives of many other people depend on the choices you will make in the near future. It can be hard to choose the right if you have not already decided whose side you are on. Remember that Satan works overtime to tear down families. Have the courage to follow what you know is right. Don't settle for less than a temple marriage for eternity.

If you want true love, seek the giver of true love: God. True love is a spiritual endowment, not a sexual fantasy. It is only from God you can receive this greatest of all gifts.

David Isaksen, Norway

### Decide to Come Back

When I was about 17, I began to feel I couldn't relate to people at church anymore. Around the same time, my parents divorced and stopped attending church. I still went, but I had lost faith in eternal marriage. When I met Kristian,\* it wasn't hard to turn my back on the Church and walk away. So I did.



We lived together for almost four years before we split up. I wanted to start going to church again, but I was afraid everybody would ask all sorts of questions. I went to visit my sister. In her ward no one knew me or how long I'd been away from the Church, and during my stay I started going to church again. I continued going in my own ward when I returned home. The first Sunday I was really scared, but people were just happy I was there.

I knew I had to choose a side; I couldn't keep walking with one foot on the Lord's side and one on the world's. I started meeting with my bishop. He has helped me understand the Atonement. It's been a long road of repentance—at times a very difficult one. I'm still in progress, and I still have a lot of things to learn, but I'm happier now. I know I chose the right when I decided to come back to the Church. It was about making up my mind about what I felt and what I knew was right and then just going for it.

Name withheld

### Stand Firm in Your Righteous Decisions

Some time ago a friend of mine was facing the same decision you are. My friend Sarah\* always had a strong testimony of the Church and its truths. Since we were young, both Sarah and I had a great desire to get married in the temple.

When she was 17 or 18, she met and started dating a young man. He had a great personality and was very easy to like. He wasn't a member, but in the beginning it didn't seem like that was a problem.

Eventually, she started to think about how life would be if she married him, even though it wouldn't be in the temple. She thought:



### YOU ARE NEVER ALONE

"We do not set the standards, but we are commanded to teach them and maintain them. The standard remains abstinence before marriage and total fidelity in marriage. However out of step we may seem, however much the standards are belittled, however much others yield, we will not yield, we cannot yield. . . .

"If you, our youth, feel alone, remember there are millions of you in the Church now. . . . Wherever you are—in school, at work or play, in the military—you are never alone."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Standard of Truth Has Been Erected," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 26.

"Maybe it can work; maybe we can compromise. Maybe he will change in time. Maybe I can bring him into the gospel."

She thought a lot about this, and she cried and she prayed. She knew deep inside that she had always wanted temple marriage, but her feelings for her boyfriend made it hard for her to decide. In the end she broke up with him. It was one of the hardest things she had ever done, but she put her trust in the Lord.

In the spring of 2007 she married a wonderful man. They are now sealed to each other for time and eternity. She's truly happy she decided to wait until she found someone she loved and could marry in the temple.

If you don't know what kind of decision to make, pray about it until you do know. Put your trust in the Lord. I know from watching Sarah—and from my own life—that when we do, He blesses us. ■

Anna Lindgren, Sweden

*\*Name has been changed.*

#### NOTE

1. Neal A. Maxwell, "Why Not Now?" *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 13.

# To the Point

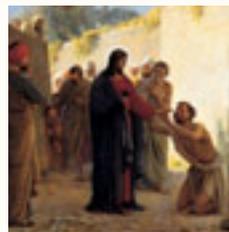
## Why does the Church put such an emphasis on service? Why can't we just have fun?

The gospel of Jesus Christ places great emphasis on helping our fellowmen. It is not enough to sympathize with someone in need—it is our responsibility to act. “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

in callings and do other service, we not only strengthen others but also become better people.<sup>1</sup>

What's more, service can be a lot of fun if you approach it with the right attitude. Think of your talents and skills and how you can use them to help others.

*Service can be a lot of fun if you approach it with the right attitude.*



The Savior taught, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40), and King Benjamin taught that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). Serving others shows our dedication to the Lord and to the well-being of His children.

Service doesn't just help others. It can also lead to our own spiritual growth. When we serve

Individual service is rewarding, and you can also enjoy serving with friends! Gather a group of people together, and brainstorm how you can serve in a new and creative way. You'll be amazed at how fulfilling service can be.

### NOTE

1. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Lift Where You Stand,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 56.



## Whom do I talk to about getting a patriarchal blessing?

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “A patriarchal blessing is a very unique and remarkable privilege that can come to the faithful members of the Church having sufficient maturity to understand the nature and the importance of such blessings. . . . Like many blessings, they must be requested by the person or by the family of the one desiring the blessing.”<sup>1</sup>

If you feel spiritually ready to receive your patriarchal blessing, you should first make an appointment for an interview with your bishop or branch president, who will determine your readiness and worthiness. If he feels you are ready, you will receive a recommend. You may then contact your stake patriarch to schedule an appointment.

### NOTE

1. James E. Faust, “Your Patriarchal Blessing,” *Tambuli*, June 1983, 30; *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 4.

## What is the significance of Pioneer Day? Is it celebrated all over the Church?



**P**ioneer Day commemorates the arrival of the first group of Mormon pioneers to the Salt Lake Valley, on July 24, 1847. In Utah it is an official state holiday, and the associated celebration, including a parade, is referred to as Days of '47. It is a time for recognizing all people who have contributed to building the state, regardless of religion or background.

In addition, Latter-day Saints in various locations worldwide may

**No matter where you live, July 24 is a good time to remember what early Latter-day Saints did for us all.**

join in recognizing the pioneer heritage we all share. Some communities hold pageants, parades, concerts, and handcart treks as part of the commemoration. Elsewhere, the remembrance may be as simple as a family outing or a personal moment of reflection. No matter where Church members live, no matter if there is a formal celebration or just a minute of thought, it is an appropriate time to remember what early Latter-day Saints did for us all, including local pioneers who strengthened the Church where you live.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “What a joy and privilege it is to be part of this worldwide Church and be taught and uplifted by prophets, seers, and revelators! . . . As the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is now being embraced around the world, we are all pioneers in our own sphere and circumstance.”<sup>1</sup> ■

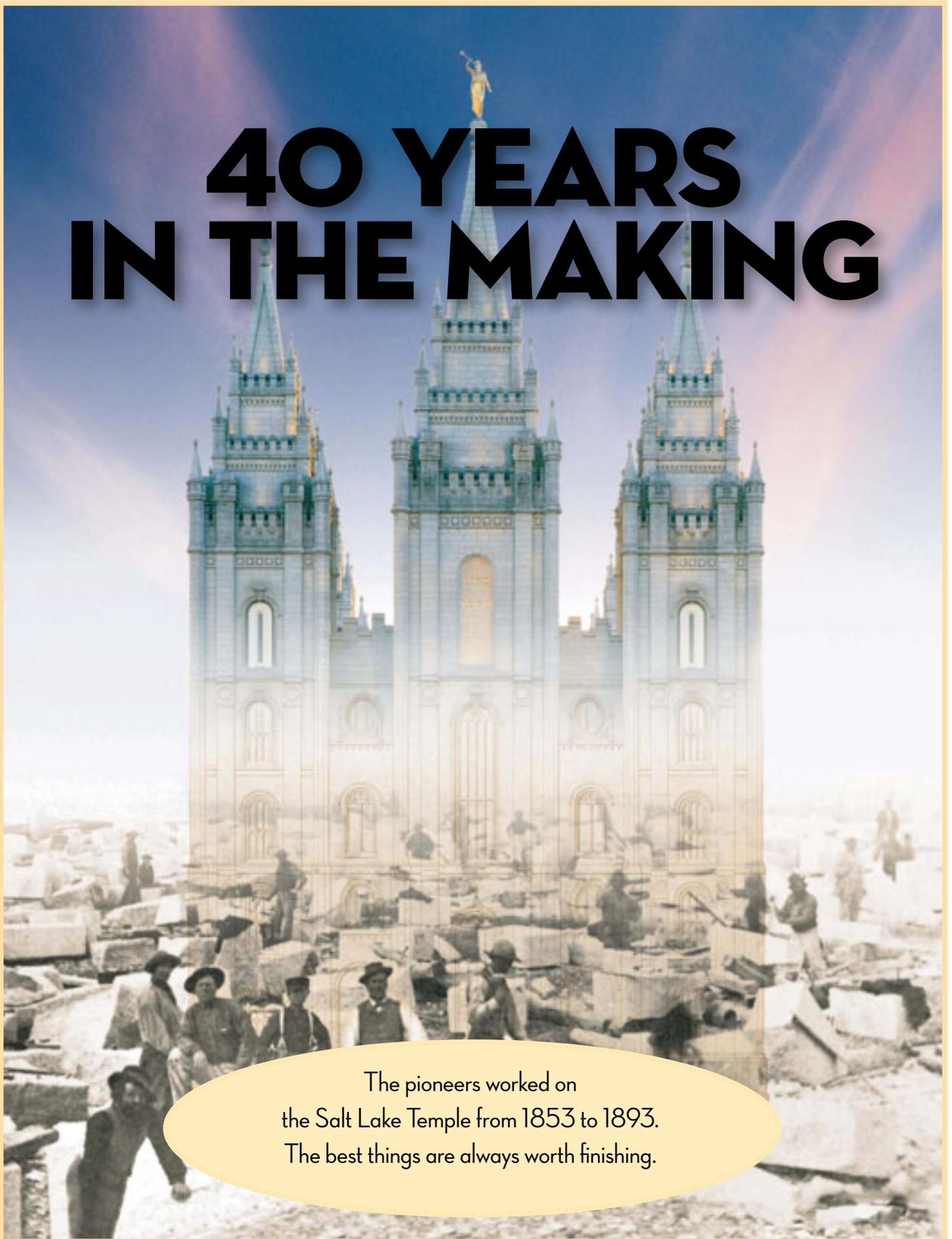
*What pioneer stories inspire you? Let us know at [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org).*

**NOTE**

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Heeding the Voice of the Prophets,” *Liahona*, July 2008, 3; *Ensign*, July 2008, 5.



# 40 YEARS IN THE MAKING



The pioneers worked on  
the Salt Lake Temple from 1853 to 1893.  
The best things are always worth finishing.



## CELEBRATING THE PIONEERS

**E**ach July many members of the Church worldwide pause to honor the pioneers who entered the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. Here is an experience that one young woman shared with us:

“Sometimes our ward has pioneer activities,” says Analee B. of Burke, Virginia, USA. “People dress up in pioneer outfits, and we usually go on some type of ‘trek’—it’s really a walk. We also talk about pioneers, and we do games that pioneers would play. In Virginia it is really hot and humid in the summer, and we always have these celebrations outside, so with the hot weather we really feel like pioneers.”

“For me personally I am almost always reading a book about Church history. Reading those books makes me appreciate the pioneers even more and helps me understand better what they went through.”

How, in your area, do you celebrate the past or present pioneers in the Church? Remember, pioneers can include anyone who prepared the way for others to follow.



## MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

**2 Nephi 32:5** has been my favorite scripture since I was in Primary because it tells you what to do when you are given the gift of the Holy Ghost. You must receive it and be worthy of it, and then the Holy Ghost will guide you on the right path.

Peaches C., age 16, Trinidad, West Indies



*“All things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart”*

**(D&C 59:18).**

## HOW TO GAIN A TESTIMONY

**A** testimony is a very important part in our lives as members of the Church. To gain a testimony, do what Moroni invites us to do: ponder in your heart the message or the principle that you want to know is true; then ask God in the name of Jesus Christ if it is true. Those who pursue this course and ask in faith will gain a testimony of the truth by the power of the Holy Ghost (see Moroni 10:3–5). I can testify to you that if you pray with all the faith of your heart, our Heavenly Father will answer your prayer.

When I was an investigator, I decided to pray and ask Heavenly Father if everything I had learned was true. Never in my life will I find words to describe the feeling I had, but I know that it was the answer of my Heavenly Father because I have received a lot of blessings from it.

Jordi R., age 20, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

# KGrowing into Knowing

By Sonia Padilla-Romero



*As I learned the doctrines of the gospel, my difficult circumstances didn't change, but I felt happier.*

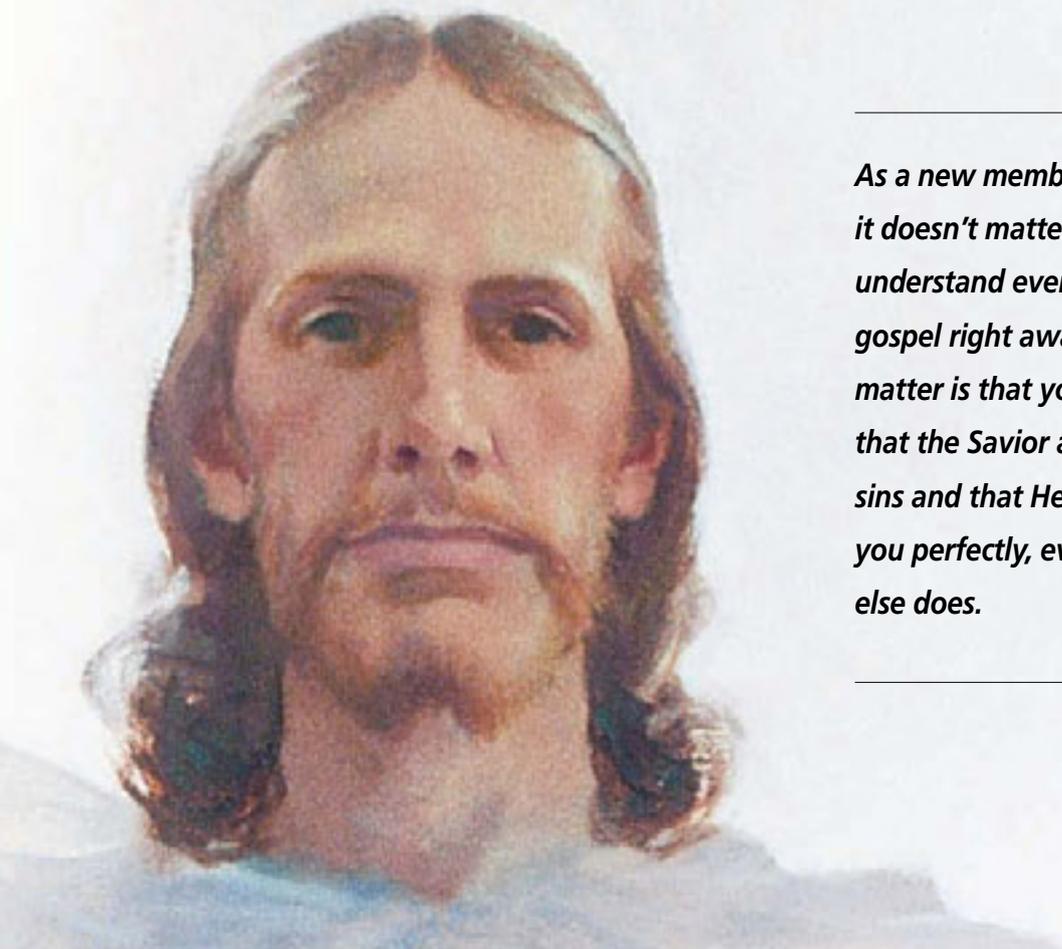
When I was 14, some Latter-day Saint missionaries came to our home and taught my mother and me. They soon invited us to be baptized. My mother declined, but I said yes. Looking back, I don't know that I was converted. I think that, like many teens, I was simply looking to do something different than the norm.

For the next year I went to church by myself. I didn't really feel like I fit in, and I didn't understand much of what was taught. But I was active. The next year I lived away from home and attended a Church-owned high school in Mexico City. Although I had loved the high school during my initial visit and worked hard to be accepted to the school (and to convince my parents to let me attend), I quickly found that being on my own wasn't easy. I still didn't have a testimony. I didn't really understand who Joseph Smith was or what the Book of Mormon taught. More than ever I felt like I didn't fit in.

Of course, I didn't tell my parents. I had spent a lot of time convincing them to let me come to this school. How could I admit that maybe this wasn't the place for me after all? Because of my pride, I just struggled silently.

My difficult situation became worse when I received news that my parents were divorcing. I felt as though my whole world was being destroyed.

It was at that point that my bishop took me aside and asked how I was




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***As a new member, I learned that it doesn't matter if you don't understand everything in the gospel right away. What does matter is that you understand that the Savior atoned for your sins and that He understands you perfectly, even if no one else does.***

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doing. I told him about all of my frustrations and my sorrows. "I feel like I really don't know anything anymore," I said.

That good bishop started teaching me about the gospel. We started with how to truly communicate with Heavenly Father. Over time we talked about the Atonement. He taught me truths of the gospel, and for the first time, I felt I had a testimony. I was glad I had something to cling to in that shaky period. Even though I felt powerless to help my family, I was able to feel a sense of happiness in being close to Heavenly Father.

I knew that He knew me, and that changed everything.

Perhaps it's common for new members of the Church to feel as I did about not fitting in. What I've learned is that it doesn't matter if you don't understand everything in the gospel right away. What *does* matter is that you understand your relationship to Heavenly Father and that He has a purpose and plan for your life. It *does* matter that you understand that the Savior atoned for your sins and that He understands you perfectly, even if no one else does. Once I knew these doctrines, other things fell into place.

Thanks to the love and patient teaching of my bishop, high school

became a positive period in my life. Attending the Church high school changed my vision of who I was and what my life could be. When I graduated, I stayed in Mexico City. The first thing I did once I found a place to live was find the local ward so I could continue to have a place of refuge, a place where I could grow in the gospel.

A short time after that, I served a mission on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. I found great joy in sharing with others the truths that had given me a solid foundation in an otherwise turbulent time of life.

I am grateful to be a member of the Church. I know that Heavenly Father is aware of each of us and that He has a plan for our lives. It has been a great blessing to watch Him unfold His plan for me. ■

# THINGS WILL WORK OUT



**By Elder Erich W. Kopischke**  
Of the Seventy

*Have faith and trust in the Lord,  
and He will provide.*

I was born in Germany to good, caring parents who were members of the Church. During World War II, when my father was 10 years old, he was introduced to the gospel by a friend in Stettin, which is now part of Poland. Because of the war, there were no missionaries in Stettin at that time. After he accepted the gospel, my father taught his family, and they were converted. He later met my mother, who was also living in East Germany. There were no missionaries there either. My father taught my mother the gospel, and she accepted it. They were married and then moved to West Germany shortly before I was born.

In Germany at that time, there were not many members of the Church. At school I was the only member. At a young age I gained a strong testimony that God lives and that this is His true Church. I never doubted the truthfulness of the gospel. I held on to this testimony, and it helped me stay active through my youth.

### **Fear of Falling Away**

I had two friends my age who were also active in the Church. They were brothers, and we grew up together. However, I could see them only on Sunday because we lived almost

25 kilometers away from each other. We saw each other during priesthood meeting and Young Men activities. Even though we saw each other only once a week, being good friends helped all three of us stay active in the Church.

Later I noticed that many of the older youth became less active in the Church, and I had an absolute fear that one day I might lose my testimony. There were so few youth in the Church in Germany in those days that when they became less active, their absence was noticeable. It was frightening for my parents. They had given up everything to raise their children in religious freedom, and now they were thinking, “What can we do so that we will not lose Erich?”

One day when I was about 14 years old, my family was driving home from church. We had noticed, once again, that some of the youth had turned their backs on the Church. I said to my parents, “I want you to drag me to church until I am 21 years old, and then I will take care of myself!” I really told them that, and my mother often repeated it to me.

### **An Education Decision**

This concern explains why, when I was about 10 years old and attending primary school, my parents made a decision. In Germany you start a higher-education path

at a young age. My parents decided not to allow me to go into higher education because they had seen many young people leave the Church while attending these schools at that time. They said, “You can go anywhere, but not to the *Gymnasium* [university-track school], because we don’t want to lose you to the world!”

That decision meant that I received a basic education and later a vocational education; for me, that meant a degree in business. This limited many of my professional possibilities. I completed my training when I was 18 years old and was called to serve as a missionary in Munich, Germany. I loved being a missionary.

When I finished my mission, I

found myself without a lot of career options. I had finished my education. Two years after my mission, I married my wife, Christiane, and there was no chance for me to gain a university education. There was a moment when I felt sad about my parents’ decision because I felt so limited.

Then a thought came to me: “Whatever my parents did, they did to protect me. They did it out of love, and it will *not* be a disadvantage for me.” Even though at times it seemed to be a disadvantage in a worldly sense, I could now understand that it would never be a real disadvantage. I decided to make a career in the insurance business, and I later became an executive in the company where I worked.

One challenge for me was that I had always wanted to be a teacher, and you cannot be a teacher in Germany without a university education. However, I eventually did become a teacher—a religion teacher. I became a teacher for the Church Educational System. And in a manner of speaking, that is what I am now—a teacher. So I gained a testimony that it is worthwhile to listen to your parents, to follow their counsel, and to trust that they love you, pray for you, and know what is best for you. The desire to stay active in the Church was so strong on my part and the desire to protect me was so strong on my parents’ part that everything did come together for my good.

## SEARCHING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

**W**hen you are young, you have questions, and your friends and others question what you are doing. One of the answers to those questions is in Moroni 7:19, where Mormon teaches us: “Search diligently in the light of Christ that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ.”

That is a wonderful scripture. The Light of Christ is our conscience; it is a gift to every child of our Heavenly Father. We should think constantly about things that are good, and we should cleave to those things and condemn them not. I have

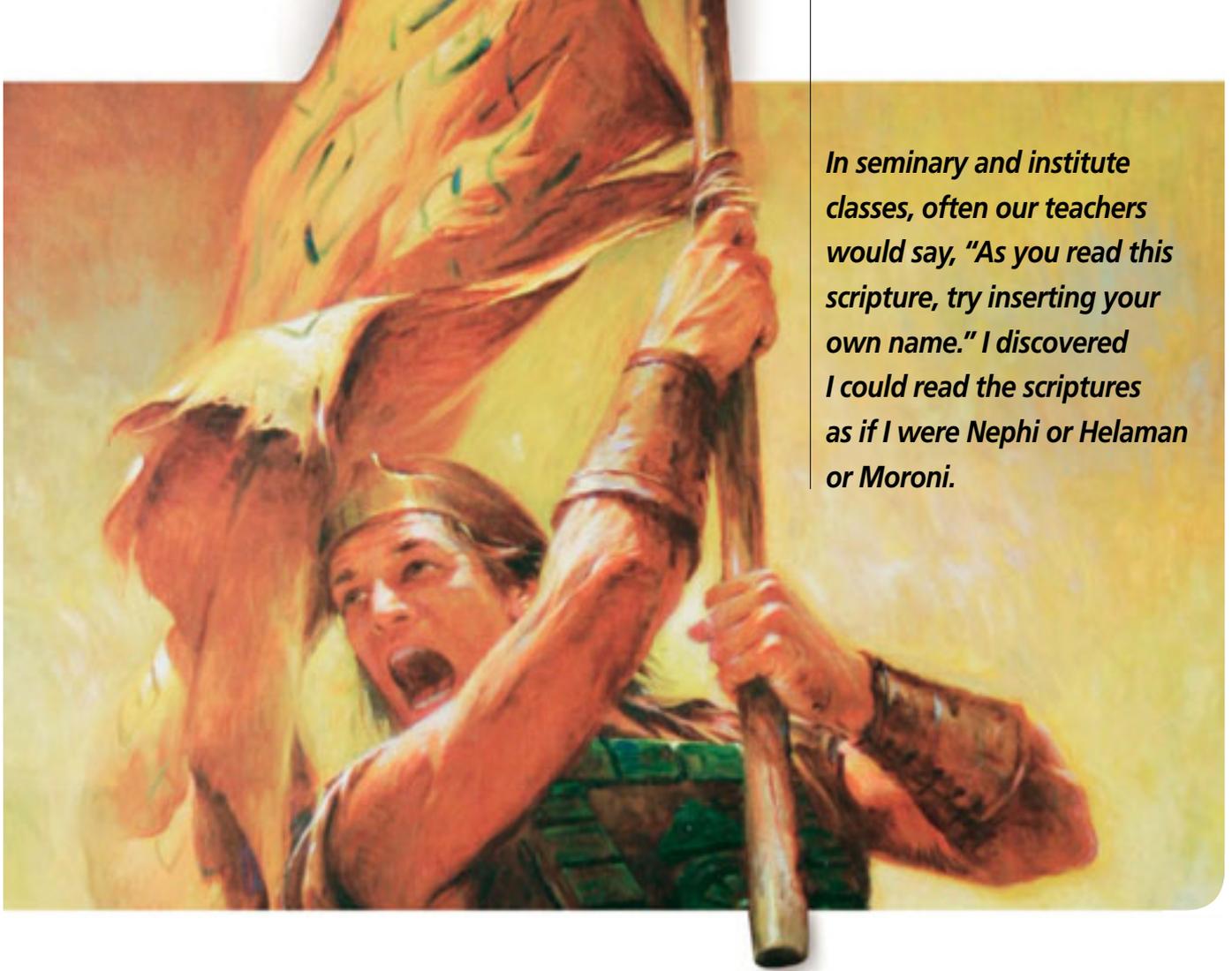


always thought that if everyone in the world would do that, whether he or she is a member of the Church or not, this

promise, as prophesied, would be fulfilled; and we would become better sons and daughters, better friends, better employees, better missionaries, better people. As Paul said, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

I have seen so many people in the world around me say, “I will take this good thing, but I will not take that one.” They keep themselves from the truth. But the scriptures invite us to hold on to everything that is good and to search our conscience in the Light of Christ.

Elder Erich W. Kopischke of the Seventy.



*In seminary and institute classes, often our teachers would say, "As you read this scripture, try inserting your own name." I discovered I could read the scriptures as if I were Nephi or Helaman or Moroni.*

### **My Higher Education**

Something else that helped me stay strong as a youth was the seminary program, which was introduced in Germany in 1972, when I was 14 years old. It had a great impact on my life. I can still remember my seminary teacher, because she left a great impression on me and influenced me in such a positive way.

Because of my seminary experience and my individual study of the scriptures as a youth, I learned to love the scriptures. My study strengthened my testimony, and I have never lost my love for seminary and institute classes. I taught one of the first early-morning seminary classes in Germany. It was a great class. The young people loved it, and

they came every morning. Some of them traveled quite a distance. Out of that group, the young men all went on missions, and almost all of those young men and women have stayed active in the Church.

When I think about how I gained my testimony and what had the greatest impression on me for good, I really can say that it was the seminary and institute classes I attended. It was the learning of gospel principles and doctrines from the scriptures, with a group of friends, from a teacher we admired.

One of the best things to do when studying the scriptures is to apply them to yourself. Often our teachers would say, "As you read this scripture, try inserting your own name."

I discovered I could read the scriptures as if I were Nephi or Helaman or Moroni. That changed the whole setting for me when I read the scriptures. It was like a dream; all of a sudden I could see myself in the same situation as those I was reading about.

The scriptures helped me understand that faith is something real. It is not just knowing about things in the scriptures in a theoretical way, but faith connects us to the Lord's reality for us. This is something I gained from my time in seminary as a youth. I have a sure faith that if the Lord gives an assignment, we can "go and do" (1 Nephi 3:7), and He will provide what we need to accomplish that assignment.

### Strength from the Scriptures

A scripture that really helped me when I was young is Joshua 1:6–9. It says, in part: “Be strong and of a good courage. . . . Observe to do according to all the law. . . . Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper.”

As a young man, I thought, “Once I receive an assignment from the Lord, I will not turn to the right or to the left.” I had some good experiences as a result. For instance, one day while I was in business training, I had to go to a Church meeting, but I had a work responsibility related to the mail. Normally this responsibility would take me and the other trainees as much as an extra hour after our regular work hours. But I had to go to Hamburg on the 5:30 p.m. train to get to my Church meeting. I told the others of my dilemma, and they said to me, “Good luck. It is not going to happen.”

I said, “Sure it will, because this is an important meeting.” They shrugged their shoulders and said sarcastically, “Yeah sure—you and your faith. You think just because you are religious that everything is going to work out. That means that we would have to finish the mail by 10 minutes to 5:00. It has never happened.” I said, “Well, whatever happens will happen. But I need to be in Hamburg on time tonight.”

Now, believe it or not, for the first and only time in three years, everything was finished that day at 10 minutes to 5:00, and I made it to the train

on time. This impressed my fellow trainees and opened the door for me to have some gospel conversations with them.

I have complete trust and faith that when the Lord gives you an assignment, it will work out somehow if you “do not turn to the right or to the left.” I did not know that the mail duty we had would be finished early that day. You won’t always know those kinds of things in advance. You cannot tell the Lord how it should happen, but with faith and trust in Him, it often will work out well.

My study of the scriptures and my parents’ example gave me something very important, even as a young man. Together, they helped me develop great faith that in my day-to-day living, the Lord would help and bless me. ■



### A MISSION WILL KEEP YOUR PATH CLEAR

One of the most important things a young man can do is prepare to serve a mission. It is important to prepare spiritually, physically, and educationally. Study the scriptures diligently. Study them every day, with the help of seminary and institute classes. Then go on a mission, and do and be the very best you can.

You will come to know that your mission experiences are the best education for you. It is a wonderful way to practice all the good things you have learned in your family, in the Church, and in seminary and institute classes. If you young men, and you young women who so desire, will prepare for and serve a mission, it will keep your life’s path clear for you. I would wish for my sons and daughters and for you, the youth of the Church, to be worthy to go on a mission when you reach the right age and to

wholeheartedly seize and magnify that opportunity.

I would wish for you all, including my own children, great faith and trust in the Lord, that you might enjoy His marvelous promises. I know that the Lord will provide the experiences, challenges, and blessings He knows will be for your good. I have a sure testimony that when we have great faith and trust in the Lord, He will provide.

Elder Erich W. Kopischke of the Seventy.



# A FOREVER FAMILY



**W**hen I first met Uanci Kivalu, she was smiling broadly. But as she sat down and her tone turned serious, I wondered what this friendly 16-year-old would share. “My story is about the temple,” she said.

Uanci is from Tonga, an island nation filled with towering coconut trees, majestic banana trees, and broad taro plants. Most of the youth I had seen on the island seemed content with life, with smiles as broad as Uanci’s had been only moments before. Tongan youth her age like to dance, sing, play netball, and spend time with their families. They are generally a happy bunch. But Uanci’s seriousness was mixed with a deeper emotion I could not identify, and it surprised me.

“I want to talk about the temple,” she repeated.

“When I was growing up,” Uanci began, “my brothers and sister and I were members of the Church. We would attend church every Sunday with my mom. I loved the temple, and I loved going with the youth to do baptisms for the dead. I would feel the Spirit when we went there. But my dad wouldn’t come to church.”

*What at first seemed a tragedy eventually led Uanci’s family to the temple.*

Uanci’s voice began to quaver. I glanced up from my notepad and saw tears in her eyes.

“One day my little brother ’Alekisio had an injury in his hips that got infected,” she continued. “He got better for a while. And my dad came back to church. But then my dad fell away again.”

The tears were now streaming down Uanci’s face, and the tissue I handed her was immediately soaked, as were her sleeves, as she tried unsuccessfully to dry the tears.

“My little brother got worse, and then he died. He was only 12 years old.”

Uanci paused for a moment, overcome by her feelings, and I began to understand why she had been so serious. This young woman had already felt great tragedy in her life. But there was also a glimmer of hope shining through her eyes.

“Then,” she began again, “my dad finally decided to come back to church. At first, it was hard for him. Our bishop, leaders, relatives, and family encouraged him that the only way our family would be together again—to see my brother again—would be to be sealed in the temple.



### PEACE IN THE TEMPLE

“To you who are worthy and able to attend the temple, I would admonish you to go often. The temple is a place where we can find peace. There we receive a renewed dedication to the gospel and a strengthened resolve to keep the commandments.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Until We Meet Again,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2009, 113.

“We struggled after my brother died,” Uanci continued. “But my parents worked hard and received their ordinances. Finally, we were sealed in the temple as a family on October 10, 2008, exactly one year after ’Alekisio died. My bishop stood in place of my little brother. It was the most indescribable feeling I ever felt.”

Uanci’s tears were not tears of sorrow but of joy. She and her family had been to the house of the Lord and sealed in the temple, and she knew what that meant. If her family lives worthy of their covenants, they will be together forever.

As I think about Uanci, I imagine her walking across the Liahona campus, the Church-owned high school in Tonga that sits adjacent to the temple. As she walks, Uanci gazes over at the spire of the angel Moroni, its golden form glistening in the sun. There are tears in her eyes again, but she is also smiling, for she knows she will see ’Alekisio again. ■

# HE TOLD ME, “NO WAY”

*“Inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father” (D&C 89:5).*

**By Truman E. Benson**

*Based on a true story*

I used to think my best friend, Chase, would do anything. When I dared him to jump off the top step of my porch, not only did he do it, but he even took a running start!

When I dared him to ride the upside-down roller coaster, he didn't just ride it, but he actually sat in the front seat!

And when I told him there was no way he would say hi to Julia—the prettiest girl in the whole school—not only did he say hi, but he sat and talked to her for five minutes!

I thought Chase would do anything. Until today, that is.

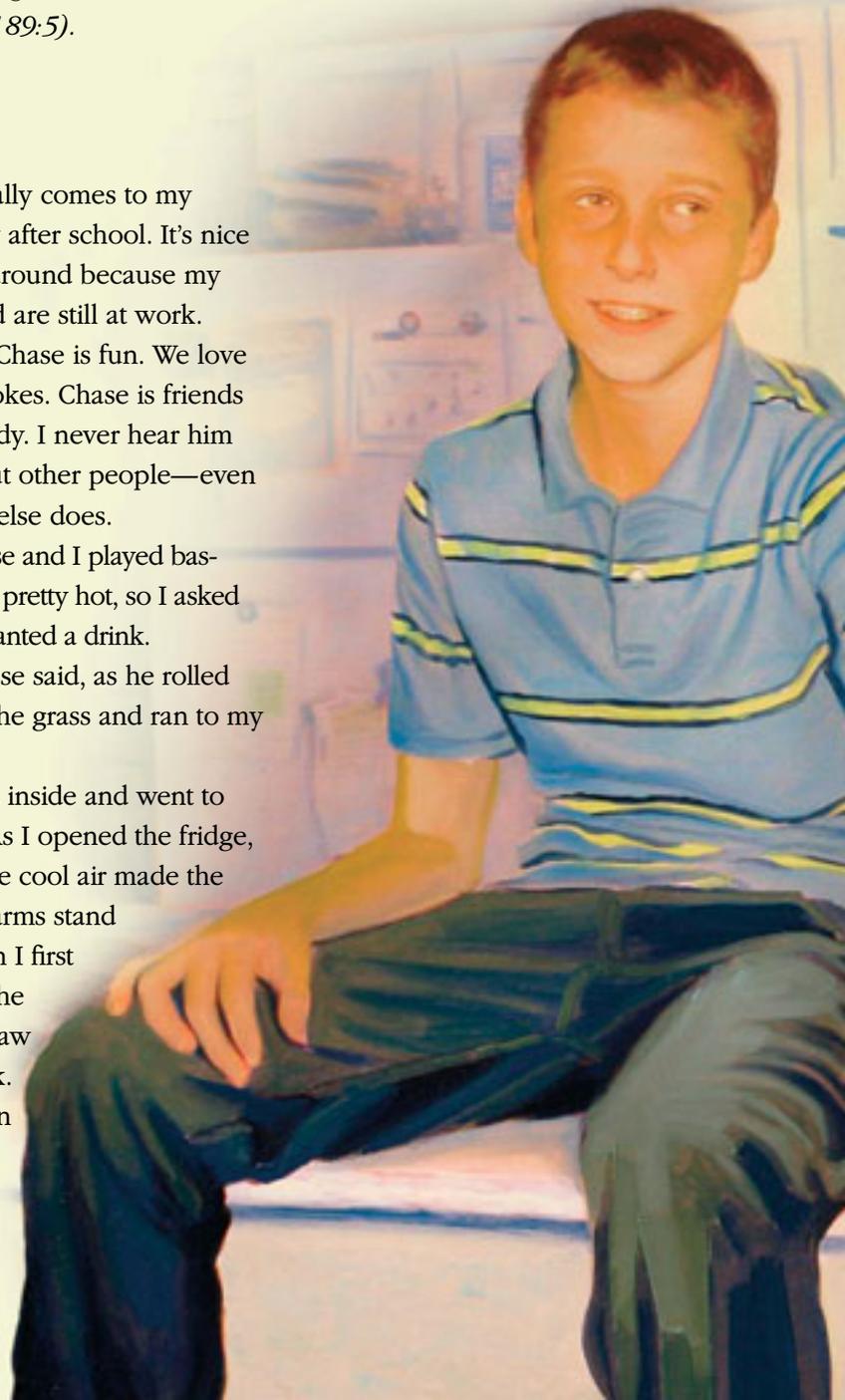
Chase comes over to my house almost every day. We live super close to each other. There is only one house in between ours. But Chase doesn't come over on Sunday or Monday. On Sundays he goes to church. On Mondays he has some kind of a family night. He invited me a couple of times. We ate brownies and played games. It was pretty fun.

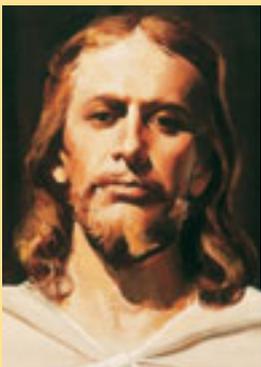
Chase usually comes to my house to play after school. It's nice to have him around because my mom and dad are still at work. Playing with Chase is fun. We love to make up jokes. Chase is friends with everybody. I never hear him talk bad about other people—even if everybody else does.

Today Chase and I played basketball. It was pretty hot, so I asked Chase if he wanted a drink.

“Sure,” Chase said, as he rolled the ball into the grass and ran to my front porch.

We walked inside and went to the kitchen. As I opened the fridge, the rush of the cool air made the hairs on our arms stand on end. When I first peeked into the fridge, I just saw juice and milk. Then, an open can in the corner caught my eye.





“The Lord has commanded you to take good care of your body. To do this, observe the Word of Wisdom.”

**For the Strength of Youth**  
(pamphlet, 2001), 36.

My dad had left a can of beer open. He would never know if we took a couple of sips. I pulled the can out.

“Want to try?” I asked.

“What is it?” Chase asked.

“It’s beer,” I said. “My dad drinks it all the time. He won’t know if we just take a sip.”

Chase looked at me. He raised his eyebrow and put his hands on his hips. Then he said something I never thought I’d hear him say.

“No way!” Chase said.

“Did you just say *no*?” I asked.

“Beer’s not good for you,” he said. “We shouldn’t drink it. It makes you do dumb things.”

“Not if you just take one little sip,” I said. “Watch, I’ll show you.”

I raised the can to my mouth, took a small sip, and smiled. It tasted gross, but I didn’t want to look uncool.

“See? Do I look any dumber to you?” I asked.

“I think I’m going to go home,” Chase said. “Don’t drink any more of that stuff. It’s not a good idea.”

As I watched Chase walk out the door and run down the sidewalk back to his house, I couldn’t help but wonder why he would do almost anything but not take even a small sip of beer.

I took another small sip after Chase left. “Blech! This stuff really is gross,” I thought as I put the can back in the corner of the fridge.

Maybe Chase was on to something after all. ■



# LEAD ME, GUIDE ME

By Anne-Mette Howland

Based on a true story

When I was 10 years old, my family moved from Denmark to Canada. We had lived there only a little while when two sisters who lived across the street from our new home invited me and my 12-year-old brother, Poul, to take a bus ride with them to see the city.

Poul and I were excited to go. My mother wasn't sure about the idea, but she finally gave in. Mother gave the two girls the money for our bus ride. She asked them to look after us because my brother and I didn't speak English yet. The girls promised they would take good care of us.

We all got on the bus and started the ride. After a while the bus stopped, and the girls motioned for us to get off. We followed them as we all started walking around the city.

Then suddenly the two girls started running in different directions! We tried to follow them, but they disappeared around unfamiliar corners. At first we thought they were just playing a trick on us and would soon

come back. But after a while we knew we were lost and on our own.

"Should we ask someone for directions?" I asked Poul.



Elaine S. Dalton,  
Young Women  
general president, "Believe!" *Liahona* and  
*Ensign*, May 2004, 110.

"Believe in yourselves. Believe that you are never alone. Believe that you will always be guided."

"We can't speak English, and we don't know our address," he answered.

"Let's call Mother," I suggested, pointing to a nearby phone booth.

"We have no money, and we don't know our phone number," Poul said.

I started to cry. Poul put his arm around me. "Stay calm, Anne-Mette. Let's say a prayer."

We huddled together and asked Heavenly Father to help us find our way back home.

After the prayer Poul pointed down a street. "I feel we need to go this way," he said.

I started to cry again. How could he know which way to go?

Poul comforted me again. "You need to have faith that we will be guided," he said.

When he said that, a feeling of peace came over me. I had the thought that I needed to have faith and let my brother guide me.

After walking a long time, we came to a pond. "Do you remember this pond?" Poul asked. "We drove past it on our way from the airport to our new home!"

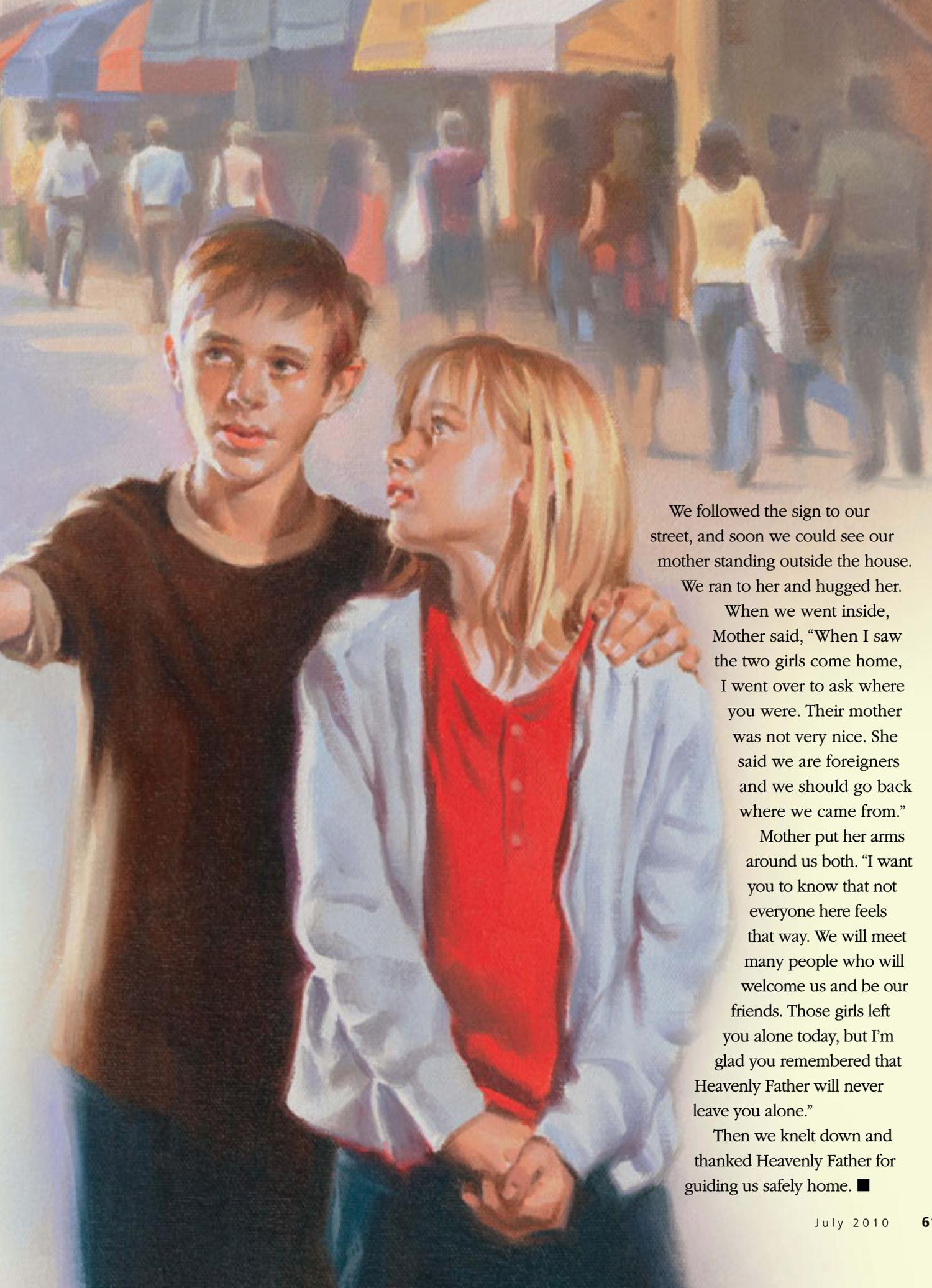
I felt better hearing the excitement in his voice. We sat down by the pond and said another prayer.

Suddenly Poul looked into the distance. "Do you see that?" he shouted. He got up and started running, and I jumped up to follow him.

"What do you see?" I called.

"It's the Laundromat sign near our house!"





We followed the sign to our street, and soon we could see our mother standing outside the house.

We ran to her and hugged her.

When we went inside, Mother said, "When I saw the two girls come home, I went over to ask where you were. Their mother was not very nice. She said we are foreigners and we should go back where we came from."

Mother put her arms around us both. "I want you to know that not everyone here feels that way. We will meet many people who will welcome us and be our friends. Those girls left you alone today, but I'm glad you remembered that Heavenly Father will never leave you alone."

Then we knelt down and thanked Heavenly Father for guiding us safely home. ■

# A Prophet's Pledge

**I**n the spring of 1848, my great-great-grandparents, Charles Stewart Miller and Mary McGowan Miller, left their home in Scotland and journeyed to St. Louis, Missouri, with a group of Saints, arriving there in 1849.

While the family was in St. Louis working to earn enough money to complete their journey to the Salt Lake Valley, a plague of cholera swept through the area. In the space of two weeks, four of the family members succumbed. The children who survived were left orphans, including my great-grandmother Margaret, who was 13 years old at the time.

The nine remaining Miller children continued to work and save for that journey their parents and brothers would never make. They left St. Louis in the spring of 1850 with four oxen and one wagon,

arriving finally in the Salt Lake Valley that same year.

Others of my ancestors faced similar hardships. Through it all, however, their testimonies remained steadfast and firm. From all of them

I received a legacy of total dedication to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

With all my heart and the fervency of my soul, I declare that God does live.

Jesus is His Son, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. He is our Redeemer; He is our Mediator with the Father. He loves us with a

love we cannot fully comprehend, and because He loves us, He gave His life for us. My gratitude to Him is beyond expression.

I pledge my life, my strength in serving Him and in directing the affairs of His Church in accordance with His will and by His inspiration. ■

*From an April 2008 general conference address.*



By President Thomas S. Monson

## A LEGACY OF FAITH

**A** legacy is a valuable gift that we inherit from our ancestors. President Monson's great-great-grandparents, Charles and Mary Miller, gave him a legacy of faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Fill in the blanks with words from their story.

The Miller family started their long trek in \_\_\_\_\_.

They worked in St. \_\_\_\_\_ to earn money to finish their journey.

A \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ killed many people.

After their parents and two brothers died, the \_\_\_\_\_ Miller children traveled on.

They had \_\_\_\_\_ oxen and \_\_\_\_\_ covered wagon.

President Monson's great-grandmother Margaret was \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

They went from St. Louis, \_\_\_\_\_, to the Salt Lake \_\_\_\_\_.

President Monson said, "I pledge my \_\_\_\_\_, my strength in serving [Jesus Christ]."

## A PIONEER TODAY

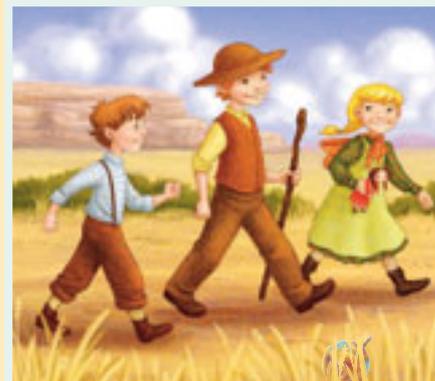
**A** pioneer is someone who goes somewhere or does something first and shows others the way to follow. Draw a picture of someone you know about or someone in your family who is a pioneer today.



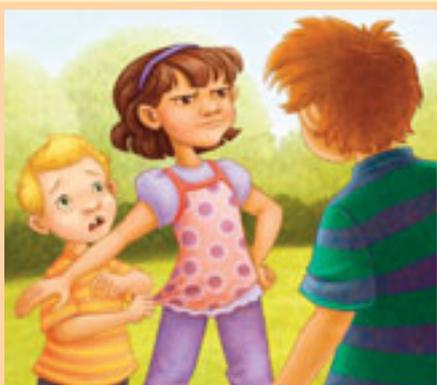
*You don't have to push a handcart,*



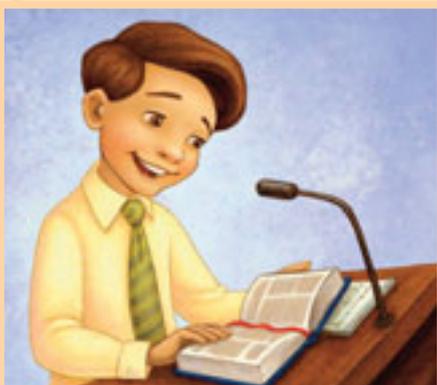
*Leave your fam'ly dear,*



*Or walk a thousand miles  
or more  
To be a pioneer!*



*You do need to have great courage,*

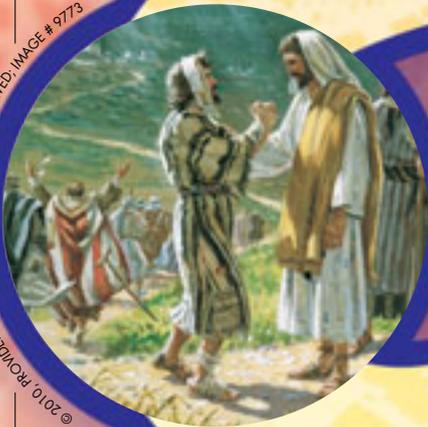
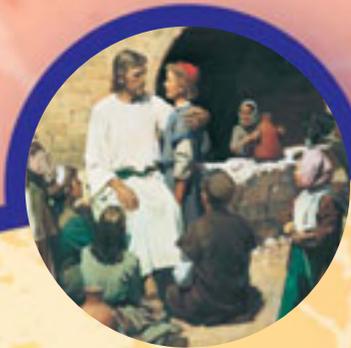
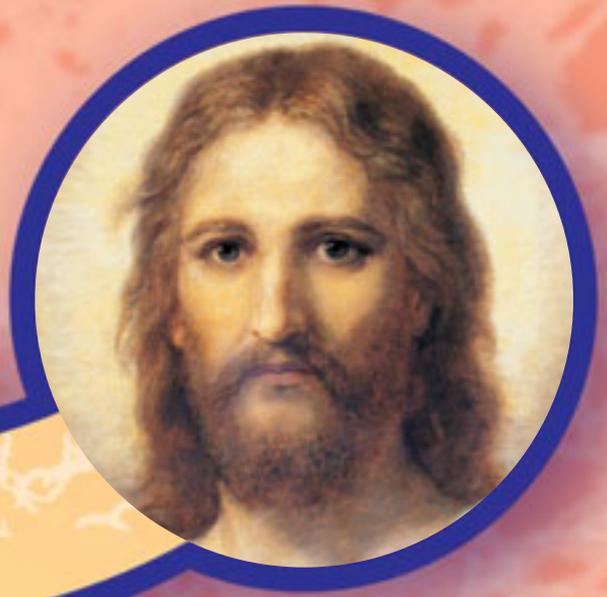


*Faith to conquer fear,*



*And work with might for a cause that's right  
To be a pioneer!*

*("To Be a Pioneer," Children's Songbook, 218-19)*



I follow Jesus Christ's example when I'm a good friend to \_\_\_\_\_.



I follow Jesus Christ's example when I help my brother or sister by \_\_\_\_\_.



I follow Jesus Christ's example when I pray to thank Heavenly Father for \_\_\_\_\_.



I follow Jesus Christ's example by \_\_\_\_\_.

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# I Can Follow Jesus Christ's Example

By Sandra Tanner and Cristina Franco

Jesus Christ said, "Come, follow me." We can follow Jesus by doing the things He did. The pictures on the opposite page show how Jesus encouraged people to have faith in Him. He taught that it is important to give thanks for blessings we receive. He gathered the children around Him so He could be with them and teach them. Jesus loved the people He was with and told us to love our neighbors. With the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus taught about loving others.

A traveler was attacked by thieves and left to die. A priest and then a Levite saw the hurt man, but each of them passed by without helping. Finally, a Samaritan came by and stopped to help the man. He bandaged the man's wounds and took him to an inn. The Samaritan left money with the innkeeper to help care for the man. (See Luke 10:30–37.) This story shows us what it means to follow the commandment to love our neighbors.



## July 2010 Scripture Journal

*Read* Luke 18:22.

*Pray* to Heavenly Father to know how you can follow Jesus.

*Memorize* Luke 18:22.

*Choose* one of these activities, or create your own:

- Help someone else memorize Luke 18:22.
- Do the activity on page 64. Cut out the footprints. When you do something to follow Jesus Christ's example, write it on the blank line, and attach a footprint to the path.
- Become a friend to someone who has a disability or is lonely. Think of the example of Jesus to help you know what to do. You can visit and spend time with the person and encourage and help him or her.

How does what you have done help you understand this scripture?

*Write* in your journal or draw a picture about what you have done. ■

# Pioneer Parasols

*“Charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever” (Moroni 7:47).*

By Marli Walker

*Based on a true story*

**S**arah! Sarah, wake up!” five-year-old Christiana Larsen said to her little sister. “It’s time to leave.”

Three-year-old Sarah struggled to open her eyes.

“But it’s still dark outside,” she complained sleepily.

“I know, but Mama says we have to get an early start. The ship to America leaves soon.”

The Larsen family had joined the Church in Denmark. Now they would be making the long journey to join the Saints in the Salt Lake Valley.

Christiana helped Sarah get dressed. Then the little girls tearfully took one last look around their comfortable bedroom. They knew it would be a long time before they would sleep in a real bed again.

“Don’t forget your parasol, Sarah,” Christiana said as she picked up her own lacy silk parasol. “Mama said she would pack them with the bedding.”

Mama and Papa had said they couldn’t take anything besides necessities on the trip to America. After the bedding, clothing, and tools were packed, there wouldn’t be much room for anything else.

But Christiana and Sarah had begged to take just one favorite thing to their new home. After all, they were leaving behind their dolls, books, and toys. Each girl chose her pretty parasol.

As the sun rose, Christiana and her family boarded the ship that would sail to America. They were excited to go to Zion, even though they had to leave friends, family, and their home.

The ocean voyage was long and tiresome. During the hot afternoons on the ship, the two girls used their pretty parasols to keep the sun off their heads. If the wind blew in the right direction, the ship sailed steadily on. But if it changed course, the ship was forced back, often as far as it had already come.

When the Larsens landed in America, they bought a wagon and oxen and began the long journey to the Salt Lake Valley. The ride in the wagon was bumpy and hot, so Christiana and Sarah often walked instead.

Like many other pioneer families, Christiana’s family experienced hardships and tragedy along the way. Christiana’s newborn brother

died during their journey and was buried on the plains.

After the Larsen family reached the Salt Lake Valley in 1857, Christiana loved to go to church with other children her age. Christiana and Sarah happily carried their parasols to church every Sunday to keep the hot desert sun off their faces.

As the days and weeks went by, the family’s money and food began to run out. One night Christiana heard her parents discussing the problem. Her father said he knew of a family who had been blessed with a good harvest of grain. The Larsens could trade something they had for some flour. But what did they have to trade?

Christiana spoke up. “You can trade Sarah’s and my parasols, Papa.”

“But you love your parasols, Christiana. I couldn’t do that!”

“It’s all right, Papa,” Christiana said. “We need the food more than we need the parasols.”



ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN CALL

The next day Christiana's father traded the beautiful lacy parasols for some flour. The flour provided food for the whole family.

That night, as Christiana got

ready for bed, she looked sadly at the corner where her lovely parasol had stood. But as she remembered the wonderful bread she had eaten for supper, her sadness turned

to gratitude. As she said her prayers that night, she thanked Heavenly Father for her lovely parasol, which helped to feed her family. ■



**S**acrifice is the crowning test of the gospel. It means consecrating time, talents, energy, and earthly possessions to further the work of God."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Are You a Saint?" *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 96.



Beatriz da S., age 10, Brazil

When I was little, my mother took me to attend many baptisms. But last year, when I was old enough to be baptized, I was very nervous. I was afraid that I couldn't participate in the ordinance correctly, like those I had watched. Above all, I was afraid to go into the water. But the Holy Ghost helped me. I seemed to keep hearing the words, "Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid!" The Holy Ghost helped me overcome these problems so I could be baptized, which was very important to me. I was very blessed. When I came out of the water, I was not afraid of the water any longer, and I felt good inside.



Bryan K., age 9, Taiwan

## WORK HARD AND BE PREPARED

I did not do well on my Malay language paper during the first semester examination, and my rank in class dropped badly. I was very upset, but I knew only I was to blame, because I had spent many hours after school playing with my friends instead of doing my homework and studying. My mother and I made a plan to help me improve. I would finish my homework without a fuss as she asked each day, and both of us would pray for me to do well on the second semester exam. I worked hard the whole semester. A week before the exam, my mother was prompted to have me prepare a particular topic for the composition portion of the exam. The teacher decides what the topic will be, and we are graded on how well we write about that topic.

On the day of the exam, I was

surprised when I saw that the topic the teacher had chosen was the very one I had prepared for! Because I had worked hard and prepared, even though I did not know this would be the topic, I wrote very well and got an A+! My teacher was surprised that I had improved so much.

I gained a testimony regarding work. I know that when we pray and work hard, we will receive inspiration to help us succeed at our work.

Ethan D., age 11, Malaysia





Gino A., age 6, Philippines



Melanie A., age 3, from Mexico, likes to help her mom by picking up her toys after playing. Now that she is three, she helps at church by sliding the chairs to others so they can stack them up after Sunday meetings. Melanie loves President Monson and loves to see him on television at conference time.



Edwin M., age 9, from Costa Rica, is a good singer and likes to sing "A Child's Prayer." He enjoys swimming. At school he often explains the gospel to his friends and reminds them not to say bad words.



Sometimes when I am lying in bed, I imagine what could happen if the house was on fire, and I get very afraid. When that happens, I pray to Heavenly Father. Then I get a restful feeling, and I can fall asleep easily. I am grateful that I can pray to Heavenly Father whenever I am afraid or sad. He helps me to overcome everything.

Lea M., age 9, Germany

If you would like to submit a drawing, photo, experience, testimony, or letter for Our Page, e-mail it to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org), with "Our Page" in the subject line.

Each submission **must** include the child's full name and age plus the parent's name, ward or branch, stake or district, and the parent's written permission (e-mail is acceptable) to use the child's photo and submission. Submissions may be edited for clarity or length.

*"Jesus is our loving friend. He is always near" (Children's Songbook, 58).*

# WHO IS JESUS?

By Eliana Osborn

*Based on a true story*

1. "Watch out! The allosaurus is going to get you!" roared Teddy as he chased Cole's dinosaur around the couch with his allosaurus.

"No one can stop me. I'm a tyrannosaurus rex," Cole said, bouncing his dinosaur along the walls.



3. "Who's that on your wall?" Teddy asked, eating his string cheese.

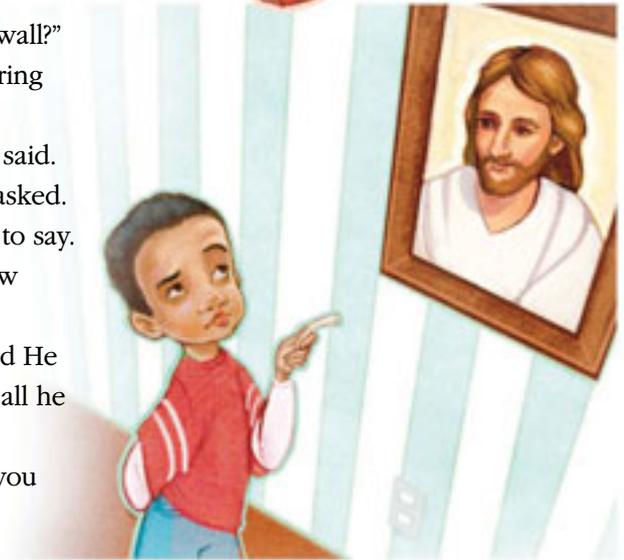
"Jesus, of course," Cole said.

"Who is Jesus?" Teddy asked.

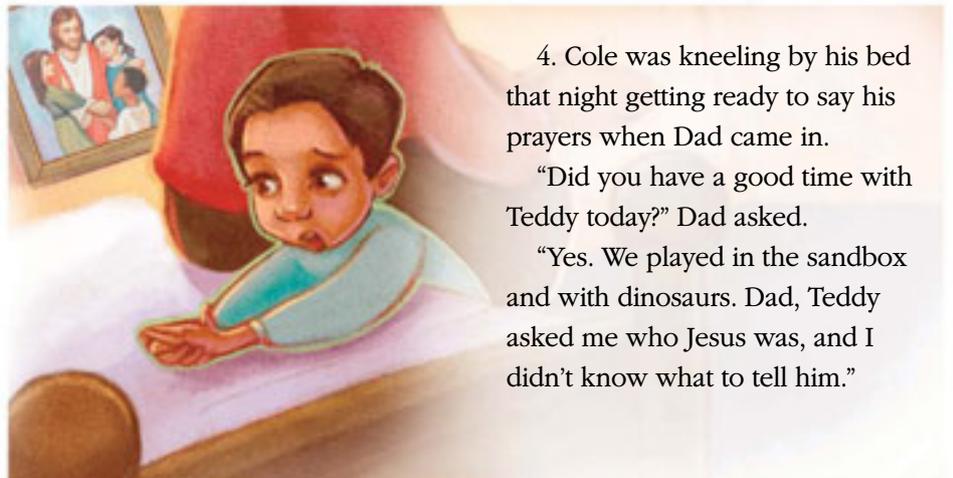
Cole didn't know what to say. He thought everyone knew about Jesus.

"He lives in heaven. And He loves all the people," was all he could think to answer.

"OK," Teddy said. "Do you want to go outside?"



2. The boys stomped through the house like loud, hungry dinosaurs until Mom brought out a snack.



4. Cole was kneeling by his bed that night getting ready to say his prayers when Dad came in.

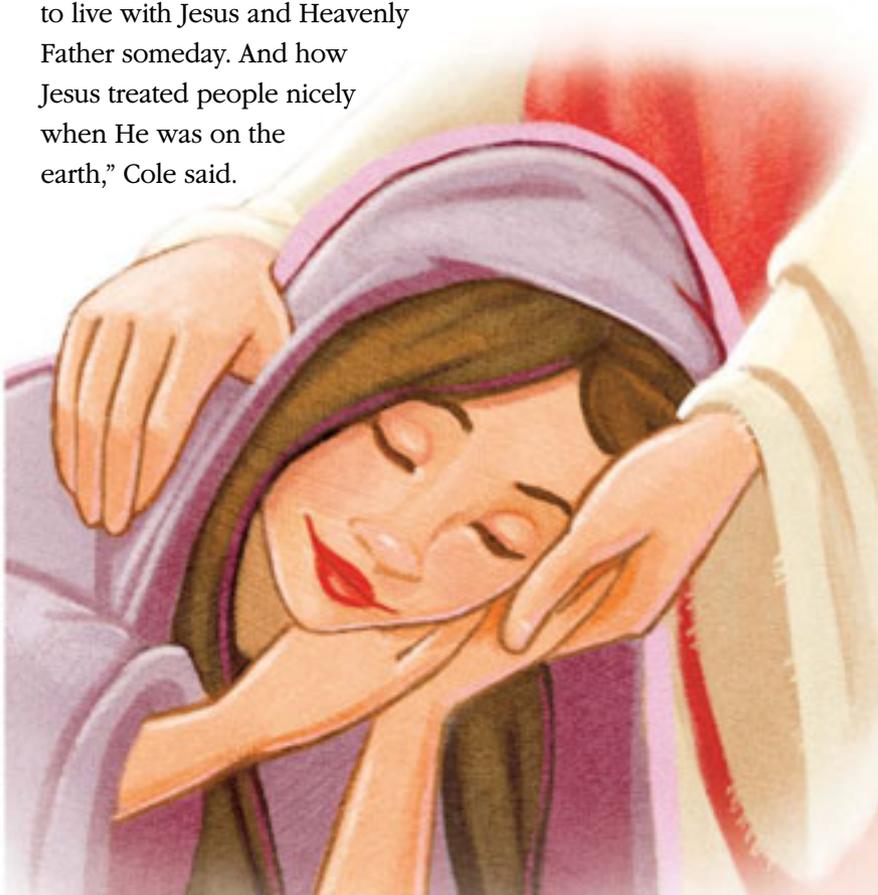
"Did you have a good time with Teddy today?" Dad asked.

"Yes. We played in the sandbox and with dinosaurs. Dad, Teddy asked me who Jesus was, and I didn't know what to tell him."

5. Dad pointed to a picture on the wall above Cole's bed. It was of Jesus surrounded by children. "What do you think about when you look at this painting?" Dad asked.

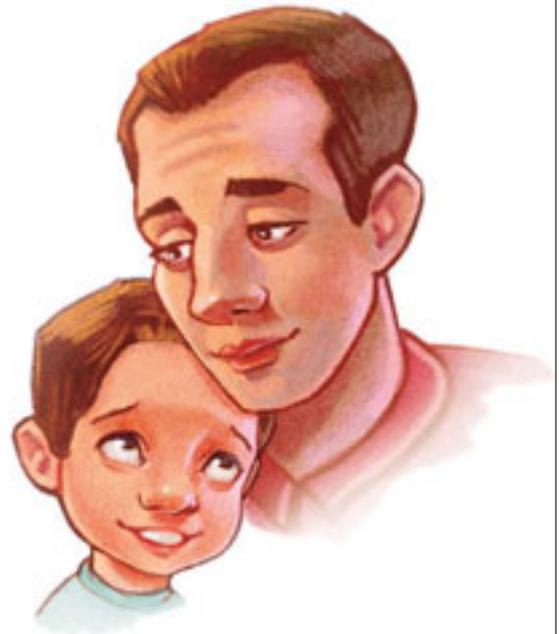
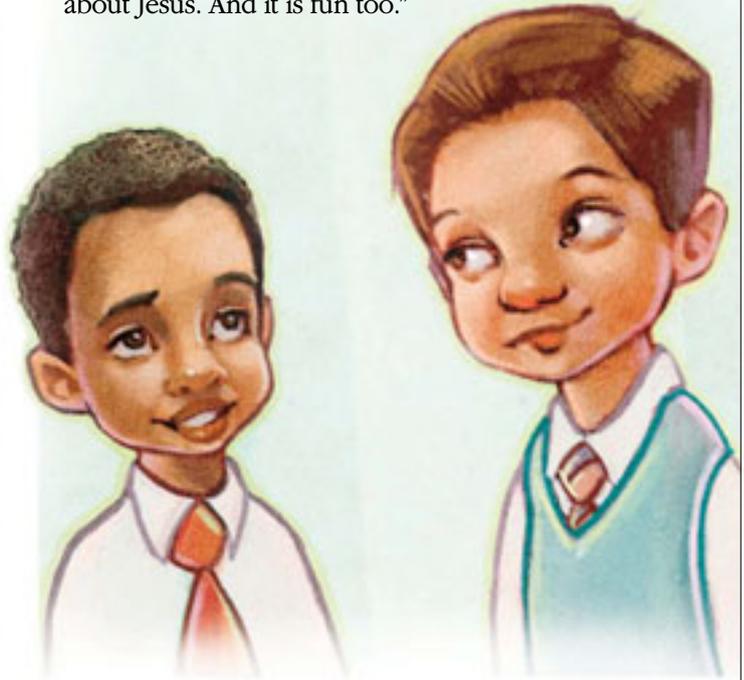


6. "I think about how I want to live with Jesus and Heavenly Father someday. And how Jesus treated people nicely when He was on the earth," Cole said.



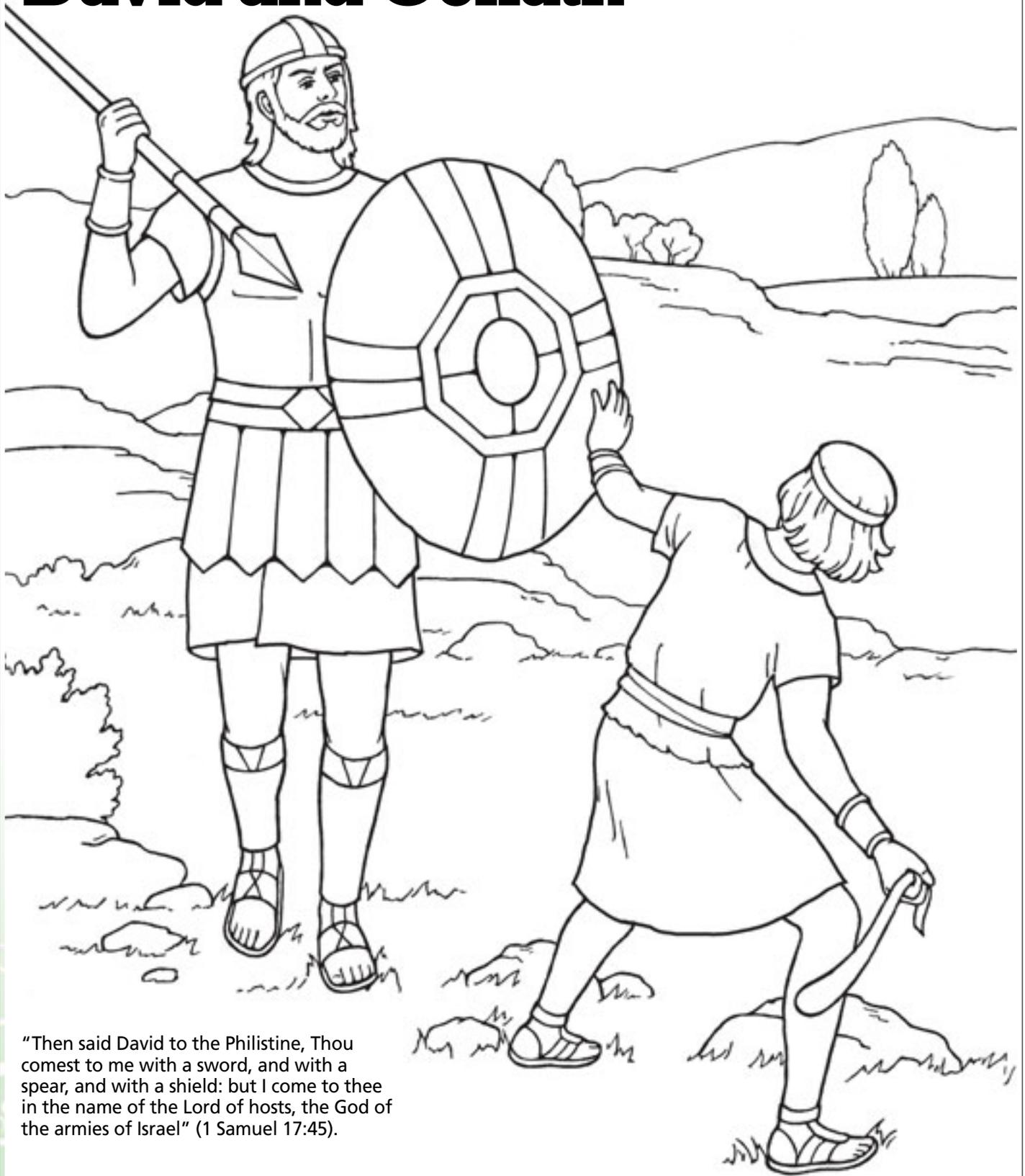
7. "It sounds like you could tell Teddy both of those things," Dad said.

"Maybe Teddy would like to come to church with me sometime," Cole said. "Then he could learn lots of things about Jesus. And it is fun too."



8. Dad kissed Cole on the top of his head. "You're a good boy, Cole. Heavenly Father and Jesus are both proud of you. And Teddy is lucky to have you for a friend." ■

# David and Goliath



"Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (1 Samuel 17:45).

# Pioneer Trek

By Arie Van De Graaff

These pioneers are trying to get home. Can you help them find the right path?



ILLUSTRATION BY ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

## Sunday School Presidencies Learning Important Role

By Lauren Allen

Church Magazines

Each Sunday in the Highland Utah 30th Ward, Richard Christiansen and his counselors in the Sunday School presidency go through a routine familiar in almost every unit of the Church. They make sure that each class has a teacher and help students get from the hallways to the classrooms.

However, Brother Christiansen has caught the vision that his responsibilities are not limited to herding students and ringing bells.

One of the primary roles of each quorum and auxiliary organization is to teach members gospel principles essential to their salvation. The role of a Sunday School presidency, such as Brother Christiansen and his counselors, is to assist auxiliary and priesthood leaders in this charge by acting as teacher training specialists within the ward.

“Teaching is the primary means the Church has to strengthen members, help them deepen their witness of the Restoration, and gain salvation and exaltation,” said Russell T. Osguthorpe, Sunday School general president.

As ward Sunday School president, Brother Christiansen has the responsibility to serve as a resource for parents, leaders, and teachers to help improve the instruction that occurs in the home and in the Church.

“Teaching is what it’s all about, and being effective as a teacher helps others be excited to learn,” Brother Christiansen said.

One of the tools at Sunday School presidencies’ disposal is the teacher improvement course that may be offered during Sunday School. The course consists of 12 lessons found in the *Teaching, No Greater Call* manual and may be taught by a member of the Sunday School presidency under the direction of the bishop.

“This is a course that can be helpful to any Church member who is interested in improving his or her teaching skills,” Brother Osguthorpe said, whether in the home or the classroom. “The lessons help participants learn how to teach by the Spirit, how to invite active, diligent learning, and how to teach so that members will be eager to apply the principles of the gospel in their own lives.”

According to Brother Osguthorpe, Sunday School presidents attend ward council regularly, as outlined in *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2*, so that they can understand the bishop’s goals for the members of the ward and can counsel together on how to help improve teaching so those goals can be reached.



During a ward or branch council the Sunday School president could be invited by the bishop or branch president to provide instruction on principles relating to gospel teaching and learning. Brother Osguthorpe suggests that he could also report on attendance in youth and adult Sunday School classes and invite the help of other ward leaders to assist those who may be struggling.

“The most effective teaching in the Church occurs in homes where faithful parents live gospel principles and teach those principles to their children. The auxiliaries exist to support the home in these most sacred duties. The Sunday School presidency is a resource in the ward to help both parents and teachers fulfill their responsibilities,” said Brother Osguthorpe.

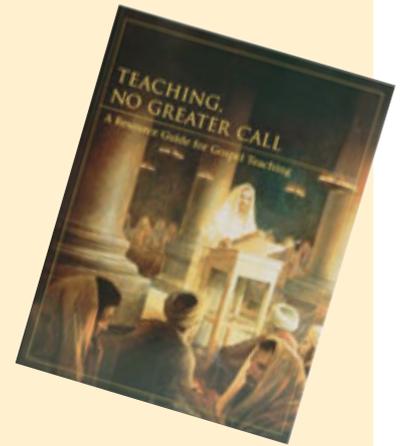
Successful gospel teaching on the part of parents and Church leaders can strengthen members’ testimonies and help them come unto Christ, he said.

“The only reasonable way to measure the effectiveness of gospel teaching [in a ward] is to observe the faithfulness of the members. If more young men are serving missions, if more youth are [growing up and] marrying in the temple, if more parents are reading the scriptures, holding family home evening, and worshipping in the temple regularly, teaching is improving.” ■

## RESOURCES TO IMPROVE TEACHING

Through use of the scriptures, the *Teaching, No Greater Call* (item no. 36123) manual, and the “Gospel Teaching and Leadership” section of the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2*, members may improve their teaching and fulfill the call of President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ “better than we have ever done before” (“We Have a Work to Do,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 88).

“We must strengthen ourselves and our people to get our teachers to speak out of their hearts rather than out of their books, to communicate their love for the Lord and their precious work, and somehow it will catch fire in the hearts of those they teach,” said President Hinckley (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1977], 619–20).



The purpose of the Teaching the Gospel course found in *Teaching, No Greater Call* is to help Church members develop their teaching abilities and realize the importance of improving gospel teaching. The course covers topics such as teaching by the Spirit, inviting diligent learning, and using effective teaching methods.

The *Teaching, No Greater Call* manual is available in more than 30 languages. Contact local distribution centers for availability. ■

## CHANGES TO TEACHER IMPROVEMENT EXPLAINED

In a letter dated November 17, 2006, the First Presidency announced changes to how teacher improvement should be handled. Some confusion persists. The following

### DISCONTINUED:

The *positions* of stake teacher improvement coordinator and ward teacher improvement coordinator were discontinued.

Quarterly teacher improvement meetings were discontinued.

identifies what the policy discontinued and what it did not.

### CONTINUED:

The *responsibilities* of the teacher improvement coordinator now belong to the ward or branch Sunday School president.

The teacher improvement course in *Teaching, No Greater Call* may still be taught as needed. ■

# New Mission Presidents Begin Service

The majority of the more than 100 new mission presidents and their wives began their three-year service this month in missions around the world.

Mission	New President
Alabama Birmingham	Richard N. Holzapfel
Argentina Buenos Aires North	Richard M. Gulbrandsen
Argentina Buenos Aires South	Michael J. Stapley
Argentina Córdoba	Alfredo L. Salas
Arizona Mesa	R. Spence Ellsworth
Arizona Tempe	To be announced
Armenia Yerevan	Reese A. Carter
Australia Brisbane	Fritjof F. Langeland
Australia Melbourne	Dennis R. Lifferth
Australia Perth	Paul L. Cahoon
Brazil Campinas	R. Marshall Tanner
Brazil Curitiba	Derek L. Cordon
Brazil Goiânia	Ramon C. Prieto
Brazil João Pessoa	Gordon J. Hall
Brazil Londrina	Eduardo L. M. Tavares
Brazil Ribeirão Preto	Gilson R. Prieto
Brazil Santa Maria	Isaias D. Ribeiro
Bolivia La Paz	Hector K. Quintanilla
Bolivia Santa Cruz	Fernando E. Calderon
California Carlsbad	Bruce M. Cook
California Long Beach	Ted F. Hubert II
California Los Angeles Bernardino	Stephen R. Baker William E. Jardine
Canada Edmonton	Chris W. Campbell
Canada Montréal	Nelson C. Cannon
Canada Toronto West	Bradford J. Brower
Chile Antofagasta	Leland E. Bruce
Chile Concepción	Neall W. Humphrey
Chile Rancagua	Richard W. King
Chile Santiago West	James D. MacArthur
Colorado Denver South	Alan R. Maynes
Colombia Barranquilla	Carlos A. Gaviria
Czech Prague	David R. Irwin
Democratic Republic of Congo Lubumbashi	Gary L. Packer
Denmark Copenhagen	Jens H. Andersen
Ecuador Guayaquil South	Javier Montalti
England Leeds	Jerel D. Lindley
Florida Jacksonville	James W. Barry
Florida Orlando	Garth V. Hall
Florida Tallahassee	Dale Jensen
Florida Tampa	Bruce P. Summerhays
Guatemala Retalhuleu	José E. Maravilla
Hawaii Honolulu	John C. Dalton IV Ronald L. Veirs
Honduras San Pedro Sula	Kent H. Cannon
Idaho Boise	Randy D. Funk
India Bangalore	Randy D. Funk
Indiana Indianapolis	Kent H. Collins
Indonesia Jakarta	George H. Groberg
Iowa Des Moines	Dirk O. Jergensen
Italy Milan	David R. Wolfgramm
Italy Rome	Thomas Kelly
Japan Nagoya	Scott O. Baird
Kenya Nairobi	Steven H. Broadbent
Korea Daejeon	Mark C. Furniss
Mexico Chihuahua	Gerardo Angulo
Mexico Culiacán	Rolando Cantu
Mexico León	Karim Del Valle
Mexico Mérida	Netzahualcoyotl Salinas
Mexico Mexico City East	Robert H. Hicken
Mexico Mexico City Northwest	Tom R. Tervort
Mexico Mexico City West	Carlos Villarreal
Mexico Monterrey East	Alan R. Walker
Mexico Villahermosa	Nicolas Castañeda
Michigan Detroit	Douglas D. Holmes
Missouri St. Louis	Stephen D. Clark
Mongolia Ulaanbaatar	Kris J. Mecham
Nevada Las Vegas West	Jerry B. Black
New Hampshire Manchester	David L. Wilkey
New Mexico Albuquerque	Wayne K. Miller
New Mexico Farmington	Spencer V. Jones
New York Rochester	Jack R. Christianson
Nicaragua Managua North	Carlos F. Arredondo
Nicaragua Managua South	Javier F. Monestel
Nigeria Enugu	John K. Buah
Oklahoma Oklahoma City	Nolan S. Taylor
Panamá Panamá City	Craig L. Ward
Paraguay Asunción North	Horacio D. Madariaga
Pennsylvania Philadelphia	William A. Schaefermeyer
Peru Arequipa	Arturo Fernández
Peru Cusco	Wilson B. Calderon
Peru Lima North	Lawrence P. Blunck
Peru Lima West	J. Scott Dorius
Peru Trujillo	Terry D. Turk
Philippines Butuan	Mernard P. Donato
Philippines Cagayan de Oro	William A. Hernaez
Philippines Cauayan	Rodolfo A. Carlos
Philippines Iloilo	Ryan V. Pagaduan
Philippines Naga	Ronald D. Bliesner
Philippines Quezon City	David W. DeLaMare
Poland Warsaw	Stanford W. Nielson
Puerto Rico San Juan	Jorge M. Alvarado
Russia Moscow	Stephen J. Sorenson
Russia Samara	Ralph J. Sartori
Sierra Leone Freetown	Richard Roggia
South Africa Durban	James C. Von Stetten
Spain Málaga	Richard R. Clegg
Taiwan Taichung	Clark T. Bishop
Texas Fort Worth	Joseph M. Sagers
Texas McAllen	Stephen J. Trayner
Texas San Antonio	Stephen E. Jones
Tonga Nuku'alofa	'Aisake K. Tukuafu
Uganda Kampala	Eric C. Jackson
Uruguay Montevideo West	Ronald W. Heaton
Utah Salt Lake City	Bruce R. Winn
Utah Salt Lake City South	Bruce E. Miller
Utah St. George	Keith G. Leonard
Venezuela Valencia	Jorge G. Montoya
Virginia Richmond	James C. Perry
Washington DC North	James R. Matsumori
Washington Everett	D. Keith Wilson
Washington Kennewick	Leonard D. Greer
Washington Seattle	Todd S. Larkin
Wisconsin Milwaukee	Timothy M. Jones ■

## Church Makes **Mission Changes**

**T**o better align resources to changing needs, the Church has created 10 new missions and consolidated others with neighboring missions. The resulting number of missions will be 340.

The Church has created the following missions:

Democratic Republic of Congo Lubumbashi, Guatemala Retalhuleu, Mexico Mexico City Northwest, Mexico Villahermosa, New Mexico Farmington, Nicaragua Managua North (the Nicaragua Managua Mission will be called the Nicaragua Managua South Mission), Peru Cusco, Peru Lima West, Philippines Iloilo, and Utah St. George.

The Church has combined the following missions:

The Australia Melbourne East and West Missions will become the Australia Melbourne Mission.

The Australia Sydney North and South Missions will become the Australia Sydney Mission.

The Puerto Rico San Juan East and West Missions will become the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission, with parts of the east mission being consolidated into the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East and the West Indies Missions.

The Germany Hamburg Mission will become part of the Germany Berlin Mission.

The Germany Munich/Austria,

Switzerland Zürich, and portions of the Germany Frankfurt Missions will become the Alpine German-Speaking Mission.

The Illinois Chicago North and South Missions will become the Illinois Chicago Mission.

The Illinois Peoria Mission will be consolidated into a realignment of the Iowa Des Moines, Missouri St. Louis, and Nebraska Omaha Missions.

The Ireland Dublin and Scotland Edinburgh Missions will become the Scotland/Ireland Mission.

The Italy Catania Mission will be consolidated into a realignment of the Italy Rome and Italy Milan missions.

The Japan Hiroshima Mission will be consolidated into a realignment of the Japan Fukuoka and Japan Kobe Missions.

The Korea Seoul West Mission will become part of the Korea Seoul Mission.

The New Jersey Cherry Hill Mission will be consolidated into a realignment of the New Jersey Morristown and Pennsylvania Philadelphia Missions.

The Ohio Cincinnati Mission will be consolidated into a realignment of the Ohio Columbus and West Virginia Charleston Missions.

The Spain Bilbao Mission will be consolidated into a realignment of the Spain Barcelona, Spain Madrid, and Spain Málaga missions. ■

## **Elder Oaks Addresses Harvard Law Students**

**E**lder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently addressed students at Harvard Law School during their fifth annual Mormonism 101 Series.

Each year a member of the Church is invited by the Harvard Law School Latter-day Saint Students Organization to speak about the basic beliefs of Mormonism and to answer questions students may have.

Elder Oaks explained the LDS belief in Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost as three individual beings, separate in identity and unified in purpose. He also explained the purpose of life through a brief account of the plan of salvation.

He offered his testimony of Jesus Christ and the power of the Atonement, saying, “To me, the miracle of the Atonement of Jesus Christ is incomprehensible, but the Holy Ghost has given me a witness of its truthfulness, and I rejoice that I can spend my life in proclaiming it.”

He went on to explain the Church’s reliance on sources of truth, including modern-day revelation and scripture.

“We are not grounded in the wisdom of the world or the philosophies of men—however traditional or respected they may be,” he said. “Our testimony of Jesus Christ is based on the revelations of God to His prophets and to us individually.” ■

## Cardinal Lauds Joint Efforts to Defend Religious Freedom

In the first address given by a cardinal at Brigham Young University, his Eminence Francis Cardinal George said Catholics and Latter-day Saints must stand together in defense of religious freedom in the United States.

“When government fails to protect the consciences of its citizens, it falls to religious bodies, especially those formed

by the gospel of Jesus Christ, to become the defenders of human freedom,” he said.

Cardinal George, the Archbishop of Chicago and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, addressed a group of 12,000 Latter-day Saint students and faculty members in the Marriott Center in Provo, Utah, USA.

He expressed his gratitude that “Catholics and Latter-day Saints have come to see one another as trustworthy partners in the

defense of shared moral principles.”

Both churches have stood together on issues such as abortion, pornography, and gay marriage, he noted.

“Religious freedom cannot be reduced to freedom of worship nor even freedom of private conscience,” he said. “Religious freedom means that religious groups as well as religious individuals have a right to exercise their influence in the public square.” ■

## WORLD BRIEFS

### Ogden Temple to Undergo Renovation

The nearly 40-year-old Ogden Utah Temple will undergo a major 18- to 24-month renovation.

The core design of the temple interior will remain the same, but the exterior will feature a new design, with new stone and glass.

The building will be remodeled to meet seismic requirements, feature the latest technology, and include more energy-efficient equipment. An underground parking structure will also be added.

### Honor Bee Charm Created

In conjunction with several changes to the Personal Progress program, an Honor Bee charm is now available to young women who go beyond the regular requirements.

To receive the charm, a young woman may reread the Book of Mormon and complete 40 additional hours of service after receiving her Young Womanhood Recognition medallion. Part of this service must include helping another young woman complete her Personal Progress goals. This award is a small charm is worn on the same necklace with the medallion.



### Exhibit Features Latin American Saints

The Church History Museum recently opened a new bilingual exhibit called “Mi Vida, Mi Historia: Stories of Faith and Inspiration from Latin American Saints,” which highlights spiritual experiences from the lives of 24 members. Their photos are hung throughout the exhibit, and interactive audiovisual kiosks allow visitors further insight into participants’ lives. The exhibit is available online in Spanish and English at [lds.org/museum](https://lds.org/museum). Click on **Exhibits and Galleries**, then on **Current Exhibits**. ■

## COMMENT

### They Reflect the Savior's Love

While studying the First Presidency Message, we noticed the ideas about how to adapt the teachings to small children and to teenagers. These will help our family as well as the families we visit. We know of your commitment to making gospel truths simple, personally applicable, and significantly enduring. President Monson is the prophet of God, and those in the First Presidency reflect the Savior's love as they teach us and pray for us. We also love them and pray for them.

Dias family, Brazil

### Invaluable Posters

The posters in the magazine are invaluable to our family. They send a short, clear, visual message of the teachings of the Church. We have hung a frame next to our front door, and every few weeks we trade out the poster. This helps all of us keep the commandments. We have printed every poster available on the Internet since 2001—they are truly a blessing to us. Thank you!

Schwarzwälder family, Germany

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

## FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

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

**"Blessed by My Calling,"** p. 11: As you teach the lesson, consider discussing how the Lord eased the author's burdens as she served with all her heart. Invite family members to share how they have been blessed as they have served the Lord.

**"What Did the Pioneers Bring?"** p. 16: Consider listing the four points of wisdom President Stephen L Richards presents in this article. Discuss how each of these can strengthen your family and bless the lives of those who follow in your footsteps.

**"Sharing the Gospel with Confidence,"** p. 30: Consider inviting your family to discuss how to apply the following statement from the article: "Please remember that you do not need to feel that you must justify your beliefs; you simply need to explain them in a spirit of love and kindness. The truth always prevails when true doctrine is taught."

**"He Told Me, 'No Way,'"** p. 58: After reading or summarizing the story, consider role-playing ways to respond when faced with temptation. Family members could practice saying aloud "No way," just as Chase did. ■



## What about **Family Home Evening?**

"What about family home evening? Aren't we going to have it tonight?" my six-year-old daughter, Leilani, asked. A feeling of guilt flooded over me. My husband and I had been trying to hold family home evening, but with many claims on our time, we had fallen out of the habit. Leilani's reminder made us recommit to not neglect family home evening for any reason.

As Leilani and her sister, Nadia, have gotten older, they have wanted to teach during family home evening what they have learned in Primary. They even draw their own visual aids to illustrate the principles they want to teach. We rejoice as parents to see them talking about the gospel and often can expand on the subject they have chosen.

"What about family home evening? Aren't we going to have it tonight?" are words I am trying hard not to hear repeated. I know that when children are young is the best time to teach them. The world may exercise its influence, but if we work and grow alongside our children, we can reach our goal of raising men and women of principle.

Patricia Cárdenas de Prado, Guatemala ■

## FIGHT, FLEE, OR TAKE THE BLOWS?

By R. Val Johnson  
Church Magazines

I wasn't sure what to do that afternoon in my 14th year. I was backed up against the outside wall of my school, and a bully was hitting me. Since I was surrounded by half a dozen of his friends, I decided to take the blows.

He punched me, then kicked me. Many times.

Finally he and his friends left. My bus came, and I climbed aboard. I didn't raise my head until the bus pulled up to my stop. Even 50 years later, I still wonder if I acted out of cowardice or Christian forbearance.

This experience underscores some puzzling questions we face as Latter-day Saints. When our beliefs are attacked, do we fight, flee, or just take the blows?

The Savior's words seem clear: "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39). I've often wondered, Was Jesus simply using a metaphor to teach His followers not to respond to insults with bloody retaliation, as was the usual practice? Perhaps.

And yet, consider the counsel in the Doctrine and Covenants.

In 1833 the Church was facing intense persecution, especially in Missouri. In defense of their lives, Church members took up arms. At that point, the Lord revealed section 98. In it, He taught them to forbear—within limits. They had a right to defend themselves, but if they refrained, He would reward them. If the offenders sought forgiveness, the Saints were to forgive "seventy times seven" (verse 40). As for going to battle, they were to first sue for peace and engage only if the Lord commanded it.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STOKER

*When faced with persecution, what options do we have as disciples of Christ?*

Times have changed since those terrible days, but in some ways the Church remains under attack. Our doctrine is generally misunderstood. Uninformed assumptions, illogical accusations, and outright lies are passed around as truth.

What are we to do? As disciples who strive to "stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places" (Mosiah 18:9), we must do something. We can't run. So do we fight or just take the blows?

In such matters, we can look to the prophets. In recent general conferences, I've noted a number of talks explaining the Church's position on controversial issues. The speakers don't castigate, but neither do they capitulate. Often they seek common ground with those who disagree with us. They are respectful. They try to understand and be understood.<sup>1</sup>

There may be times when the only choice is to fight, flee, or take the blows. But often we have a better option. We can reach out in love, as Jesus and His Apostles do. ■

### NOTE

1. See Dallin H. Oaks, "Love and Law," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 26; Jeffrey R. Holland, "Safety for the Soul," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 88; Jeffrey R. Holland, "My Words . . . Never Cease," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2008, 91; Robert S. Wood, "Instruments of the Lord's Peace," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2006, 93.



## WORDS OF CHRIST

### The Carriers, by J. Kirk Richards

*On November 4, 1856, rescuers and the weary and starving Martin handcart company came to the Sweetwater River in Wyoming. Chunks of ice floated in the river, which was 100 feet (30 m) wide and waist deep in places. When the pioneers saw it, memories of the suffering and deaths caused from crossing the Platte River a few days earlier caused many to cry to the Lord for help. Several young rescuers volunteered to carry women, children, and the weak across the icy river. It took most of the day.*

*Their compassion and courage exemplify the spirit of the Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount—as do the sacrifice and suffering of these handcart Saints struggling to Zion.*

*“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. . . .*

*“Blessed are they which are persecuted, for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .*

*“Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:4, 10, 12).*



COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

**T**he growth of the Church in Central and South American countries has been impressive and continues today. Members here love the Book of Mormon (see above).

However, not all nations allow us to share the gospel within their boundaries. As other prophets have, our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has called upon us to continue our faith and prayers “in behalf of those areas where our influence is limited and where we are not allowed to share the gospel freely at this time. Miracles can occur as we do so.” Let us accept our prophet’s challenge. New areas will open to the gospel just as they have in the past in answer to our prayers. See “To Fill the Earth,” page 24.