

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • JULY 2017

Liahona

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Is to Be a Pioneer,
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Under the banner "Pioneers of 1847," men and women who entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 gather for a 24th of July celebration in 1905.

Photograph courtesy of Church History Library



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*See if you
can find the
Liahona hidden
in this issue.
Hint: Look by
the trees.*



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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



“The Magic Wallet,” p. 72: You might start off the family home evening singing “Choose the Right” (*Hymns*, no. 239) You could role-play choose-the-right situations with your family. For example, what would you do if you were tempted to cheat on a test or exclude someone from an activity? Personalize the circumstances to match your family situation.

“What Is a Family Council?” p. 74: To prepare for your own family council, you might create rules and goals for family councils. Ask everyone in the family to contribute. Rules and goals could include turning off electronics, listening to each other, talking about upcoming events, and making long-term family goals. Personalize your family council and make it enjoyable so that people will look forward to having family councils.

MORE ONLINE

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Find inspiring messages at facebook.com/liahona.magazine (available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish).

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**By President
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in
the First Presidency

THE REWARD OF Enduring Well

When I was a young man, I served in the Church as a counselor to a wise district president. He was constantly trying to teach me. I remember the advice he once gave to me: “When you meet someone, treat them as if they were in serious trouble, and you will be right more than half the time.” I thought then that he was pessimistic. Now, more than 50 years later, I can see how well he understood the world and life.

We all have trials to face—at times, very difficult trials. We know that the Lord allows us to go through trials in order for us to be polished and perfected so we can be with Him forever.

The Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail that the reward for enduring his trials well would help qualify him for eternal life:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes” (D&C 121:7–8).

So many things beat upon us in a lifetime that it may seem hard to endure well. It can seem that way to a family depending on crops when there is no rain. They may wonder, “How long can we hold on?” It can seem that way to a youth faced with resisting the rising flood of filth and temptation. It can seem that way to a young man struggling to get the education or training he needs for a job to support a wife and family. It can seem that way to a person who

can’t find a job or who has lost job after job as businesses close their doors. It can seem that way to those faced with the erosion of health and physical strength, which may come early or late in life for them or for those they love.

But a loving God has not set such tests before us simply to see if we can endure difficulty but rather to see if we can endure them well and so become polished.

The First Presidency taught Elder Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) when he was a newly called member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “You have enlisted in a cause that requires your whole attention; . . . become a polished shaft. . . . You must endure much toil, much labor, and many privations to become perfectly polished. . . . Your Heavenly Father requires it; the field is His; the work is His; and He will . . . cheer you . . . and buoy you up.”¹

In the book of Hebrews, Paul speaks of the fruit of enduring well: “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Hebrews 12:11).

Our trials and our difficulties give us the opportunity to learn and grow, and they may even change our very nature. If we can turn to the Savior in our extremity, our souls can be polished as we endure.

Therefore, the first thing to remember is to pray always (see D&C 10:5; Alma 34:19–29).

The second thing is to strive continuously to keep the



were changes in you. The temptation to do evil seemed to lessen. The desire to do good increased. Those who knew you best and loved you may have said: “You have become kinder and more patient. You don’t seem to be the same person.”

You weren’t the same person. You were changed through the Atonement of Jesus Christ because you relied on Him in the time of your trial.

I promise you that the Lord will come to your aid in your trials if you seek and serve Him and that your soul will be polished in the process. I challenge you to put your trust in Him in all your adversities.

I know that God the Father lives and that He hears and answers our every prayer. I know that His Son, Jesus Christ, paid the price of all of our sins and that He wants us to come to Him. I know that the Father and the Son watch over us and have prepared a way for us to endure well and to come home again. ■

NOTE

1. *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1979), 120.

commandments—whatever the opposition, the temptation, or the tumult around us (see Mosiah 4:30).

The third crucial thing to do is to serve the Lord (see D&C 4:2; 20:31).

In the Master’s service, we come to know and love Him. We will, if we

persevere in prayer and faithful service, begin to recognize the hand of the Savior and the influence of the Holy Ghost in our life. Many of us have for a period given such service and felt that companionship. If you think back on that time, you will remember that there

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

We all have challenges that test our faith and ability to endure. Consider the needs and challenges of those you teach. Before visiting, you could pray for guidance to know how to better help them endure well. You might consider discussing both the principles and the scriptures President Eyring mentions, including prayer, service, and keeping the commandments. You might also share personal experiences of how you have been blessed in ways that have helped you endure well.



YOUTH



You can download the music to "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide" at lds.org/lgo/7176.

When My Friend Died

By Samantha Linton

During my junior year in high school, my friend had a brain aneurism and passed away the next day. Although I was a member of the Church, I still struggled. I had been taught my entire life that I could turn to Heavenly Father and the Savior for anything, but I never had to go through something like this before.

I cried for hours, trying to find something—anything—to give me peace. The night after her passing, I turned to the hymnbook. As I flipped through the pages, I landed on "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide" (*Hymns*, no. 165). The third verse stuck out to me:

*Abide with me; 'tis eventide,
And lone will be the night*

*If I cannot commune with thee,
Nor find in thee my light.
The darkness of the world, I fear,
Would in my home abide.
O Savior, stay this night with me;
Behold, 'tis eventide.*

This verse filled me with so much peace. I knew then that not only could the Savior stay that night with me but that He also knew exactly how I was feeling. I know that the love I felt through the hymn not only got me through that night but has also gotten me through many other trials I've endured.





The author lives in Utah, USA.

CHILDREN

Focus on Jesus

When we focus on Jesus, He can help us handle the hard things in life. Loving others, keeping the commandments, and praying to Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ are all ways to focus on Jesus.

Draw pictures in the blank squares so that each row and each column has a picture for love, prayer, and commandments.

That They May Be One

Prayerfully study this material and seek for inspiration to know what to share. How will understanding the purpose of Relief Society prepare daughters of God for the blessings of eternal life?



Faith
Family
Relief

“Jesus achieved perfect unity with the Father by submitting Himself, both flesh and spirit, to the will of the Father,” taught Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

“... Surely we will not be one with God and Christ until we make Their will and interest our greatest desire. Such submissiveness is not reached in a day, but through the Holy Spirit, the Lord will tutor us if we are willing until, in process of time, it may accurately be said that He is in us as the Father is in Him.”¹

Linda K. Burton, Relief Society General President, taught how to work toward this unity: “Making and keeping our covenants is an expression of our commitment to become like the Savior. The ideal is to strive for the attitude best expressed in a few phrases of a favorite hymn: ‘I’ll go where

you want me to go. . . . I’ll say what you want me to say. . . . I’ll be what you want me to be.”²

Elder Christofferson also reminded us that “as we endeavor day by day and week by week to follow the path of Christ, our spirit asserts its preeminence, the battle within subsides, and temptations cease to trouble.”³

Neill F. Marriott, Second Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, bears testimony of the blessings of striving to align our will with God’s will: “I have struggled to banish the mortal desire to have things my way, eventually realizing that my way is oh so lacking, limited, and inferior to the way of Jesus Christ. [‘Our Heavenly Father’s] way is

the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come.”⁴ Let us strive humbly to become one with our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Additional Scriptures and Information

John 17:20–21; Ephesians 4:13; Doctrine and Covenants 38:27; reliefsociety.lds.org

NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, “That They May Be One in Us,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2002, 72, 73.
2. Linda K. Burton, “The Power, Joy, and Love of Covenant Keeping,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 111.
3. D. Todd Christofferson, “That They May Be One in Us,” 71.
4. Neill F. Marriott, “Yielding Our Hearts to God,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 32.



Consider This

How does doing the will of God help us to become more like Him?

A TEACHER WHO HELPS SAVE SOULS

By Brian Hansbrow

Church Curriculum Development

*Why the Savior taught gives meaning to how He taught.
Is our purpose any different?*

I admit that when I think about teaching in the Savior's way, I tend to focus on *how* He taught. What did He do? How did He interact with people? After all, He was the master teacher! But if we want to teach like Him, it's essential to understand *why* He taught. Ultimately, that "why" will make all the difference for us and for those we teach.

When the Savior taught, His purpose wasn't to fill time or to entertain or to unload a bunch of information. Everything He does—including teaching—is meant to lead others to His Father. The Savior's whole desire and mission is to save Heavenly Father's children (see 2 Nephi 26:24). In our quest to teach as He did, we can learn to be motivated by the same purpose that motivated Him.

In other words, to teach in the Savior's way is to be a teacher whose purpose is to help save souls.

The Desire to Save Others

One of my all-time favorite accounts in the Book of Mormon tells of the sons of King Mosiah forsaking the kingdom of the Nephites so that they can establish the kingdom of God among the Lamanites. They give up an earthly kingdom for the

kingdom of heaven. They give up the comforts of safety and security among the Nephites to go among their enemies, the Lamanites, that they "might save some few of their souls" (Alma 26:26).

What motivated these servants of the Lord? "They could not bear that



any human soul should perish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble” (Mosiah 28:3). That motivation caused them to endure “many afflictions” (Alma 17:5, 14).

This story has often inspired me to think, Am I doing what I can to bring others to Christ? Am I focused enough on saving souls?

Becoming a Teacher Who Helps Save Souls

When we desire to teach for the same reason the Savior did, the principles of *how* He teaches take on greater meaning. More than just techniques, they serve as patterns for becoming like Him. As we consistently apply the following ideas, as well as others found in *Teaching in the Savior's Way*, we can not only *teach* more like Him but also *be* more like Him.

Seek Revelation Early

In order to assist in the work of saving souls, we need revelation. Revelation comes “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little” (2 Nephi 28:30)—and that takes time. So we begin preparing early and we seek revelation often.

Love the People

Love may be the most powerful way a teacher can help save souls. It may be as simple as knowing each class member's name, asking them





about their week, telling them what a good talk they gave, or congratulating them on a milestone or achievement. Showing interest and love opens hearts and helps those we teach be receptive to the Holy Ghost.

Prepare to Teach with the Needs of Learners in Mind

A teacher who helps save souls focuses on the learners. As we review the lesson material, we focus on what will best meet their needs, not ours. We forget about filling time and focus on filling hearts and minds. We think about not just what we will say and do, but what learners will say and do. We want them to share their ideas because it builds unity, opens their hearts, and helps them exercise faith.

Stay Focused on the Doctrine

It's common for teachers to evaluate their effectiveness by how much participation they elicit, but that is just one element of the experience. If our class has a lot of sharing but very little doctrine, we have provided what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles called a “theological Twinkie.” We have provided something that tastes good, but we have failed to nourish our class members with the sustaining power of doctrine.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge.”¹ We must help those we teach gain the most important kind of knowledge—the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

When we and class members share our thoughts and feelings, we should always bring it back to the scriptures and to the words of the latter-day prophets. Recently, Brother Tad R. Callister, Sunday School General President, taught: “The ideal teacher is constantly striving to connect class comments to doctrine. For example, a teacher might say, ‘The experience you shared reminds me of a scripture.’ Or, ‘What gospel truths do we learn from the comments we have heard?’ Or, ‘Would someone like to bear testimony of the power of that truth we have been discussing?’”²

Invite the Holy Ghost to Testify

A teacher who helps save souls understands that what we say and do as teachers is intended to invite the influence of the Holy Ghost into the lives of others. The Holy Ghost is the teacher. One role of the Holy Ghost is to testify of truth, especially about the Father and the Son. So as we teach about Them and Their gospel, we invite the Holy Ghost to testify to class members. To the degree that they allow it, His power strengthens their testimonies and changes their hearts. His witness is more powerful than sight.³

Invite Learners to Learn and Act for Themselves

I was recently in a Sunday School class where a teacher began by asking class members to share something that was especially meaningful to them as they read that week’s



assignment from the scriptures and how they had applied it to their lives. This led to a powerful discussion about insights and discoveries they had found for themselves. It was very natural for the teacher to add to this conversation the doctrinal points she had prepared to teach. What really impressed me was how she focused on encouraging her class members to experience the power of the word of God for themselves.

Our goal as teachers isn’t just to have a great experience in class

or to fill the time or to give a good lesson. The real goal is to walk with others on their journey back to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Our goal is to become teachers who help save souls. ■

Visit teaching.lds.org to learn more about how Teaching in the Savior’s Way and teacher council meetings can change how we learn and teach.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 266.
2. Tad R. Callister, “Sunday School ‘Discussion Is a Means, Not an End,’” *Church News*, June 9, 2016, [deseretnews.com](https://www.deseretnews.com).
3. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* (2000), 39.

By Don L. Searle

What happened to Paola Yáñez, her doctors said, was a medical miracle. The Quito, Ecuador, teenager's condition suddenly improved, her father was able to give her one of his kidneys, the transplant operation was a success, and she had a second chance at life.

But Marco Yáñez, her father, says that what happened to him was equally amazing. He found the gospel, and the change it made in his life gave him a second chance too.

A childhood bout of nephritis had damaged Paola's kidneys, but medicine had helped her live. When she was 15, however, her condition worsened. One kidney failed, and the other was deteriorating rapidly. Despite dialysis treatments, Paola was slowly dying. She was allowed to drink only a cup of water a day, and her activities were severely restricted because her lungs, pancreas, and heart had been affected.

It was impossible to take her to the United States or Cuba for a transplant—she would have to find a donor in Ecuador. Tests showed that her father could not be a donor. Her mother could, but then doctors found that dialysis had left Paola's level of antibodies so high that the transplant would be rejected. Paola prayed that somehow her life would be spared.

At this point, in June 1988, the Latter-day Saint missionaries knocked on the Yáñez family's door. Paola's mother, Carmen, recalls that she invited them in so she could taunt them. When they told her they had a message that could help her, she angrily said,

THE Real MIRACLE

The hand of the Lord was evident not only in Paola's recovery but also in her father's conversion to the gospel.



"How can you help me when my daughter is dying? I don't believe there is a God!"

Despite Carmen's initial antipathy, the missionaries continued to visit the family. At first Marco felt that he was simply too involved in his daughter's care to pay attention to the missionaries. But finally he listened, out of curiosity. He found they had answers to his questions about the purpose of life.

Marco did not believe in a personal God. For him, God was a universal energy source or a great, distant being uninvolved with human beings. But when his daughter's condition was at its most critical, he prayed, asking God to either heal his suffering daughter or take her. He prayed, "If You exist, please show me. Please give me the life of my daughter."

Following his prayer, Marco felt strongly that Paola's condition would change. He asked the doctors to test him and his daughter again. They told him the test would be a waste of time, but they agreed to do it.

They found that Marco actually *was* a suitable donor—and that Paola's condition had improved enough that she could receive a transplant!

The day before the surgery, Marco and Paola accepted priesthood blessings from the missionaries.

Both Marco and Paola expected to recover in the hospital for some time after their operations. But Marco was able to leave five days later, and Paola, who expected to stay for two months, left after only 13 days. Marco attributed their quick recovery to their priesthood blessings, and he knew that he had to take the missionaries' message seriously.

Marco and Carmen Yáñez were baptized on September 11, 1988. Paola, who had heard the missionary lessons before her surgery, and her younger sister, Patricia, were both baptized on November 3. By that time their father had received the Aaronic Priesthood and was able to baptize them.

Brother Yáñez believes that the Lord answered his prayer and allowed him to be Paola's donor in order to change his heart. "If they had operated on my wife instead of me, I believe I would have gone on living the same life," he says. It was not a life he is proud of—drinking, smoking, and gambling. He overcame his addictions, he says, because of the answers he received to his prayers. But it was very difficult; he acknowledges that only God could have helped him change.

Brother Yáñez says he now has a strong testimony of the Word of Wisdom and the law of tithing. When the missionaries were teaching him, he was keeping his business open seven days a week to pay for Paola's U.S. \$1,000-per-month treatment. The law of tithing "was very hard for me to accept," he says, but he decided to keep the Sabbath day holy and test the promise in Malachi 3:10 by paying tithing. When he closed his store on Sundays, he says, "those who used to buy on Sunday bought on Saturday—and they bought more." Today he is much better off financially than he was when he operated his business seven days a week.

When Marco Yáñez looks back, he is surprised at the changes in himself. He recognizes that his pleas for his daughter's life brought the whole family to a level of spirituality he never dreamed possible. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



**By Elder
David A. Bednar**

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

ON THE

The Zion's Camp expedition led by the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1834 is a striking example of choosing to be on the Lord's side. Reviewing the history of Zion's Camp can help us learn valuable and timeless lessons from this significant episode in Church history that apply to our lives and circumstances today.

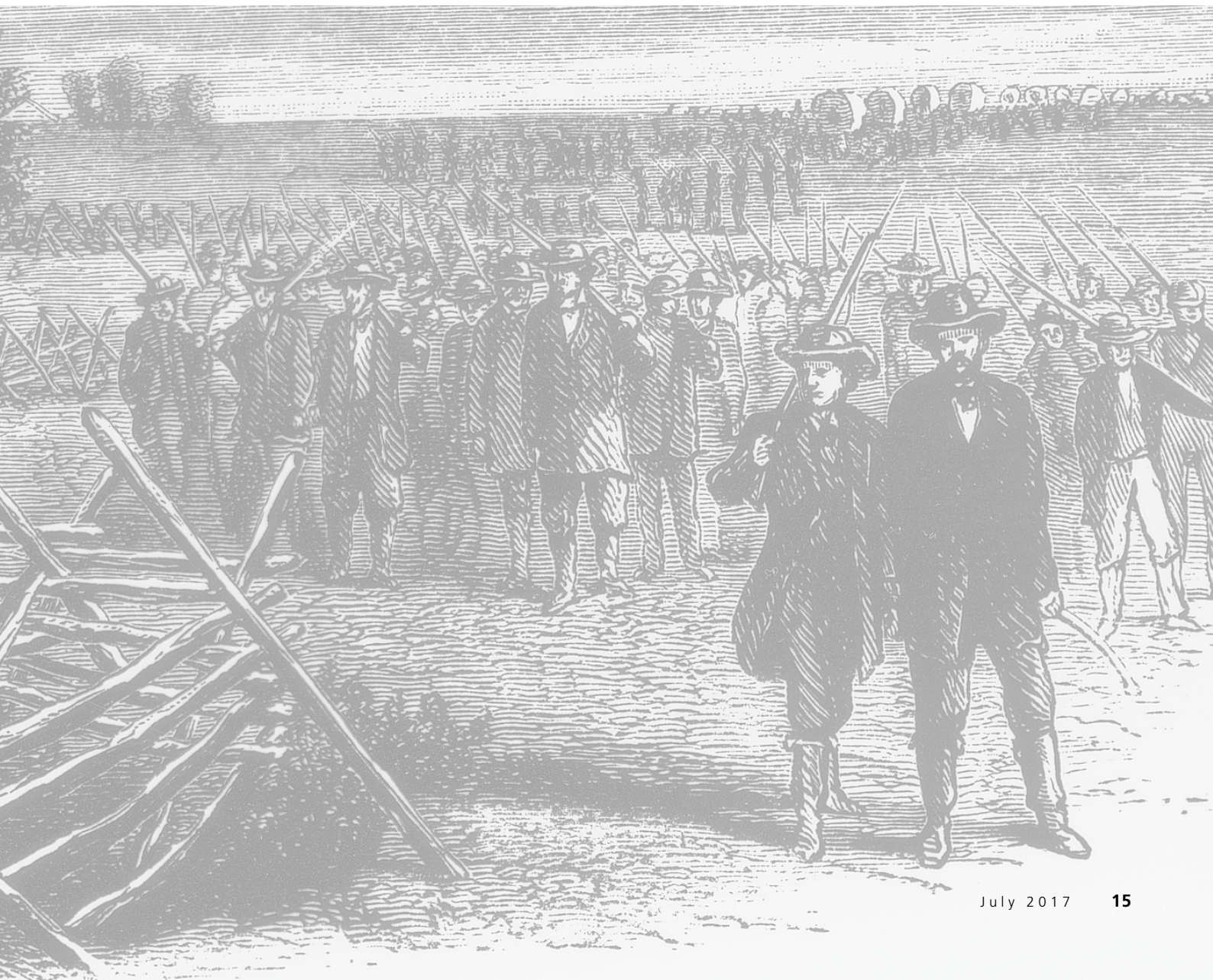
What Was Zion's Camp?

The Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation in 1831 designating Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, as the site of Zion, the central gathering place for the Latter-day Saints and the location for the New Jerusalem identified in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon (see D&C 57:1–3; see also Revelation 21:1–2; Ether 13:4–6). By the summer of 1833, Mormon settlers accounted for approximately one-third of the population in Jackson County. The rapidly increasing numbers, the potential political influence, and the distinctive religious and political beliefs of these newcomers were causes of concern to the other settlers in the area, who consequently demanded that Church members vacate their homes and properties. When this ultimatum was not acted upon, the Missourians attacked the settlements in November 1833 and forced the Saints to leave.

The formation of Zion's Camp was commanded by revelation in February 1834 (see D&C 103). The primary

LORD'S SIDE

Lessons from Zion's Camp



In November 1833, Missourians attacked Mormon settlements in Jackson County, Missouri, and forced the Saints to leave.



purpose for this army of the Lord was to protect the Mormons in Jackson County from additional assaults—after the Missouri militia fulfilled its obligation to escort the settlers safely back to their homes and lands. The camp also was to bring money, supplies, and moral support to the destitute Saints. Thus, during May and June 1834, a company of over 200 Latter-day Saint volunteers led by the Prophet Joseph Smith traveled approximately 900 miles (1,450 km) from Kirtland, Ohio, to Clay County, Missouri. Hyrum Smith and Lyman Wight also recruited a smaller group of volunteers from Michigan Territory and met up with the Prophet's group in Missouri. Participants in Zion's Camp included Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Wilford Woodruff, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, and many other readily recognizable individuals from Church history.

My purpose is not to describe the details of this demanding journey or recount all of the spiritually significant episodes that took place. Let me simply summarize a few major events of the Zion's Camp expedition:

- Governor Daniel Dunklin of Missouri failed to provide the promised militia assistance necessary for the Mormon settlers to be reinstated on their lands.
- Negotiations undertaken among Church leaders, Missouri state officials, and the citizens of Jackson County to avoid armed conflict and to resolve property disputes failed to reach a satisfactory agreement.
- Ultimately, the Lord directed Joseph Smith to disband Zion's Camp and indicated why the army of the Lord had not achieved its perceived objective (see D&C 105:6–13, 19).
- The Lord directed the Saints to build goodwill in the area in preparation for the time when Zion would be recovered by legal rather than by military means (see D&C 105:23–26, 38–41).

Zion's army was broken into smaller groups in late June 1834, and final discharge papers were issued the first few days of July 1834. Most of the volunteers returned to Ohio.

What Lessons Can We Learn from Zion's Camp?

Because of the failure to reestablish the Saints on their lands in Jackson County, Zion's Camp was considered by some an unsuccessful and unprofitable endeavor. A brother in Kirtland—one who lacked the faith to volunteer to go with the camp—met Brigham Young on his return from Missouri and asked, “Well, what did you gain on this useless journey to Missouri with Joseph Smith?” ‘All we went for,’ promptly replied Brigham Young. ‘I would not exchange the experience I gained in that expedition for all the wealth of Geauga County,’ the county in which Kirtland was then located.¹

I invite you to seriously think about Brigham Young's answer: “All we went for.” What are the key learnings we can glean from an undertaking that did not accomplish its stated purpose but nonetheless provided for those early Saints, and can afford us, the blessings of a lifetime?

I believe at least two overarching lessons are to be found in Brother Brigham's answer to that taunting question: (1) the lesson of testing, sifting, and preparing, and (2) the lesson of observing, learning from, and following the Brethren. I emphasize that these lessons are as important, if not more important, for us to learn and apply today as they were just over 180 years ago for the volunteers in Zion's Camp.



The Lesson of Testing, Sifting, and Preparing


The stalwart Saints who marched in the army of the Lord were tested and tried. As the Lord declared, “I have heard their prayers, and will accept their offering; and it is expedient in me that they should be brought thus far for a trial of their faith” (D&C 105:19).

In a most literal way, the physical and spiritual challenges of Zion's Camp constituted a sifting of the wheat from the tares (see Matthew 13:25, 29–30; D&C 101:65), a dividing of the sheep from the goats (see Matthew 25:32–33), a separating of the spiritually strong from the weak. Thus, each man and woman who enlisted in the army of the Lord faced and answered the penetrating question of “Who's on the Lord's side?”²

As Wilford Woodruff was settling his business affairs and preparing to join Zion's Camp, his friends and neighbors warned him not to undertake such a hazardous journey. They counseled, “Do not go, if you do you will lose your life.” He replied, “If I know that I should have a ball put through my heart the first step I took in the state of Missouri I would go.”³ Wilford Woodruff knew he did not need to fear evil consequences as long as he was faithful and obedient. He clearly was on the Lord's side.

Indeed, “the time to show”⁴ for those faithful men and women was the summer of 1834. But the decision to march with the Prophet Joseph to Missouri was not necessarily a one-time, all-inclusive, or immediate response to the question of “Who's on the Lord's side?” The time to show for those Saints arose frequently and repeatedly through mental and physical fatigue, through bloody blisters on their feet, through inadequate food and unclean water, through a multitude of disappointments, through dissensions and rebellions within the camp, and through external threats from vicious enemies.

The time to show came in the experiences and privations of every hour, of every day, and of every week. It was the grand combination of the many seemingly

A photograph showing two women from the side, looking at a computer monitor and a book on a desk. The woman on the left has dark hair and is wearing a pink shirt. The woman on the right has dark hair, wears glasses, and a red shirt. They are in an office or classroom setting with a window in the background.

"We have too many potential spiritual giants who should be more vigorously lifting their homes [and] the kingdom."

small choices and actions in the lives of these devoted Saints that provided the conclusive answer to the question "Who's on the Lord's side?"

How did the testing and sifting that occurred in the lives of the Zion's Camp participants serve as a preparation? Interestingly, eight of the brethren called into the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1835, as well as all of the Seventies called at that same time, were veterans of Zion's Camp. At a meeting following the call of the Seventies, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared:

"Brethren, some of you are angry with me, because you did not fight in Missouri; but let me tell you, God did not want you to fight. He could not organize his kingdom with twelve men to open the gospel door to the nations of the earth, and with seventy men under their direction to follow in their tracks, unless he took them from a body of men who had offered their lives, and who had made as great a sacrifice as did Abraham.

"Now, the Lord has got his Twelve and his Seventy, and there will be other quorums of Seventies called."⁵

Truly, Zion's Camp was a refiner's fire for all of the

volunteers in general and for many future leaders of the Lord's Church in particular.

The experiences gained by the volunteers in the army of the Lord also were a preparation for larger, future migrations of Church members. More than 20 of the Zion's Camp participants became captains and lieutenants in two great exoduses—the first but four years in the future, involving the removal of 8,000 to 10,000 people from Missouri to Illinois⁶; and the second, 12 years in the future, the great western movement of approximately 15,000 Latter-day Saints from Illinois to the Salt Lake and other Rocky Mountain valleys. As a preparatory training, Zion's Camp was of immense value to the Church. The year 1834 was the time to show—and to prepare for 1838 and for 1846.

As individuals and families, we too will be tested, sifted, and prepared, as were the members of Zion's Camp. The scriptures and the teachings of the Brethren are replete with promises that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; the making, honoring, and remembering of sacred covenants; and obedience to God's commandments will strengthen us to

prepare for, to face, to overcome, and to learn from the trials and tests of mortality.

The leaders of the Lord's Church clearly have identified some of the collective or generational tests we can expect to encounter in our day and generation. As the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1977, President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) raised a prophetic voice of warning in a meeting of regional representatives. I now quote extensively from President Benson's message and invite your focused attention on his timely counsel:

"Every generation has its tests and its chance to stand and prove itself. Would you like to know of one of our toughest tests? Hear the warning words of Brigham Young, 'The worst fear I have about this people is that they will get rich in this country, forget God and His people, wax fat, and kick themselves out of the Church and go to hell. This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution and be true. But my greatest fear is that they cannot stand wealth.'"

President Benson continues: "Ours then seems to be the toughest test of all, for the evils are more subtle, more clever. It all seems less menacing and it is harder to detect. While every test of righteousness represents a struggle, this particular test seems like no test at all, no struggle and so could be the most deceiving of all tests.

"Do you know what peace and prosperity can do to a people—It can put them to sleep. The Book of Mormon warned us of how Satan, in the last days, would lead us away carefully down to hell. The Lord has on the earth some potential spiritual giants whom He saved for some six thousand years to help bear off the Kingdom triumphantly, and the devil is trying to put them to sleep. The adversary knows that he probably won't be too successful in getting them to commit many great and malignant sins of commission. So he puts them into a deep sleep, like Gulliver, while he strands them with little sins of omission. And what good is a sleepy, neutralized, lukewarm giant as a leader?

"We have too many potential spiritual giants who should be more vigorously lifting their homes, the kingdom, and the country. We have many who feel they are good men and women, but they need to be good for something—strong patriarchs, courageous missionaries, valiant family history and temple workers, dedicated patriots, devoted quorum members. In short, we must be shaken and awakened from a spiritual snooze."⁷

Consider that affluence, prosperity, and ease can be tests in our day equal to or greater in intensity than the persecution and physical hardships endured by the Saints who volunteered to march in Zion's Camp. As the prophet Mormon described in his magnificent summary of the pride cycle contained in Helaman 12:

"And thus we can behold how false, and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men; yea, we can see that the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him.

"Yea, and we may see at the very time when he doth prosper his people, yea, in the increase of their fields, their flocks and their herds, and in gold, and in silver, and in all manner of precious things of every kind and art; sparing their lives, and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; softening the hearts of their enemies that they should not declare wars against them; yea, and in fine, doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people; yea, then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity" (Helaman 12:1–2).

I invite you specifically to note the final phrase in the last verse: "and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity."



President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) likewise taught about the collective test of ease that we face in our day: “We are tested, we are tried, we are going through some of the severest tests today and we don’t realize perhaps the severity of the tests we are going through. In those days there were murderings, there were mobbings, there were drivings. They were driven out into the desert, they were starving and they were unclad, and they were cold. They came here to this favored land. We are the inheritors of what they gave to us. But what are we doing with it? Today we are basking in the lap of luxury, the like of which we’ve never seen before in the history of the world. It would seem that probably this is the most severe test of any test that we’ve ever had in the history of this Church.”⁸

These teachings from modern and ancient prophets about latter-day tests and trials are sobering and solemn. But they should not be discouraging, and we should not be afraid. For those with eyes to see and ears to hear, spiritual warnings lead to increasingly vigilant watching. You and I live in “a day of warning” (D&C 63:58). And because we have been and will be warned, we need to be, as the Apostle Paul admonished, “watching . . . with all perseverance” (Ephesians 6:18). As we watch and prepare, truly we have no need to fear (see D&C 38:30).

Who’s on the Lord’s side? Now is the time to show that we have minds and hearts that accept and will be responsive to these inspired warnings. Now is the time to show that we are watching and preparing to withstand the latter-day trials of prosperity and pride, of affluence and ease, and of hard hearts and forgetting the Lord our God. Now is the time to show that we will be true at all times in whatsoever things we are entrusted by our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son—and that we will keep the commandments of God and walk uprightly before Him (see Alma 53:20–21).

The Lesson of Observing, Learning from, and Following the Brethren

The stalwart Saints in the army of the Lord were blessed to observe, to learn from, and to follow the Brethren. And we today can benefit greatly from the example and faithfulness of the devout members of Zion’s Camp.

In response to counsel from Parley P. Pratt, Wilford Woodruff traveled to Kirtland, Ohio, in April 1834 to join Zion’s Camp. Brother Woodruff’s account of his first meeting with the Prophet Joseph Smith is instructive for all of us:

“Here for the first time in my life I met and had an interview with our beloved Prophet Joseph Smith, the man whom God had chosen to bring forth His revelations in these last days. My first introduction was not of a kind to satisfy the preconceived notions of the sectarian mind as to what a prophet ought to be, and how he should appear. It might have shocked the faith of some men. I found him and his brother Hyrum out shooting at a mark with a brace of pistols. When they stopped shooting, I was introduced to Brother Joseph, and he shook hands with me most heartily. He invited me to make his habitation my home while I tarried in Kirtland. This invitation I most eagerly accepted, and was greatly edified and blest during my stay with him.”⁹

I find it noteworthy that Brother Woodruff, who lived for a time in the Prophet’s home and undoubtedly had a most remarkable opportunity to observe him in the routine of daily living, was blessed with eyes to see beyond “the preconceived notions of the sectarian mind as to what a prophet ought to be, and how he should appear.” Such false notions cloud the vision of many in the world today, both inside and outside the Lord’s restored Church.

As a result of my call in 2004 to serve in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I have a decidedly distinctive perspective about what it means to observe, to learn from, and to follow the Brethren. I now see on a daily basis the individual personalities, the various preferences, and the noble characters of the leaders of this Church. Some people find the human



It is important for all of us to remember that we can learn both from the teachings of the Brethren and from the examples of their lives.

limitations and shortcomings of the Brethren troubling and faith diminishing. For me, those weaknesses are faith promoting. The Lord's revealed pattern of governance in His Church provides for and attenuates the impact of human frailty. It is truly miraculous to me to witness the Lord accomplishing His will through His servants despite the flaws and failings of His chosen leaders. These men never have claimed to be and are not perfect; they certainly are, however, called of God.

A priest when he walked to Missouri with the army of the Lord, Wilford Woodruff later declared while serving as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "We gained an experience that we never could have gained in any other way. We had the privilege of . . . traveling a thousand miles with [the Prophet], and seeing the workings of the Spirit of God with him, and the revelations of Jesus Christ unto him and the fulfilment of those revelations. . . . Had I not gone up with Zion's Camp I should not have been here today."¹⁰

On the last Sunday in April 1834, Joseph Smith invited a number of the leaders of the Church to address Zion's Camp volunteers gathered in a schoolhouse. After the

brethren had concluded their messages, the Prophet arose and indicated that he had been edified by the instruction. He then prophesied:

"I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. You don't comprehend it. . . . It is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world."¹¹

Men such as Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, and Wilford Woodruff listened to and learned much from the Prophet that night—and years later helped to fulfill his prophetic pronouncement. What glorious opportunities these men had to observe, to learn from, and to follow the Prophet.

It is important for all of us to remember that we can learn both from the teachings of the Brethren and from the examples of their lives. Given the majestic vision of the future growth of the Church articulated by the Prophet Joseph Smith, please now consider the power of his personal example in the performance of routine and mundane

“Who’s on the Lord’s side?” Now is the time to show by hearing and heeding the counsel of the living apostles and prophets called of God.



but necessary tasks. George A. Smith described in his journal the reaction of the Prophet to the daily challenges of the march to Missouri.

“The Prophet Joseph took a full share of the fatigues of the entire journey. In addition to the care of providing for the Camp and presiding over it, he walked most of the time and had a full proportion of blistered, bloody and sore feet. . . . But during the entire trip he never uttered a murmur or complaint, while most of the men in the Camp complained to him of sore toes, blistered feet, long drives, scanty supply of provisions, poor quality of bread, bad corn dodger, frouzy butter, strong honey, maggoty bacon and cheese, etc., even a dog could not bark at some men without their murmuring at Joseph. If they had to camp with bad water it would nearly cause rebellion, yet we were the Camp of Zion, and many of us were prayerless, thoughtless, careless, heedless, foolish or devilish, and yet we did not know it. Joseph had to bear with us and tutor us, like children.”¹²

Joseph was a strong example of the principle taught by Alma: “For the preacher was no better than the hearer,

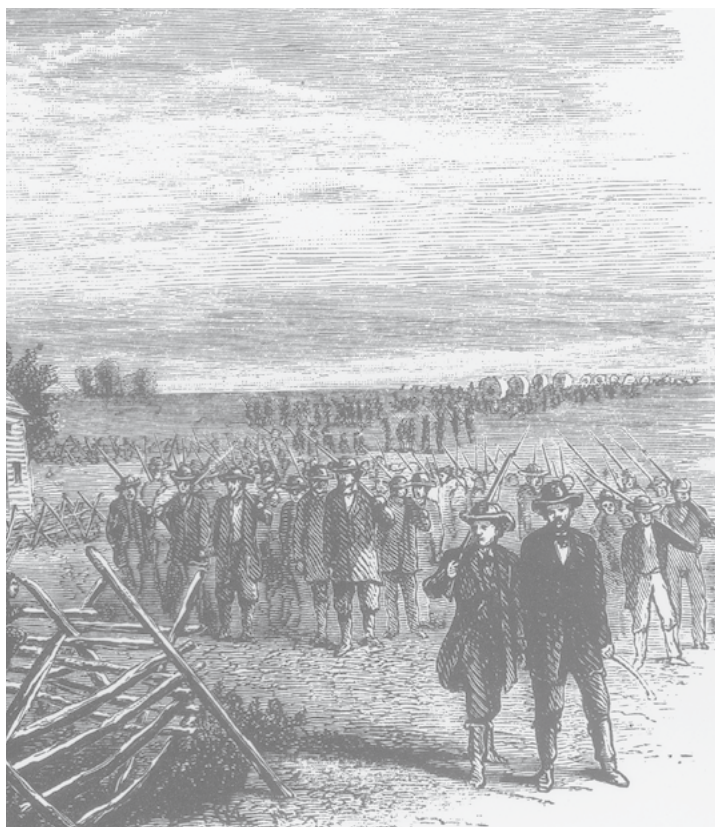
neither was the teacher any better than the learner; . . . and they did all labor, every man according to his strength” (Alma 1:26).

Since my call as a General Authority, I have tried to observe and learn as some of my Brethren have faced the effects of aging or the relentless demands of physical limitations and constant pain. You cannot and will never know the private and silent suffering some of these men live through as they serve publicly with all of their heart, might, mind, and strength. Serving with and watching President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008), President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015), Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015), and my other apostolic associates empower me to declare clearly and authoritatively that the Brethren with whom I serve are warriors—noble and great spiritual warriors—in the truest and most admirable sense of that word! Their patience, persistence, and courage enable them to “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20) that is worthy of our emulation.

President Lee warned of an additional collective test that is growing ever more pervasive in this generation: “We are now going through another test—a period of what we might call sophistication. This is a time when there are many clever people who are not willing to listen to the humble prophets of the Lord. . . . It is rather a severe test.”¹³

The test of sophistication is the companion to the test of prosperity and ease. How important it is for each of us to observe, learn from, and follow the Brethren.

“Who’s on the Lord’s side?” Now is the time to show by hearing and heeding the counsel of the living apostles and prophets called of God in these latter days to oversee and direct His work on the earth. Now is the time to show we believe that God’s “word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by [His] own voice or by the voice of [His] servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38). Now is the time to show. The time is now!



Our Own Zion’s Camp

At some point in each of our lives, we will be invited to march in our own Zion’s Camp. The timing of the invitations will vary, and the particular obstacles we may encounter on the journey will be different. But our ongoing and consistent response to this inevitable call ultimately will provide the answer to the question “Who’s on the Lord’s side?”

The times to show are now, today, tomorrow, and forever. May we ever remember the related lessons of testing, sifting, and preparing and of observing, learning from, and following the Brethren. ■

From an Education Week devotional address, “Who’s on the Lord’s Side? Now Is the Time to Show,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on July 30, 2010.

NOTES

1. Brigham Young, in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:370–71.
2. “Who’s on the Lord’s Side?” *Hymns*, no. 260.
3. *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, ed. G. Homer Durham (1946), 306.
4. “Who’s on the Lord’s Side?” *Hymns*, no. 260.
5. Joseph Smith, in Joseph Young Sr., *History of the Organization of the Seventies* (1878), 14; see also *History of the Church*, 2:182.
6. See Alexander L. Baugh, “From High Hopes to Despair: The Missouri Period, 1831–39,” *Ensign*, July 2001, 44.
7. Ezra Taft Benson, “Our Obligation and Challenge,” regional representatives’ seminar, Sept. 30, 1977, 2–3; unpublished typescript.
8. Harold B. Lee, Christmas address to Church employees, Dec. 13, 1973, 4–5; unpublished transcript.
9. Wilford Woodruff, in Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors* (1909), 39.
10. *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 305.
11. Joseph Smith, in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (2004), 25–26; see also Joseph Smith, quoted by Wilford Woodruff, in Conference Report, Apr. 1898, 57.
12. George A. Smith, “My Journal,” *Instructor*, May 1946, 217.
13. Harold B. Lee, “Sweet Are the Uses of Adversity,” *Instructor*, June 1965, 217.

Learning to Listen

THE FIRST RACIALLY INTEGRATED BRANCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA

By Matt McBride and James Goldberg

Church History Department

Tears gathered in 56-year-old Frans Lekqwati's eyes as he sat across from Olev Taim, his stake president. President Taim had just asked him what he thought about creating a branch of the Church in Frans's hometown of Soweto, South Africa.

"Why are you crying? Did I offend you?" asked President Taim.

"No," Frans responded. "This is the first time in South Africa that a white man has asked me my opinion before making a decision."

Life under Apartheid

The year was 1981. At the time, black and white people in South Africa were segregated under a system of laws known as apartheid. This legal separation, together with the Church's restriction preventing black African men



Above: A beach is designated as a whites-only area under strict apartheid practices in South Africa.

Right: A 1952 protest in Johannesburg calling for freedom and equality.



from being ordained to the priesthood, had long meant that the Church could not thrive among black South Africans. A new day dawned in 1978 when President Spencer W. Kimball received the revelation that lifted the priesthood restriction, but the challenges of segregation and a culture of suspicion between races remained.

The vast majority of black South Africans lived in townships, usually built on the outskirts of predominantly white cities such as Johannesburg. Soweto, short for South Western Townships, was the largest. White people rarely went to the townships, and black people who went to the cities were rarely treated as equals with the whites.

Frans and his family were part of a small group from Soweto who had embraced the restored gospel during the 1970s. At first they attended the Johannesburg Ward. Frans's son Jonas remembered getting up on Sundays

"We may not have agreed on things that were happening outside church, . . . but we agreed on the doctrine."

difficult for the children to stay awake through Primary!

Being a pioneer of racial integration could also be an emotional challenge. Josiah Mohapi remembered overhearing a six-year-old white boy say something offensive about

at 4:00 a.m. so the family could catch an early train into Johannesburg and then make the long walk to the chapel before the services started at 9:00 a.m. The family was always early—though sometimes it was



South Africa's first black Relief Society president, Julia Mavimbela, participates in the groundbreaking for the new Soweto Branch building in 1991. (See her story in the following article.)

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the black people he encountered at church. "To be honest, I became hot under the collar," Josiah recalled. But then he heard the mother tell her son, "The Church is for everybody." Comforted by the reminder, Josiah cooled down.

A Branch in Soweto?

President Taim was aware of the physical and emotional challenges black members faced. He considered starting a branch in Soweto to make travel easier for them but did not want to make them feel as if they were unwelcome in Johannesburg. He decided to interview Soweto members like Frans to gauge their feelings before taking any action. They gave him a clear answer: "We would love to establish the Church in Soweto."

President Taim identified experienced leaders who could help mentor recent converts. He interviewed over 200 members in Johannesburg and ultimately called 40 to join the new branch long enough to help train a pioneering group of local leaders there.

Just as black members had crossed into another part of town and another culture to attend the Johannesburg Ward, white members had to adjust to a new environment

“We can only change perception through experiences. We all needed these lived experiences that caused us to change.”

and culture as they served in Soweto. Things did not always go smoothly. Maureen van Zyl, a white member who had been called to serve as Primary president, thought nothing of it when the South African national anthem of the time was chosen as the

opening song in Relief Society meeting one week. She soon learned, however, that black South Africans viewed the anthem as a symbol of apartheid and that many black sisters were offended by the choice of song.

Black and white members alike could easily have become discouraged by such misunderstandings, but they chose to see them as an opportunity for discussion and improvement instead. “We shared all sorts of things,” Maureen remembered. “As blacks, what would be offensive and as whites, what we’d find offensive. How they did certain things and how we did certain things. And so it was just this wonderful time of learning together.”

As the branch in Soweto grew stronger and larger, branches were started in other townships using the same model. Khumbulani Mdletshe was a young man living in the KwaMashu township near Durban. When he joined the Church in 1980, he brought with him suspicions of white people common to almost all young black men in South Africa at that time. But his experiences worshipping in an integrated branch changed his perspective.

The Glue That Binds People Together

In 1982, Khumbulani and several other young men in his branch were invited to attend a young single adult conference. His branch president, a white brother named John Mountford, wanted the young men to look their best, though few of them had nice clothing. He emptied his closet, distributing suits to the young men, who wore them to the conference. The next Sunday, President Mountford wore the suit he had loaned to Khumbulani. “I could not imagine a white person wearing the same clothes that have been worn by me,” Khumbulani recalled, “but there he was. He began to help me see white people differently than I’ve ever seen them before.”

Now an Area Seventy, Elder Mdletshe observed, “We all needed these lived experiences that caused us to change.”



The flag of South Africa was adopted in 1994 as a post-apartheid symbol of unity. The black, yellow, and green represent the African National Congress, and the red, white, and blue represent the Boer Republics.



Apartheid in South Africa ended in 1994. While many congregations today exist in mostly black or mostly white areas, the greater freedom means that an increasing number of areas are mixed. Like the pioneers of the first branches in the townships, members with different backgrounds worship and work together to build up the kingdom of God.

The current Soweto stake president, Thabo Lebethoa, describes the gospel as glue that binds people together in times of division. “We may not have agreed on things that were happening outside church, with politics and other things,” he observed, “but we agreed on the doctrine.” Working from that shared foundation, people can learn from each other’s differences as they counsel carefully and listen with spiritual sensitivity. “One of the most important things about leadership is to listen to people,” President Lebethoa advises. “Listen so that you can understand. Listen so that you can feel. Listen so that you can receive inspiration.”

Thoba Karl-Halla, the daughter of early Soweto Branch member Julia Mavimbela, agrees that listening helps keep inevitable friction from turning into painful division. “I should listen with an ear that would make me understand the frustrations of the person who might probably come out as an offender to me,” she says.

Elder Mdletshe urges South African Saints today to find strength in their diversity, especially in council settings. “The Lord would have liked that,” he observes, “to have people from all walks of life sit around the table and talk about the issues.” His call to local leaders throughout the Church is to continue to build up leaders from different backgrounds, just as a past generation supported him. When trying to reach new areas and new groups, he notes, “you’re not going to find experienced people. But you build experiences in the Church. You build experiences by bringing people right into the center and having them work together.” ■

Quotations come from interviews conducted by the Church History Department in 2015.

Healing the Beloved Country: The Faith of Julia Mavimbela

By Matthew K. Heiss

Church History Department



Julia met and married John in 1946.

Julia Mavimbela's life suddenly changed in 1955 when her husband, John, was killed in an automobile accident. Evidence at the scene suggested that the other person involved, a white man, had veered into John's lane. Yet that man was not ruled at fault. Rather, white police officers said that blacks are poor drivers, so John was responsible for the crash.¹

Julia was 37 years old with four children and another on the way. She had been wronged by racism, the police, and the justice system. Yet she eventually learned not to give in to bitterness; rather, she spent her life striving to be healed and to heal her beloved country through Christlike service. It was her love of the land, her faith in God, and her dedication to living by her faith's principles that made this possible.

Julia was born in 1917, the last of five children. Her father passed away when Julia was five years old. Her mother was left to raise the children on her own, finding work as a washerwoman and a domestic worker.

Julia's mother was a religious woman who taught her children from the Bible. "My mother had taught me to swallow

the bitter pills of life and encouraged me never to look back but to look ahead," Julia said. Julia's mother also understood the importance of education and did all she could with her limited means to see that her children received formal schooling.

Julia received more training and education and worked as a teacher and school principal until she met and married John Mavimbela in 1946. John owned a grocery and butcher shop. Julia gave up her career to work there. Together they built a home and had children. Despite the restrictions of apartheid, life was good. However, that all changed with John's death.

On her husband's tombstone, Julia inscribed these words:

*In loving memory of
John Phillip Corlie Mavimbela.
By his wife and relatives.
But the lump remains.
May his soul rest in peace.*

Describing the fourth line, Julia said, "At the time of writing, the lump that remained was one of hatred and bitterness—for the man who caused the accident, for the policemen who lied, [and] for the court who deemed

my husband responsible for the accident that took his life."² One of her greatest trials was to overcome this bitterness and anger.

Shortly after the death of her husband, in a night of "troubled sleep," Julia had a dream in which John appeared to her, handed her some overalls, and said, "Go to work." Describing the result of this dream, she said, "I found a way of getting myself away from the worries of these years, and that was through community involvement."

Twenty years later, in the mid-1970s, the blacks' reaction to apartheid had gone from peaceful protests to violent outbursts. One of the flash points for the violence was Soweto, where Julia was living. She said, "Soweto became unlike any place we had known—it was as if we were in a battlefield."

Julia feared that her wound of bitterness would reopen: "It had been over



Below: During apartheid, Julia started a community garden to teach children that “all is not lost.”

Right: Julia in her native Zulu dress and serving in the Johannesburg South Africa Temple.

20 years since John’s death, but I could still feel the pain of that time.” In an effort to seek healing, both for herself and for her people, Julia thought, “Perhaps if I can teach the children to love working in the soil, all is not lost.” She established a community garden that symbolized hope to people who knew only fear and anger.

As she worked with the children in her community garden, she would teach them: “Let us dig the soil of bitterness, throw in a seed of love, and see what fruits it can give us. . . . Love will not come without forgiving others.”

She said, “I knew deep in my heart I was breaking up the soil of my own bitterness as I forgave those who had hurt me.” The lump of bitterness that remained after John’s death started to dissolve.

In 1981, Julia was introduced to the Church. The missionaries, performing community service in Soweto, found a boys’ center in desperate need of repair. For several weeks they cleaned up the premises.³

One day, Julia was asked to serve at that same boys’ club. When she arrived, she was astonished to see “two white boys hurling their spades into the brown dust.” The missionaries asked if they could come to her home and deliver a message. Three days later, Elders David McCombs and Joel Heaton showed up wearing their



missionary attire and name tags.

Julia said that the first two missionary lessons “went in one ear and out the other.” But on their third visit, the missionaries asked about a photograph of Julia and John on her wall. She mentioned that her husband was dead, and the missionaries felt prompted to tell her about the plan of salvation and baptism for the dead. She said, “Then I started listening, really listening, with my heart. . . . As the missionaries taught me the principle of eternal relationships, I had the feeling that here is the way to be with my parents and my husband.” Julia was baptized five months later.

A month after her baptism, Julia spoke at stake conference. “When I walked to the podium,” she said, “I think most everybody was shocked. It was their first time seeing a black person speaking at conference—maybe for some of them the first time ever to hear a black person address an audience.” She felt prompted to talk about her husband’s death and the years of difficulty she had. She described her bitterness and how she “had finally found the church that could teach me to truly forgive.”

Her struggles with misunderstanding and prejudice, however, were not over,

even after apartheid ended in 1994.

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in his April 2015 general conference talk, “Latter-day Saints Keep on Trying,” told of an incident Julia and her daughter Thoba experienced when they “were treated less than kindly by some white members.” Thoba complained about their treatment. What could have easily become an excuse to leave the Church became a priceless teaching moment. Julia replied, “Oh, Thoba, the Church is like a big hospital, and we are all sick in our own way. We come to church to be helped.”⁴

Julia discovered that healing was possible through the gospel of Jesus Christ, not only for herself but also for her nation. Her service in the Johannesburg South Africa Temple taught her that in the temple, “there is no touch of Afrikaner. There is no English. There is no Situ nor Zulu. You know that feeling of oneness.”

Julia Mavimbela died on July 16, 2000. ■

NOTES

1. Except as noted, quotations come from Laura Harper, “‘Mother of Soweto’: Julia Mavimbela, Apartheid Peace-Maker and Latter-day Saint,” unpublished manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. In the Harper text, the word *lamp* is used instead of *lump*. However, Thoba confirmed that the word inscribed on the grave marker was *lump*.
3. From David Lawrence McCombs, interview with author, Aug. 25, 2015.
4. Dale G. Renlund, “Latter-day Saints Keep on Trying,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 57.



Desideria Yáñez:

A PIONEER AMONG WOMEN

By Clinton D. Christensen
Church History Department

*After a dream
led her to
the restored
gospel, this early
Latter-day Saint
from Mexico
became a
stalwart pioneer
of the Church.*

One night in early 1880, Desideria Yáñez was sleeping in a comfortable pueblo in the cactus-lined hills of Nopala, Mexico. As she dreamed, she saw a pamphlet titled *Voz de Amonestación* (*Voice of Warning*) that would change her life and aid her spiritually. Upon waking, she knew the men publishing the pamphlet were in Mexico City.¹ She also realized it was physically impossible for her to travel the 75 miles (120 km) to the city, but she was determined to follow the impressions of the dream and find a solution.

The Faith of a Family

Desideria discussed her dream with her son José. He believed her and journeyed to Mexico City in her place. He began anxiously talking to people and eventually met Church member Plotino Rhodakanaty, who directed him to the Hotel San Carlos.²

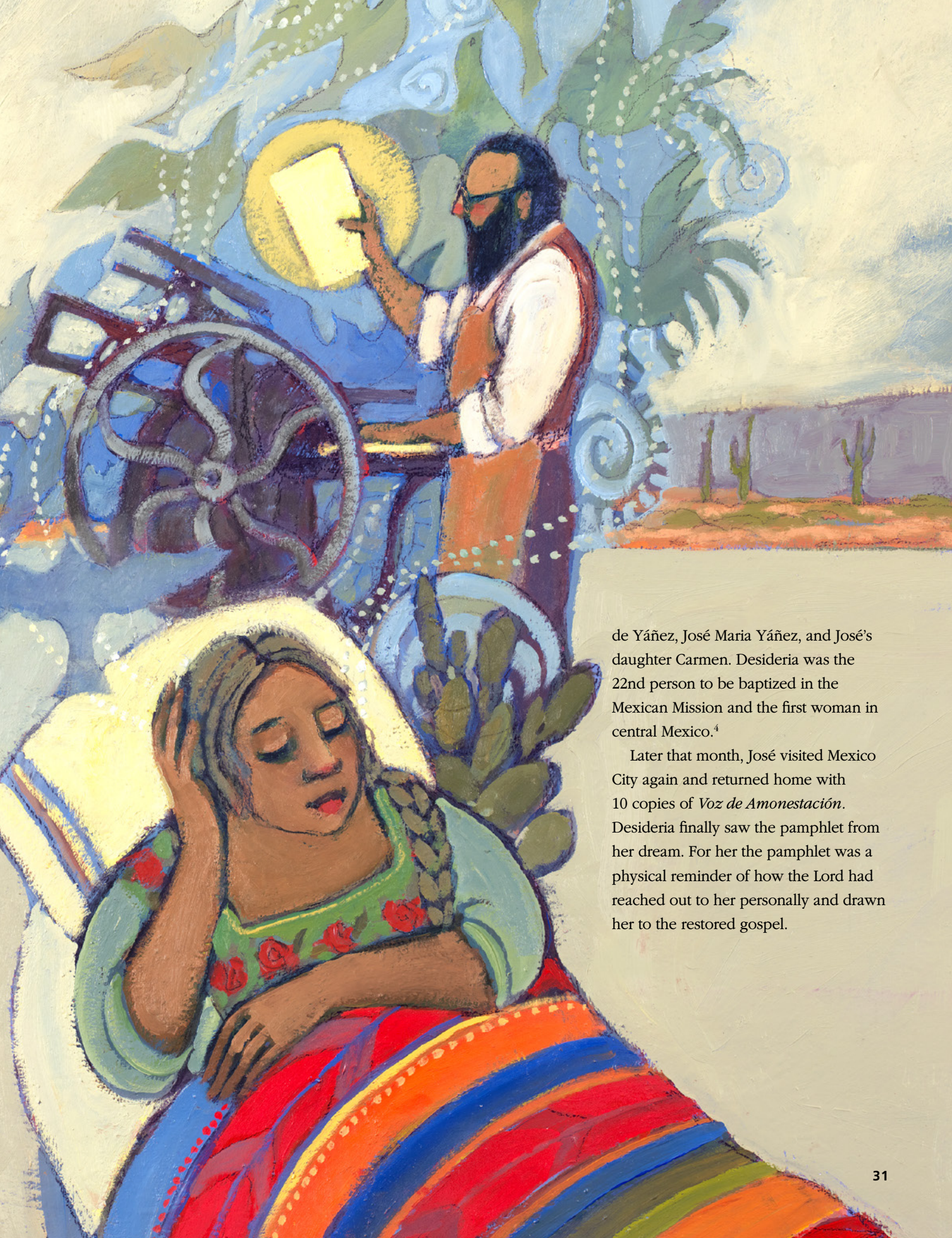
At the hotel, José found Elder James Z. Stewart correcting the printer's proofs of

Parley P. Pratt's *Voz de Amonestación*, the same pamphlet Desideria had seen in her dream. After José talked to Elder Stewart about Desideria's dream, the missionary gave José some other Church pamphlets, since *Voz de Amonestación* was not finished, and Elder Stewart noted the interesting conversation in his journal.³

Many dusty miles later, José reunited with his mother. Upon learning of the pamphlet's reality, Desideria knew that the dream had been true. She pored over the pamphlets José had brought her, and the basic teachings of the gospel they contained touched her soul. She desired to be baptized.

Found by a Missionary

Because Elder Stewart was still completing *Voz de Amonestación*, Elder Melitón Trejo, a missionary from Spain, was sent to Nopala to find Desideria and José. On April 22, 1880, Elder Trejo baptized Desideria Quintanar



de Yáñez, José Maria Yáñez, and José's daughter Carmen. Desideria was the 22nd person to be baptized in the Mexican Mission and the first woman in central Mexico.⁴

Later that month, José visited Mexico City again and returned home with 10 copies of *Voz de Amonestación*. Desideria finally saw the pamphlet from her dream. For her the pamphlet was a physical reminder of how the Lord had reached out to her personally and drawn her to the restored gospel.

The First Spanish Book of Mormon

At age 72, Desideria found her health growing worse. By 1886 she was confined to her little home in San Lorenzo near Nopala. One dreadful evening, thieves broke into her house, beat her, and escaped with \$3,000.⁵ Desideria survived. Instead of despairing, Desideria waited in faith for the Lord's help. She had already learned from her dream that the Lord was aware of her situation.

Then in October 1886, an Apostle and two mission presidents unexpectedly visited the area. José Yáñez told them about his mother's suffering. The brethren came swiftly to Desideria's home. Desideria was delighted to meet Elder Erastus Snow of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and have him place his hands upon her head for a priesthood blessing.

During the brethren's visit, the new mission president, Horace Cummings, surprised Desideria with important news. He told her that the first translation of the entire Book of Mormon in Spanish was near completion in Salt Lake City. Desideria quickly requested a copy of the forthcoming scripture.

A month later, President Cummings returned to Desideria's home with a copy. Of the experience, he wrote: "Visited old Sister Yáñez, an invalid and gave her an unbound Book of Mormon which I had sent to Utah for. It was the first in Spanish that had been received in Mexico. . . . She seemed much pleased with it."⁶ This would be the last visit of a missionary to Desideria during her lifetime.

Isolated but Not Forgotten

By 1889, just 10 years after the restored gospel arrived in central Mexico, Church leaders had felt prompted to shift the Church's limited resources to establishing colonies in northern Mexico. The members near Mexico City, about 1,000 miles (1,600 km) from the colonies, felt like sheep without a shepherd as missionaries left for the north. Though still surrounded by her family, Desideria knew that they would have to practice the gospel in isolation. This meant she would never have the benefit of joining the Relief Society or of receiving temple blessings while alive.



But she recognized that the Lord knew her. Through His servants, the Lord had manifested His desire to minister one by one to His flock. Because of her dream, the priesthood blessing, and the Book of Mormon, Desideria could testify of her absolute assurance that God cared for her spiritual and temporal needs. Though this knowledge did not prevent trials and challenges from occurring in her life, it did give her the confidence that the Lord would always ease her burdens.

An Enduring Legacy

In 1903, missionaries returned to southern Mexico for the first time since 1886. They met with José, who summed up Desideria's endurance to the end and legacy of faith by saying that both his wife and his mother "died in full faith of Mormonism" and that he had "hope of dying in Mormonism."⁷

After having her dream, Desideria embarked on the gospel path, becoming a Latina pioneer of the Church. The seed of faith planted through a dream in 1880 was not wasted; it had sprouted forth as Desideria made the covenant of baptism and endured her trials in faith. It

would have been easy for Desideria to wither away spiritually as she and her family practiced the gospel isolated from the rest of the Church, but she held on. She knew God cared and watched over her small part of the world.

Though she couldn't leave her home, she became an example of faith, diligence, obedience, and fortitude not only to her family but also to each of us as we seek to carry on the pioneer spirit. ■

NOTES

1. See Alonzo L. Taylor Mission Papers, July 10, 1903, and Mexican Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports, July 7, 1903, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. See Taylor Mission Papers, July 10, 1903, and James Z. Stewart Papers, Feb. 17, 1880, Church History Library.
3. See Stewart Papers, Feb. 17, 1880.
4. See Moses Thatcher, Journal, Nov. 20, 1879, and Stewart Papers, Apr. 26 and June 20, 1880, Church History Library. Desideria was the first woman baptized after the Mexican Mission opened in 1879 in Mexico City. However, a brief mission to the northern city of Hermosillo in 1877 resulted in the baptism of five persons in a nearby village, including Maria La Cruz Paros, the first known Mexican female convert. Official Mexican Mission records created by Moses Thatcher list Desideria Yáñez as the first woman convert, when she was in reality the second. See also Louis Garff Reminiscences, undated, Church History Library.
5. See Horace H. Cummings Papers, Oct. 24, 1886, Church History Library.
6. Cummings Papers, Nov. 29, 1886.
7. Taylor Mission Papers, July 10, 1903.





Raising Our Son

in a PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD

By Kami Crookston

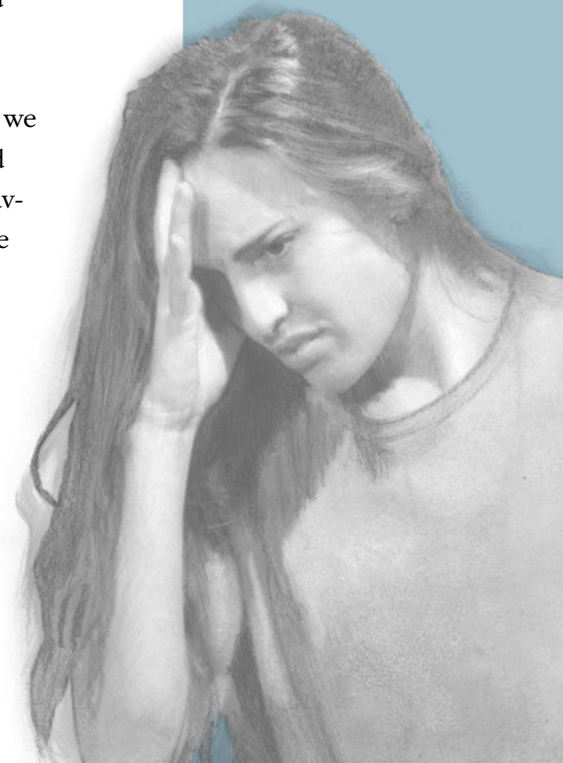
My vision of parenthood was one of perfectly behaved children who were always beautifully dressed and never got dirty. I quickly realized the image I cherished was a fantasy. I have grown to accept my messy house and runny noses because I know that they come with the most amazing blessings I could ever have. But what I never could have imagined was the struggle I would face while raising my children, especially my son Brad.

Brad came into this life as innocent as any child, but it didn't take long for us to realize that he was different. He couldn't go to nursery without my husband or me with him because he was too aggressive. As he grew older and played with other children, he needed constant supervision. When we sought help, we were told that we just had to be more consistent with him. We did everything we could think of: we researched online, read parenting books, and asked doctors and family members. Finally, when Brad started school, he was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, as well as a host of other problems.

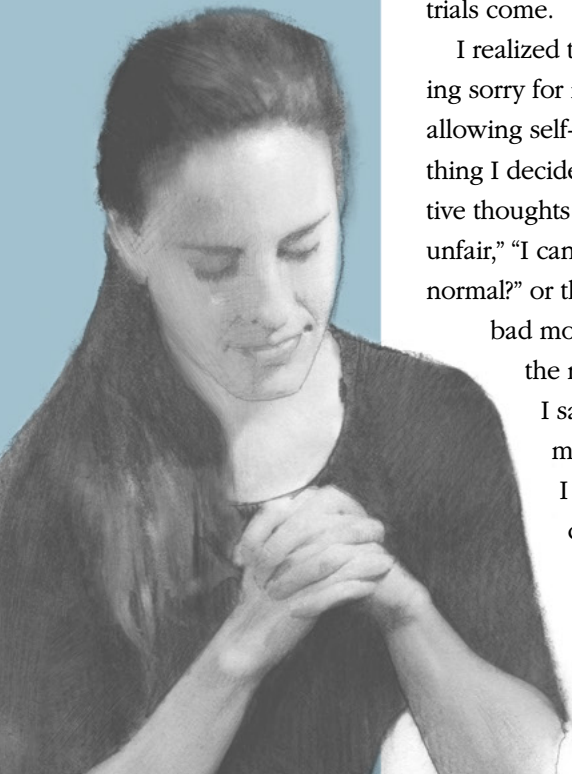
For the first time we felt we had hope. Now that we had a diagnosis, we could start a treatment plan. We were hopeful that Brad would respond well to a medication that had helped others. Unfortunately, Brad's behavior on medication was worse than without it, so he had to stop. I felt the last bit of my hope drain away.

One day when Brad was six, I faced one of his many daily tantrums. I wanted to give up. I went to my room for a moment to myself, and tears rolled down my cheeks. I prayed for the strength to be able to face the approaching bedtime routine. How could I keep doing this, day after day?

When I learned to use the spiritual resources available to me, I was flooded with ideas of ways to help my son and to better face my own trial.



My husband and I had researched and discovered many resources to help us, but we forgot the most significant one: prayer.



I felt like I was past what I could endure. Did Heavenly Father understand how hard it was? If He truly loved me, I reasoned, He would remove this burden from me and give my son a normal life. Those thoughts and feelings surrounded me as the trial I faced seemed to get worse instead of better.

The True Nature of Trials

I thought I understood trials. We were supposed to go through them like a pot being heated in a kiln. We'd go in and out of the fire, and then life would go back to normal until the next round of heating and tempering. But I had been facing this trial for years, and it was not going away. I felt the weight pressing down on me, and the feeling of helplessness brought me to my knees.

I then knew that the place I needed to go for comfort and understanding was the temple. By inspiration, I realized that we do not get to pick what trials we have in this life or how long they last. What we can control is the way we think and act when trials come.

I realized that the reason I was feeling sorry for myself was because I was allowing self-pity to fill my mind. The first thing I decided to do was stop any negative thoughts that crept in, such as "This is unfair," "I can't do this," "Why can't Brad be normal?" or the worst culprit, "I am such a

bad mother." I worked hard to stop the negative voice in my head, and I saw that my real voice became more patient and loving when I was dealing with all of my children.

I also encouraged positive thinking. I began to think, "You are doing great," and I would give myself a compliment, such as "You kept your voice low and didn't yell. Way to go!"

Rely on God

After a particularly hard day, I asked my husband to give me a blessing. During the blessing I was reminded that I am a daughter of God, that He is aware of me and my needs, and that my son is a son of God. Brad was God's son first, and my husband and I have a partnership with God in Brad's behalf. I realized that I had not been using all the tools that the partnership provides for me. My husband and I had researched and discovered many resources to help us, but we forgot the most significant one: prayer.

I began to pray daily about how I could help Brad. When he was having an emotional meltdown, I would say a quick prayer for inspiration before approaching him. As I relied on God for my support and for inspiration for my son, I got a glimpse of what I could be and what I could do for him. I strived to follow Alma's words: "And this is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God" (Alma 29:9).

The changes were immediate. I was flooded with ideas and ways to help Brad. I used family home evening as a tool and prayed for ideas about what to teach. I also read the scriptures with more intent and recognized the great parenting advice they contain. I began to be filled with hope and comfort.

As I continued to put into practice the idea that my husband and I are partners with God in parenting our children and using the tools that He has given us, I began to rely on God more and more. I realized that my knowledge of parenting could only go so far, but a loving Heavenly Father, who knows all things and loves my son more than I do, could help me become a better and stronger mother. And though I still sometimes falter, I know where to look for help. I understand now that some trials may not have a time limit on them, but if I keep my eye on eternity, God will help me.

Take Joy in the Little Moments

When times were tough, I learned to take time to feel joy in the little moments—the gifts—that are given to us. When my son cannot help but give me a kiss, I am grateful. When I watched my son ride the bus without anyone to sit with, I was blessed to have this scripture come into my mind: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88). I knew that Brad was not alone and never will be.

We are an eternal family, and with the help of people who love us and our loving Heavenly Father watching over us, I can appreciate the small gifts given to me daily and feel the joy and happiness that we are meant to have. And with those small blessings and the help of the Lord, I can become who I am meant to be, no matter how long it takes. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



When Murilo was baptized at age 16, his whole family was against it. When he received a mission call, his parents threw away his church clothes and stopped him from serving a mission. He eventually helped bring his family into the Church, but he still felt unworthy for not having served a mission.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Murilo Vicente Leite Ribeiro

Goiânia, Brazil

It was difficult for me to be a young man and to not be on a mission. I felt inferior to my friends who had already left on missions, and I felt alone at church. Some people thought I did not go because I was unworthy. But I did my best to remain firm in the faith.

Years later I met with Elder Jairo Mazzagardi of the Seventy when he came to reorganize our stake. He asked me about my mission.

"I did not serve a mission," I said, starting to cry.

"Brother Murilo," he said, "do not look back; look forward. Whoever looks back walks backwards, and whoever looks forward walks forward. You are clean."

It felt like a six-ton backpack was lifted off my back.

He told me to return with my wife and called me to serve as stake president.



Read more of Murilo's story in the *Liahona* online at lds.org/go/71738.





I began driving a jeepney and working as a sales agent to provide for our basic needs.

EMPTY-HANDED BUT FULL OF FAITH

After serving in the Philippines Cagayan de Oro Mission, I was determined to follow the counsel of the prophet and apostles to marry in the temple. Most of my nonmember relatives and friends, and even some members, said I should earn a college degree first or have a great job before thinking about marriage. I had neither when I became engaged.

I was nervous, but I remembered a story about President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) when he received a mission call to England. He was preparing to leave in the midst of economic pressures and concerns that troubled him. Just before he left, his father handed him a card with five written words: “Be not afraid, only believe” (Mark 5:36). I also remembered the words of my bishop: “Have faith. God will provide.” These

words gave me courage and strength to move forward.

Though empty-handed, I married my lovely fiancée in the Manila Philippines Temple. Shortly thereafter I started to work for a company that required me to work on Sundays. I wanted to keep the Sabbath day holy, so this job didn’t last long. Many wondered why I had quit my job, but I pressed forward, repeating to myself the words “Have faith. God will provide.”

I began driving a jeepney and working as a sales agent to provide for our basic needs and prepare for the arrival of our first baby. My wife noticed I was exhausted trying to provide for our family. She told me I needed to go back to school, but I thought it would be hard to work, serve in the Church, and be a student.

I was right; it *was* hard. But we did our best to keep the commandments. Often our finances fell short, but with help from the Church’s Perpetual Education Fund, I was able to finish my education before our second child was born. I found a job as a high school teacher and eventually became a seminary and institute coordinator.

Following the counsel of the prophet and other Church leaders helped me realize that marriage provides great opportunities for spiritual growth and maturity. I have been blessed because of my marriage and the gospel.

We don’t need to be afraid, even in the most difficult circumstances. We just need to do our best and remember these words: “Have faith. God will provide.” ■

Richard O. Espinosa, Tarlac City, Philippines

COMFORTED AFTER A MISCARRIAGE

Eighteen weeks into my fourth pregnancy, I woke up to some minor bleeding. I felt anxious when the bleeding didn't stop, so I decided to go to the emergency room.

During the long drive to the hospital, I hoped and prayed that everything would be OK. At the worst, I thought the doctor would prescribe several days of bed rest.

When I was admitted to the hospital, the staff performed several tests. They found that the baby didn't have a heartbeat. The diagnosis was "fetal demise." The doctor couldn't do anything further at that point, so he released me from the hospital.

I went home feeling sad and frightened. I was unable to sleep that night. When I got out of bed the next morning, I was prompted to go to an early-morning endowment session at the temple.

Near the end of the session, my eyes focused on the wedding and engagement rings on my ring finger. They had belonged to the great-grandmother I was named after. She passed away when I was five, and I had recently been reading her life story. I remembered that she had experienced many miscarriages when she was in her 20s.

All morning I had been fighting tears of sadness and fear, but in that

moment, I felt a wave of peace. I felt comforted. Great-grandma had passed through similar trials in her life, and the Savior had helped her. I felt the assurance that He would help me too.

"He will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:12).

I am deeply grateful for the peace that comes from attending the temple, for a legacy of faithful ancestors, and most of all, for the atoning sacrifice of the Savior Jesus Christ. ■

Emily Miller, Texas, USA

My wedding and engagement rings had belonged to my great-grandmother. I remembered that she had experienced many miscarriages.

GIVING A RIDE AND SHARING THE GOSPEL

The drive through the English countryside was quiet on my way to church one morning. Along the way I saw an elderly lady on the side of the road. I had to decide quickly whether to stop and see if she needed a ride.

I felt that I should stop. She told me her name was Mary and said she had just arrived at that spot. I realized that a few seconds later for her or earlier for me and we would have missed each other. It was perfect timing!

She told me where she needed to go, and it was close to the chapel. I mentioned I was on my way to church and asked if she had heard of the Church. She said she had faith in the Savior but knew little of the Latter-day

Saints. On the way we shared our thoughts and feelings about the Savior.

When I dropped Mary off, I said I could give her a ride after church. She accepted, and we arranged to meet at the chapel. When I walked into church, I asked the missionaries for a copy of the Book of Mormon to give to my new friend. Later, when she arrived at the chapel, the members were friendly and shared their testimonies with her.

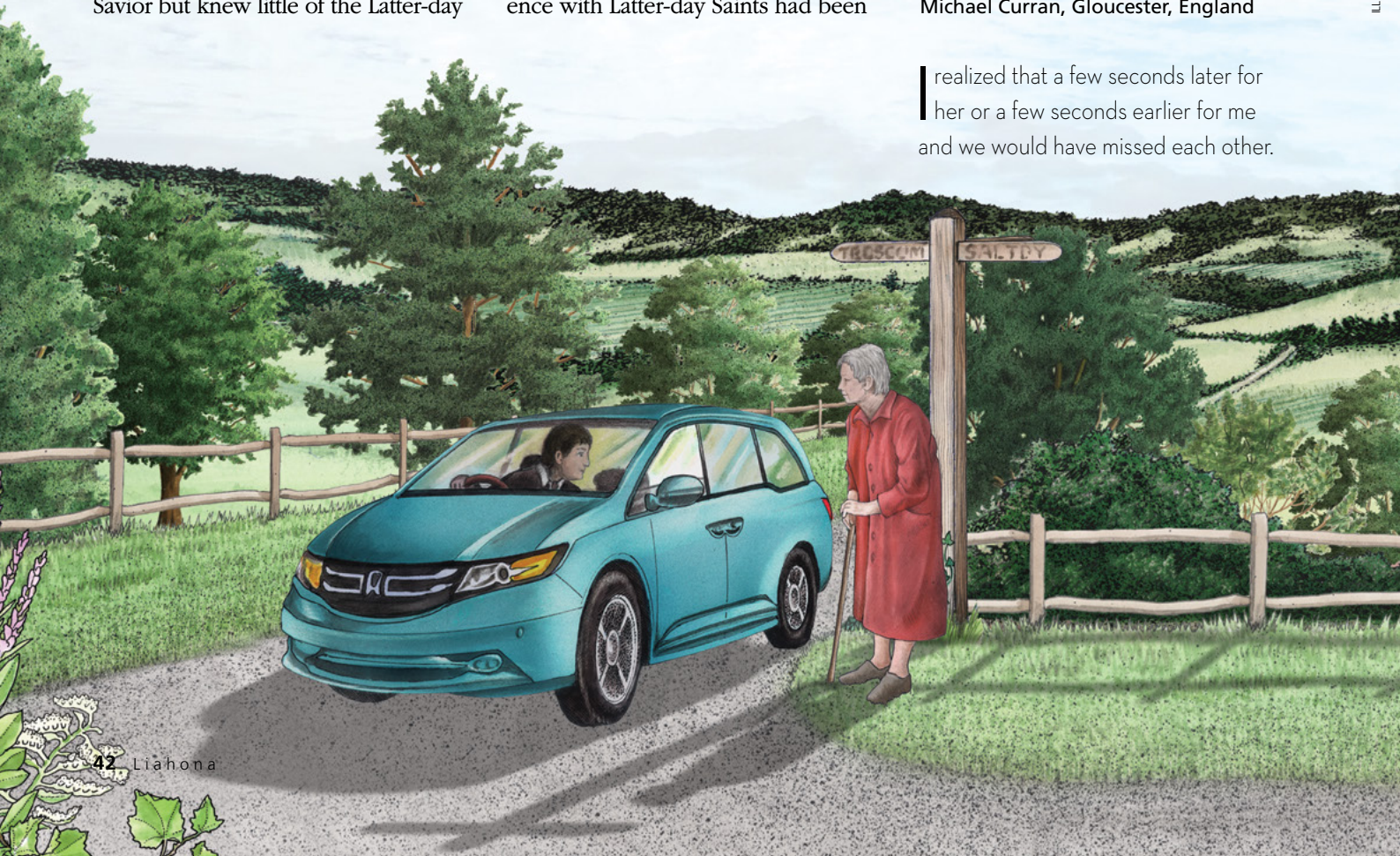
On the drive back I told Mary she could learn more about Jesus Christ by reading the Book of Mormon. I also told her where to find the account of the Savior's appearance to the Nephites. Although her experience with Latter-day Saints had been

brief, I knew she had felt something. I dropped Mary off where we had met. I didn't expect to see her again.

When I was driving home from work the next day, a detour caused me to drive down a road I do not normally travel. To my surprise I saw Mary again! When she saw me, she was surprised too and smiled. I was happy to give her another ride. It was another moment of perfect timing the Lord had arranged for her to hear about our faith.

I haven't seen Mary since, but this experience taught me that the Lord watches over all and prepares the way. I am grateful He provided an opportunity for me to share the gospel. ■
Michael Curran, Gloucester, England

I realized that a few seconds later for her or a few seconds earlier for me and we would have missed each other.



ANGELS BROUGHT LIGHT TO MY HOME

One Sunday morning I was asked if I'd like to have home teachers visit me. I had just recently been divorced and was having a hard time facing my new life as a single mother with two small children. I said I would appreciate a visit. At the time, I was feeling bitter about my situation and felt alone in my struggles.

The following week, two good brothers came to my home. During their visit they asked the usual questions and shared a short gospel message with my family.

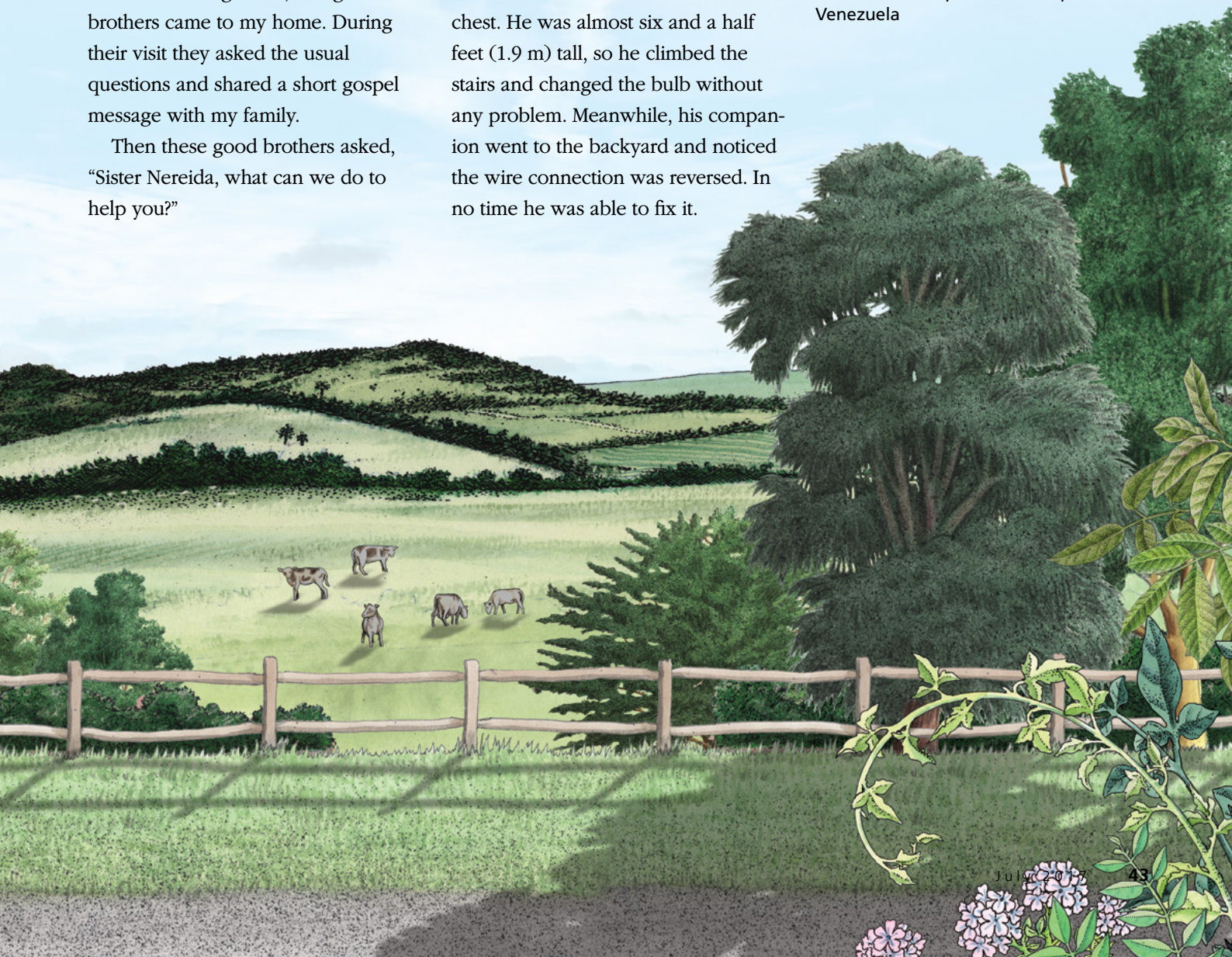
Then these good brothers asked, "Sister Nereida, what can we do to help you?"

Without thinking much about it, I told them the light bulbs were out above the stairs going up to the second floor. I had replacement bulbs, but I couldn't reach high enough to change them, and I worried about using a ladder on the stairs. I also told them that I had no working lights in the backyard.

Right away they got up. One went out to his car and returned with a tool chest. He was almost six and a half feet (1.9 m) tall, so he climbed the stairs and changed the bulb without any problem. Meanwhile, his companion went to the backyard and noticed the wire connection was reversed. In no time he was able to fix it.

How grateful I have been to my home teachers over the years for their simple act of kindness, love, and dedication and for the wonderful lesson they taught me. My home teachers were truly angels who not only brought light to our home but also brought the peace, hope, and safety of the gospel, which brings light to any kind of darkness. ■

Nereida Santafe, Gran Caracas, Venezuela



THE ONLY THING THAT SAVED ME

By Shuho Takayama as told to
Ana-Lisa Clark Mullen

Golf is a popular sport in Japan, so I started playing it when I was 14 years old as a way to spend time with my father. It was fun from the start, and eventually I started to practice on my own and played on the golf team at my high school. I became friends with my teammates and coaches, who encouraged me to pursue my dream of becoming a professional golfer.

I worked hard, not just on my game but on my studies, graduating near the top of my high school class.

When I first entered college, I had a great relationship with my golf coach and teammates. They were better than I was, so I did all I could to keep up with them. Some of the team members commented on my unique first name, Shuho. I told them that my Korean maternal grandmother gave it to me and that in Korean it means “beautiful mountain.” From that point on I felt like their attitude toward me

changed, tainted by a generations-long tension between some in Japan and Korea.

They began calling me “the Korean kid” and said I would hurt the good name of the university. Rather than allowing me to practice golf with them, they made me clean the toilets.

It became increasingly stressful to be around the team. Being away from home, I felt like I was on my own. I tried to hang on to my dream and return to the good favor of my coach and team, but after two years,

**An unexpected
friendship
helped me
change my life
from darkness
to light.**

I couldn’t tolerate their harsh treatment anymore, so I returned home.

This was a dark time for me. The stress was having psychological and physical effects. My self-esteem had taken a beating for two years. My dream to be a professional golfer was at an end. I didn’t know where to go with my life. And I was angry. I was angry at everyone: the coach, my teammates, and my parents. I was so angry, my thoughts scared

me. I had no friends, and I felt I was unable to trust or associate with other people. For six months, I only left home to work out at the gym.

During this dark part of my life, I made friends with Justin Christy, whom I met at the gym. When I first saw him, I thought he was a foreign-exchange student. I was hesitant to talk to him until I saw him talking to someone at the gym and was surprised to hear that he spoke Japanese. I still felt unable to trust other people, but he suggested that we train together.



There was something different about him that I didn't understand at the time. I was calm when I was around him. I started to look forward to our training time together. I had found someone I felt I could trust as a friend.

After training together for several months, Justin invited me to a dinner group that he went to on a regular basis. I was hesitant, but after several invitations I decided to go to what ended up being a young single adult dinner at the home of Richard and Corina Clark. They greeted me warmly when I entered their home, Brother Clark in Japanese and Sister Clark in English. I didn't understand what she was saying, but I attempted to respond to her. Even though several people there didn't speak Japanese, they were a fun-loving group who were warm and friendly. There was lots of laughter.

I began attending other young single adult activities and had never had so much fun with other people in my life. I wondered what it was about these people that made them so nice and friendly.

Around this time Justin asked me what I wanted to do with my life. I was surprised to find that my goals had started to change. I told him I wanted to learn to speak English and I wanted to be a friend to all, just like

**I decided that
I wanted to
help save people
who were in
the same
situation I was.**

him. He told me of the free English classes at his church. I went to the English class and met the missionaries. Even though I had never thought about God, I felt like I should listen to the missionaries. They taught me the fundamentals of the gospel and called me almost every day. They became my good friends, which made me really happy because I didn't have very many friends yet.

I started meeting many members of the Church who went to the missionary lessons with me and became good friends with them. They taught me the gospel and set the example for me. Justin talked to me about the Book of Mormon and told me stories from it so that I wanted to read it for myself. Another friend, Shingo, who is very detail-oriented, discussed doctrines with me in a way that was easy for me to understand. He always bore

his testimony at the end of our conversations.

I had found something I believed in and a place I felt I belonged. After I was baptized and confirmed, I started to think about serving a mission, but I was worried about dedicating two years to it. I talked to a lot of people about serving a mission, especially my returned missionary friends. I thought a lot about it, and I realized that the gospel was the only thing that could

have saved me.

I know that God has given me everything: my dreams, hope, friends, and especially love. The gospel helped me come out of darkness into the light. ■

The author lives in Tokyo, Japan.



BE AN EXAMPLE

"Each of us came to earth having been given the Light of Christ. As we follow the example of the

Savior and live as He lived and as He taught, that light will burn within us and will light the way for others. . . .

"I am confident there are within our sphere of influence those who are lonely, those who are ill, and those who feel discouraged. Ours is the opportunity to help them and to lift their spirits."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Be an Example and a Light," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 86.

How I Shared the Gospel with Shuho

By Justin Christy

When I met Shuho at the gym, he said he wanted to learn English and go to a golf exchange program. I told him about the English classes at the church, but it took several weeks before we were able to attend. In the meantime, as we worked out together, we talked a lot about gospel topics, about the Book of Mormon, and about life in general.

The friendship and examples of the Church members he met caught his attention and helped him learn about the gospel. It is the Spirit that leads to conversion; all we do is deliver the message and support people as they choose for themselves.

It used to be stressful for me to think about sharing the gospel. But I have found that if we just open our mouth at the right time, we will have missionary opportunities. All we need to do is invite people to a church activity or meeting. If we are open-minded, there will always be opportunities to share the gospel. ■





Playing the Most Important Part

By Annie McCormick Bonner

Live theater was my passion! As a young adult, I threw myself into acting and singing on the stage. I was blessed with talent and hoped to establish a career performing professionally. I won the most challenging roles I could get and always behaved professionally in order to win the respect of my fellow thespians.

I was thrilled when the most influential director in our area told me that he would be holding auditions for an operetta and that he wanted me to try out. The show would be performed in our area's most prestigious venue, and it seemed that my director friend already had me in mind for the leading role.

The script was unavailable for perusal before the audition, but the operetta was based on a novel by

an 18th-century philosopher, which I read. I also became familiar with the show's music, which was exceptionally beautiful and challenging.

The audition went well, and I was soon informed that the leading role—the most important part—was mine! I believed that this role was a huge opportunity.

I walked on clouds of excitement—until the script arrived. As I read it, my elation rapidly floated away. While the novel and the music were worthy, the script was irreverent and contained suggestive and inappropriate stage directions. I knew that I shouldn't be involved in this production. It was a terrible disappointment.

Suddenly I had a dilemma. Theater etiquette dictates that after accepting a role, an actor does not quit because the production schedule does not allow time for changes in cast. Backing out now would be considered very unprofessional. I feared losing the trust of the theater company, offending the

director, and even losing the opportunity to continue performing elsewhere.

Of course, I was tempted to rationalize! A voice strutted across my mind, proclaiming, "You can't quit now. The script isn't so bad. The good in the show will make up for the naughty parts." But the Holy Spirit was always in the wings of my heart—firmly, patiently, unwaveringly cuing me that I needed to exit the operetta.

I had just landed the biggest role of my life. I was excited—until the script arrived.

I knew what I had to do. Trembling, I picked up the phone and dialed the director.

"Hello, sir," I said when he answered. "This is Annie."

"Annie! I'm so excited about the show. Did you get the script?"

"Yes, I did, and I . . . I . . ."

I burst into tears. Talk about unprofessional!

Somehow, between sobs, I managed to explain to the director why I could not be in his show. And then I waited for the world to end.

The dear man laughed. He respected my choice. At first he tried to talk me into staying with the show, but he relented. He said he would still adore me even if I didn't want to be in his operetta. And he simply asked me to bring the script to him right away so that he could give it to somebody else. I hung up the phone, mortified at my weeping but grateful for the director's affectionate, understanding response.

I wiped away my tears and then grabbed the script and jumped into my car. As the engine started, the radio also came to life. It was preset to the local classical music station, and to my amazement, the tune playing was the overture of the very same operetta. I had never ever heard it played on the radio before.

I felt like Heavenly Father was playing this music for me. He

wanted me to understand that He loved me and that He approved of my choice. The music coming over the airwaves was one of God's tender mercies. Through it I felt the comfort of His love.

I went on to study drama at university. More than once I found myself in similar circumstances. There were times when it became necessary to exit certain collaborative projects because of inappropriate content. These situations were never easy or pleasant, but I was able to handle them more gracefully and without tears. Perhaps my earlier experience was preparation for these occasions. Perhaps it helped me to better understand who I am and what I most want to be.

William Shakespeare wrote:

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women
merely players:
They have their exits and their
entrances;
And one man in his time plays
many parts.¹*

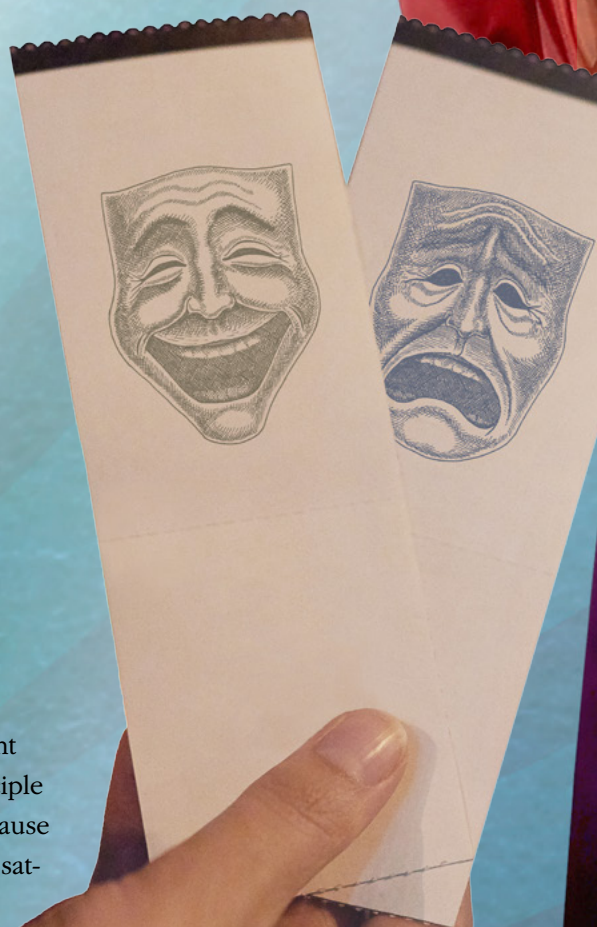
I'm learning that there is one part to play that is more important than any other. It is as a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Winning the applause of our peers can be exciting and satisfying, but it is God's approval

that matters. Our greatest performances come as we learn to follow the Master. ■

The author lives in Washington, USA.

NOTE

1. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, act 2, scene 7, lines 141–44.



STRONG

All Week Long





These youth share how the Lord blesses them as they take the sacrament and remember their covenants throughout the week.

It's Sunday night. That means tomorrow is Monday—back to homework, your job, football practice, piano lessons, and more. There's certainly a lot to do this week! But you've got this. You can conquer your long to-do list this week.

Want to know how?

You've got spiritual strength on your side. Every Sunday, you can take the sacrament and renew the covenants you've made. As you do, you are promised that if you take upon you the name of Jesus Christ, remember Him, and keep His commandments, you will *always* have His Spirit to be with you (see D&C 20:77, 79). That means you can feel spiritually strengthened no matter what you face this week.

We asked some youth to share their experiences with the sacrament and how it has strengthened them as they remembered their covenants all week long. Check out some of their stories. Maybe you've faced similar things!

BACKGROUND AND ABOVE: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM GETTY IMAGES



Always remembering the Savior helps me have courage in the face of difficult trials. Halfway through my senior year of high school, my family moved back to the United States, but I stayed in Australia by myself to finish the school year. After I visited them during a school holiday, I was flying back to Australia, and I felt incredibly lonely. However, I suddenly realized that I wasn't alone; I never was and I never will be because the Savior's Spirit will always be with me as I strive to follow Him. That was the greatest comfort I could have received in that moment.

Shannon S., 19, Sydney, Australia



When I hear the sacrament prayers, I remind myself that if I keep my part of my baptismal covenant, I can keep the Spirit with me. My week is a lot easier when I keep the Spirit nearby. For example, many students at my school use bad language and speak in inappropriate ways. Remembering my covenants helps me to ignore what I hear and even to influence some of my peers to stop speaking that way.

Jacob B., 14, Colorado, USA



For me, taking upon myself the name of Jesus Christ means remembering that His Spirit can always be with us and that we must choose to do what is right. Once at a birthday party, my friends were drinking, and they offered me an alcoholic drink. I said no. Then one of my Church friends came and told them that we do not drink alcohol because of our religion. Remembering the Savior always brings the Spirit close to me and keeps bad things away from me.

Miguel C., 16, Paraná, Brazil



At school there was a girl with a disability. Most people used that as an extra excuse to make fun of her. My friend and I were the only ones who tried to help her. Some days it seemed like the whole class teamed up against her. It was challenging to know how to react. I wanted to just walk away, but I chose to remember that she is a child of God and to think about how Jesus would treat her. I felt the calming effect of the Holy Ghost. I remembered that I could make a difference. Following the Savior's example helped me a lot, and I knew everything would be OK.

In my baptismal covenants I am promised to always have the Holy Ghost with me if I act as the Savior would. I'm grateful to have felt that comfort and strength from the Holy Ghost.

Alexis L., 13, Kansas, USA

During the sacrament, I used to think about things like what I have to do in the week, things at school, or my friends. But then through Sunday School classes and the messages of our prophets, I began to understand the meaning of the sacrament. I now think about the Atonement of Jesus Christ, that He gave His life for us, paid for our sins, and suffered all things. That gives me the motivation every day to say, I can strive to be like Him and demonstrate the same love that He showed others. I can share the gospel with others. I can do something to be more worthy to enter the temple and to take the sacrament.

Alessandra B., 17, Santiago, Chile



Knowing that I have covenanted to take upon myself the name of Christ gives me a sense of duty to follow Him, but it's not always easy. One time at a group activity I saw a kid who didn't have anyone to talk to. I felt like I should go talk with him. At first, I didn't want to. I am not that great at putting myself out there to make friends. But remembering what Christ would do, I found the strength to make a new friend. As I was talking to him, I could feel the Spirit prompting me to ask questions and have fun.

Evan A., 16, Utah, USA



Taking the sacrament gives me a peaceful feeling and thoughts that convince me I can handle anything life throws at me. Last June, I was having a difficult time in my life. One of my best friends moved away, I was struggling with depression, and I had unrealistic thoughts about body image. One Sunday, I was taking the sacrament, and a flood of peace washed over me. I felt truly happy.

Olivia T., 14, Virginia, USA



The sacrament is a spiritual boost for the week. It reminds me of the covenants that I have made with my Father in Heaven, and it guides me through the week. It makes me think of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for us, and that prepares me spiritually for the upcoming week.

One time I was stressed and frustrated, but when I took the sacrament and read the sacrament hymn, I was filled with the Spirit. I forgot about my stresses and focused on the Savior.

Brett B., 17, Colorado, USA





**By Elder
Dallin H. Oaks**
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

HOW TO GAIN A TESTIMONY

The first step in gaining any kind of knowledge is to really **desire to know**. In the case of spiritual knowledge, the next step is to **ask God in sincere prayer**. As we read in modern revelation, “If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal” (D&C 42:61).

Here is what Alma wrote about what he did: “Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit” (Alma 5:46).

As we desire and seek, we should remember that acquiring a testimony is not a passive thing but a process in which we are expected to *do* something. Jesus taught, “If any man will do

his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17).

Another way to seek a testimony seems astonishing when compared with the methods of obtaining other knowledge. **We gain or strengthen a testimony by bearing it.** Someone even suggested that some testimonies are better gained on the feet bearing them than on the knees praying for them.

A personal testimony is fundamental to our faith. Consequently, the things we must do to acquire, strengthen, and retain a testimony are vital to our spiritual life. In addition to those already stated, we need to **partake of the sacrament each week** (see D&C 59:9) to qualify for the precious promise that we will “always have his Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77). Of course, that Spirit is the source of our testimonies. ■

From an April 2008 general conference address.



HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

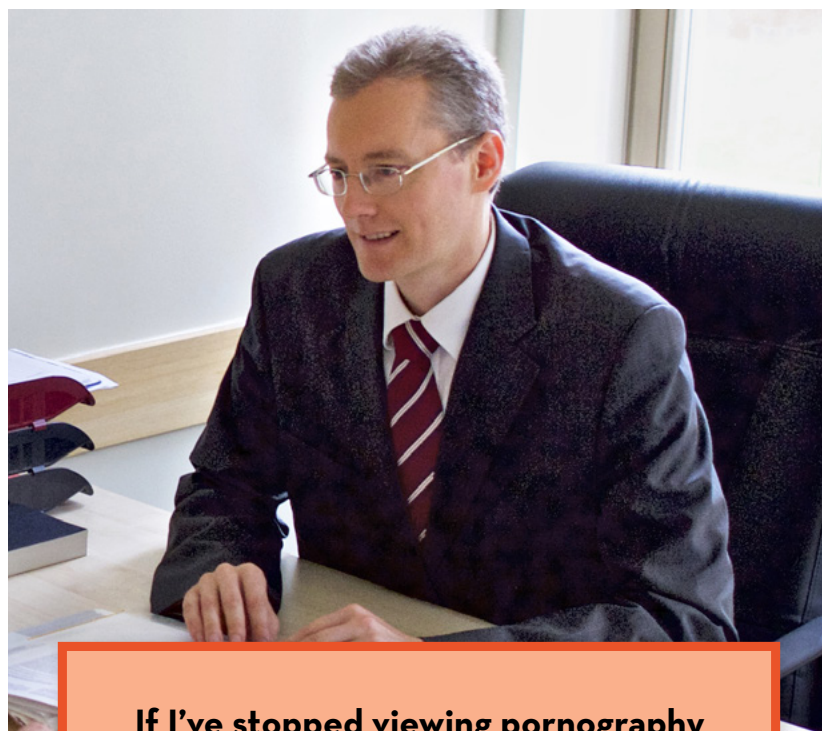
I have a testimony of the Church. It came through inspiration and dedication and reading the scriptures daily. And when you have your own testimony, it is amazing how differently you see and hear things.
Shannon Muriel M., Colorado, USA

TO THE POINT

How do I balance not judging others and not condoning sin?

We're commanded to forgive others and leave final judgment to God (see D&C 64:9–11), but this doesn't mean condoning sin. If we're around others who are engaging in sinful behavior, we should be a light to them and stand up for what's right. At a minimum, this means setting a good example by not engaging in sin ourselves and not placing ourselves in questionable situations or company. But should we point out people's bad behavior to let them know God's laws and where we stand on them? And if so, when and how should we do it?

The answer probably depends on the situation, the kind of relationship we have with the people involved, and their knowledge of God's laws. For instance, talking one-on-one to family members and close friends is better than telling a roomful of mere acquaintances to repent. Seek the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. He can guide your words and actions so that you can show the right balance of love, tolerance, and steadfast commitment to the Lord's standards. ■



If I've stopped viewing pornography on my own, do I still have to talk to the bishop?

If you've been viewing pornography, you're encouraged to "seek the help you need. Your parents and bishop can help you take the steps necessary to repent and rid yourself of this destructive habit" (*For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 12).

If you've stopped viewing pornography on your own, the question isn't really whether or not you're still "required" to talk to your bishop about it. The real question is "Why not talk to my bishop?" There really is no downside to it. He will be understanding and encouraging, and he will be pleased with the efforts you've made to forsake your past sins. The bishop can help you resolve any lingering doubts you may have regarding your worthiness and the thoroughness of your repentance. And he can help you strengthen your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice. For similar reasons, you should also consider talking to your parents. ■



To be a Latter-day Saint is
to be a pioneer.

YOUR PIONEER JOURNEY— FOR REAL, NOT PRETEND

By Aaron L. West

Church History Department

When I was a little boy, I sometimes pretended to be a sports star. I pretended I could fly. I pretended I was a giant. I was happy with my life, even though I was short, earthbound, and only mildly athletic. But pretending was fun. I enjoyed experiencing something different, even if it was just in my imagination. I guess that's why a lot of people like to pretend.

Speaking of pretending, we Latter-day Saints love to go on pioneer treks. We wear pioneer clothes (sort of). We pull pioneer handcarts (kind of). We eat pioneer food (well, not exactly). We make a huge effort to pretend to be pioneers. The amazing thing is that we don't need to pretend. *We already are pioneers.*

President Thomas S. Monson has said, "To be a Latter-day Saint is to be a pioneer, for the definition of a pioneer is 'one who goes before to prepare or open up the way for others to follow.'"¹ President Monson has taught us, by his words and his actions, how to be true pioneers:

"We follow in the footsteps of the ultimate Pioneer—even the Savior—who went before, showing us the way to follow.

"'Come, follow me,' He invited."²

Come . . . follow . . . me. These simple words can help us be true pioneers.

Let's look at these words from the perspective of a few modern-day pioneers who recently went on a stake pioneer trek.





Taylor A.



Ethan G.



Harmony C.

“COME, FOLLOW ME”

The word *come* is an invitation. It suggests movement from one place to another. Taylor A. knows well the meaning of this word.

Taylor is bright, joyful, and full of the Spirit, but she would be quick to tell you that those words did not describe her two years ago. She has moved to a different place now, spiritually and physically. She is a pioneer.

“I’ve been a pioneer in my life,” she said, “because I’m a recent convert. And my journey has just been amazing. I just feel like it’s a whole new life. And once we take that first step in our journey, miracles happen.”

Not only does Taylor understand the invitation to come—she knows the source of the invitation. She observed, “In our world, we’re so disconnected with what got us here, right? We are so caught up in our jobs and technology, and a message that’s really been hitting me lately is putting Christ first. If we just connect to really what the pioneers did—[they were] centered in Christ.”

Follow is another invitation. On the pioneer trek, Ethan G. gained a greater understanding of this word. “Sometimes I haven’t felt the best on trek, or I’ve felt kind of discouraged,” he admitted. “But I realize that the pioneers also felt that way.”

Ethan used to wonder why the early pioneers were willing to do what they did. He said, “I feel like I might have just given up. But as I’ve thought about that, I kind of realized that it’s because they loved the Savior, and they have a hope they can become better through Him. I want to try that too.”

Before Ethan went on the trek, he read about pioneers from the past, felt a connection with them, and was inspired by their faith to follow Jesus Christ. And what is Ethan doing now? He is preparing to receive a call to serve as a full-time missionary. True to President Monson’s counsel, he is getting ready to show others the way to follow.

Where should we come? Who should we follow? The Savior tells us: “Come, follow *me*” (Luke 18:22;

emphasis added). When Harmony left home for trek, she saw the Lord’s hand in her experience. She knew she was following Him.

Harmony’s path to her stake trek was different from others’ paths. At age 15 she learned that she had a rare form of skin cancer. She wasn’t able to participate in her stake trek. “I was devastated,” she recalled.

Four years later, when her stake announced another trek, Harmony was free of cancer. But at age 19, she thought she wouldn’t be able to go. Then she received a calling to participate as a leader. She said, “It’s a testimony to me that the Lord knows who we are, and He knows the desires of our hearts, and if they’re righteous and good, He’ll bless us.”

Harmony offered advice to help us when we face trials: “To anyone who’s struggling, I’d say just to lean on the Lord. He’s always there for you. He loves us, and He won’t let us fall. We just need to reach out our hand to Him, and He will help us on our pioneer journey.”



"I have no ancestors among the 19th-century pioneers. However, since the first days of my Church membership, I have felt a close kinship to those early pioneers who crossed the plains. They are my spiritual ancestry, as they are for each and every member of the Church."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf,
Second Counselor in the
First Presidency, "The Global
Church Blessed by the Voice
of the Prophets," *Ensign* or
Liahona, Nov. 2002, 10.

If you never go on a pioneer trek, you can still be a pioneer. You don't have to wear a bonnet or pull a handcart. You just need to follow Jesus Christ, as the early pioneers did. In doing so, you will be, as President Monson said, "one who goes before to prepare or open up the way for others to follow."

If you do have an opportunity to go on a pioneer trek, enjoy it! And when it's over and you leave your handcart behind, don't leave your pioneer testimony inside it. Bring that testimony with you.

You are a real-life, modern-day pioneer. With the ultimate Pioneer—the Savior—as your guide, you are sure to succeed! ■

1. Thomas S. Monson, "True to the Faith of Our Forefathers," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, July 2016, 4; quoting *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), "pioneer."
2. Thomas S. Monson, "True to the Faith of Our Forefathers," 4–5.

To meet Taylor, Ethan, Harmony, and other modern-day pioneers, watch this video at **lds.org/go/pioneer717**.

You can read pioneer stories at [lds.org/go/handcart717](https://www.lds.org/go/handcart717).



A SONG FOR MANON

What was originally envisioned as an evening's entertainment grew into an outpouring of love for an individual young woman.

By Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines

The young women were excited. In fact, the entire ward in southern France was excited. To encourage greater unity, leaders were planning a ward social, with dinner and entertainment. Knowing that the Beehives, Mia Maids, and Laurels had already been learning songs and dances during some of their activities, the leaders invited them to provide the evening's entertainment.

And so the ward's young women began practicing in earnest—all of them but one. Manon would not be able to perform. She had been undergoing cancer treatments for more than two years.

Manon C., age 16, still came to meetings and activities as often as she could, and she always shared a bright smile despite what she was going through. But during chemotherapy she was sometimes too weak to do much more than rest. Ward members had fasted and prayed several

times on her behalf. No one expected her to practice or to dance.

But she *could* attend the dinner. So why not dedicate the evening to Manon?

A Dedicated Evening

The idea quickly caught on.

"We wanted Manon to feel the ward's love and support for her," explains Emma S., 16. "If our ward wanted to become more unified, what better way to do it than by working together to show our love for Manon?"

The entire ward became involved in the preparations. Families received assignments to bring food for the dinner; the Relief Society helped make costumes for the young women; the young adults provided technical support (lighting, sound, and background videos) for rehearsals



From left: Emma wrote a song, young women performed, Manon was guest of honor, and youth and leaders all helped.

and the final performance; and priesthood brethren helped set up tables and chairs.

All of this work was done by ward members spread out over a large area. “The youth in the ward are very close in spirit, but we live far apart,” says Aiolah V., 16. “We don’t see each other in school because we live in different parts of town, so we make an extra effort to ensure that no one gets left off to the side.”

“We also stay in touch all the time, thanks to cell phones,” says Inka S., 15. “We teach each other by sharing our different experiences. We know we can count on each other, and we try to set good examples for each other.” The young women, who love being together whenever they can, found that rehearsals for the dinner show provided additional opportunities to deepen friendships.

“Before we started rehearsing, I was quite shy,” Inka explains. “I was afraid of making a mistake. But when we danced as a group, I put my shyness aside. I knew it was time to show the ward how hard we had worked.”

Manon, for her part, was both humble and gracious. “When they told me about the dinner and show and that I’d be the guest of honor, I thought I’d be bothered that they were making a fuss,” she recalls. “On the other hand, I was excited to be there!”

A Show of Love and Support

Soon the evening arrived, and it was a perfect occasion to offer love and support for Manon. “The food, of course,

was excellent,” Aiolah says. “This is France, after all!”

And then the entertainment—called a *spectacle* in French—lived up to its name. Games, vocal presentations, and dances delighted the audience. Then the young women, as a combined choir, provided the highlight of the show. They dedicated a song to Manon, a song Emma wrote and composed herself. The lyrics in the chorus sum up the love and support everyone wanted Manon to feel:

*Please don’t give up,
‘Cause we believe in you,
And don’t forget who you are,
‘Cause we believe in you.*

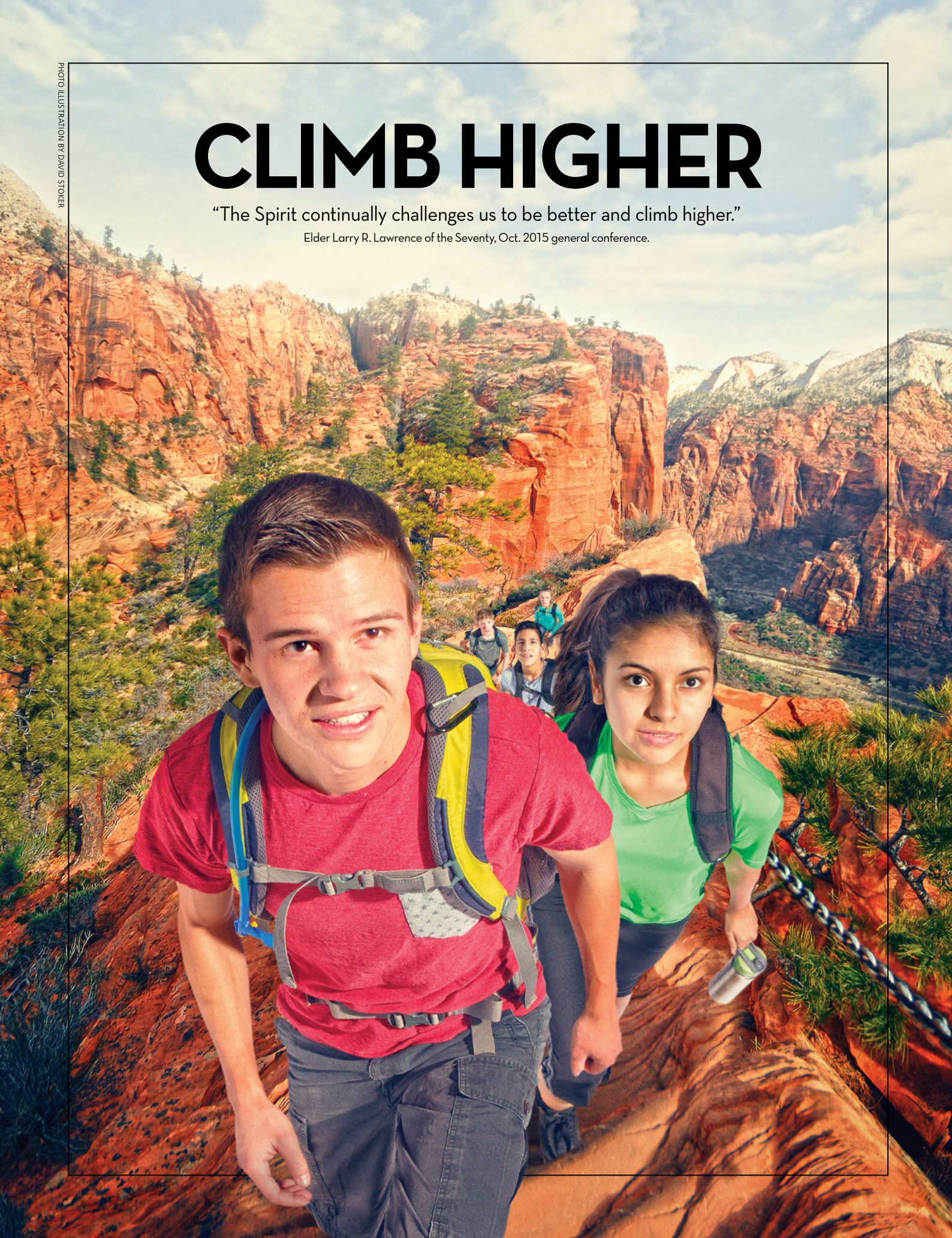
As the young women performed the song, it was as if everyone in the ward were singing along, at least in their hearts. It felt like Emma’s simple song was transformed into an unsung chorus that resonates in the hearts of Latter-day Saints wherever they are—an anthem of courage and compassion; family and friends; unity, faith, and hope; a never-ending prayer that is heard in heaven.

The leaders’ intent in organizing the social was to unify the ward. Dedicating the evening to Manon not only helped to accomplish that goal but also generated an enduring sense of support for Manon and her family and an understanding that every child of God is important. “It is the goal of the Church to help us be closer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ,” Aiolah says. “We know that They love us and that we are never alone.” ■

CLIMB HIGHER

“The Spirit continually challenges us to be better and climb higher.”

Elder Larry R. Lawrence of the Seventy, Oct. 2015 general conference.



The Way to Zion

By Jessica Larsen

Based on a true story

Richmond, Missouri, June 2, 1862

“Mary, what do you see?” Mary’s stepmother spoke softly from her sickbed.

“The fighting seems to be getting closer,” said Mary, looking out the window. The American Civil War was being fought just a few miles away. The sound of gunshots had filled the air since morning. Mary turned to her stepmother. “I’m so sorry. I don’t think we can leave the house to get the doctor.”

“Come closer.” Mary sat next to the bed and took her stepmother’s hand. “I know your father is still not well,” Mary’s stepmother said quietly, “but you need to take the family to Zion—your brother, your sister, and the twins. Don’t give your father any peace until he goes to the Rocky Mountains! Promise me!”

Mary knew how much her family wanted to go to Salt Lake City. After they heard the gospel and were baptized, they had left England to join the Saints in Zion. But would it even be possible? She glanced at her father, who sat silently in his chair. Three years ago, Father had suffered a terrible stroke that had paralyzed his left side.

Mary took a deep breath. “I promise,” she whispered.

Soon Mary’s stepmother closed her eyes for the last time.

One morning soon after, Mary decided it was time to tell her father about her promise. “I know I’m just 14,” she said, “but I must take our family to Zion.” She heard the twins waking. “I need to go get breakfast started,” she said. “But just think about it, please.”

A few days later, Father called Mary’s name. “It’s all arranged,” he said. His speech was still slurred from the stroke. “I’ve sold our land and the coal mine so we can buy a wagon, some oxen, cows, and a few supplies. A wagon company is leaving soon for the West. They’re

not Latter-day Saints, but we can travel with them as far as Iowa. When we get there, we can join a party of Saints going to the Salt Lake Valley.”

Mary threw her arms around him. “Thank you, Father.” Soon they would go to Zion!

The days passed quickly as Mary helped get the family ready for their travels. “Everything is going to be all right,” she told herself. “Soon we’ll be in Zion.”

But then Father fell ill. From the way his mouth drooped on one side, Mary feared it was another stroke.



"He's too sick to travel," she told the leader of the wagon company. "We just need a few days for him to recover."

"We can't wait," the man said briskly. Seeing Mary's face, he softened his tone. "You can stay here until he's ready to travel, and then you can catch up with us." With no other choice, Mary agreed.

A week later, Mary got her family ready to travel again. "The twins and Sarah can ride on the oxen," she told Jackson, her nine-year-old brother. "Father can ride

in the wagon, and you can help me drive the oxen."

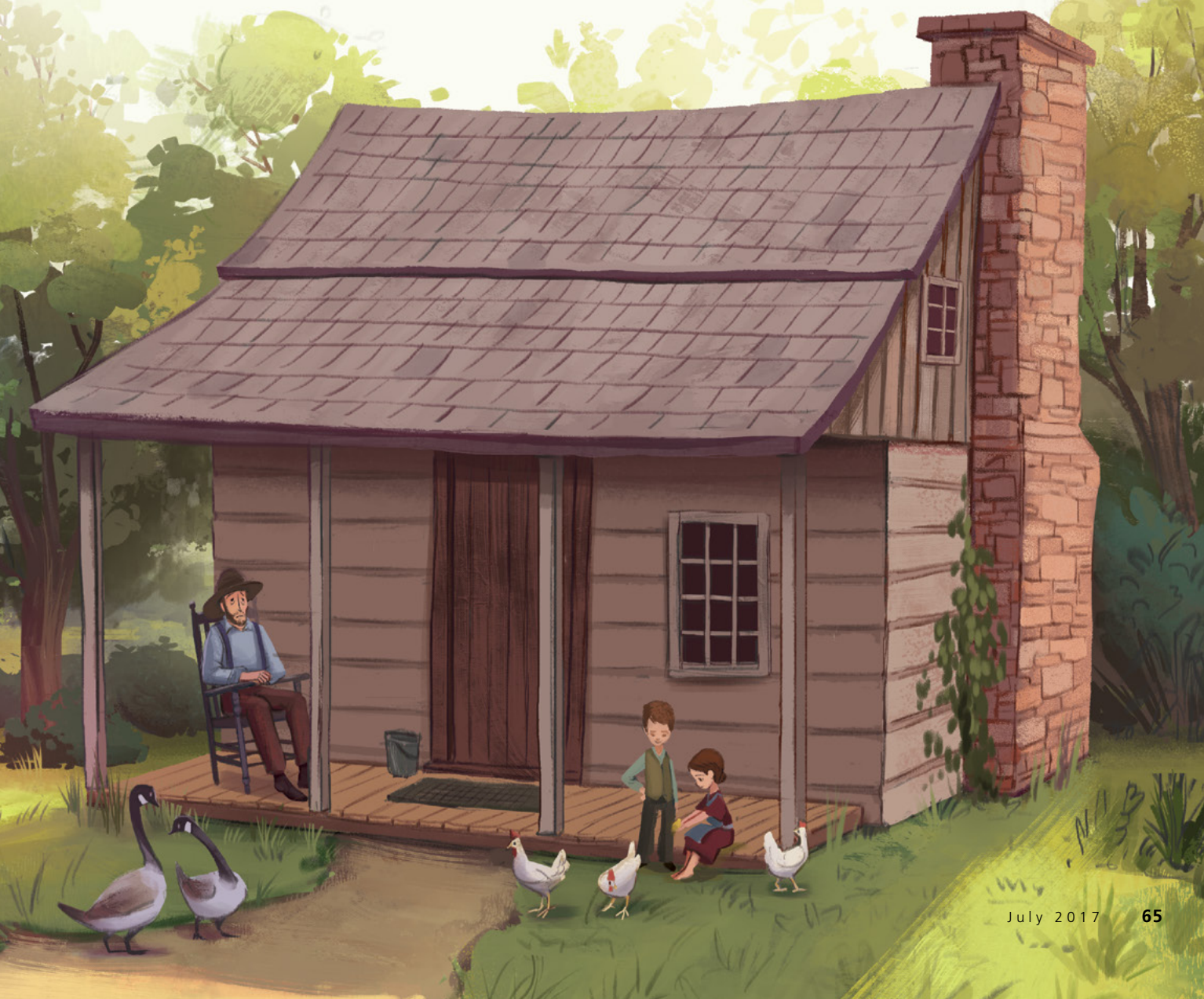
"I'm scared," Sarah said in a small voice. She was only six, and she looked tiny on the ox's broad back. The four-year-old twins looked at Mary with wide eyes.

"We'll just make good time and catch up with our group!" Mary said with forced cheerfulness.

On and on the Wanlass family traveled, for miles and then for days. Finally, even Mary had to admit the truth.

The wagon party had not waited for them. Mary and her family would have to travel to Zion alone.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MELISSA MANWILL



The Platte River, Nebraska, 1863

"Whoa, there!" Mary pulled back on the reins, and the oxen slowed. "Everyone all right?" She looked at her three youngest siblings, who rode on the oxen's backs. They nodded.

The Platte River lay before them, wide and muddy. "What now?" her younger brother, Jackson, asked. He was only nine, but he was helping Mary drive the oxen. Father lay in the back of the wagon, still sick from his stroke.

"We don't need to cross the river," said Mary. "But we can follow it." There was no road to Zion, but the river should guide them as they headed west. "Giddyap!"

Mary didn't know that Mormon pioneers traveled on the other side of the Platte River and went a different way. By not crossing the river, they were entering Indian Territory. They would not see another wagon train for the rest of the journey.

They traveled on. Weeks later, Mary saw a cloud of dust approaching. "Steady," she whispered to the oxen and herself. "Steady."

The dust cleared to show a small group of Indians riding on horses. One of the riders moved toward the back of the wagon, where Father was lying.

The rider's eyes were kind. "He is sick?" he asked, pointing to Father.

"Yes," Mary whispered. The man called out something in his own language, and the men rode off as quickly as they had come.

Mary looked at the sun in the sky. "We'll stop here," she told Jackson. She lifted Sarah and the twins down.

"Mary, come look!" Jackson said. The man with the kind eyes was riding toward them, something heavy in his hands.



“Wild duck,” he said. “And rabbit. For you.” Mary could only stare, speechless, as he dropped the game into her arms. With another nod, he rode off into the twilight.

“Food!” Mary exclaimed. “Meat!” The man’s gift was truly a miracle.

More miracles happened on their journey. A buffalo herd came near them but then parted around the wagon, going on either side of it. A dust storm carried one of the twins into a river, but Mary was able to save her.

But the journey was still difficult. Every day the wagon looked more worn, and the oxen looked more tired. The ground was steep and rocky. The mountains were hard to cross. But Mary and her family kept plodding forward.

They were just coming down from a tall summit when Mary saw a man driving toward them in a wagon.

“Maybe he can tell us the way to Lehi, Utah!” she said to Jackson. They had an uncle who lived there.

“You’re in Echo Canyon, not far from the Salt Lake Valley,” the man said when she asked where they were. “But where is the rest of your party?”

The whole story came out, and the man listened with amazement. “You’ve traveled over 1,000 miles (1,609 km) all by yourselves?” He shook his head with admiration. “You are one brave girl. Let me tell you the way to Lehi. You’re nearly there.”

“Nearly there,” Mary whispered to herself as the man drew a rough map in the dirt. Nearly to Zion. “I think we might make it, after all.”

Mary and her family made it to Lehi, Utah. She later married and had a large family of her own. Her example of faith and courage has blessed many people. ■

The author lives in Texas, USA.



Fasting for a Prophet

Silioti loved President Kimball. She wanted him to get better.

By Rebecca J. Carlson

Based on a true story

"Feed thou our souls, fill thou our hearts, and bless our fast, we pray" (Hymns, no. 138).

This story took place in Tonga in 1981.

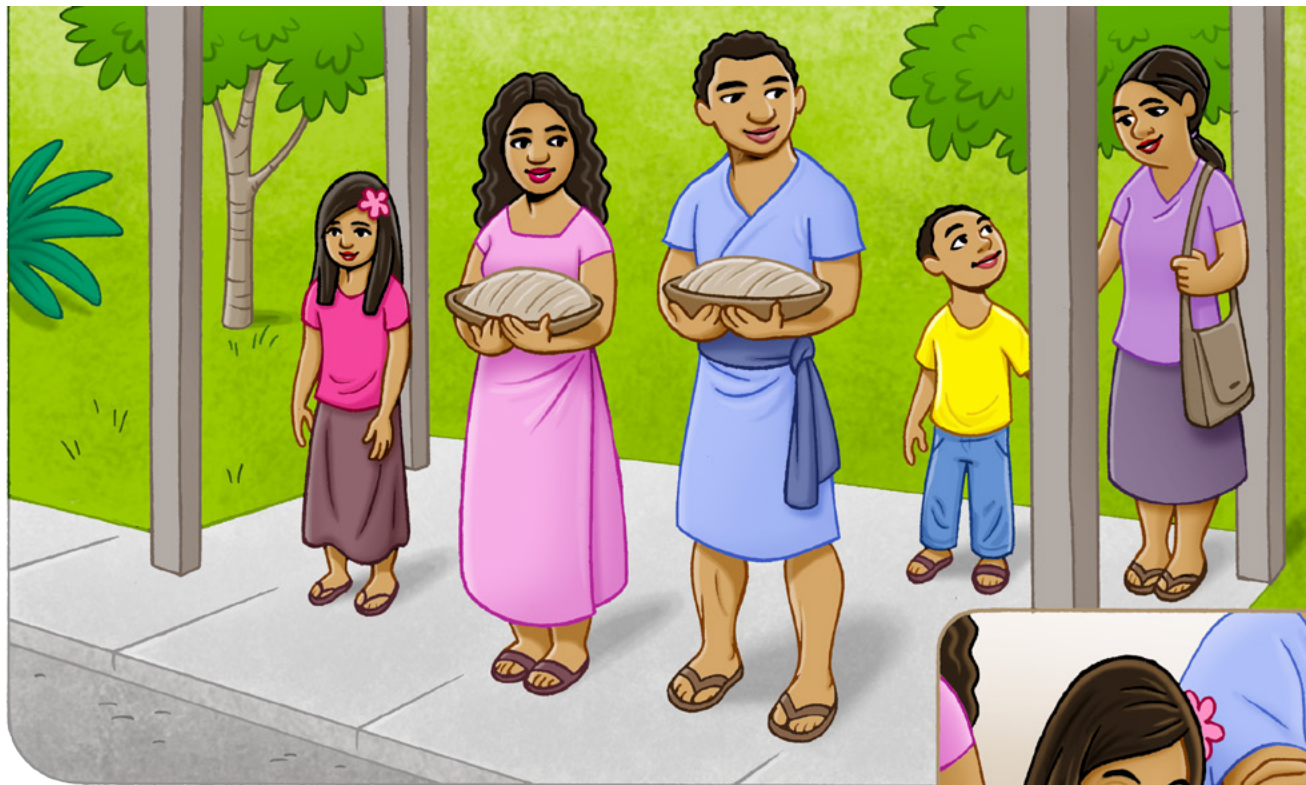
Silioti walked home from school past trees of yellow papayas and rosy ripe mangoes. When she saw the fruit, she remembered how hungry she was. She also remembered that today was a special day. Today everyone in her stake in Tonga was fasting for the prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball. The prophet was sick and needed an operation. Tonight everyone in the stake would meet to pray and end their fast together.

When Silioti reached her house, she smelled food cooking in the *'umu*, the pit oven. Her stomach grumbled. Silioti was glad she was old enough to fast now, but fasting on a school day was so much harder than fasting on a Sunday.

Silioti tried to forget how hungry she was. She found firewood and cleaned up the leaves that had fallen from the tall breadfruit trees that shaded her yard.

"Heavenly Father will understand if I take a tiny sip of water," Silioti thought as she washed





her hands after chores. Then she thought of how much she loved President Kimball. She wanted him to be well again. She decided she would wait.

Silioti sat down on the porch and laid her head in her mother's lap. She was so tired.

"You can end your fast if you need to," Mother said.

"But I want to fast," said Silioti. "I can do it."

When Father came home from work, everyone in the family helped uncover the *'umu*. They took out the pork wrapped in leaves, the fish, and the breadfruit baked in coconut milk. Then they wrapped the food in cloth and carried it out to the road to wait for the bus.

They met other families on the road, all with their own dishes of food.

They all smiled and talked as they climbed on the bus together. Silioti found a little space next to Mother. She smelled the good food as the bus bumped along.

It was dark when the bus reached the chapel. Inside, Silioti knelt with her parents, her brothers and sisters, and hundreds of other members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

During the prayer, Silioti prayed in her heart, "Please let President Kimball get well again." She knew every person in the room was praying for the same thing. A calm feeling inside told her that President Kimball would be OK.

When she opened her eyes she saw tears on the faces of the people around her. All of these people had fasted, and she had fasted with them. It had been hard, but she had done it!

President Kimball survived his operation and served as the prophet for four more years. ■

The author lives in Hawaii, USA.

WHY DO WE FAST AND PRAY?

"Fasting and prayer go together. When we fast and pray with faith, we are more receptive to receiving answers to our prayers and blessings from the Lord."

Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service (2004), 79.



How do I know when I'm old enough to start fasting?



On fast Sunday, we usually go without eating or drinking for two meals. We also give the money our meals would have cost to help people who need it. That's called a "fast offering." While we are fasting, we can remember our blessings, pray for people, and feel close to Heavenly Father. You can begin fasting when you and your parents feel you are ready. If you aren't able to fast because of a health problem, you can still pray and feel the Holy Ghost while others are fasting.



It's fine to fast when you want to help bless others and feel the Spirit. It would be a good time to fast after you are baptized.
Eddie O., age 9, California, USA



I knew I was old enough to start fasting when I felt like I wanted to, and the Holy Ghost told me I was doing the right thing. When I started, I did it step by step.

First I would fast one meal. Then I would try two.
Anne D., age 9, Nevada, USA



I would know I am old enough because I would have a feeling from the Holy Ghost telling me that it is the right time to fast. And then I would ask my mum and dad if that feeling was right.

Brooklyn R., age 7, Auckland, New Zealand



You can pray to Heavenly Father to see when you should start fasting. I know that Heavenly Father can answer your prayers.

Liam P., age 7, Utah, USA



When I get baptized, I think I'll feel ready to start fasting. I can pray to Heavenly Father for His help and ask Him when and how I should start.

Brian K., age 7, Washington, USA



By Elder
Larry S. Kacher
Of the Seventy



Shining Your Light

I would like to tell you about two young girls I know who were shining examples in sharing the gospel. When our daughter Nellie was almost eight years old, our family lived in Switzerland. Nellie was excited to be baptized. Just before her birthday, we had family home evening with our friend Tina. Tina had been taught by the missionaries. But she wasn't sure if she wanted to be baptized.

After our lesson we asked Tina to pray. Tina didn't speak much English, so she prayed in Chinese. We didn't understand her words, but we felt the Spirit when she prayed.

Later that night Nellie asked if she and Tina could be baptized on the same day. We didn't know how Tina would feel about that idea. But we all agreed that Nellie should at least call and ask. To our surprise, Tina said yes!

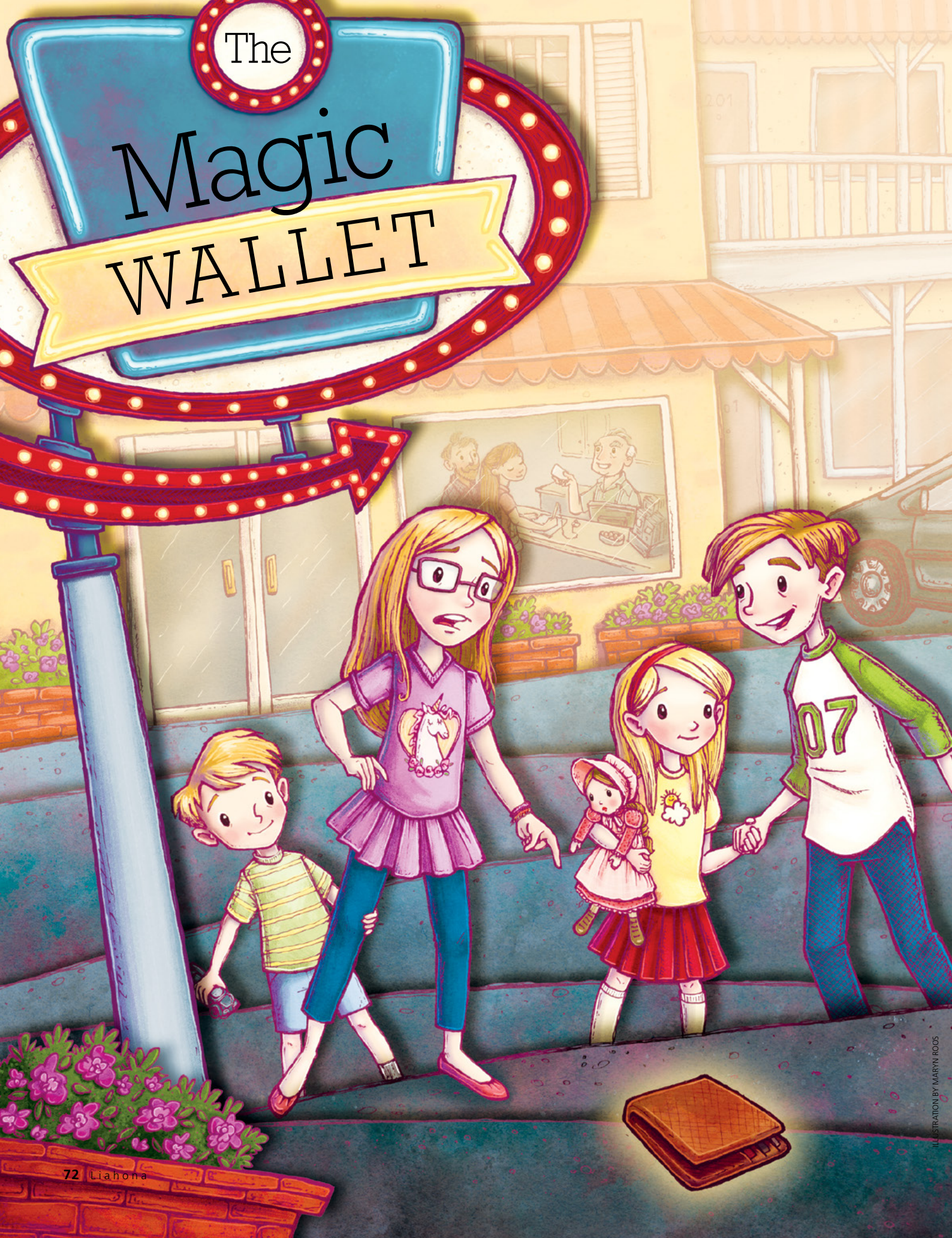
Nellie and Tina were baptized that weekend. Later,

Tina told us a wonderful story. She reminded us about her prayer at our family home evening. In her prayer she had asked Heavenly Father to let her know if she should be baptized. When Nellie called later that night, Tina knew that Heavenly Father had heard her prayer.

Our friend Jasmine was a good example to us too. Jasmine was 12 years old. Her family became our good friends when we lived in the Middle East. In her country, Church members can't talk about the gospel with others. It's against the law. But Jasmine decided she could share the gospel by doing what Jesus did. She could show love and kindness to others. Wherever Jasmine went or whatever she did, she tried to be like Jesus. She was a bright example to others.

Nellie and Jasmine show us how we can be examples of Jesus Christ. We can do this no matter how old we are or where we live. ■

The Magic WALLET



By Amanda Waters

Based on a true story

"Choose the right way and be happy. I must always choose the right" (Children's Songbook, 160).

"You're it!" Mandy said. She tagged her little brother and then swam away. Mandy's family was staying in a motel until they could move to their new home. It was fun eating ravioli warmed up in the microwave for lunch. And they got to swim in the motel pool almost every day!

But there was one not-so-good part about the motel. The motel manager's office was right under their room, and the manager thought Mandy and her brothers and sisters were too loud. "How can I rent rooms when it sounds like a herd of elephants are over my head?" he asked Dad.

After lunch Mandy's little brother Aaron jumped off the bed and hit the floor with a *thump*. Mandy winced and looked up at Mom.

"No jumping. Tiptoe, please," Mom said.

But it was too late. The phone rang.

"Uh oh," thought Mandy.

Mom picked up the phone. Mandy could hear her apologizing to the manager.

Mom's shoulders sagged as she hung up the phone. "Edward and Mandy," she said, "I need to put Aaron and Emily down for a nap. Will you please take Kristine and Daniel for a walk?"

As they started across the motel parking lot, Mandy spotted something small and brown on the ground.

It was a wallet. And it had money in it!

"Look, Edward!" she said, holding the wallet up high.

"We need to take this to the manager's office right away," said Edward.

Mandy felt her stomach clench. Why did they have to take it right now? Couldn't Mom or Dad return it later?

But Mandy knew the right thing to do.

The children opened the office door and timidly stepped inside. The manager frowned. "Um, we found this wallet in the parking lot," Mandy said. Her hand shook as she set the wallet on the counter.

A man who was standing at the counter looked over.

"That's mine," he said. He quickly looked through the wallet. "And everything's here. Thank you, kids!"

Mandy looked up at the manager. His frown was gone, and his eyes were twinkling.

After they left the office, Daniel asked, "Was that wallet magic?"

"Why do you think it's magic?" asked Edward.

"Because it made the grumpy man happy!"

Edward shook his head. "The wallet wasn't magic," he said. "He was happy because we did the right thing."

Mandy had a special feeling inside. She never knew choosing the right could make people so happy.

A few days later, Mandy and Dad went to pay the week's bill. The manager smiled at Mandy. He had only called once since they found the wallet, and just to thank them for being honest. Mandy felt like she'd made a new friend.

"Choosing the right really is magical," Mandy thought. She waved goodbye, and the manager waved back. "And he really isn't so grumpy after all." ■

The author lives in Nevada, USA.



Being Honest

One day at recess, someone dropped their quarter. I picked it up, and even though I wanted to keep it, I gave it to one of the teachers. I felt good because I chose the right. I learned that if you find something that is not yours, and even if you like it, don't keep it, because that would be stealing.

Tyler B., age 7, Oregon, USA



**By Elder M.
Russell Ballard**

Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

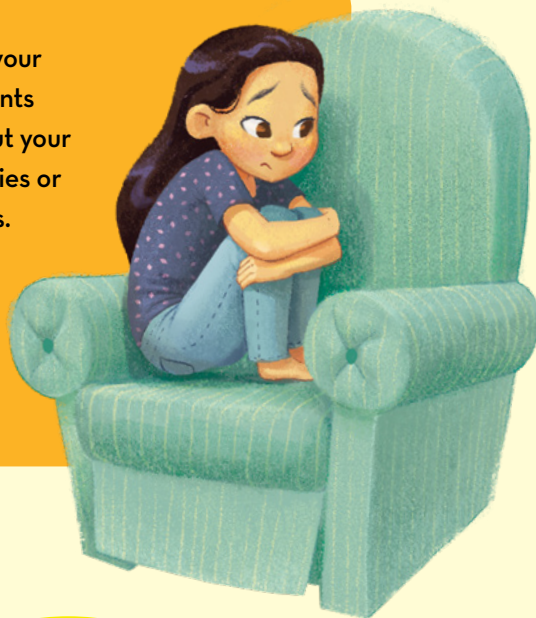
What is a family council?

A family council is a meeting on any day of the week. It can be with just you and a parent or with your whole family. It's a time when you can . . .



Turn off
electronics and
look at and listen
to each other.

Tell your
parents
about your
worries or
fears.



Make goals
and write
them down.



Offer to
help a sibling
during a
hard time.

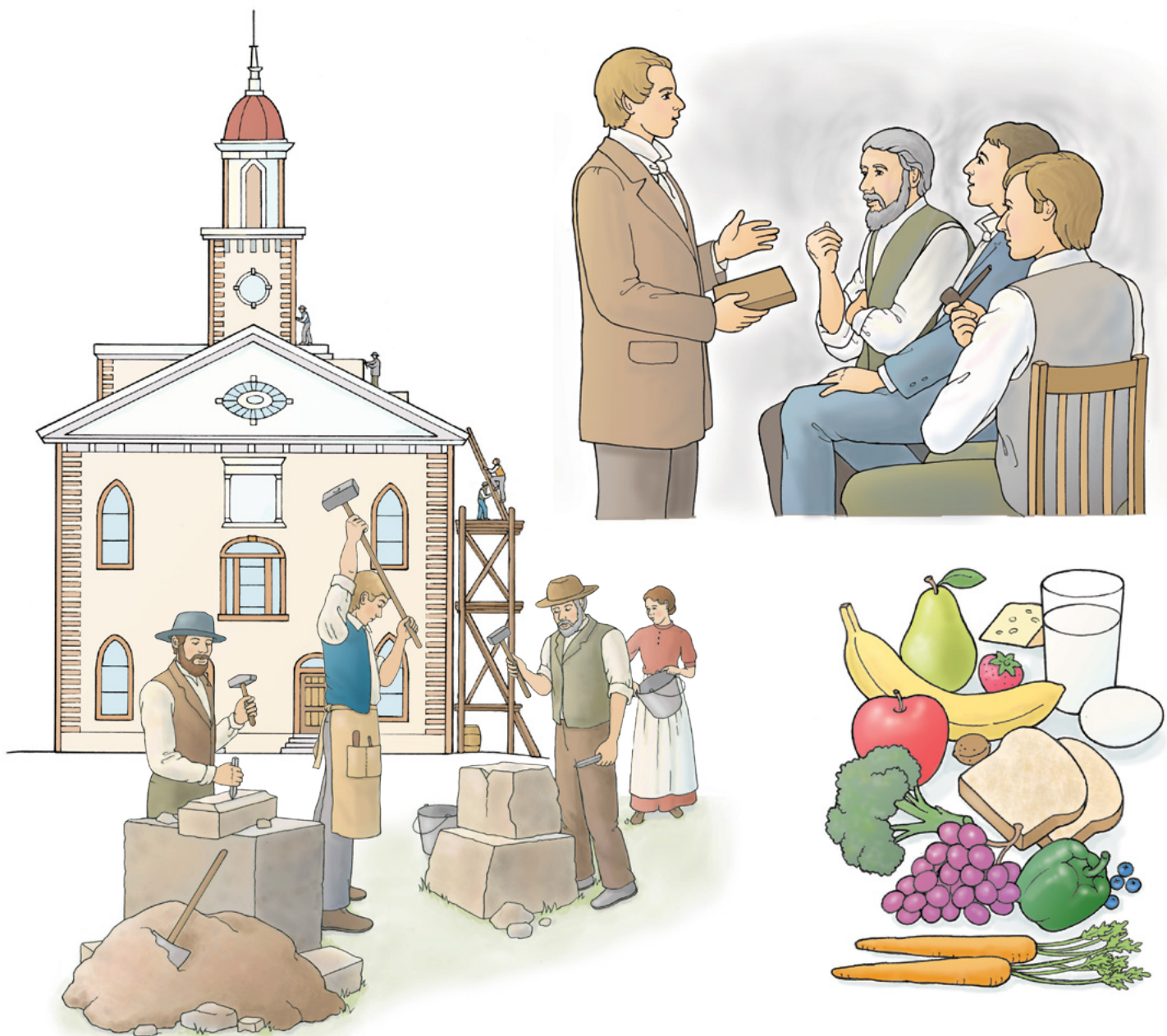


Combined with prayer, a family council can invite the Savior's presence in your home.
It can help your family be happy.

From "Family Councils," Ensign or Liahona, May 2016, 63–65.

Kirtland and the Word of Wisdom

Cut out these figures to help you share Church history stories!

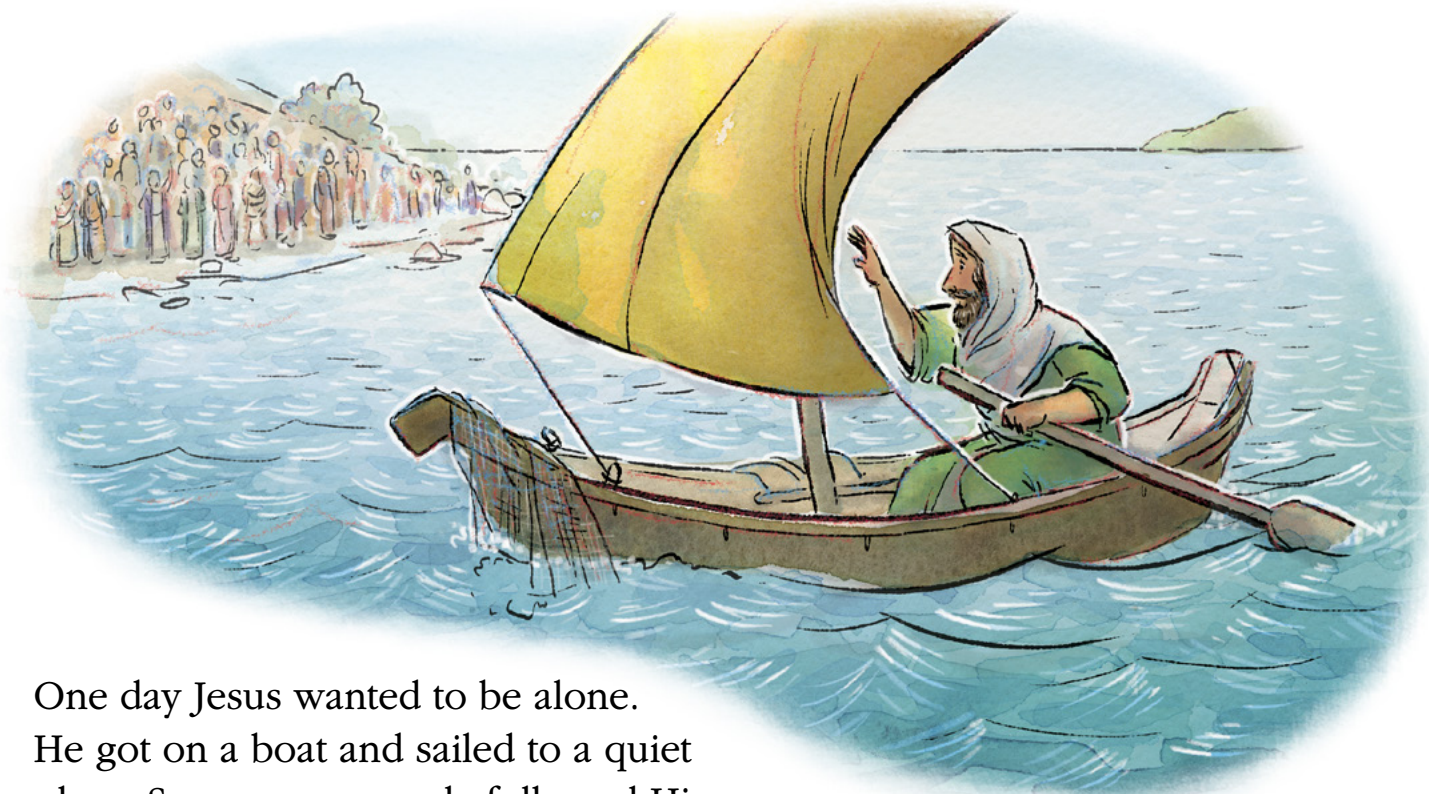


While the early Saints lived in Kirtland, Ohio, the Lord told them to build a temple. (Read about what happened after the temple was dedicated in D&C 110.) The Lord also told Joseph Smith to start a school to teach Church leaders about the gospel. Many men at this school smoked or chewed tobacco. Joseph and Emma didn't like the smoky, messy tobacco. When Joseph asked the Lord what to do about it, he received the revelation we now call the Word of Wisdom. You can read it in D&C 89.

You can find more Church history figures at liahona.lds.org.

Jesus Fed Many People

By Kim Webb Reid

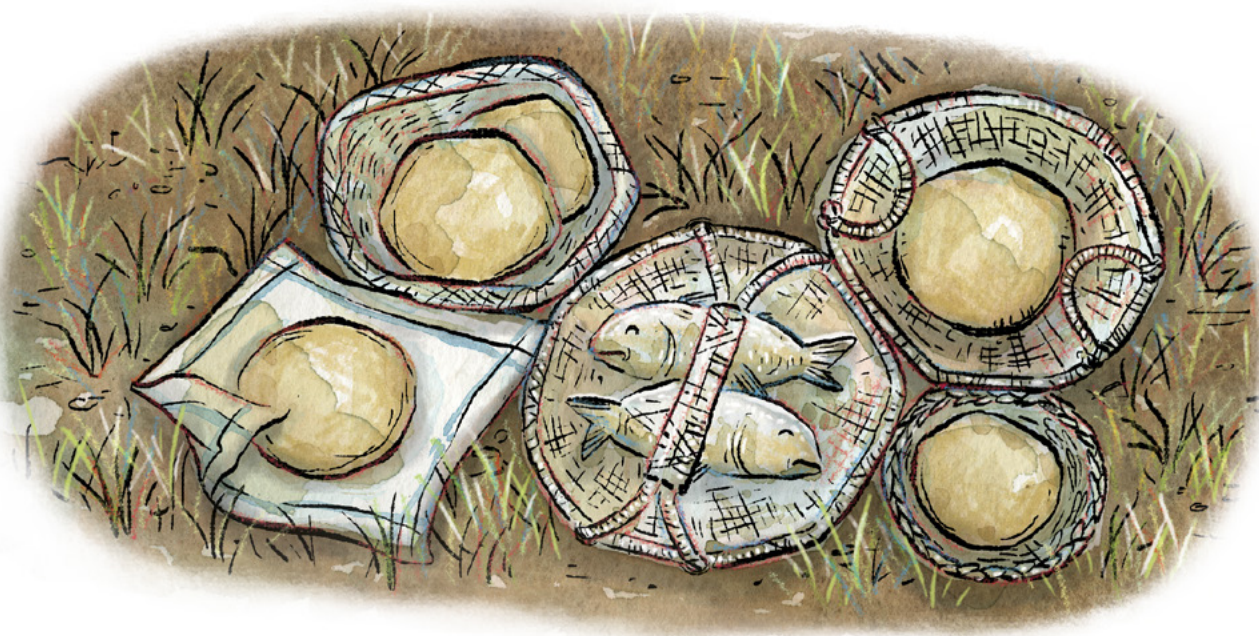


One day Jesus wanted to be alone. He got on a boat and sailed to a quiet place. Soon many people followed Him there.

Jesus taught the people and healed the ones who were sick. At the end of the day, everyone started feeling hungry. Jesus's disciples wanted Him to send the people away to buy food in the city.



Jesus told His disciples to feed the people so they wouldn't have to leave. But the disciples only had five loaves of bread and two fish. It wasn't enough to feed everyone.



Jesus blessed the food and broke it into pieces. Then the disciples passed it out to the people. Would there be enough food?



Thousands of children, women, and men ate the bread and fish. After they finished eating, 12 baskets of food were left over! It was a miracle. Miracles still happen on earth today! ■

From Matthew 14:13–21.

I Like to Read the Scriptures





By President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961)

First Counselor in the First Presidency

THEY OF THE LAST WAGON

In that last wagon there was devotion and loyalty and integrity and, above and beyond everything else, faith in the Brethren and in God's power.

I would like to say something about the last wagon in each of the long wagon trains that toiled slowly over the plains. . . .

. . . Back in the last wagon, not always could they see the Brethren way out in front, and the blue heaven was often shut out from their sight by heavy, dense clouds of the dust of the earth. Yet day after day, they of the last wagon pressed forward, worn and tired, footsore, sometimes almost disheartened, borne up by their faith that God loved them, that the restored gospel was true, and that the Lord led and directed the Brethren out in front. Sometimes, they in the last wagon glimpsed, for an instant, when faith surged strongest, the glories of a celestial world, but it seemed so far away, and the vision so quickly vanished because want and weariness and heartache and sometimes



discouragement were always pressing so near.

When the vision faded, their hearts sank. But they prayed again and pushed on, with little praise, with not too much encouragement, and never with adulation. . . . Yet in that last wagon there was devotion and loyalty and integrity and, above and beyond everything else, faith in the Brethren and in God's power and goodness. . . .

So through dust and dirt, . . . they crept along till, passing down through its portals, the valley welcomed them to rest and home. . . .

But hundreds of these stalwart souls of undoubting faith and great prowess were not yet at their journey's end.

Brother Brigham [Young] again called them to the colors of the kingdom of God and sent them to settle

the valleys, near and remote, in [the] vast mountains of refuge. So again they yoked their oxen and hitched up their teams, and . . . wended their slow way to new valleys, again trusting with implicit faith in the wisdom and divine guidance of their Moses. . . .

And thousands upon thousands of these tens of thousands, from the first till now, all the elect of God, measured to their humble calling and to their destiny as fully as Brother Brigham and the others measured to theirs, and God will so reward them. They were pioneers in word and thought and act and faith, even as were they of more exalted station. The building of this intermountain empire was not done in a corner by a select few but by this vast multitude flowing in from many nations, who came and labored and wrought, faithfully following their divinely called leaders. . . .

So to these humble but great souls, . . . I humbly render my love, my respect, my reverent homage. ■

From an October 1947 general conference address, "To Them of the Last Wagon."



TO THEM OF THE LAST WAGON
(CA. 1954), BY LYNN FAUSETT

Sustained by their faith in Jesus Christ, the pioneers courageously forged a path that became known as the Mormon Trail on their 1,000-mile (1,600 km) journey to the Salt Lake Valley. Those at the end of the wagon train couldn't always see their leaders, yet they steadfastly pressed forward.

Also in This Issue

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

THE ONLY THING THAT SAVED ME

Shuho faced racism and rejection but found the gospel and learned to trust people again.



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FOR YOUTH

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STRONG All Week Long

How the sacrament can help you be strong all week long.

FOR CHILDREN

Question Corner

When should children start to fast?



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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS