

# Liahona



Pioneers: Their Heroic  
Lives, Our Legacy of  
Faith, pages 20, 28

The Twelve Apostles:  
A Global Calling and a Personal Ministry,  
page 12

Overcoming Insecurity,  
One Act of Service at a  
Time, page 22

THE  
CHURCH  
IS HERE

# Bengaluru India



Here are a few facts about the Church in India:

**1**  Temple to be built in Bengaluru

Church members  **13,570**

**43**  Wards and branches (the Convent Road Ward meetinghouse is shown in the center of the photo)

Missions  **2** ಯೆಲವು ಕ್ರಿಸ್ತನ ಎಲೆ ದೋವು ಎಲೆ

**5**  Indian languages in which part or all of the Book of Mormon is available

Major languages spoken in India  **22**

**1851** Several people are baptized and a small branch begins in Kolkata.

**1993** The India Bangalore Mission is established, with 1,150 members in 13 branches.

**2007** The India New Delhi Mission is created.

**2012** The first stake is organized, in Hyderabad, by President Dallin H. Oaks.



How Can We  
Create a Culture  
of Inclusion at  
Church?  
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# Heaven Has Everything to Do with It

It was a rare privilege to interview every member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to write about the holy apostleship (see “We Are Witnesses,” page 12).

After meeting with President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve, I looked back into his office. He was sitting at his desk, writing a general conference address. He is the Church’s longest-tenured General Authority—sustained to the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1976. He looked tired and energized at the same time. “How are you?” he had just asked me, followed by the kindly admonition: “Don’t wear yourself out.” Coming from someone who has accepted a call to literally wear out his life in the service of the Lord, the exchange had great meaning to me.

The Twelve are called to “regulate all the affairs of [the Church] in all nations” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:33). But when you are with them, their focus shifts from a worldwide Church to the individual in front of them. They came to their callings from positions held in high acclaim by the world, yet when I left their offices, the words to define them were always the same—humble and kind.

“I sometimes ask myself, ‘How in the world am I here with these great men?’” President Ballard told me. Then he testified, “Heaven has everything to do with it.” I hope you enjoy this glimpse into the calling of an Apostle.

Sarah Jane Weaver  
*Church News* Editor



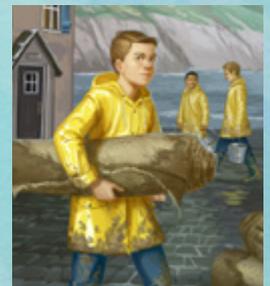
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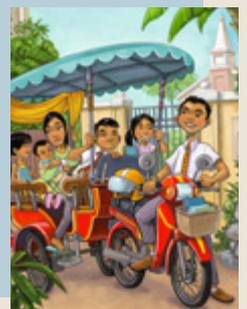
He needs the Lord's help to attend college; **work is a joy**, not a chore; you can **be a witness of Christ**; a desert becomes a spiritual haven; a letter is the best present; and **what you will find in the Book of Mormon**.



## Children

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## FEATURED DIGITAL-ONLY ARTICLES

**Overcoming Discouragement***By Self-Reliance Services*

Life is full of challenges. But there is always a way to find joy and hope again.

**Supporting Missionaries Who Come Home Early***By Kevin Theriot PhD*

Early-returned missionaries need our love and understanding.

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# RELIGION: *A Blessing to Our Lives and Communities*



**F**aith and religion are a core part of our identity. Our faith, and religion in general, affects our everyday lives. Numerous studies of Christian denominations and other religions have found that believers are healthier and more likely to contribute to their communities. The research findings presented here are just a sample of the many ways religion improves our lives.

## Relationships



### NOTES

1. See Arthur C. Brooks, *Gross National Happiness: Why Happiness Matters for America—and How We Can Get More of It* (2008), 52.
2. See Rodney Stark, *America's Blessings: How Religion Benefits Everyone, Including Atheists* (2012), 4.
3. See Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (2000), 66–67.
4. Tyler J. VanderWeele, “Does Religious Participation Contribute to Human Flourishing?” *Big Questions Online*, Jan. 14, 2017, bigquestiononline.com.
5. Stark, *How Religion Benefits Everyone*, 4.
6. Brooks, *Gross National Happiness*, 48.
7. See Andrew Sims, *Is Faith Delusion? Why Religion is Good For Your Health* (2009), 220.
8. See Stark, *How Religion Benefits Everyone*, 4, 106–107, 111.



## RELIGIOUS PEOPLE:

▶ ARE MORE LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER,<sup>1</sup> GIVE TO CHARITY,<sup>2</sup> AND JOIN CLUBS AND GROUPS.<sup>3</sup>

▶ HAVE HEALTHIER “SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND STABLE[R] MARRIAGES” AS WELL AS EXPANDED SOCIAL NETWORKS.<sup>4</sup>

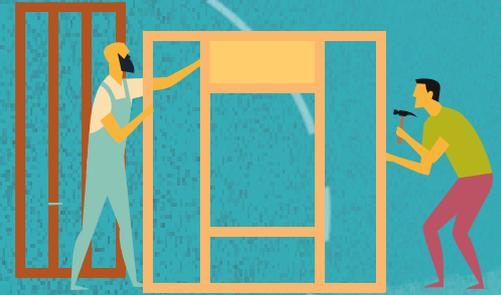
▶ “ARE MORE APT TO MARRY AND LESS LIKELY TO DIVORCE [AND THEY] EXPRESS HIGHER DEGREES OF SATISFACTION WITH THEIR SPOUSES.”<sup>5</sup>

▶ “ARE ABOUT A THIRD MORE LIKELY . . . TO SAY THEY ARE VERY HAPPY.”<sup>6</sup>

▶ HAVE LOWER DEPRESSION RATES AND LESS ANXIETY.<sup>7</sup>

▶ TEND TO LIVE SEVEN YEARS LONGER THAN PEOPLE WHO AREN'T RELIGIOUS.<sup>8</sup> ■

## Community



## Health





## Iona Wikaira

Kaikohe, New Zealand



*Although she faces challenges as a corrections officer, Iona finds strength and stays calm through faith in Jesus Christ.*

**CHRISTINA SMITH, PHOTOGRAPHER**

I've found that when people in your work environment know that you're a member of the Church, they will have respect for you and the Church when they see that you don't let your standards drop because of the environment you're in. That's why it's important for me to try to be a good example of a Latter-day Saint.

In each situation, I think, "How would the Savior like me to behave?" or "How would He like me to deal with this?" In all my experiences, I try to make sure that my actions reflect what the Savior would do. This helps me be a lot more level-headed and a lot calmer even in all the chaos of a tough work environment.

### LEARN MORE

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) taught the importance of being an example to everyone around us at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/7197](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/7197).

Find more stories in the "Portraits of Faith" series at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/18](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/18).

# Ministering Principles

## How Can We Create a Culture of Inclusion at Church?

**W**hen we look around our wards and branches, we see people who seem to fit in easily. What we don't realize is that even among those who seem to fit in, there are many who feel left out. One study, for example, found that nearly half of adults in the United States report feeling lonely, left out, or isolated from others.<sup>1</sup>

It's important to feel included. It's a fundamental human need, and when we feel excluded, it hurts. Being left out can produce feelings of sadness or anger.<sup>2</sup> When we don't feel like we belong, we tend to look for a place where we are more comfortable. We need to help everyone feel that they belong at church.

### **Including Like the Savior**

The Savior was the perfect example of valuing and including others. When He chose His Apostles, He didn't pay attention to status, wealth, or lofty profession. He valued the Samaritan woman at the well, testifying to her of His divinity in spite of how the Jews looked down on Samaritans (see John 4). He looks on the heart and is no respecter of persons (see 1 Samuel 16:7; Doctrine and Covenants 38:16, 26).

The Savior said:

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34–35).

### **What Can We Do?**

Sometimes it's hard to tell if someone feels like they are on the outside. Most people don't say it—at least not so clearly. But with a loving heart, the guidance of the



Holy Ghost, and an effort to be aware, we can recognize when someone doesn't feel included at Church meetings and activities.

**Possible Signs Someone Feels Excluded:**

- Closed body language, such as arms folded tightly or eyes downcast.
- Sitting in the back of the room or sitting alone.
- Not attending church or attending irregularly.
- Leaving meetings or activities early.
- Not participating in conversations or lessons.

These may be signs of other emotions too, such as shyness, anxiety, or being uncomfortable. Members can feel “different” when they are new members of the Church, are from another country or culture, or have experienced a recent traumatic life change, such as divorce, death of a family member, or early return from a mission.

Regardless of the reason, we shouldn't hesitate to reach out in love. What we say and what we do can create a feeling that all are welcome and all are needed.

**SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES**

Send us your experiences as you have ministered to others or have been ministered to. Go to [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) and click “Submit an Article or Feedback.”

## Some Ways to Be Inclusive and Welcoming

- Don't always sit by the same people in church.

- Include others in conversations.

- Take time to think about what it really means when we say the Church is for everyone, no matter their differences. How can we make this a reality?

- Invite others to be part of your life. You can include them in activities you are already planning.

- Express love and offer sincere compliments.

- Don't withhold friendship just because someone doesn't meet your expectations.

- When you see something unique about a person, be interested in that instead of glossing over it or avoiding it.

- Find and build on common interests.

- Look past people's outward appearances to see the true person. (For more on this topic, see "Ministering Is Seeing Others as the Savior Does," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, June 2019, 8–11.)



### Blessed by Inclusion

Christl Fechter moved to another country after war tore apart her homeland. She didn't speak the language well and didn't know anyone in her new neighborhood, so at first she felt isolated and alone.

As a member of the Church, she summoned her courage and began attending her new ward. She worried that her thick accent would keep people from wanting to talk to her or that she would be judged for being a single woman.

But she met others who overlooked her differences and welcomed her into their community of friends. They reached out in love and acceptance, and she soon found herself busy helping teach a Primary class. The children were great examples of nonjudgmental acceptance, and the feeling of being loved and needed strengthened her faith and helped rekindle her lifelong devotion to the Lord.

It's not always easy to feel comfortable around people who are different from us. But with practice, we can get better at finding value in differences and appreciate the unique contributions each person brings. As Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, our differences can help make us a better happier people: "Come, help us build and strengthen a culture of healing, kindness, and mercy toward all of God's children."<sup>3</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. See Alexa Lardieri, "Study: Many Americans Report Feeling Lonely, Younger Generations More So," *U.S. News*, May 1, 2018, usnews.com.
2. See Carly K. Peterson, Laura C. Gravens, and Eddie Harmon-Jones, "Asymmetric Frontal Cortical Activity and Negative Affective Responses to Ostracism," *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, vol. 6, no. 3 (June 2011), 277–85.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Believe, Love, Do," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 48.



#### DISCOVER MORE

For more ideas, read "We Can Do Better: Welcoming Others into the Fold," *Ensign or Liahona*, Sept. 2017.

#### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Sister Linda K. Burton, former Relief Society General President, taught, "First observe, then serve" (*Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 78). Following this counsel can help us create wards and branches where everyone is included and needed. Here are some additional ideas to consider:

- When we enter our church building, we can **look around and observe** whom the Lord would have us bring into our circle of friendship that day.
- Sometimes we avoid those who are different than us or who are going through a difficult time because we are afraid of saying the wrong thing. This can leave them feeling isolated, wondering why no one speaks to them. **Sit by them, express love, and ask sincere questions.** Ask them about their experience with their challenges and how you can help.
- In our talks and in our Sunday lessons, we can choose to **use examples that show that individuals and families in a variety of situations** can live the gospel and enjoy its blessings.
- Class members can be greatly blessed when teachers find ways to **include members from a variety of ages, nationalities, and family situations.** We have much to learn from the many faithful members of the Church who have experiences different than our own.
- Teachers can create a safe place for all to share their experiences in living the gospel. Whenever a comment is shared, a teacher can **respond positively to something that has been offered.** Class members will then be more likely to feel confident and comfortable in sharing their thoughts.



# We Are Witnesses: The Twelve Apostles Today

Modern Apostles share their thoughts on their sacred calling.

**By Sarah Jane Weaver and Jason Swensen**

*Church News*

**I**n the 189 years since the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 102 men have been called to serve as members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Although the Lord has directed many changes in the Church since then, the fundamental duties of an Apostle remain the same.

From his office near Temple Square, President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke of the spiritual mandate given to the Apostles to testify of the Savior around the globe, of the special connection they share with missionaries, and of some common misconceptions about being “an apostle, seer, and revelator.” When asked if there were other members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles he would recommend to talk about their sacred calling as part of this article, President Ballard was quick to answer, “Yes. All of them.”



### Being in Tune

Vast challenges face today's Apostles. They minister to worldwide congregations that are being tested by political unrest, breakdown of the family, relentless social media pressures, and economic uncertainties. It is important for the Apostles to understand the challenges and circumstances that members face.

As Church leaders, the Apostles must get to know the people and their circumstances to be able to serve them better. "We need to learn the things affecting the lives of people," said Elder Ulisses Soares. "The Apostles need to be in a constant process of learning, inquiring, and receiving inspiration and revelation."

As important as it is to be in tune with what members face, it is even more important for the Apostles to listen closely to God's guiding voice and to be in tune with the Lord's will, said President Ballard. "This is the Lord's Church, and our major challenge is to be sure we are in tune with how He would want us to carry out His kingdom here on earth," President Ballard said.

### Special Witnesses

As each Apostle speaks about his calling, it quickly becomes apparent that administrative matters are not their primary concern. Their principal responsibility is exactly the same as it has always been—they are to be "special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world" (Doctrine and Covenants 107:23).

The Savior's last direction to His Apostles (see Matthew 28:19–20) was to go forth "to teach, to testify, to baptize, and to build and strengthen His Church," said President Ballard.

Today the Apostles' commission hasn't changed. "First and foremost, all the time, we are witnesses of the living reality of the Lord Jesus Christ," said Elder David A. Bednar. "We are not administrators; we are ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Apostles are commissioned "to be traveling witnesses" who go to "all the world," said Elder Jeffrey R. Holland. "We want even the most distant unit of this Church, geographically speaking, to feel that there is a very close link between them and the prophet of the Lord," he said. "It is often said,



‘The Church makes a very small world of it.’ In the case of Apostolic contact, we hope that this is always so.”

### **Reaching Every Stake**

Elder Quentin L. Cook explained that over a four-year period, every single stake and ward, district and branch, in the Church has a member of the Twelve coming and meeting with its leaders—and training them on prophetic priorities.

“Leadership conferences have allowed us to fulfill our doctrinal mandate to ‘[build] up the church and [regulate] all the affairs of the same in all nations’ [Doctrine and Covenants 107:34] under the direction of the First Presidency,” he said.

Collectively, the rich, deep instructive experiences by members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles help guide these local leaders as they make important decisions to encourage and support members through their challenges, Elder Bednar said.

“As we go different places, we feel the goodness of the members,” said Elder Gerrit W. Gong. “We hear the experiences and we learn things that help us to understand as we counsel together as a quorum about what is happening in the different parts of the world and in different groups within the Church.”

Traveling to leadership conferences “gives us the opportunity to interact with wonderful, sweet people,” said Elder Cook. “We go to their homes, and we have a chance to minister to them. . . . It’s the ministering to the Saints that touches our hearts most deeply. We do it with guidance from the Holy Ghost and the Savior and with the knowledge learned by experience, some too sacred to share,” he said.

### **To the One**

After 43 years as a General Authority and now in his fourth decade of service in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, President Ballard’s duties have taken him to most of the



*The word apostle comes from a Greek word meaning “to be sent.” As with the early Apostles, the Savior still sends His Apostles “into all the world” (Mark 16:15–16).*

Elder Ronald A. Rasband said that after his call to the apostleship, he learned that he needed to add extra time to every activity into his life so he can greet Church members and others. “It is not about me,” he said. “It is about the deference and the honor the members of this Church hold for the office of the apostleship.”

Elder Rasband said that during his ordination to the apostleship, he was instructed, “‘We place you in a position to be a special witness of the name of Christ in all the world . . . at all times and in every circumstance.’ Those words were included in my ordination: ‘at all times and in every circumstance.’”

### **An Important Relationship**

The Apostles and the Church’s 70,000-plus full-time missionaries share a sacred, even interdependent, relationship.

The word *apostle* comes from a Greek word meaning “to be sent,” explained Elder Dale G. Renlund. Consider the Savior’s defining charge to His Apostles of old: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15–16).

In following that command, the Twelve are “righteously engaged” in missionary work and delivering the message of the gospel, said President Ballard.

Like Paul of old, today’s Apostles prayerfully delegate their duties to share the gospel with others. And, in apostle-like manner, the missionaries are sent across the globe to teach Christ’s gospel. “It is the Twelve, exercising the keys that they have, who assign them to missions,” said Elder Bednar. “And so we send them.”

The Lord remains the guiding director of missionary work. He authorizes His living Apostles, who are assigned at different times to serve on the Missionary Executive Council, to communicate His desires to the full-time missionaries

countries in the world, allowing him to minister face to face to countless members and missionaries. Millions have tuned in to hear his general conference and devotional talks. But while he has a global responsibility, the Holy Ghost allows him to connect with and bless individuals. This seeming paradox is the Savior’s way, he said. “I sometimes get a letter from someone saying, ‘I was in a meeting, and you said something that changed my life.’ That’s the power of the Holy Ghost. The Lord micromanages His Church.”

A “countless number of sweet, simple experiences with members of the Church all over the world” defines the apostolic ministry, said Elder Bednar. “The Lord sends a member of the Quorum of the Twelve to specific places at particular times where we encounter faithful Latter-day Saints and others who often are struggling or are in need of comfort and reassurance. God orchestrates those interactions,” said Elder Bednar.



*President Ballard in Spain*



*Elder Holland in England*



*Elder Uchtdorf in Russia*

laboring in the field. Such administrative duties go beyond simply “running the organization,” said Elder Bednar. The Apostles hold priesthood keys for the gathering of Israel. “We are providing spiritual oversight and direction so that the work is performed in the way that the Lord wants it,” he said.

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf chairs the Church’s Missionary Executive Council. Sitting atop his office desk is a small bronze sculpture of a missionary companionship depicted as pedaling furiously on bicycles, perhaps rushing to a teaching appointment. Whenever he studies that bronze piece, he is reminded of the unbreakable connection between the Apostles and the missionaries. “Every one of the 70,000 missionaries are performing a sacred service and are called by the Lord with a letter from the prophet of God to be representatives of the Savior. They are the extended arm of the Twelve.”

“Whenever we have time, we meet with them,” President Ballard said. “We let them ask questions. We try to help them find, teach, baptize, and strengthen our Heavenly Father’s children.”

Working together, both groups are sent to share the gospel’s good news throughout the world. “We see the full-time missionaries as our companions,” said Elder D. Todd Christofferson.

### **Misconceptions**

While some outside observers might think the Church is led like a corporation, the apostleship “is not like being a business executive; it is quite different,” said Elder Gary E. Stevenson. “The role of an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ is really a ministerial, pastoral role.” The role of being a

witness of Jesus Christ to the world “informs and defines us.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen said that in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, there are no factions, lobbying, or power centers. There are “differing opinions,” but “there are no egos.”

The Lord puts a lot of people together from different professions and backgrounds, Elder Andersen said. But “they are alike in their testimony of the Savior and in their humility. They don’t seek position; they are not trying to be the smartest person in the room. The Lord can work with that. I have never seen anyone [in the Twelve] show anger, and I have never seen anyone put anyone down.”

Humility defines the apostleship, said Elder Uchtdorf. Their callings make them recognizable almost anywhere they travel, “but we know it’s not about us—it’s about Him. We are representing Him. . . . It’s about His greatness.”

### **We Are All Called to Serve**

After the Savior’s death and Resurrection, He instructed His disciples for 40 days and then ascended into heaven. Left

*Elder Christofferson in Mexico*





*Elder Bednar in Peru*



*Elder Cook in Argentina*

with a vacancy in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—created by the betrayal and death of Judas Iscariot—members of the quorum gathered and petitioned the Lord.

Two men, Matthias and Barsabas, were identified, and the Apostles prayed that the Lord would show “whether of these two thou hast chosen, . . . and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles” (see Acts 1:23–26).

Then and now, “being called as an Apostle is not an accomplishment or achievement,” explained Elder Renlund. “It’s not a calling that is earned. Matthias, in Acts chapter 1, was selected by God instead of Barsabas. God didn’t tell us why. But the thing we should know is that Barsabas’s testimony honoring the Savior and His Resurrection was equal to that of Matthias.”

God chose, he explained. “If Barsabas fulfilled whatever calling he had, his reward was no different from that which Matthias would have received, provided he magnified his calling.”

*Elder Andersen in Brazil*



Just as Barsabas’s testimony was equal to Matthias’s testimony, every member of the Church is entitled to and can “develop an apostolic-like relationship with the Lord,” said President Ballard.

Service to the Lord and the Church is “a privilege and a blessing. It is an honor,” said Elder Uchtdorf. “The Lord shows His love for us, and we can show our love to the Lord by doing whatever He asks us to do.”

### **A Sacred Experience**

Being part of a traveling high council is a sacred experience, said Elder Andersen. “When we bear testimony, that testimony goes into the heart of the people, in part, because of our ordination.”

Elder Christofferson said that early in his apostolic ministry, he felt overwhelmed by perceived expectations. But then he received a simple message from the Lord: “Forget about yourself and what people may think of you, whether they are impressed or disappointed or anything else. Just focus on what I want to give them through you. Focus on what I want them to hear through you.”

Several years ago, Elder Christofferson was visiting Mérida, Venezuela, where a little boy, maybe 7 years old, spotted him through a window and began shouting, “*El Apostol, el Apostol!*” (“The Apostle, the Apostle!”).

“That is a very simple incident, but it illustrates to me the depth of appreciation that even children have for the calling,” he said. “It’s not about the person who holds the calling. That child had learned that level of appreciation for the call and what it represents.” ■

*By choosing to sustain the Twelve Apostles, Church members demonstrate their confidence in each Apostle's pledge of obedience to the Savior.*

# How Can We Sustain Our Leaders?

**By Sarah Jane Weaver and Jason Swensen**

*Church News*

In the tearful days after a wildfire devastated entire neighborhoods in California's Sonoma County in October 2017, Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles traveled to affected communities to be with the Latter-day Saints.

He was on a mission of ministering. He and Sister Melanie Rasband comforted fire-weary members in their meetinghouses and at the edges of their charred homes.

And wherever he went, members came forward to shake his hand. It was a gesture of appreciation. They thanked the Apostle for his support. But each handshake communicated a common sentiment: "I sustain you."

## **An Act of Faith**

Sustaining is a sacred action that connects membership of the Church to Church leaders, says Elder Gary E. Stevenson. With more than 16 million members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, relatively few Church members will ever speak face to face with an Apostle or shake an Apostle's hand. But every member has the opportunity to make a personal connection with these and other Church leaders through his or her formal sustaining vote and daily sustaining actions, says President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve.

"We sustain with our raised arm but also with our hearts and our actions," says Elder Gerrit W. Gong. "We sustain Church leaders in the same way we sustain each other. We know we are bound by covenant."

Praying for the Apostles remains a priceless element of sustaining, says Elder Ulisses Soares. "We are regular people, and the Lord has called us to something above our capacity. But we feel we can reach that capacity because people are praying for us."

Faith precedes and follows the sustaining, adds Elder Soares. "By sustaining the Apostles, you are helping the Savior accomplish His work. Your faith helps the Lord accomplish what He communicates through His prophets and revelators."

"I love the imagery of arms to the square and the meaning behind that," says Elder Jeffrey R. Holland. For the Apostles, being sustained by the members of the Church is spiritually akin to receiving life-giving food, he adds. "Every voice counts and every helping hand looked to. No one has to serve alone in the Church, whatever our calling"

*Elder Rasband in India; Elder Stevenson in Hong Kong; Elder Renlund in Brazil; Elder Gong in Shanghai, China; Elder Soares at Brigham Young University*



## A Long-standing Practice

Sustaining the Apostles is a latter-day practice that dates back to Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. From the first day, early Saints were invited to consent to the calling of Church leaders and to sustain them in that calling.

On April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith and his newly baptized followers gathered in a small log farm home belonging to Peter Whitmer, Sr., in Fayette, Seneca County, New York.

Joseph stood and asked those participating if they desired the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Exercising the principle of common consent, the new members raised their hands and consented by unanimous vote. Next they consented to accept Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as their teachers and spiritual advisers.

“Membership in the Church is a very personal matter,” notes Elder Holland. “Every individual counts. That is why we function on the principle of common consent. We want everyone to have an opinion, to express him or herself, and to be united in going forward.”



## An Act That Elevates Us All

When accepting the call to the apostleship, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles “are constrained” to follow the Lord’s will, says Elder Dale G. Renlund. By choosing to sustain the Twelve, members demonstrate their confidence in each Apostle’s pledge of obedience to the Savior.

Latter-day Saints who give their sustaining vote to an individual Apostle are simultaneously sustaining the consolidated Quorum, says Elder Quentin L. Cook.

That sacred vote lifts and blesses the Apostles—but it also lifts the sustainers, adds Elder Cook. “It empowers them and blesses them and gives them guidance.”

This means that just as members deeply impacted by the Santa Rosa fires offered sustaining support to Elder Rasband, members worldwide can be lifted even as they lift each member of the Twelve. ■





# Our Ongoing Legacy of Pioneers



In July of 1847, the first company of pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley after having trekked across the American West in search of a new home where the Saints could worship the Lord free of persecution. Many members in North America can trace their heritage back to these pioneer ancestors. But for most members of the Church worldwide, their pioneer heritage began elsewhere, either with recent ancestors who joined the Church or perhaps even with themselves as they became the first person in their family, community, or nation to embrace the gospel.

This month, as we celebrate our pioneer ancestry, you could ask yourself: Where did my legacy of faith begin? What sacrifices did the pioneers in my ancestry make to dedicate their lives to the Church? How can I honor and share their legacy? What can I do to help others understand and honor their own pioneer ancestry? ■

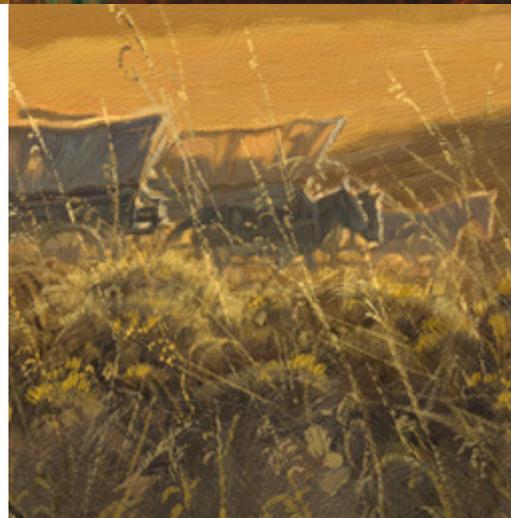


## LEGACY OF FAITH

“We must be sure that the legacy of faith received from [the pioneers]

is never lost. Let their heroic lives touch our hearts, and especially the hearts of our youth, so the fire of true testimony and unwavering love for the Lord and His Church will blaze brightly within each one of us as it did in our faithful pioneers.”

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Faith in Every Footstep,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 25.



Clockwise from above left:

*Woman Holding Book of Mormon and Basket of Flowers*, by Jubal Aviles Saenz

*Building Now for Eternity*, by Sylvia Huege de Serville

*Awake, Awake, Put on Thy Beautiful Garments*, by Natalie Ann Hunsaker

*The Visit*, by Chu Chu

\**Joseph William Billy Johnson: Holiness to the Lord*, by Emmalee Rose Glauser Powell

*Family Reading*, by Jose Manuel Valencia Arellano

*A Stop along the Way*, by Carmelo Juan Cuyutupa Cannares

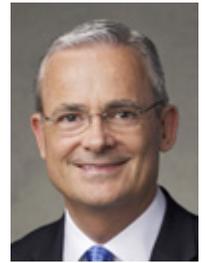
*The Fruit of Joy*, by Nanako Hayashi

*Except as noted,\* these and other images from the Church History Museum international art competitions can be seen online at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/71921](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/71921).*

## LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR PIONEERS

To learn about the history and pioneers of the Church in your country, visit [history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/GlobalHistories](http://history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/GlobalHistories).





**By Elder  
Patrick Kearon**  
Of the Presidency  
of the Seventy

# A Holier Pattern of SERVICE

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May we follow the living Christ ever more willingly, ever more effectively, as we strive to become His true disciples through ministering as He would.

**W**hen I was 15 or 16, I was deeply self-absorbed and, like many of us in our adolescence, unsettled, uncertain, and vulnerable. I felt lost, self-conscious, and awkward. It didn't help that my parents lived far away in Saudi Arabia while I was at boarding school on a desolate bit of coast in England. In terms of the school, Hogwarts with Snape would have been more welcoming.

Bad weather was common along that coast, but one winter a particularly formidable storm blew in across the Irish Sea with hurricane-force winds. Around 5,000 homes were flooded, food was running out, and people were left cut off without electricity or any means of heating and lighting their homes.

As the flood started to subside, we were dispatched by the school to help with cleaning up. I was astonished to experience such a natural disaster close up. Water and mud were everywhere. The faces of those whose homes had been flooded were ashen and gaunt. They hadn't slept in days. My fellow schoolboys and I went to work, moving waterlogged belongings to upper floors and pulling up ruined carpet.

But what struck me most was the camaraderie that developed. There was just a wonderful, good-natured feeling among people united in a worthy cause under challenging circumstances. I later reflected that all those insecure feelings that usually consumed my teenage thoughts left while I was involved in this great effort to assist our neighbors.



The discovery that helping others was the antidote to my gloomy, self-obsessed state should have been transforming. But it wasn't, because the discovery didn't sink deep enough, and I failed to reflect more thoughtfully on what had taken place. That understanding came later.

### **The Invitation to Minister**

I was considering this during the April 2018 general conference as I heard the repeated call to minister as the Savior ministers—and to do so out of love, in recognition that we all are children of our Heavenly Father.

We will serve not because our service is being counted and measured but because we love our Father in Heaven and are motivated by a higher and nobler pursuit—helping our friends find and stay on the path home to Him. We are loving and serving our neighbors as Jesus would if He were in our place, truly trying to improve people's lives and lighten their burdens. This is where joy and lasting fulfillment come from, for both the giver and the receiver, as we share the fruits of knowing and feeling our infinite worth and God's eternal love for each of us.

"A hallmark of the Lord's true and living Church will always be an organized, directed effort to minister to individual children of God and their families," said President Russell M. Nelson. "Because it is His Church, we as His servants will minister to the one, just as He did. We will minister in His name, with His power and authority, and with His loving-kindness."<sup>1</sup>

I know that if we heed this call to minister, we can rise out of ourselves; grow in faith, confidence, and happiness; and overcome our self-focus and the sense of emptiness and gloom that come with it.

### **Ministering Transforms Us**

The beauty of this kind of ministering is that it helps others, but it also transforms us by taking us away from our worries, fears, anxieties, and doubts. At first, serving others may simply distract us from our own

problems, but that swiftly grows into something much higher and more beautiful. We begin to experience light and peace, almost without realizing it. We are calmed, warmed, and comforted. And we recognize a joy that comes in no other way.

As President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) explained: "The abundant life noted in the scriptures is the spiritual sum that is arrived at by the multiplying of our service to others and by investing our talents in service to God and to man." He added, "We become more substantive as we serve others—indeed, it is easier to 'find' ourselves because there is so much more of us to find!"<sup>2</sup>

### **A Call from the Master**

When the Savior called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him, their change of direction and focus was instant: "They straightway left their nets, and followed him" (Matthew 4:20).

But after the Savior had been taken from them in the cruelest way, they returned to their fishing, to what they felt they knew. On one occasion, the resurrected Savior came to them as they fished in vain.

"And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes" (John 21:6).

This was not only a demonstration that He had lost none of His power but also a bold picture that they were looking in the wrong place and focusing on the wrong thing. As they ate fish together on the shore, the Savior asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Each time with growing anxiety, Peter answered that he did. Following each of Peter's answers, Jesus asked Peter to feed His sheep. (See John 21:15–17.)

Why did the Savior ask Peter three times if he loved Him? Peter had been called to follow Jesus before, and he had responded instantly, leaving his fishing behind. But when Jesus was taken from them, Peter grieved; he was lost. He returned to the only thing he felt he knew—fishing. Now Jesus wanted Peter to really hear Him and to comprehend the gravity of the invitation this time. He needed Peter to understand what it meant to be a disciple of the resurrected Christ now that He would no longer be physically by their side.

What did the Lord want from Peter? He wanted Peter to feed His sheep, His lambs. This was the job that needed doing. Peter recognized this gentle, direct call from his Master, and the chief Apostle responded, valiantly and fearlessly giving the remainder of his life to the ministry he had been called to.

### Begin with Prayer

We have another chief Apostle on earth today. President Nelson is extending the invitation to you and me to feed Jesus's sheep. With all the distractions around us and so many lesser things demanding our attention, the challenge is to *respond* to this invitation and *act*—actually do something, really make a change, and live differently.

Your question now might be, “Where do I start?”

Begin with prayer. President Nelson has challenged us to “stretch beyond [our] current spiritual ability to receive personal revelation.”<sup>3</sup> Ask your Father in Heaven what you might do and for whom. Respond to any impression you receive, however insignificant it might seem. Act on it. Any small act of kindness causes us to look outward and brings its own blessings. It could be a kind, unexpected text to someone. Perhaps it's a flower, some cookies, or a kind word. Maybe it's clearing a garden or yard, doing some laundry, washing a car, cutting grass, clearing snow, or just listening.

As Sister Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President, has said: “Sometimes we think we have to do something grand and heroic to ‘count’ as serving our neighbors. Yet simple acts of service can have profound effects on others—as well as on ourselves.”<sup>4</sup>



You might be reluctant to take the first step, convinced that you don't have time or that you can't really make a difference, but you will be amazed at what even some little thing can do. President Nelson has set out a higher and holier pattern of service for you and me. When we respond, we will discover how fulfilling, liberating, and calming it is for us and how we can be an agent for change and comfort in the lives of others.

At times, such as after completing a mission, we may be tempted to say, "Well, I did it. Let someone else serve. I want a break." But true ministering doesn't pause. It's a way of life. We might take breaks from our regular activities and holidays to rest and rejuvenate, but our covenant responsibility to love one another as He has loved us and to feed His sheep doesn't take a break.

### Ministry of the Worldwide Church

I am so proud to belong to a Church that puts ministering into practice. In 2017 alone, our members donated over 7 million voluntary hours growing, harvesting, and distributing food for the poor and the needy. The Church provided clean water for half a million people and wheelchairs



for 49,000 people in 41 countries. Volunteers provided glasses and ophthalmological services, and they trained 97,000 caregivers for those with sight challenges in 40 countries. Thirty-three thousand caregivers were trained in maternal and newborn care in 38 countries. Not to mention Helping Hands, through which hundreds of thousands of our people have donated millions of hours in recent years. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ jump to help those affected by disasters big and small, as well as improve their neighborhoods and communities.

The Church's budding JustServe initiative, which lists service opportunities, already has over 350,000 registered volunteers, who have contributed millions of hours helping in their local communities.<sup>5</sup>

This is a Church of action. This is what we do. This is what you do. Let this be a defining characteristic of who you are.

### Three Kinds of Service

I would like to highlight three broad kinds of service we each have the opportunity to engage in.

1. Service that we are assigned or invited to perform as a responsibility at church. We will strive for the kind of ministry that is treasured, not measured, where we think about, pray for, and help those we have been given the responsibility to care for.

2. Service we choose to do of our own volition. This is an expansion of the first, which will flow into all our daily actions and interactions as we more consciously seek to forget ourselves and turn outward toward others. There is no formal assignment, but we are motivated by a desire to follow Christ, starting by being more kind and considerate to those around us.



3. Public service. Where appropriate, involve yourself in politics with an eye on service and on building individuals and communities. Avoid the political tribalism that has become so polarized, strident, and destructive across communities, countries, and continents. Join other politicians who are finding common cause to bring healing to troubled lives in their own jurisdiction and beyond. You can be a voice of balance and reason, advocating fairness in all corners of society. There is a growing need for you to contribute your energy to this kind of worthy civic engagement.

### **We Can Change Our Own World**

When we read the news, we might feel that the world is sliding away. If each of us acts in ways big and small each day, we can change our own world and that of those around us. As you serve your neighbor and serve *with* your neighbor in your community, you will make friends who share your desire to help. These will become strong friendships, building bridges across cultures and belief.

If you will respond to the invitation to minister as Jesus does, you will be transformed, becoming ever more selfless. You will discover

the joy that comes from ministering in the Savior's way, leaving behind your anxieties and uncertainties and the gloom that comes from your perceived inadequacies.

Perhaps a name or a cause has come to mind. This is likely an invitation from the Spirit, and perhaps you have received it before. Reach out, look out, and lift up. Choose to respond to this invitation, and pray today to know what you can do. When you see and feel the blessings this brings to you and those you minister to, you will want to make this a daily pattern.

Our highest and best endeavor is to share the light, hope, joy, and purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ with all of God's children and help them find the path home. Helping, serving, and ministering to them are manifestations of the gospel in action. As we make this a way of life, we will discover that it is uniquely fulfilling, and it is how we can find the peace and joy which may have eluded us.

This is how the Savior lived, and this is why He lived—to provide the perfect balm and the ultimate healing through His great, infinite, atoning gift for you and for me. May we follow the living Christ ever more willingly, ever more effectively, as we strive to become His true disciples through ministering as He would. ■

*From a worldwide devotional for young adults, "A Hallmark of the Lord's True and Living Church," delivered at Brigham Young University—Idaho on May 6, 2018.*

### **NOTES**

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Ministering with the Power and Authority of God," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 69.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Abundant Life," *Ensign*, July 1978, 3.
3. Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 95.
4. Jean B. Bingham, "Ministering as the Savior Does," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 104.
5. See JustServe.org. It is available in North America and is being tested in Mexico, the United Kingdom, Puerto Rico, and Australia.





## Chapter 1

# Gather Up a Company

*Editors' note: This is an excerpt of chapter 1 from Saints, No Unhallowed Hand, volume 2 in the Saints series. Volume 1, The Standard of Truth, released last year, finished with the first Latter-day Saints having received their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple and getting ready to leave Nauvoo to travel west.*

**T**housands of Latter-day Saints hushed as Lucy Mack Smith's voice echoed through the large assembly hall on the first floor of the nearly completed Nauvoo temple.

It was the morning of October 8, 1845, the third and final day of the fall conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Knowing she would not have many more opportunities to speak to the Saints—especially now that they planned to leave Nauvoo for a new home far to the west—Lucy spoke with a power beyond her feeble seventy-year-old body.

“It was eighteen years ago last twenty-second of September that Joseph took the plates out of the earth,” she testified, “and it was eighteen years last Monday since Joseph Smith, the prophet of the Lord—”<sup>1</sup>

She paused, remembering Joseph, her martyred son. The Saints in the room already knew how an angel of the Lord had led him to a set of gold plates buried in a hill called Cumorah. They knew that Joseph had translated the plates by the gift and power of God and published the record as the Book of Mormon. Yet how many Saints in the assembly hall had truly known him?

Lucy could still remember when Joseph, then only twenty-one years old, had first told her that God had entrusted him with the plates. She had been anxious all morning, afraid he would return from the hill empty-handed, as he had the four previous years. But when he arrived, he had quickly calmed her nerves. “Do not be uneasy,” he had said. “All is right.” He had then handed her the interpreters the Lord had provided for the translation of the plates, wrapped in a handkerchief, as proof that he had succeeded in getting the record.



There had been only a handful of believers then, most of them members of the Smith family. Now more than eleven thousand Saints from North America and Europe lived in Nauvoo, Illinois, where the Church had gathered for the last six years. Some of them were new to the Church and had not had a chance to meet Joseph or his brother Hyrum before a mob shot and killed the two men in June 1844.<sup>2</sup> That was why Lucy wanted to speak about the dead. She wanted to testify of Joseph’s prophetic call and her family’s role in the Restoration of the gospel before the Saints moved away.

For more than a month, vigilante mobs had been torching the homes and businesses of Saints in nearby settlements. Fearing for their lives, many families had fled to the relative safety of Nauvoo. But the mobs had only grown stronger and more organized as the weeks passed, and soon armed skirmishes had broken out between them and the Saints. The state and national governments, meanwhile, did nothing to protect the Saints’ rights.<sup>3</sup>

Believing it was only a matter of time before the mobs attacked Nauvoo, Church leaders had negotiated a fragile peace by agreeing to evacuate the Saints from the county by spring.<sup>4</sup>

Guided by divine revelation, Brigham Young and the other members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were planning to move the Saints more than a thousand miles west, beyond the Rocky Mountains, just outside the border of the United States. As the presiding quorum of the Church, the Twelve had announced this decision to the Saints on the first day of the fall conference.

“The Lord designs to lead us to a wider field of action,” apostle Parley Pratt had declared, “where we can enjoy the pure principles of liberty and equal rights.”<sup>5</sup>

Lucy knew the Saints would help her make this journey if

she chose to go. Revelations had commanded the Saints to gather together in one place, and the Twelve were determined to carry out the Lord’s will. But Lucy was old and believed she would not live much longer. When she died, she wanted to be buried in Nauvoo near Joseph, Hyrum, and other family members who had passed on, including her husband, Joseph Smith Sr.

Furthermore, most of her living family members were staying in Nauvoo. Her only surviving son, William, had been a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, but he had rejected their leadership and refused to go west. Her three daughters—Sophronia, Katharine, and Lucy—were also staying behind. So too was her daughter-in-law Emma, the prophet’s widow.

As Lucy spoke to the congregation, she urged her listeners not to fret about the journey ahead. “Do not be discouraged and say that you can’t get wagons and things,” she said. Despite poverty and persecution, her own family had fulfilled the Lord’s commandment to publish the Book of Mormon. She encouraged them to listen to their leaders and treat each other well.

“As Brigham says, you must be all honest or you will not get there,” she said. “If you feel cross, you will have trouble.”

Lucy spoke more about her family, the terrible persecution they had suffered in Missouri and Illinois, and the trials that lay ahead for the Saints. “I pray that the Lord may bless the heads of the Church, Brother Brigham and all,” she said. “When I go to another world, I want to meet you all.”<sup>6</sup>

In January 1846, Brigham met often with the Quorum of the Twelve and the Council of Fifty, an organization that oversaw the temporal concerns of God’s kingdom on earth, to plan the best and quickest way to evacuate Nauvoo and establish a new gathering place for the Saints. Heber Kimball, his



fellow apostle, recommended that they lead a small company of Saints west as soon as possible.

“Gather up a company who can fit themselves out,” he advised, “to be ready at any moment when called upon to go forth and prepare a place for their families and the poor.”

“If there is an advance company to go and put in crops this spring,” apostle Orson Pratt pointed out, “it will be necessary to start by the first of February.” He wondered if it would be wiser to settle somewhere closer, which would allow them to plant crops sooner.



**Seeking relief from persecution, Brigham Young (above) and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles followed the Lord’s direction to move the Latter-day Saints more than 1,000 miles (1,600 km) west, beyond the Rocky Mountains.**

Brigham disliked that idea. The Lord had already directed the Saints to settle near the Great Salt Lake. The lake was part of the Great Basin, a massive bowl-shaped region surrounded by mountains. Much of the basin was dry desert land and a challenge to cultivate, making it undesirable for many Americans moving west.

“If we go between the mountains to the place under consideration,” Brigham reasoned, “there will be no jealousies from any nation.” Brigham understood that the region was already inhabited by Native peoples. Yet he was hopeful that the Saints would be able to settle peacefully among them.<sup>7</sup> ■

*To read the rest of the chapter, please visit [saints.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://saints.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) or the digital version of this article in the July issue of the Liahona in the Gospel Library or at [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).*

*The word Topic in the notes indicates additional information at [saints.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://saints.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).*

#### NOTES

1. Historian’s Office, General Church Minutes, Oct. 8, 1845; “Conference Minutes,” *Times and Seasons*, Nov. 1, 1845, 6:1013–14. A complete report of Lucy’s October 1845 conference sermon, with annotations, is available in Reeder and Holbrook, *At the Pulpit*, 21–26. **Topic:** Lucy Mack Smith
2. Lucy Mack Smith, *History, 1844–45*, book 5, [7]; *Saints*, volume 1, chapters 4 and 44; Black, “How Large Was the Population of Nauvoo?” 92–93. **Topic:** Deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith
3. Solomon Hancock and Alanson Ripley to Brigham Young, Sept. 11, 1845, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL; “Mobbing Again in Hancock!” and “Proclamation,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, Sept. 10, 1845, [2]; Gates, *Journal*, volume 2, Sept. 13, 1845; Glines, *Reminiscences and Diary*, Sept. 12, 1845; “The Crisis,” and “The War,” *Warsaw Signal*, Sept. 17, 1845, [2]; “The Mormon War,” *American Penny Magazine*, Oct. 11, 1845, 570–71; Jacob B. Backenstos to Brigham Young, Sept. 18, 1845, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL; Orson Spencer to Thomas Ford, Oct. 23, 1845; Thomas Ford to George Miller, Oct. 30, 1845, Brigham Young History Documents, CHL; see also Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 525–42.
4. *To the Anti-Mormon Citizens of Hancock and Surrounding Counties* (Warsaw, IL: Oct. 4, 1845), Chicago Historical Society, Collection of Manuscripts about Mormons, CHL; see also Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 536–42.
5. Council of Fifty, “Record,” Sept. 9, 1845, in *JSP*, CFM:471–72; “Conference Minutes,” *Times and Seasons*, Nov. 1, 1845, 6:1008–11.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 29:8 (Revelation, Sept. 1830–A, at [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)); Doctrine and Covenants 125:2 (Revelation, circa Early Mar. 1841, at [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)); Historian’s Office, General Church Minutes, Oct. 8, 1845; “Conference Minutes,” *Times and Seasons*, Nov. 1, 1845, 6:1013–14.
7. Council of Fifty, “Record,” Jan. 11, 1846, in *JSP*, CFM:514, 515, 518. **Topic:** Council of Fifty

## A Promise to a Child

A few years ago, I was extremely depressed. The only thing I could find a little motivation for was my best friend and her children. We went for walks on weekends, which I enjoyed. Over time, however, we began to go on walks less and less frequently. I began to miss my friend and her family. I later learned that our walks became less frequent because my friend and her family had resumed a practice they had stopped many years before—attending church.

One day they invited me to lunch. Seeing them again made me feel very happy. I told them how much I missed them. My friend's six-year-old daughter suggested that we solve that problem by going to church together. So without thinking twice, she invited me to go.

Oh, no! How could I make this family understand that going to church was right for them but too

*My cell phone constantly rang, reminding me that I had promised a little girl that I would go to church with her.*

boring for me? I hadn't gone to church for years, but how could I say no to a child? I said I would go, but the truth was that I didn't have the least intention of keeping that promise.

That Sunday, I went to breakfast with my dad. My cell phone constantly rang, reminding me that I had promised a little girl that I would go to church with her. I ignored my cell phone until my dad asked me why I wasn't answering it. I admitted that I had been invited to go to a church meeting but didn't want to go. He smiled and said, "Lluvia, never make a promise to a child if you are not

willing to fulfill it." I decided I would keep my promise.

When I arrived at church, I felt something different, something that I can't describe. I still can't explain how it happened, but the next Sunday, I found myself there again, and the next and the next, until I understood what I was feeling: the Holy Ghost.

The Church members began to make me feel at home. Without any doubt, I was curious about the Church. I began meeting with the missionaries, and I also began to gain a testimony. The missionaries' visits became more constant, and my understanding of the gospel grew until I felt an immense desire to be baptized. I was baptized a short time later, and now I enjoy the blessings of the gospel. Because of this, I'm so grateful I kept my promise to a six-year-old girl. ■

**Lluvia Paredes Cabrera,  
Yucatán, Mexico**





**B**efore I left for the hospital, a friend and fellow worker said, “Since we’re so close to the house of the Lord, why don’t we pray together first?”

## Let’s Pray Near the Temple

**W**hen our son Marco was three years old, he and I suffered a serious bout of food poisoning. Marco became so sick that he fell unconscious. My wife, Marianela, and I rushed him to the hospital. By the time we arrived, he looked like he was dead. Finally, after about four hours, he regained consciousness.

From then on, Marco suffered seizures off and on for the next five years. When we took him to bed each evening, we wondered if in the middle of the night, we would again have to rush him to the hospital. We had a difficult time sleeping during those stressful years, and we relied on prayer, faith, fasting, and priesthood blessings.

When Marco was about six, Marianela called me at work and told me to hurry to the hospital. Marco had suffered a serious seizure and was in a coma. When she called, I was working

on the renovation of the Argentina Missionary Training Center, located adjacent to the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple.

Before I left for the hospital, a friend and fellow worker said, “Since we’re so close to the house of the Lord, why don’t we pray together first?” The temple was closed for renovation and expansion, but we approached the Lord’s house, where I prayed for Marco.

Despite everything we had gone through with Marco, I felt gratitude to God for the time Marianela and I had been able to share with him. As I prayed, I told Heavenly Father that we had tried to be good parents and had taken care of Marco the best we could. I also told Him that we would accept His will if He called Marco home.

When I arrived at the hospital, I didn’t know if Marco would survive the coma or, if he came out of it,

whether he would be able to walk or talk again. After a grueling two hours, he awoke. He was exhausted, but he was all right. From then on, miraculously, he improved. Eventually, Marco was weaned off his medication and released for good from the hospital.

Marianela and I look back on that difficult time grateful that we still have Marco and grateful for the things we learned. Our trial united us and made us stronger spiritually. Without it, we might not have learned to recognize the many ways the Lord shows His hand in our lives.

As Marianela says, “We saw a mountain of evidence and experiences that have given us a testimony of the presence of God, that He is with us and that He listens to us. If we endure and have patience, blessings can come when we least expect them.” ■

**Juan Beltrame, Buenos Aires, Argentina**

# Why Didn't God Warn Me?

**M**y husband and I were living in on-campus housing at the Texas State Technical Institute when our two oldest children were four and two. It was our first experience in Texas hill country, and I loved it! Every spring, central Texas is awash with flowers. In gardens, woods, vacant fields, on roadsides, everywhere I looked there were more blossoms to see.

I took my children on stroller rides nearly every day. We'd find new places to explore, and I let the children pick as many wildflowers as they wanted. We'd finish our ride through a neighborhood where most of the houses had beautifully maintained flower gardens.

One day we came around a corner to discover a large mass of papers spread across one of the flower gardens. The

wind quickly scattered the paper all over the yard. I decided to tidy up the litter before it spread further. I grabbed handfuls of pages and stuffed them in my diaper bag.

As I looked down, I realized I was holding pornography. Appalled, I asked my children to stay in the stroller as I snatched up the rest of the pages. I became upset as I saw glimpses of things I never wanted to see. In my heart, I began complaining, "Why didn't God warn me to go another way home?"

Then I heard the unmistakable huff of school bus brakes. About a dozen kids got off the bus. They all moved past the yard that had been filled with pornography only moments before.

In that moment, my whole perspective changed. I now knew why I hadn't

been warned to go another way. I was grateful I was there to pick up those pages so those children could be spared seeing those damaging images. As I made my way back home, I thought, "What if the school bus had come later? What if I had never found out why I had that experience? How long would I have been upset with God?"

Since that day, the opportunity the Lord gave me to see the "why" of that experience has helped me trust that His wisdom and purposes are greater than my own.

Sometimes I will know why something happened; other times I won't. But no matter what, I know I must have faith that the Lord has a bigger purpose that I can't always see. ■

**Lark Montgomery, Texas, USA**

*The wind quickly scattered the paper all over the yard. I decided to tidy up the litter before it spread further.*



# When Holding Fast Gets Painful

One sweltering July day, I helped my brother-in-law build a retaining wall. This project eventually pitted me against the roots of a blossoming cherry tree that was in the way.

“Easy,” I thought.

I gathered the appropriate tools and dug around the roots to make room to work. Then I grabbed a saw and, without a second thought, went to work cutting the roots. The smaller roots cut easily, but when I moved to the larger roots, I quickly realized that they weren’t going to be as easy. One root in particular was difficult.

Gritting my teeth, I was determined to cut through that root. Sweat rolled down my neck from the glaring sun overhead as I squeezed the saw tighter. The saw vibrated until my entire body

shook. I could feel my right hand—the one squeezing the saw trigger—start to burn with pain. I ignored the pain and kept holding on.

Finally, the saw cut through the root. I released the trigger and felt the sweet pleasure of victory. As I removed my glove, however, I noticed a small piece of skin had been torn from my hand.

As I thought about this experience, I realized that holding on to the saw was, in a way, like holding fast to the iron rod. We are told to hold fast to the iron rod as we move through life. But just because we hold fast to it doesn’t mean we won’t experience moments of pain. I injured my hand as I clung to the saw. In a similar way, we will pass through trials and tribulations as we continually hold fast to the iron rod.

Heavenly Father knew that the journey back to Him would be fraught with peril. That’s why He has given us the scriptures and words of the prophets to help us. As we hold on to these things through our trials and tribulations in mortality, we will one day return to His presence.

When we return to Him, we will be able to look down at our hands, which held fast to the iron rod, sometimes in spite of pain or difficulty. And we will know that with the help of Heavenly Father and through the atoning power of Jesus Christ, we held on tightly, no matter what obstacles we encountered. ■

**Jeff Borders, Washington, USA**



# Six Steps to Getting a Job

By Bruno Vassel III

We can't be temporally self-reliant if we need a job and don't have one. Here are six steps to becoming employed.

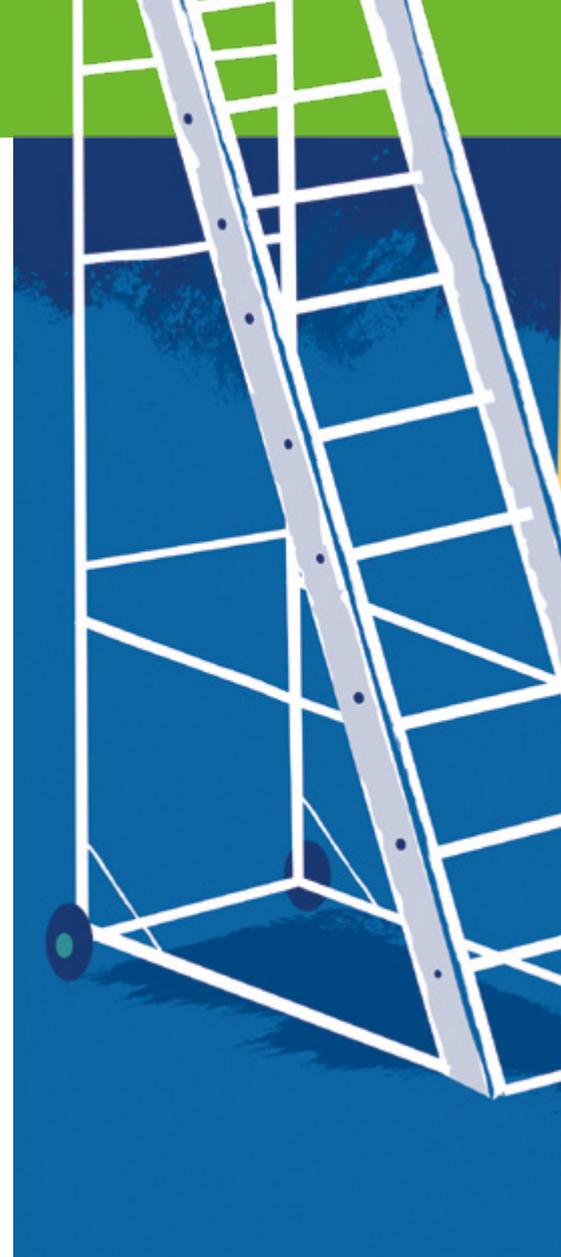
**D**o you need employment or a better job? Know someone who does? The challenge today for so many people who desperately need employment or a better job is that they're often not sure how to get the job they want. They ask, "Do I write a résumé, put myself on the internet, or do both, and how?" "What is the right way to answer questions like, 'What are your weaknesses?' and 'Why should I hire you for this job?'"

This article shares a six-step plan of what you must know and then do to get the job you want. These six steps are based in part on the results of a survey I conducted on the hiring practices of 760 employers who were recruiting at Brigham Young University. These steps were also developed from information I received from hiring experts and over 30 years of employment and recruiting training I gave to thousands of people in over 20 countries. Finally, my wife and I recently served as senior missionaries assigned to implement Self-Reliance Services throughout Europe. Our experiences reinforced to us that job seekers need this specific help. Regardless of where you live in the world, what your job skills are, or what job position you want to obtain, these six steps can help you.

This process of getting the job you want can take anywhere from a few days to weeks or even months, but the good news is that this process works. These six steps can help job seekers at all levels who fit into one of three categories: (1) those looking for their first job, (2) those wanting to move to another job or get promoted within their current company or organization, and (3) those wanting to move to a position in another organization.

## Step 1. Identify the specific job you want now.

You must identify a realistic job that you can perform right now, that fits your own work-related skills, background, accomplishments, or education. Once you decide, write down the job's title. If you need help, various websites list many different job titles and descriptions. For step 1, you don't need to find a job opening; just identify the type of job that you are qualified for and interested in.





*With several job options in front of you, what are the next steps to take to get the job that's right for you?*

Two of the biggest mistakes job search candidates make are to not decide on a specific job that they really want or to pick a position for which they are not qualified. If you're not sure what specific job to look for and pursue, then you may end up not getting any job at all. Saying something like, "I just need a job, any job" is not helpful. Saying this does not impress prospective employers and damages your own job search efforts. So pick a specific job you can do now, and then focus on getting that job.

## **Step 2. Find the job description for the job you want.**

The survey I conducted with the 760 employers who recruited at Brigham Young University and my years of employment experience in many countries showed that recruiters and hiring managers almost always consider only candidates for a specific job who have the correct work-related skills, experience, accomplishments, or education for that job. This is especially true for middle- and upper-level positions. As

they carefully consider candidates, these recruiters use an outline or list called a job description to remember the most critical requirements of each open job. The hiring person then compares all candidates to that position's specific description.

You must find the job description for the job you want. It will help you decide if you really are a good candidate for that job. It will also help you decide what to say and not say about yourself on your résumé, in cover



letters, and in interviews with employers. Employers usually list the job description for each of their open jobs on their website, in newspaper ads, and on job search websites. Current workers who know the job may also be able to tell you about the open job's description and requirements.

Your task in step 2 is to find the specific requirements listed in the job description for the job you want. You'll then use that key information in steps 3–6.

### **Step 3. Identify your skills, experiences, job results, and education that fit the job you've selected.**

Here is where you identify your own personal skills and work-related accomplishments that show that your background really does match the critical

requirements of the job you now want, as described in the job description you found in step 2.

As you make this list of your work-related skills and accomplishments, you'll then be able to compare your work background with the key qualifications shown in the job description you found in step 2. If your list shows that your skills match up nicely with the needs of the job you selected in step 1, then move forward now to steps 4–6. If, however, your skills and accomplishments you listed in step 3 don't match up nicely with the job description you found in step 2, then you should seriously consider picking another job to pursue at this time, one that more closely matches your current skills and abilities.

### **Step 4. Write a customized one- or two-page résumé.**

A main purpose of your résumé, also called a curriculum vitae, is to get an interview with the recruiter or hiring person who's looking to fill the open position. Your résumé does this by briefly showing the hiring person that your work-related skills, experience, accomplishments, or education fit what the employer's job description says are the most important characteristics of an ideal candidate for that job.

The résumé you write for each different employer's open job *must be customized*. You don't need to change the same core data that you'll include on all your



*Customize your résumé for each job. List the skills and accomplishments that are relevant to the job description.*

résumés, like your employment history, your school information, and your current contact information. Those details will be the same on all your résumés. But if you apply for a job with more than one employer, each employer will have a somewhat different or very different job description for their job. Therefore, you must select which of your skills and accomplishments are relevant to each job description. Put those onto your résumé as concise statements that start with a descriptive verb, such as “researched,” “developed,” “produced,” “managed,” and so on.

For example, if you had work experience in both sales and marketing and you were applying for two different jobs—one focusing on sales and the other on marketing—then you would develop two résumés, one sharing more of your sales activities and accomplishments and the other sharing more of your marketing accomplishments and activities. (If you don’t have much work experience yet, visit [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/71939](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/71939) to learn how to use experience from your Church service on your résumé.)

### **Step 5. Find employers who are now hiring people for the job you want.**

There are always some open jobs to be filled, even in very hard times. Employees retire, change jobs, get promoted, get demoted, or move away. And there are always some businesses growing and needing more workers. All of these

situations lead to jobs becoming available that need to be filled by qualified candidates. Sometimes this happens in small trickles and sometimes in floods of open jobs to be filled. So don’t get discouraged if you haven’t found a job yet. Just keep looking for that job for you.

Look on employers’ websites, career websites, newspaper ads, and other sources for the job you want. Also, one of the best ways to find open jobs is by networking—contacting lots of people every day, such as neighbors and ward members, telling them of the specific job you’re looking for and asking if they know of such an open job or if they know someone who might know of such an open job. Be sure to give

*Plan for and practice answering the questions you might be asked in a job interview.*

your contact information to all of these people as you network daily.

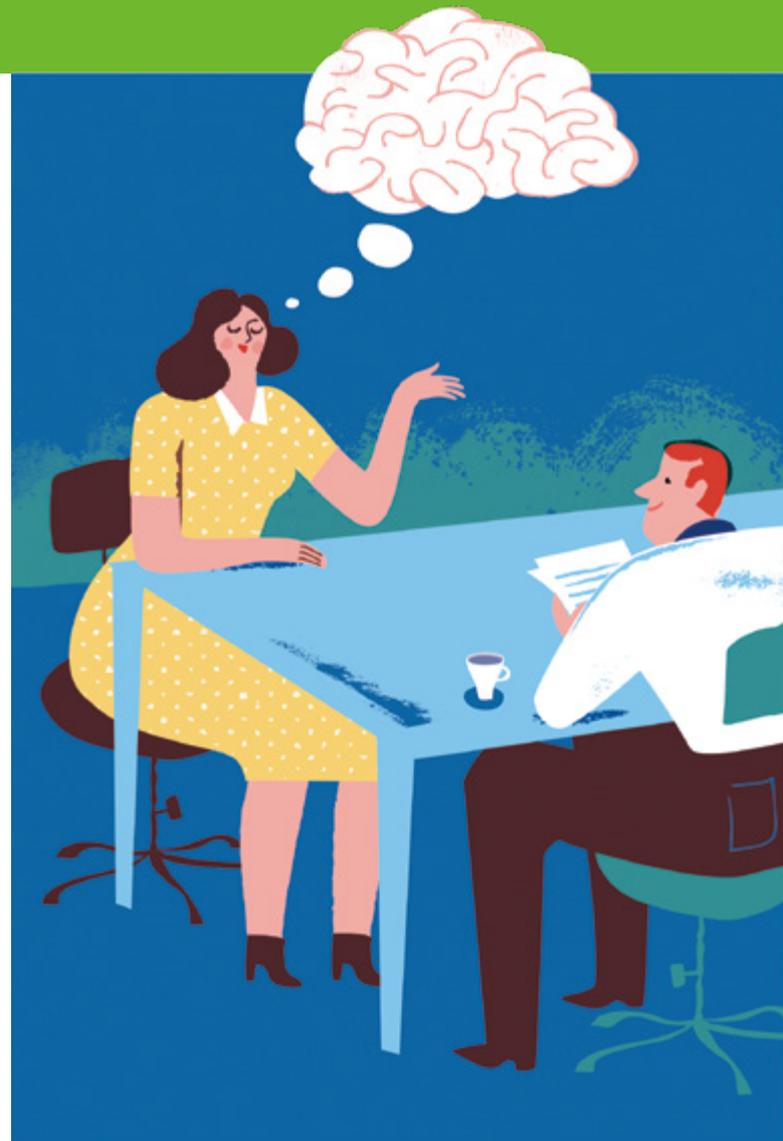
### **Step 6. Learn to interview well before sending your résumés to employers.**

Before you begin to send your finely tuned résumés to prospective employers, you must first learn to interview well. Far too many people begin sending out résumés as quickly as they can, before they're prepared to interview well. The problem with this is that some of these job seekers may get invited right away for an interview. These candidates get excited, go to the interview before preparing adequately for it, don't interview well, and therefore don't get the job. Once you've done this, you can't go back to that company or interviewer and ask for another interview, saying you've now learned how to answer the questions correctly!

How you answer every question in the interview is critical to your success in getting the job you want. Although you must always be fully honest, there are still right and wrong ways to answer each question in an interview. You'll be asked questions like these:

- What are your strengths and your weaknesses?
- What problem did you have in a former job that you would now handle differently?
- What are your salary requirements?
- What would you like to be doing in five years?

As a candidate, the answer you give to every question you're asked must be anticipated and planned out ahead of time. Even one bad answer may cost you the job. Focus your answers on short, one- to two-minute examples that show that your background, skills, and accomplishments do fit their job description. Research the organization before the first interview so you can tailor your responses to their needs.



At the end of most interviews, you will have the opportunity to ask the employer a few questions. Your very best question to ask is about the open job. "What needs to be accomplished or changed in this job?" This will help you in future interviews if you're asked to come back. You can generally save your questions about the organization's goals, work culture, salary (unless you are asked about it), work hours, and benefits for future interviews.

You now have the six steps to getting the job you want. You can't be temporally self-reliant if you need a job and don't have one. If you need employment, a better job, or know someone who does, please use or share these powerful job search tools. They work! May the Lord bless you in your efforts to get the job you want. ■

*The author now lives in Utah, USA.*

## CHURCH RESOURCES TO HELP YOUR JOB SEARCH

Consider joining your ward or stake's "Find a Better Job" self-reliance course. Ask your bishop or branch president if your ward or branch has a self-reliance or employment specialist.

Visit [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/719](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/719) to find videos on interviewing, networking, résumé writing, and more.



## THE GLORIOUS OPPORTUNITY FOR WORK

"Work is an antidote for anxiety, an ointment for

sorrow, and a doorway to possibility. Whatever our circumstances in life, . . . let us do the best we can and cultivate a reputation for excellence in all that we do. Let us set our minds and bodies to the glorious opportunity for work that each new day presents."

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Two Principles for Any Economy," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 56.



## He Won't Forget Your Work

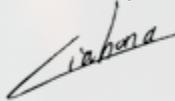
Several months ago I had a dream where, sitting in church on the last row as usual, and with no intention of participating, my vision changed. I saw that scattered among the congregation were other early-returned missionaries. A desire to help them grew in my heart as I looked around. I knew that sharing my experiences could be a way of ministering to them and helping them continue along the covenant path despite this seeming speed bump along the way.

Through this dream, Heavenly Father let me know that He cares. He appreciates the righteous service we gave as missionaries, no matter how long our full-time service lasted. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which you have shewed toward his name" (Hebrews 6:10). In my article (see page 47), I share a scripture story and the experiences of other early-returned missionaries that can help you as you navigate this unexpected and difficult road. I also love how Alex uses a story from the Book of Mormon to help us see that even for those who return home early for worthiness issues, there is still hope (see page 44).

In digital-only articles, you'll read how Emily transformed the feelings of anxiety, fear, and hopelessness she experienced into a personal and sacred joy. And Kevin, a professional counselor, offers suggestions on how loved ones can support those who struggle with an early return.

The reason we each returned doesn't matter as much as what we do when we return home. With the Savior's help, we can heal, progress, and continue to find more joy in our eternal journey.

Sincerely,  
Liahona Ficquet



## BEST ADVICE . . .

*Young adults share their best advice about returning home early from your mission:*

"Just know that everything's going to be OK. I was given this advice: it's hard until you decide it isn't.

You can decide what kind of future you're going to have."

—**Nathaniel Park, Western Australia, Australia**

"It doesn't need to define you."

—**Elena Kingsley, Utah, USA**

"No matter what the circumstances are, try to find a new routine for yourself, to get back into life."

—**Rosa-Lynn Ruiter, Netherlands**

"The end of one mission is the beginning of a new one. Find that new mission!"

—**Roberto Alfonso Martinez IV, Utah, USA**

"God loves you and has a plan for your life. Keep the faith!"

—**Rebecca Stockton, Arizona, USA**

*What's the best advice you've ever received about marriage? Send us your response at [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) by July 31, 2019.*

## SHARE YOUR STORY

Do you have an amazing story to share? Or do you want to see articles about certain topics? If so, we want to hear from you! You can submit your story or your feedback at [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

## ABOUT THE YOUNG ADULT AUTHORS

**Alex Hugie** is from Oregon, USA. He graduated from Brigham Young University with a bachelor's degree in English. He has particular interests in studying young adult literature, writing wonky short stories and novels, and drinking milk.



**Liahona Ficquet** is from Southern France. She is a learner and likes to work around the house with her dad. She enjoys studying in the medical field and aspires to work in women's health. She is currently working on the French translation of a book written by and for early-returned missionaries.



**Emily Warner** grew up in northern Idaho, USA, which is still her favorite place on earth. She studied accounting at Brigham Young University and enjoys hiking, taking pictures, and traveling the world with her husband.



## IN THIS SECTION

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By Alex Hugie

47 **Early-Returned Missionaries: You Aren't Alone\***

By Liahona Ficquet

\* This article has additional bonus content in the digital version.



## DIGITAL ONLY

**Supporting Returned Missionaries Who Come Home Early**

By Kevin Theriot

**Finding Joy through Christ Despite Returning Home Early from My Mission**

By Emily Warner

Find these articles and more:

- At [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
- In **YA Weekly** (under the Young Adults section in the Gospel Library app)
- At [facebook.com/liahona](https://facebook.com/liahona)

Your value is not diminished by returning home early from your mission.

# If Your Mission Ended Early, Don't Give Up

By Alex Hugie

If you're reading this, you probably already know how overwhelmingly difficult it can be to come home early from a mission. Young adults who serve may experience physical injury, mental health issues, civil emergencies, worthiness concerns, serious conflicts with others, or disobedience to mission rules, causing them to leave their mission before their expected release date.

Regardless of the reason, God would not want this setback to leave any of His children spiritually crippled. So how can early-returned missionaries move forward from such a jarring transition? And how can parents, Church leaders, and loved ones help?

## A Book of Mormon Missionary

One story from the book of Alma gives us a helpful example. The Nephite prophet Alma directed a mission to the wicked Zoramites, accompanied by a number of trusted individuals. One of these individuals, his son Corianton, “fors[ook] the ministry, and did go over

into the land of Siron among the borders of the Lamanites, after the harlot Isabel” (Alma 39:3). Consequently, Alma sharply reproved Corianton and called him to repentance, noting, “I would not dwell upon your crimes, to harrow up your soul, if it were not for your good” (Alma 39:7).

Corianton received his father's chastening humbly, repented of his sins, and returned to serve as a missionary among the Zoramites to “declare the word with truth and soberness” (Alma 42:31). The account goes on to say that after Alma had spoken with his sons, “the sons of Alma [both Shiblon and Corianton] did go forth among the people, to declare the word unto them” (Alma 43:1).

## Returning with Potential

What do we learn from this story? First, a missionary who leaves early—even for preventable reasons—is still capable of accomplishing great things. Corianton may have made

grave mistakes, but he still went on to accomplish a great work. Likewise, even missionaries who return as a result of their own actions shouldn't feel as if they've destroyed their spiritual potential. Corianton learned from his mistakes and came to build God's kingdom in tremendous ways, and that same capability rests within everyone no matter how much they feel like they've failed.

Second, we learn the crucial role others play in an early-returned missionary's spiritual recovery. Alma—Corianton's father and priesthood leader—counseled Corianton with sharpness but also with confidence in his ability to still achieve his spiritual potential. As with Corianton, consequences for disobedience on a mission must come, but any discipline should be accompanied by love,

forgiveness, and mercy (see Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–44).

### Returning to Heal

This same message of hope for early-returned missionaries is echoed today. Marshall, who returned early due to physical and mental health challenges, at times felt regret for both health obstacles and personal inadequacies that kept him from being a fully functional missionary. Nevertheless, he feels that his service was absolutely worthwhile.

"As missionaries, we're not perfect," Marshall says. "We're still subject to temptation; we can still sin. But your imperfections are probably what Satan wants you to focus on—to feel like your offering isn't accepted by the Lord because of those times when you weren't the best missionary."

Marshall believes that the Lord wants missionaries to know He is pleased with the service they offer, even when that service was imperfectly rendered by either choice or circumstance.

Marshall has learned to cope and heal by doing all he can to stay close to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

### Returning to Repent

Another missionary, who served in Colorado, USA, was sent home from his mission for disciplinary reasons and excommunicated from the Church, but he was later rebaptized. "Coming home was hard," he says. "I felt lost and empty. At times, the most difficult part of coming home was [finding] the motivation to keep going to church,



reading the scriptures, and praying. The simple things were the hardest.”

But he found strength in the support of friends and family and in working to repent.

“Setting goals, meeting with my bishop, and going to the temple when I was worthy were keys in being able to come closer to my Heavenly Father,” he adds. “I remember times when I couldn’t meet with my bishop or accomplish some goals; the adversary was always right there, tempting me.”

His recovery was made possible by “always remembering that I have a Heavenly Father who loves me and wants me to be happy. Having a testimony of the Savior’s Atonement and of repentance, we can always come closer to God no matter how distant we might feel.”

“Looking back on my mission,” he continues, referring to the months he served before the events that led to his being sent home, “I still feel like it was one of the best experiences I’ve ever had. I learned a lot, and although it didn’t turn out the way I had planned, I was still able to see lives change because of the gospel. I made some mistakes, but my testimony has grown so much more as I’ve striven to repent and keep moving forward.”

He wants others who returned early because of their choices to know that “the world isn’t over. Coming home is a first step toward repentance. Once you go through this process of repentance, you will have

gained so much. That heavy burden will be lifted. There is no better feeling than knowing you are in the right in the sight of God.”

### **Loving Those Who Return Early**

Both of these missionaries who returned home early emphasize how important it is for the friends and family of early-returned missionaries to love and support them.

“Give them space,” Marshall says. “But make sure you’re close by, because it can be a little depressing. Be their friend.” By listening to the Spirit, we can gauge their needs and know when to reach out and when to respect their privacy.

“Just love them,” adds the missionary who served in Colorado. “Encourage them to always remember the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.”

How others treat early-returned missionaries could help make the difference between them falling away in shame or moving forward with faith. It’s essential, then, that they be embraced without being judged.

Like Corianton, early-returned missionaries have the potential to rise from their current vulnerable state into mighty instruments of the Lord.

### **Finding Hope in God’s Plan**

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles offers some words of comfort to early-returned missionaries. “When someone asks if you’ve served a mission, you say yes,”

he said. “. . . Cherish the service you rendered. Be grateful for the opportunity to have testified, to have been out in the name of the Lord, to have worn that missionary name plaque. . . . Please, please do not relive this; do not rehash it; do not think you’re inadequate or a failure.”<sup>1</sup>

For those who return early as a result of sin, remember these words from Sister Joy D. Jones, Primary General President: “If we sin, we are less worthy, but we are never worth less!”<sup>2</sup> She asserts that God will help us develop confidence in ourselves in our darkest moments if we will turn to Him.

The message from the Book of Mormon, from modern early-returned missionaries, and from Church leaders is the same: Never give up hope, because God still has plans for you greater than you can imagine. For the loved ones of these missionaries, your response to their return home will make a tremendous difference in helping them to heal and reach their potential. Remember that the Atonement of Jesus Christ can heal all wounds—including those of missionaries who return home early. ■

### ***The author lives in Utah, USA.***

You can find a list of resources for prospective and early-returned missionaries in the digital version of this article at [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) or in the Gospel Library app.

### **NOTES**

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Elder Holland’s Counsel for Early Returned Missionaries” (video), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media-library](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media-library).
2. Joy D. Jones, “Value beyond Measure,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 14.

Young adults share how they found meaning and peace after coming home early from their missions and how you can too.

## Early-Returned Missionaries: You Aren't Alone

By Liahona Ficquet

**T**he army of full-time missionaries striving to fulfill their duty to “invite others to come unto Christ”<sup>1</sup> brings “great hopes and much joy” (Alma 56:17) to many. Those missionaries, just like the stripling warriors in the Book of Mormon, fight every day with “miraculous strength; and with such mighty power” (Alma 56:56).

But even among the 2,060 stripling warriors, there were still 200 who “fainted because of the loss of blood” (Alma 57:25). Did it make them less valiant? Less strong? Less courageous? Less worthy than the others? Not a bit.

Just the same, you missionaries who returned home early for mental or physical health reasons are *not* less valiant, less strong, less courageous, or less worthy. Your perseverance through your trials is—and should be—astonishing. You have been spared—maybe greatly wounded, but spared. Your wounds, whether they be physical, mental, or spiritual, now need to be taken care of (see Alma 57:28). For those who have returned home for reasons having to do with



worthiness, repentance will be a vital part of your healing.

As you adjust to being home, make sure you give yourself time to heal and remember to always trust in God (see Alma 57:27). He has reminded us: “When I give a commandment to any of the sons [or daughters] of men to do a work unto my name”—for example, serving a mission—“and those sons [and daughters] of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies”—in some cases, our physical or mental illnesses or other injuries—“come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at [their] hands . . . , but to accept of their offerings” (Doctrine and Covenants 124:49).

Whatever wounds you have sustained—or had reopened—in battle, as long as you served worthily or repented completely, your contribution was needed and accepted by the Lord.

Reading the following stories may help you find healing in the fact that you are not alone and that sharing your story can help others.

### *Realize That* **THE SAVIOR HAS FELT YOUR PAIN**

**O**n the plane ride to my mission, I imagined what my homecoming would be like. Cheers would erupt, my family and friends would embrace me, and I would live out the rest of my life in peace, enjoying every blessing that came with being an honourably returned missionary.

Eleven months later, on the plane ride home, every moment was spent in aching anxiety about what lay ahead. My family was waiting, and although they did cheer and embrace me, before I knew it, I was alone with no idea about my future.

The Savior saw my dark days. He knew how I felt lying in bed for three weeks crying and sleeping to avoid reality. He knew I would need His strength because no one else around me could understand or even empathise with what I was going through. But He did. I couldn't have survived my mission or returning home early without Him.

Ali Boaza, Queensland, Australia

### **DON'T WASTE TIME** *Wondering Why*

**T**he thought of coming home early was devastating. As soon as the counselor suggested it, I felt a very complicated mix of emotions: Shame. Relief. Guilt. Peace. Sorrow. All at the same time.

I know that God was supporting me because somehow I got through that first week home. And then I got through another week. And another. Until I was finally able to feel like myself again. My dad was my biggest support and really took me under his wing. He always wanted to talk and spend time with me. Not to pry into what “went wrong,” but just to see how I was doing.

When my dad passed away in a rock climbing accident a few months later, I knew without a doubt that God has a plan for me. Being able to be with my dad for the last months of his life strengthened my testimony of the plan of salvation. I still don't understand all the reasons why I had to come home when I did, but I've also learned that if you spend too much time wondering why, then you miss the wonderful miracles God has provided for you every day.

Kristen Watabe, Ohio, USA



### *Be Willing to* **FOLLOW THE LORD'S WILL**

Everything was going well on my mission. I had incredible experiences that will stay in my heart forever. However, after eight months, I started having health problems. After much fasting and prayer, I was sent home. I was devastated. I thought everything was my fault. I stopped reading my scriptures and praying as often. I wondered if I hadn't done everything that I could have to stay.

But I realized I was being tested to see if I would remain loyal to the Lord. It was difficult, but I put my trust in Him, and I returned to the mission field, where I once again had amazing experiences.

Then, my health problems returned. But this time I was more willing to follow Heavenly Father's will. So I returned home a second time. It was difficult, but I know that I can learn from everything I went through.

Even though I didn't serve for 24 months, I know that I served an honorable mission. I know that the time I served the Lord was worth it for me and for the people I helped. I'm grateful to my Savior for His infinite Atonement. He knows each of our challenges.

And if we rely on Him with all certainty, we will never be alone.

Fillipe Hoffman, Goiás, Brazil

### **SURROUND YOURSELF** *with Goodness*

I never thought I would go home early from my mission, and I was embarrassed and nervous about facing everyone. Although it was one of the hardest moments in my life, I also grew from the experience. It molded me into a better person.

I returned home to go through a repentance process. Some of the choices I had made before my mission were not in line with the gospel teachings and commandments. Because of my embarrassment and desire to maintain my standing in the Church, I didn't go through the repentance process with my bishop beforehand. But within the first few months, I felt the need to return home to repent so I could serve with honor and integrity.

Things that really encouraged me when I returned home were participating in spiritually uplifting activities, including Church meetings, service projects, and the temple, once I was able to. What helped me the most, however, were the people around me—family, a few friends, and even people I had never met before showed me love and kindness.

Overall, with the help of the Lord and the Christlike examples around me, I was able to return to Florida to finish my mission. My hope is that we will all strive to be Christlike toward others, whether they have returned home early or are simply in need.

Caigen Stuart, Utah, USA

The promise found in your missionary call letter, made to you as you decided to step forward in this work, will be fulfilled: "The Lord will reward you for the goodness of your life." With attention and care, your wounds can be healed and become a tool for you to be able to help others come unto Christ. That is, after all, the duty of missionaries. ■

**The author, who is from France, is attending school in Utah, USA.**

Find more stories from early-returned missionaries in the full version of this article at [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) or in the Gospel Library app.

#### **NOTE**

1. "What Is My Purpose as a Missionary?" *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service*, rev. ed. (2018), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/manual/missionary](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/manual/missionary).



## I Play Volleyball, Run Track, and Read a Lot.

If I could spend a day doing anything, I would probably go to the beach.

I was born in Chicago, Illinois, but came to Nauvoo when I was in foster care. I don't remember much about my life before being in foster care, but I remember not feeling safe. When I went into foster care, I felt safe. I like having the gospel. Some of my friends have been put into some scary situations because they don't follow our standards. I know that following the commandments keeps me safe.

It was a cool experience finding my family. My mom came to the preschool I went to because she was helping substitute. She played with me, and she told one of the teachers that she wanted to take me home because I was such a cute kid. The teacher said, "She is up for adoption, so maybe!" My mom looked into it and adopted me and my two brothers. It's cool because I know what it's like to not have a family, and that makes having a family even more special.

**Lily S.,** 14, Illinois, USA

# YOUTH

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PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SMITH



# STUDY, READ, REVIEW, PRAY. *Repeat.*



**By Mario Días Alonso**

In Chile, in order to go to college, you have to take a university placement test. I wanted to study engineering at a university that was far from where I lived. It would be very expensive, so my goal was to get the highest score possible on the placement test so I could earn a scholarship for outstanding exam scores.

I knew where and what I wanted to study, and I knew what I would have to do to make it happen. I started preparing for the test. I studied, read, and reviewed the material, but on the practice tests, I still wasn't getting the score I needed. I turned to my Heavenly Father in prayer and asked Him for greater intelligence and to enlighten my understanding so I could reach my goal.

I prayed for this daily for an entire year. I went to special preparation classes at my school, and I enrolled in classes at an institution that was geared toward preparing for the exam.

I kept up my daily scripture study, and I never missed a day of seminary. I fulfilled all my Atonement Priesthood assignments and never studied on Sundays, no matter how desperate the situation



*Without a scholarship,  
I couldn't afford college.*



## HELPING YOU SUCCEED IN YOUR EDUCATION

The Church provides several resources to help you in your training or education after high school:

- The Perpetual Education Fund is available in some countries to help pay for vocational training. You can talk to your bishop or branch president about it or visit [pef.lds.org](http://pef.lds.org).
- BYU-Pathway Worldwide provides affordable online higher education. Students begin with PathwayConnect, a one-year online program that helps people start or return to university studies. After completing PathwayConnect, students can then earn a job-ready certificate in less than a year and then continue on to earn a degree—all at the same low tuition rate. Visit [byupathway.lds.org](http://byupathway.lds.org).
- Learning English can often improve your chances of finding a better job. EnglishConnect is an English-language learning program provided by the Church to help individuals increase spiritual and temporal self-reliance in a gospel-centered environment. Visit [englishconnect.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://englishconnect.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
- The Church's self-reliance course for education is called "Education for Better Work." It is a 12-week course held in your stake or district. Find the manual in the Gospel Library under Self-Reliance or at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/71857](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/71857).



### EDUCATION WILL HELP YOU SERVE

"My counsel . . . is to continue your education, wherever you are, whatever your interest and opportunity may be. Determine how you can best serve your family and society and prepare well."

President Russell M. Nelson, "Education: A Religious Responsibility" (Brigham Young University-Idaho devotional, Jan. 26, 2010).

was. I knew Sunday is the Lord's day, and I wanted to respect it in the way my parents had taught me. I knew I couldn't afford to deprive myself of the blessings Heavenly Father had for me, especially when I most needed them. Despite all this, I wasn't getting the score I needed on my practice tests.

My family and I prayed and fasted, and my dad gave me a blessing. With

this spiritual preparation and my other preparation, I took the test. Not only did I end up with the score I needed, but I exceeded my goal, scoring one of the highest percentages possible in the math section. I received the scholarships and benefits I needed, and I was able to study at the university I chose.

From the time I was young, I learned that if I did everything I could and took

care of my spiritual responsibilities first, then Heavenly Father would bless me. Things might not always work out the way we expect them to, but God will take care of us. I know it's only with His help that all things are possible. ■

*The author lives in Cautín Province, Chile.*



**By Elder  
Joni L. Koch**  
Of the Seventy

*When you learn to love and value work, you also find a great source of joy.*

# My Best

Some years ago, I found myself in an auditorium at the Churchill College of the University of Cambridge in England for an annual meeting for the company I worked for. On that occasion, I had the privilege to receive from the company's global president and CEO an award in behalf of my team for the excellent work we performed that year.

As company leaders from all over the world, representing 80,000 employees, clapped their hands and praised our team for our achievement, I thought, "This must be my best day of work ever!" The atmosphere of that moment was exhilarating.

## Shared Bread

But then my mind took me back to my first day of work nearly 40 years earlier. My father owned a bakery and baked bread that was distributed to many small markets in our city in southern Brazil. When I was a young child, I kept insisting that my father take me to work with him. One day he finally said yes!

My mother sewed a little white apron and a baker's hat for me, and my dad and I went to the bakery. Together, we mixed and prepared dough, manually shaped the dough into loaves,

and placed the loaves into the brick oven. When the bread finished baking, we used a long wooden paddle to carefully retrieve the bread. We waited for a few seconds, then we shared a loaf of the still-warm bread. It tasted wonderful!

Upon reflection, I decided that receiving an award at Cambridge was my second-best day of work. The best and happiest day at work was in a much more humble setting: a little bakery with no audience or standing ovation. It was just me and my dad. That day, he taught me to love and value work and helped me feel the joy of making something from scratch with my own hands. I learned that hard work is satisfying to both the body and the soul.

## Work Is a Blessing

When the Lord told Adam and Eve, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19), it seemed like He was



*I will always remember the white apron and baker's hat my mother made for me and the bread my father and I made together.*

# Workday Ever!

chastising them. In reality, He was giving them the opportunity to experience the joyful and fulfilling sensation of becoming self-reliant, of providing for their own wants and needs.

Many of us look at work solely as a way to temporarily provide for ourselves and our families or maybe as a way to acquire a social status by carrying a fancy job title. But far more importantly, God wants us to work so we can gain a strong sense of fulfillment as we complete tasks, create something new, innovate and improve on what already exists, and add value to the world we live in.

Spiritually speaking, a gospel-centered life always includes work. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "A consecrated life is filled with work, sometimes repetitive, sometimes menial, sometimes unappreciated but always work that improves, orders, sustains, lifts, ministers, aspires."<sup>1</sup>

As a child, you were probably asked, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" During your teenage years, that question will most likely switch to, "What are you going to study in college?"

## **Passion, Honor, and Purpose**

Whatever profession you decide to embrace, whatever line of work you may end up in, seek to do your work with passion, honor, and purpose. You should work hard and always try to accomplish the best results. Having this attitude toward work will help you

become temporally, emotionally, and spiritually secure. The opportunity to work is a blessing from the Lord. As you learn to appreciate and love work, you will find the happiness and purpose that come from self-reliance.

I can still hear the applause and the words of encouragement coming from that audience at the University of Cambridge, but more dear to me is the memory of my day at the bakery with my father and the smell of those loaves of bread as they came out of the oven. ■

## **NOTE**

1. D. Todd Christofferson, "Reflections on a Consecrated Life," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 17.

The Apostles Are Witnesses of Jesus Christ—and

# You Can Be Too!



By Heather White Claridge  
Church Magazines

Imagine that you and a friend are eating lunch at school. Your friend is just about to open a candy bar when someone walks up and accuses her of stealing the candy and demands it be returned. You were with your friend when she bought it, so even though you might be nervous, you tell the accuser that your friend is not a thief.

## How to Become a Witness of Jesus Christ

- Have a “desire to believe” (Alma 32:27).<sup>4</sup>
- Study about the Savior in the scriptures.
- Pray and ask for the Holy Ghost to confirm that Christ is your Savior.
- Study the New Testament and mark when the Apostles were witnesses.



### Special Witnesses

Standing up for the truth like this can be called “being a witness.” In the example, you would be a witness of your friend’s good character. Just like you can be a witness for your friend, God has called prophets and apostles to be special witnesses of His Son, Jesus Christ. Apostles are “sent forth with certain authority and responsibility”<sup>1</sup> to teach, testify, and serve as “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:23).

Not long after Christ was resurrected, the Apostles were called to be His witnesses (see Acts 1:8). As you study Acts in the New Testament, you can read of many instances when the Apostles testified that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (see Acts 2:36; 5:27–32; 10:36–44). The Apostles today continue in this call as special witnesses—just listen to any general conference and you will see how they testify of Christ.

### The Holy Ghost Testifies of Christ

Some Apostles in the New Testament were with Christ when He was on the earth and saw Him ascend into heaven (see Acts 1:9–11), and Apostles today may have seen Christ,<sup>2</sup> but it is not physically seeing Jesus

that makes someone a witness of Him.

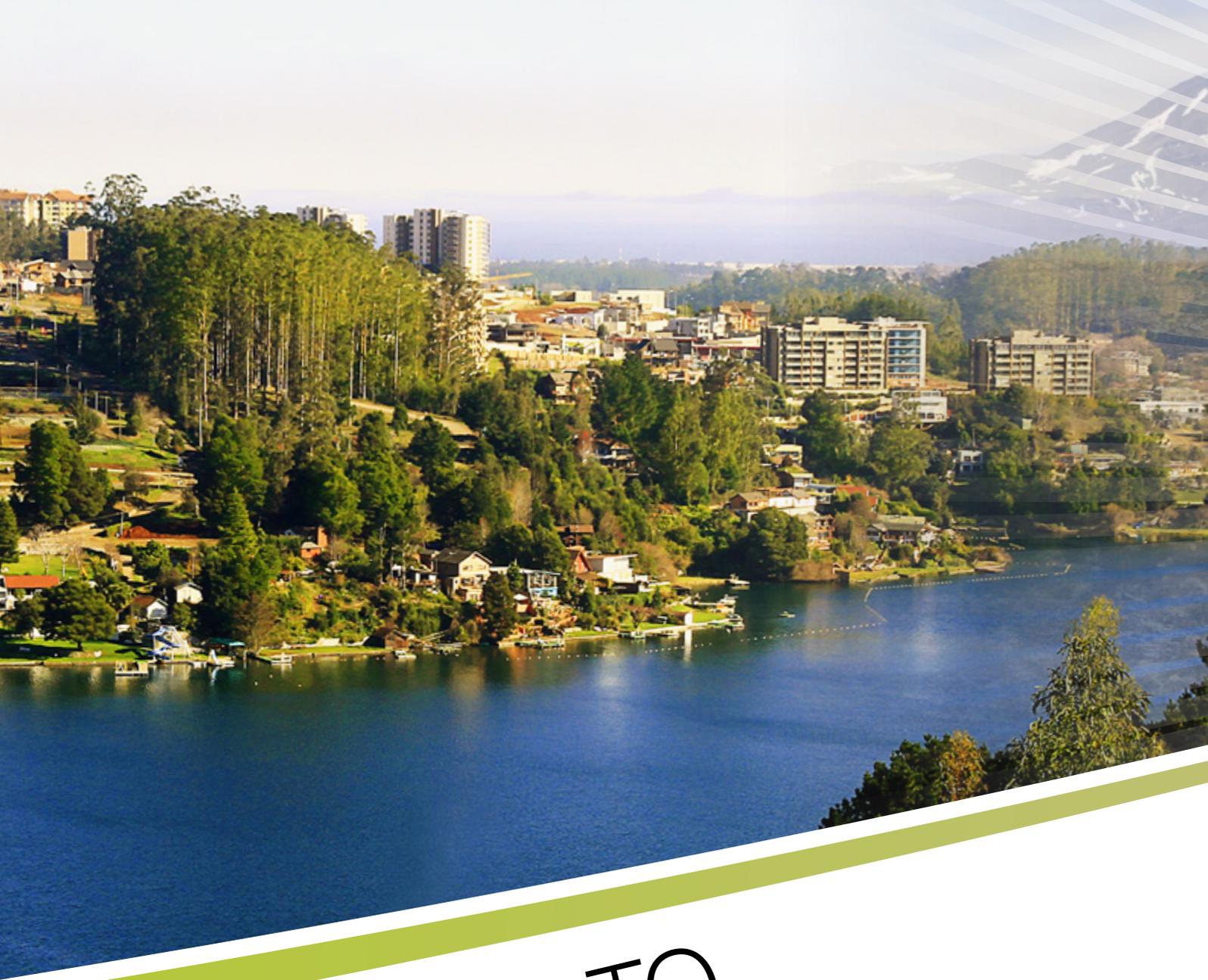
President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) said, “[The Holy Ghost] is the only way that a person can truly know that Jesus is the Christ and that his gospel is true.”<sup>3</sup> This means that, even though Apostles may have seen Christ, they know He’s the Savior because the Holy Ghost has told them!

### You Can Be a Witness

What’s even more amazing is that you are also promised that you can know that Jesus Christ is your Savior through the Holy Ghost (see Doctrine and Covenants 46:13). It’s not something that only Apostles can know! Even though you’re not called to be a special witness of Christ, you can seek out a testimony of Christ and be His witness to the people in your life. You can follow the Savior’s command to Peter: “When thou art converted, strengthen thy [brothers and sisters]” (Luke 22:32). ■

### NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Special Witnesses for Christ,” *Ensign*, May 1984, 50.
2. See Boyd K. Packer, “The Witness,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 97; see also Lorenzo Snow, “A Visit from the Savior,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Sept. 2015, 80.
3. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. (1957–66), 3:31.
4. See also Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 93–95.



# "YOU NEED TO LEAVE THIS PLACE"

Despite my fears about moving to northern Chile with my family, the desert turned out to be our promised land.



By Sergio Riquelme Segura

**W**hen I read in the Book of Mormon about how Nephi always supported his visionary father, I concluded that most youth in the Church were probably like Nephi. But when my family decided that we needed to move to the desert, I felt more like Laman and Lemuel. I didn't want to leave my home.

Like Nephi and his brothers, I was "born of goodly parents" (1 Nephi 1:1). Both joined the Church when they were teenagers, and my mother waited for my father while he served a mission. They were active, hardworking members of the Church. When I was in high school, the economy slowed down in our region of Concepción, Chile. Jobs dried up, and my father began having trouble finding work. Finally, he began looking for a job out of town.

His job search took him north to the city of Calama, in Chile's mining region. He is a construction engineer, and he found a good job there. But he was alone and far away. We saw him only when he could afford the 32-hour bus ride home. After a few years of seeing my father only two or three times

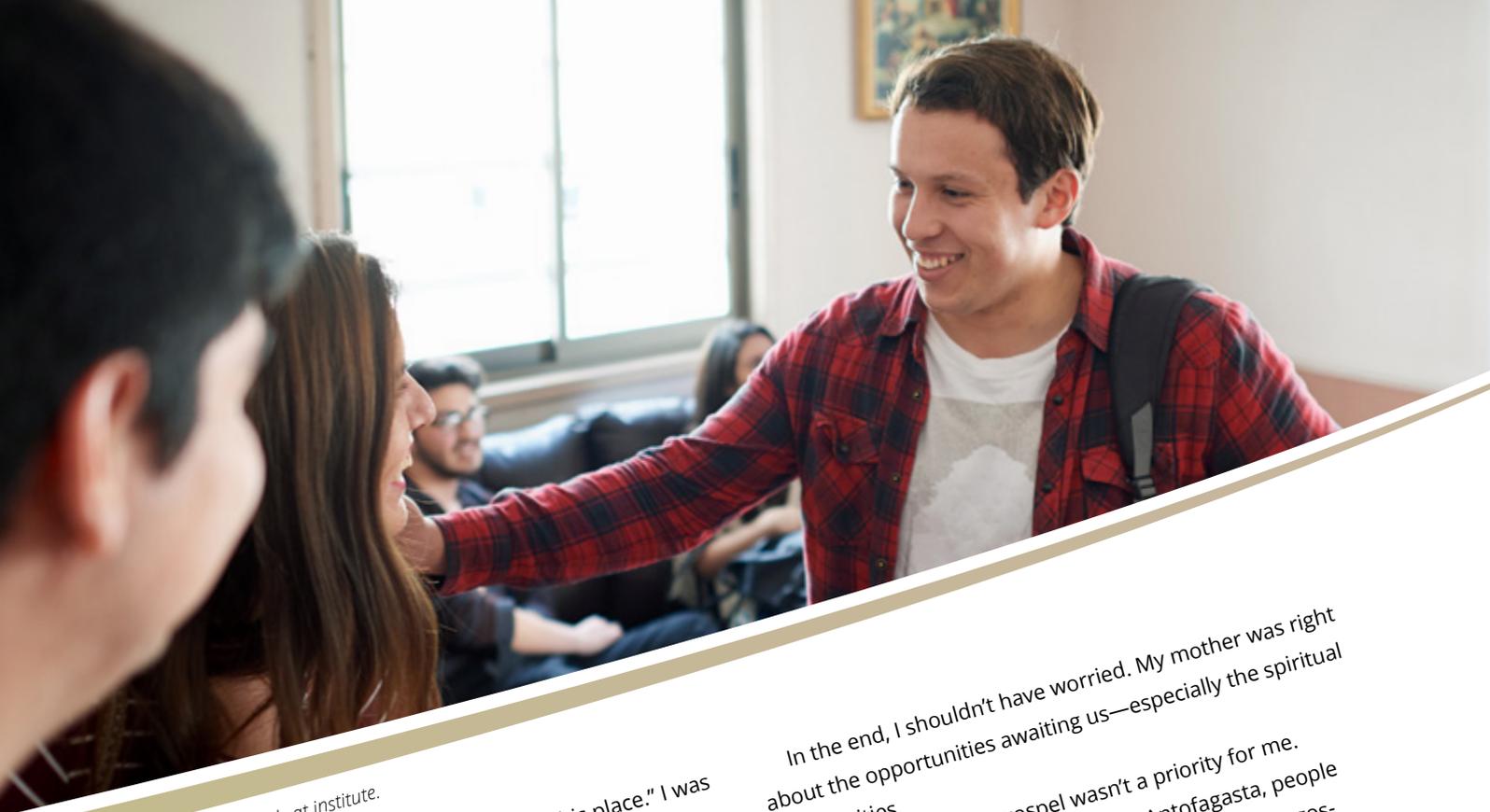
a year, my mother felt that it was time to make a change. My parents concluded that the rest of our family needed to move north.

### **We Need to Be with Our Father**

My younger brother had no problem moving. And my older sister, who was in college, set a good example for me. "I'll sacrifice my studies," she said. "We need to be with our father."

Everyone supported the decision to move except for me. I wanted to be with my father too, but I resisted making changes and personal sacrifices. I had my friends, I knew my surroundings, I enjoyed my lifestyle, and I wanted to go to college in Concepción. I did everything I could do to convince my mother that we shouldn't go.

Finally, she said, "Son, your father is alone. He wants us with him. I wish you understood, but you're too focused on yourself." Then she reassured me, "We will have opportunities there." In my heart, I knew she was right—even though my head wasn't convinced. I didn't have a strong testimony at the time, but I decided to pray about whether I should go with my family.



*Sergio visits with friends at institute.*

A clear answer came to me: "You need to leave this place." I was sad, but I told my parents I would go.

### **Where Are the Trees?**

Concepción is a green place with lots of trees. It receives 50 inches (127 cm) of rain per year. Antofagasta, the city near Calama we were moving to, receives only 0.1 inch (0.25 cm) per year.

The most shocking thing for me about the move was the actual trip. As we made our way north by bus, watching the transition from green to brown was agonizing. I wondered, "Where are the trees? Where are the cows in the countryside?" All I saw was dirt, rocks, and hills.

Obviously, northern Chile is a desert, so what else could I expect? I was reminded of how Laman and Lemuel felt when Lehi's family left the land of their inheritance and headed into the wilderness.

I had a lot of fears when we arrived in Antofagasta. What would happen if I didn't make any friends? What would happen if I couldn't get used to the area? What would happen if my hopes for the future didn't come true?

In the end, I shouldn't have worried. My mother was right about the opportunities awaiting us—especially the spiritual opportunities.

Before our move, the gospel wasn't a priority for me. The Lord was in the background. But in Antofagasta, people came into my life who helped me see the beauty of the gospel. I received help from special priesthood leaders. I made friends who remain a treasure to me. My spiritual life changed completely.

I'm grateful I listened to my mother. I'm grateful the Lord answered my prayer. I'm grateful I had the courage to move north with my family.

Here in the desert is where I made the changes that helped me become who I am today. Here is where I committed to embrace the gospel, serve a mission, marry in the temple, and dedicate my life to the Lord. Here is where I determined that I no longer wanted to be like Laman and Lemuel.

For my family and me, the wilderness turned out to be our promised land. ■

*The author lives in Antofagasta, Chile.*

# FAITH

COMES ONE STEP AT A TIME

*“Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work.”*

*Doctrine and Covenants 64:33.*

Dear Merilee  
 Well you have got the big bit  
 you, I guess when you get  
 already be past. I can't be  
 16 years old. It seems  
 years ago when you us  
 red cowboy hat + pray  
 only 3/5 or so, but  
 Stay sweet + pure  
 one know that the cl  
 YOU TF

ELDER GARY STEVE



actions speak louder  
 + you do fit your name  
 of Honor: HAPPY

Love ya  
 Always

*Two others*  
 Gary

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# LETTER

## from a Loving Brother

*My older brother missed my 16th birthday because he was serving a mission. Yet the advice he sent me was a present I would cherish forever.*

**By Merilee S. B. Averett**

as told to Richard M. Romney

**S**ixteen! What a time of life! “Nobody should have to go through this alone,” I thought.

My wise parents were kind and always gave me good counsel. My older sister had just gotten married and moved out of state. My little brother was involved with his 11-year-old concerns. I had great friends, and I knew my Church leaders sincerely cared about me.

But my older brother, Gary, was my confidant. I looked up to him in all things as a teenager. “Whenever I talk to him, things make more sense,” I said to myself. “I wish he could be here right now.”

But he wasn’t. He was far away in Japan, serving a full-time mission.

Despite missing Gary, I did have a fun birthday. My mom made me our traditional birthday breakfast, and I received a few gifts before going to school. That night, my family and I went out for a pizza dinner and ended with birthday cake. I even let myself daydream about dating, driving, and other exciting things I would do as a 16-year-old.

However, the best present I received that day was a letter in the mail. Gary hadn’t forgotten my super special day! This was before the days of email, so a letter took a long time to travel from Japan to Cache Valley, Utah, USA. I was amazed that his letter arrived right on my birthday! The letter was handwritten, which made it more like having my brother present with me as I read:

“Dear Merilee:

“Well, you have got the big birthday coming up, don’t

you? I guess when you get this letter it will already be past. I can’t believe it—you are 16 years old. It seems like only a few years ago when you used to [wear your little red cowboy hat].

“Stay sweet and pure, and always let everyone know that the Church means a lot to you. If you do that, you won’t ever get into a situation where you have to make a decision with all the peer pressure weighing on you. Example: In high school, everyone knew that I didn’t want to drink or smoke, not at all, so I never got invited to a party where that sort of thing went on. My friends knew I didn’t do that. . . .

“If you let people know your standards, then people with your standards are attracted to you. I don’t mean you have to *tell* everyone, but actions speak loud. Your spirit is really sweet, and you do fit your name. And you have a good sense of humor. Happy ‘Sweet 16’ Birthday!” The last sentence was underlined in red. No other birthday present could’ve been better! I read it over and over again, until he was back home from Japan and we could finally talk to each other face to face.

It has been years since I received that letter, but I still have it. Many things have changed since then, but not my love for my brother. Today I sustain him not only as my brother and friend, but as Elder Gary E. Stevenson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The counsel he offers as a special witness of Christ to all the world is an added strength in my life, just like the letter he sent me on my 16th birthday. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

# What Will You Find in the Book of Mormon?

By Elder Gary E. Stevenson  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

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**A**s you find time and a quiet place to read the Book of Mormon, I see you discovering answers, feeling guidance, and gaining your own testimony of the Book of Mormon and a testimony of Jesus Christ.

As you read, you will pore through the passages of this precious book and encounter your beloved Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, on nearly every page. It is estimated that some form of His name is used an average of once every 1.7 verses.<sup>1</sup> Even Christ Himself testified of its truthfulness in these the latter days, stating, “As your Lord and your God liveth it is true” (Doctrine and Covenants 17:6).

I am grateful for the invitation and promise that the Lord has offered through the prophet Moroni to each of you—and to everyone who reads the Book of Mormon: “And when ye shall receive these things [the Book of Mormon], I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of [Jesus] Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:4; see also verses 3, 5).

The truths you will find in the Book of Mormon will uplift and inspire you. They will strengthen your faith, fill your soul with light, and prepare you for a future you scarcely have the ability to comprehend.

Within the book's pages, you will discover the infinite love and incomprehensible grace of God. As you strive to follow the teachings you find there, your joy will expand, your understanding will increase, and the answers you seek to the many challenges mortality presents will be opened to you. As you look to the book, you look to the Lord. ■

*From an October 2016 general conference address.*

**NOTE**

1. See Susan Easton Black, *Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon* (1987), 16–18.

Has **four sons.**



Born on August 6,  
1955, and raised in  
**Cache  
Valley,  
Utah.**



**Lived in Asia**  
for more than  
nine years of his life.



# Elder **GARY E. STEVENSON**



Married  
**Lesa Jean Higley**  
in April 1979 in the Idaho Falls  
Idaho Temple.



Earned a bachelor's degree in  
**business  
administration**  
from Utah State University.



As a young man, he often  
went with his father to  
**visit and serve  
widows**  
in their ward.

Called to be an  
Apostle in  
**October  
2015.**



Refers to his  
**wife** as the  
"sunshine in and  
of my life."



Said his call to  
**the Quorum  
of the Twelve**  
was a "knee-buckling  
experience."



Called to serve in the  
**Japan Fukuoka  
Mission**  
as a young missionary.



Cofounded an  
**exercise equipment**  
manufacturing company where he  
worked as president and chief  
operating officer until 2008.



When he was 11 years old,  
**his father kept  
him safe** from  
stepping on a rattlesnake.

Enjoys  
**skiing**  
snowboarding,  
and hiking.



Served as president of the  
**Japan Nagoya  
Mission**  
from 2004 to 2007.



YOUNG ADULTS

**DID YOU RETURN  
HOME EARLY FROM YOUR  
MISSION?**

*Whatever the reason,  
you can continue to enjoy the  
blessings of the gospel.*

42

YOUTH

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THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

# the Friend



How are you a  
**pioneer?**

See pages F7 and F10



By President  
Dallin H. Oaks

First Counselor  
in the First  
Presidency

# Sharing the Gospel

The Savior, Jesus Christ, commanded His disciples to share the gospel with everyone on earth. He said,

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

We need every member of the Church to help take the gospel to all the world.

Here are some ways you can help:

- ①. **Love** everyone as your brothers and sisters, like Jesus taught.
- ②. **Keep the commandments** so you can be a good example.
- ③. **Pray** to know who is ready to learn about the gospel and how you can share it with them.
- ④. **Help others** learn more about Jesus Christ.

Missionary work means having an attitude of love and helping others. No matter how the other person responds, you are a successful missionary if you share the gospel with love! ●

*Adapted from “Sharing the Restored Gospel,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2016, 57–60.*



# Sharing with Love

How can you show your love today?  
Match each picture with the number from  
President Oaks's message.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY REBECCA SORGE



# Praying with FILIP



**By Shirley Espada-Richey**

(Based on a true story)

*“Pray always” (Doctrine and Covenants 19:38).*

It was Josef’s first time at Filip’s house. They had a great time building a cardboard spaceship. They even colored awesome flames on it. When Filip’s mom called them for dinner, Josef followed Filip into the kitchen.

“I’ll say grace,” said Filip’s dad.

*What does that mean?* Josef wondered. He watched Filip and his family as they each touched their forehead, then the middle of their chest, then the left side, then the right. Josef had never seen anyone do that before.

Filip held his hand out. Josef looked around and saw that the rest of Filip’s family were holding hands and bowing their heads. *Are they about to pray? Is that what it means to “say grace”?* Josef wondered.

Josef didn’t want to hurt Filip’s feelings, so he took Filip’s hand. Filip’s dad took Josef’s other hand and then started to pray.

“Bless us, O Lord . . .”

Before they sat down, Filip and his family touched their foreheads and chests as they had before.

When Josef got home, Mom asked about his day.

“Did you have a good time?” Mom asked.

“Yes,” Josef said quietly. He *did* have a good time.

The spaceship was awesome, and the hamburgers were yummy. But something was bothering him.

Mom looked at him more closely. “You don’t sound OK. Is something wrong?”

“Well . . .”

Josef had so many questions! He kept thinking about that prayer. Why was it different from how he and his family prayed?

“Mom,” he asked, “how did you pray before you joined the Church?” Josef told her about Filip’s family’s prayer.

“It sounds like they’re Catholic, like I used to be,” Mom said. “They were making the sign of the cross with their hands. See how it looks like a cross? It’s a reminder that Jesus died for us.”

Josef smiled. “So Filip believes in Jesus too?”

“That’s right,” Mom said. “Do you remember what Filip’s dad said in the prayer?”

Josef had to think about it. “He thanked God for the gifts He gives us . . . and he talked about Christ!”

“See?” Mom said with a smile. “We’re not so different. I’m glad you could pray with Filip’s family.”

A few days later, Filip came over to play. They were playing outside when Dad called them in for dinner. Josef’s stomach rumbled as they ran to the kitchen.

“I’m starving!” said Josef.

“Me too,” said Filip.

Everyone took their places around the table.

Filip sat next to Josef. Filip made the sign of the cross and reached for Josef’s hand.

“This is how we pray at our house,” said Josef. “We fold our arms, close our eyes, bow our heads, and pray.”

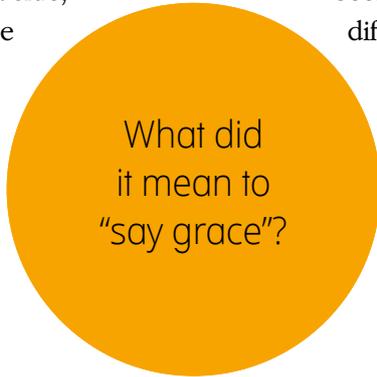
“That’s it?”

“That’s it.”

“Easy,” said Filip.

Josef closed his eyes and smiled. He was glad he could pray with his friend. ●

*The author lives in California, USA.*



What did it mean to “say grace”?



I have friends at school who are Catholic and Muslim, and we are all best friends because that is how Jesus wants us to treat each other.

Elizabeth A., age 8, West Midlands, England

# Full of Good Works

These three women from the New Testament helped people. Read what they did; then match the pictures. What can you do to help someone today?



**Priscilla** and her husband made tents for a living. She taught about the gospel with her husband. They may have held Church meetings in their home. (See Acts 18:26.)



**Lydia** sold purple dye. She felt the Spirit and decided to be baptized. She gave the disciples a place to stay in her home while they were traveling. (See Acts 16:14-15.)



**Tabitha** gave to the poor and sewed clothes and coats for those in need. After she died, Peter raised her from the dead. (See Acts 9:36, 39-40.) ●



This page supports page 108 of *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families*.

# To Be a Pioneer

Words and music by Ruth Muir Gardner  
Arr. by Vanja Y. Watkins

*Boldly* ♩ = 69-76

**F**

1. You don't have to push a  
(2. You) do need to have great

**C7** **F**

hand - cart, Leave your fam - 'ly dear, Or  
cour - age, Faith to con - quer fear, And

**C7** **F7** **Gm**

walk a thou - sand miles or more To  
work with might for a cause that's right To

**C7** **1. F** **2. F**

be a pi - o - neer! 2. You  
be a pi - o - neer!

# Hello from Cambodia!



Hi, I'm Paolo.  
And this is  
Margo.



We're  
visiting Cambodia.  
Here's what we've  
learned!

**Cambodia** is a country in Southeast Asia. About 16 million people live there, with about 14,000 Church members.



Most kids in Cambodia get to school and church by riding a motorcycle with a parent. Or they might take a *tuk tuk*—a carriage pulled by a motorcycle.



Here's a Cambodian Book of Mormon. The Cambodian language is called Khmer (kuh-MY). Its alphabet has 74 letters—the most of any alphabet in the world!

These Church members are greeting each other in the traditional Cambodian way, called *sampeah*. The higher your hands are, the more respect you show.



PHOTOGRAPH OF MEMBERS GREETING EACH OTHER AND MAN ON THE MOTORCYCLE BY JAMES ILLIFF JEFFERY



Last year President Nelson announced that Cambodia's first temple would be built in Phnom Penh, the capital city! The temple will help families like this one be sealed together forever.



Many Primary children in Cambodia are the only Christians at their school. That's because most people in Cambodia practice a religion called Buddhism. Their religion teaches them to be honest, peaceful, and wise. Here's a famous Buddhist monument in Cambodia that people from all over the world visit.



A lot of Cambodian foods use *prahok*, a sour and salty fish paste. These Church members made a big pot of soup to eat together at the stake center between general conference sessions.



Thanks for exploring Cambodia with us. See you next time!



### Meet some of our friends from Cambodia!



I feel very happy when I obey God.

**Sineth B., age 6,  
Kampong Thom,  
Cambodia**



After I took the discussions with the missionaries at home, I was baptized and I'm so happy!

**Sina B., age 8,  
Kampong Thom,  
Cambodia**

**Are you from Cambodia?  
Write to us! We'd love to  
hear from you.**

# Mara the Pioneer



**By Jessica Larsen**

(Based on a true story)

*October 2018, Phnom Penh, Cambodia*

Mara buttoned her skirt and looked in the mirror. It felt funny to wear church clothes on a Saturday, but this was a special Saturday. It was general conference!

“Are you excited for the women’s session?” Mak (Mom) asked. She brushed Mara’s hair with quick, gentle strokes. “I want you to try to listen as much as you can.”

“Yes! I hope they tell pioneer stories!” Mara liked those best.

“Maybe they will,” Mak said. “Did you know your dad is a pioneer?”

Mara was confused. Her dad had never pulled a handcart.

“How is he a pioneer?” she asked.

Mak nodded toward the window, toward the river. “He was fishing there when he met the missionaries. He was the first one in his family to get baptized,” Mak said. “That makes him a pioneer! Now let’s go find your grandmother.”

Yiay (Grandma) was waiting for them in the front room. Mara’s family and her grandparents all lived together. Yiay helped take care of Mara after school while her parents worked. Now Yiay stood by the moped, the big motorized scooter that carried them around the city.

“The Church has only been in Cambodia for 25 years,” Mak told Mara as she opened the door and pushed the moped onto the street. “So we’re all pioneers. Even you!”

“How am I a pioneer?” Mara wondered as she got on the moped. Mak drove the moped, with Yiay in back and Mara in the middle. Mara held on tight as they zigged down the crowded street.

As they passed a café, the smell of tea wafted over them. Almost everyone here drank tea. But Mara didn’t. She followed the Word of Wisdom. Mara grinned. That’s one way she was a pioneer!

As the moped turned a corner, Mara saw a *wat*, a Buddhist temple. The red pointed roof rose above the



other buildings. Monks with shaved heads and orange robes sat studying in the courtyard.

Mara knew that most people in Cambodia were Buddhist. They didn't believe in Jesus Christ. But Mara did. "That's another way I'm a pioneer," thought Mara. And today she would get to listen to the prophet!

As the moped turned into the church parking lot, Mara saw lots of women arriving. Some had walked or ridden mopeds. Others arrived in *tuk tuks*, small carriages pulled by a motorbike. Many of the women wore dresses or plain skirts, like Mara did. And some wore *sampots*, beautiful long skirts made of colorful patterned fabrics.

Mara, Mak, and Yiay sat down in the chapel with the other women. Conference had actually happened a whole week ago in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. But now the people in Cambodia would be able to watch the broadcast in Khmer. Mara spoke both English and Khmer at home, and she also learned French in school. But many Cambodians just spoke Khmer.

The first speaker didn't tell any stories about pioneers. But then the second speaker told a story about walking up a steep dirt path on her way home from school. It was called the "boys' trail," and sometimes she would take off her shoes and walk barefoot. She wanted to do hard things so she could be like a pioneer! Mara smiled as she thought about all the ways *she* was a pioneer.

The last speaker was the prophet. He stood tall. Mara listened extra closely. "I invite you to read the Book of Mormon between now and the end of the year," he said. "The heavens will open for you. The Lord will bless you."

Mara knew it wouldn't be easy to read the whole Book of Mormon. She looked at the women around her. All of them had chosen to follow Jesus Christ. All of them had come tonight to listen to the prophet. She would follow the prophet, just as they did. She would be a pioneer! ●

*The author lives in Texas, USA.*

**In the October 2018 general conference, President Russell M. Nelson also announced that a temple will be built in Cambodia!**

# I'm Christian!

By Marissa Widdison  
Church Magazines



When I was baptized  
and confirmed, I took the  
name of Christ.  
That means I choose to  
follow Him and try to do  
what's right.



I'm Christian! I believe that Christ  
is God's Begotten Son—  
The Prince of Peace, Good Shepherd,  
Bread of Life, the Holy One.



I'm Christian! I read scriptures daily, learning of His life,  
His miracles, His teachings, His eternal sacrifice.



I'm Christian! I want the world to know Jesus died for them.  
Because He gave His life for us, we all will live again!



I'm Christian! When my soul feels hurt  
by sin or earthly cares,  
I turn my heart to Jesus and I know  
He will be there.



I'm Christian! I use what I have to  
help my friends in need.  
I try to do what Christ would do;  
I'm following His lead.



I'm Christian! I forgive all those who  
choose to do what's wrong.  
I welcome peace and friendship and  
help people get along.



I'm Christian!  
I remember Christ the way  
He asked us to:  
I take the sacrament each  
week and promise  
to be true.



I'm Christian! I love  
Jesus Christ with all my  
heart. It's true!  
It's your turn now—  
please share what being  
a Christian means  
to you! ●



I'm Christian! Even when alone,  
I show integrity.  
I'm honest, brave, and virtuous.  
You can depend on me.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The name "Christians" was first used in the New Testament to describe people in the city Antioch who followed Jesus. You can read about them in Acts 11:26.

# Will You Come to My Baptism?

By Rebecca Hogg and  
Eric B. Murdock  
(Based on a true story)

*“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers” (1 Timothy 4:12).*

Oliver couldn't wait for the week to go by. Next week was the big day he had been waiting for since he was four. He was going to be baptized.

Oliver was so excited about his baptism that he wanted to shout it from the rooftops for all of England to hear! He couldn't wait to tell his friend Dylan at school.

“I can't believe it. My baptism day is *finally* almost here,” Oliver said. “It's going to be brilliant!”

“I thought only babies got baptized.” Dylan looked confused.

“Kids have to be at least eight to be baptized in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” Oliver said. “That's my Church.”

Oliver wanted to shout it from the rooftops for all of England to hear!



“Cool,” Dylan said.

Suddenly Oliver had a thought. “Would you like to come to my baptism?”

“Sure,” Dylan said. “But I need to ask my parents first.”  
“OK!”

Oliver was excited that Dylan might come to his baptism. This gave him another idea. “I don’t want to share my baptism with just *one* friend. I want to invite as many people as I can!” Oliver rushed home and told Mum he had a plan.

On the fast Sunday before his baptism, Oliver started his plan. He shared his testimony at the pulpit; then he said, “I’m getting baptized next Saturday, and I want everyone to come! Will you please invite anyone you know who isn’t a member, or who doesn’t come to church, to my baptism?” He felt like a missionary. He really liked that feeling!

Over the next week, Oliver invited friends, family members, and teachers to his baptism.

“It would mean a lot to me if you could come!” he told them.

As Saturday got closer, Oliver started to wonder how many people would actually show up. What if they were all too busy or didn’t want to come?

He said a short prayer that at least a few people he invited would come. Then he stopped worrying about who might show up. He knew he had done a good thing just by inviting them. Besides, the most important thing about the day was getting baptized.

When he got to church on his baptism day, Oliver could hardly believe his eyes. A lot of his friends were there to support him. He even saw a bunch of people he didn’t know. He waved when Dylan walked in with his parents.

When it was time to be baptized, Oliver stepped into the warm water. His dad took his hand, as they had practiced. Then he said the short baptism prayer and lowered Oliver into the water. Before he knew it, Oliver was standing up again—dripping wet and grinning. He knew he was following Jesus’s example.

After Oliver changed into dry clothes, his dad and a few other men confirmed him a member of the Church and gave him a special blessing, where they invited him to receive the Holy Ghost. Afterward, Oliver asked if he could share his testimony.

“Thank you so much for coming to support me on my special day. It means so much to me,” Oliver said. “I’m grateful for my baptism, and I believe this is Christ’s Church on the earth.”

Afterward, people came up to congratulate Oliver.

“Thanks for inviting me!” Dylan said. “I had a good feeling inside.”

“Everyone has been so kind!” Dylan’s mum said. “We have felt very welcomed.”

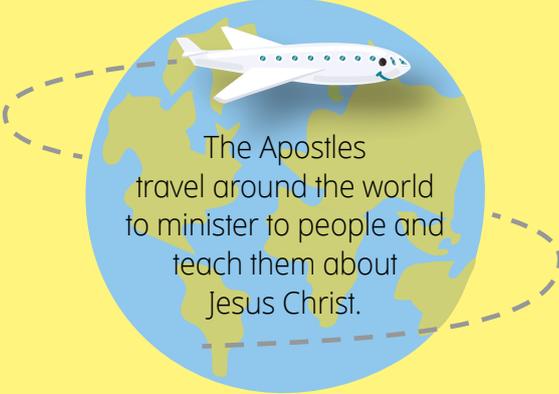
That night, Dad sat down on the end of Oliver’s bed. “What a great day!” Dad said.

Oliver nodded. “I’m glad I could share it with my friends.” ●

*The authors live in Kent, England, and Utah, USA.*



# Elder Christofferson Visits the Philippines



The Apostles  
travel around the world  
to minister to people and  
teach them about  
Jesus Christ.



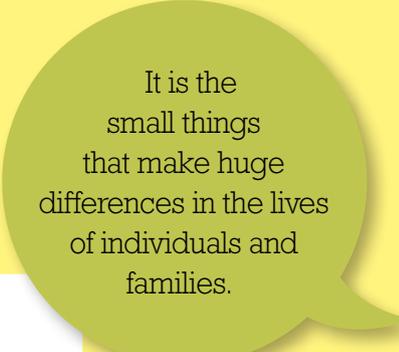
Elder D. Todd Christofferson and Sister Kathy Christofferson visited Church members in the Philippines. It's a country made up of more than 7,000 islands. And it has more than 770,000 members of the Church!



Elder Christofferson said if you visit the Philippines, you will come home with a smile on your face!



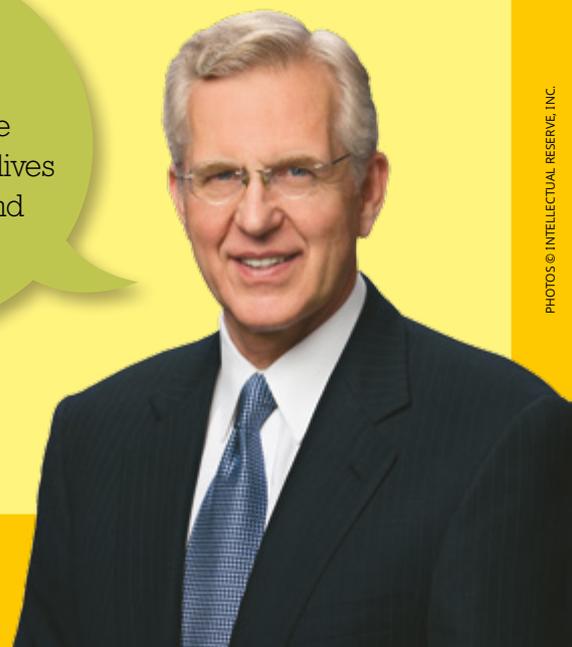
Lots of Church members from the Philippines—especially young women—serve missions. Elder Christofferson said they are known for being good at learning languages.



It is the  
small things  
that make huge  
differences in the lives  
of individuals and  
families.

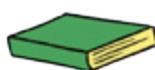
**Elder  
Christofferson  
taught:**

Be kind and look after others.  
This is called ministering.  
Live the gospel—all of it!  
Share the gospel with others.



# Find It!

Maria and Daniel from the Philippines like helping their *lola* (grandmother). Today they took turns pushing her wheelchair through the park while she told them about the missionary who baptized her. See if you can find 9 things Maria and Daniel might use on a mission someday.



hymnbook



necktie



dress shoes



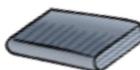
toothbrush



scriptures



pen



journal



cup



dress shoe

# Show and Tell



**Alžběta K., age 7, Zlín Region, Czech Republic**



**I** have a friend who I met at the beach during holiday. Friendship is a wonderful gift from Heavenly Father!

**Terezka J., age 6, Zlín Region, Czech Republic**



**I** am a child of God. He loves me.

**Nahomie K., age 3, Kasai-Central Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo**



**I** like to give hugs to other people.

**Ethan L., age 6, Occitanie, France**



**I** want to share with everyone.

**Verlann N., age 8, Tarlac, Philippines**



**L**ook what we made for the kindness garden!

**Abnahia and Jatziel G., ages 5 and 7, Puerto Rico**



**W**hen I was little, I was afraid of water. Even though people told me I didn't need to worry, I was scared. The missionaries told me that Jesus Christ was baptized to set an example, and I could feel my fear go away. When I was baptized, I felt a great joy.

**Sarah T., age 11, Île de France, France**



**By Elder  
Taniela B. Wakolo**  
Of the Seventy

*“Ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name” (3 Nephi 27:5).*

I was born in Fiji. My parents were not members of the Church, but they went to another church.

When I grew up, I married my wife, Anita. She was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She kept inviting the missionaries over to meet me.

One day I told them they could come to dinner for the next three nights. I said they had to use only the Bible to answer my questions. Their answers were perfect. On the third night, they asked *me* a question.

“If you had a grocery store, what would you call it?”

“I would call it the Wakolo Family Grocery Store because it’s my store,” I answered.

“Whom should a church be named after?” they asked.

It was a great question. And I knew the answer with my heart and soul. The true Church would be named after Jesus because it’s His Church. And The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was named after Him!

I had just one more question: “When can I be baptized?” One week later, I was.

When I was baptized, I took upon myself Jesus Christ’s name. That means I became a member of His Church and promised to follow Him. I try my best every day to live as He did. I know that this is Jesus Christ’s true Church. ●

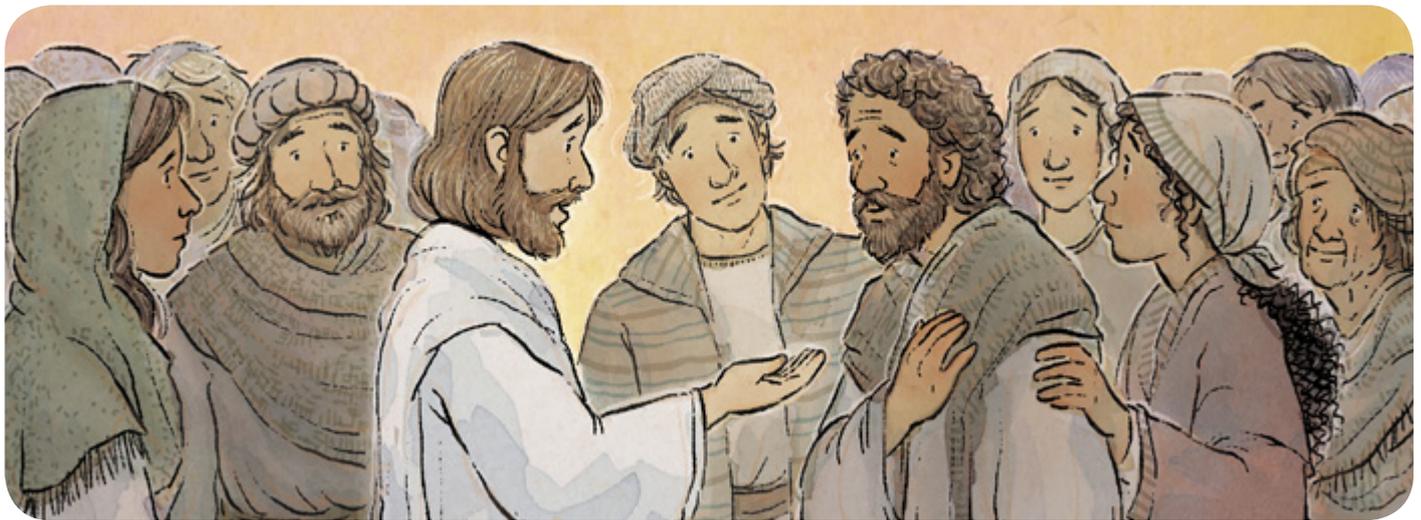
# It’s HIS Church



# Jesus Said to Share the Gospel



After Jesus died and was resurrected, He visited His followers. He told His Apostles to teach all people to obey the commandments and be baptized.



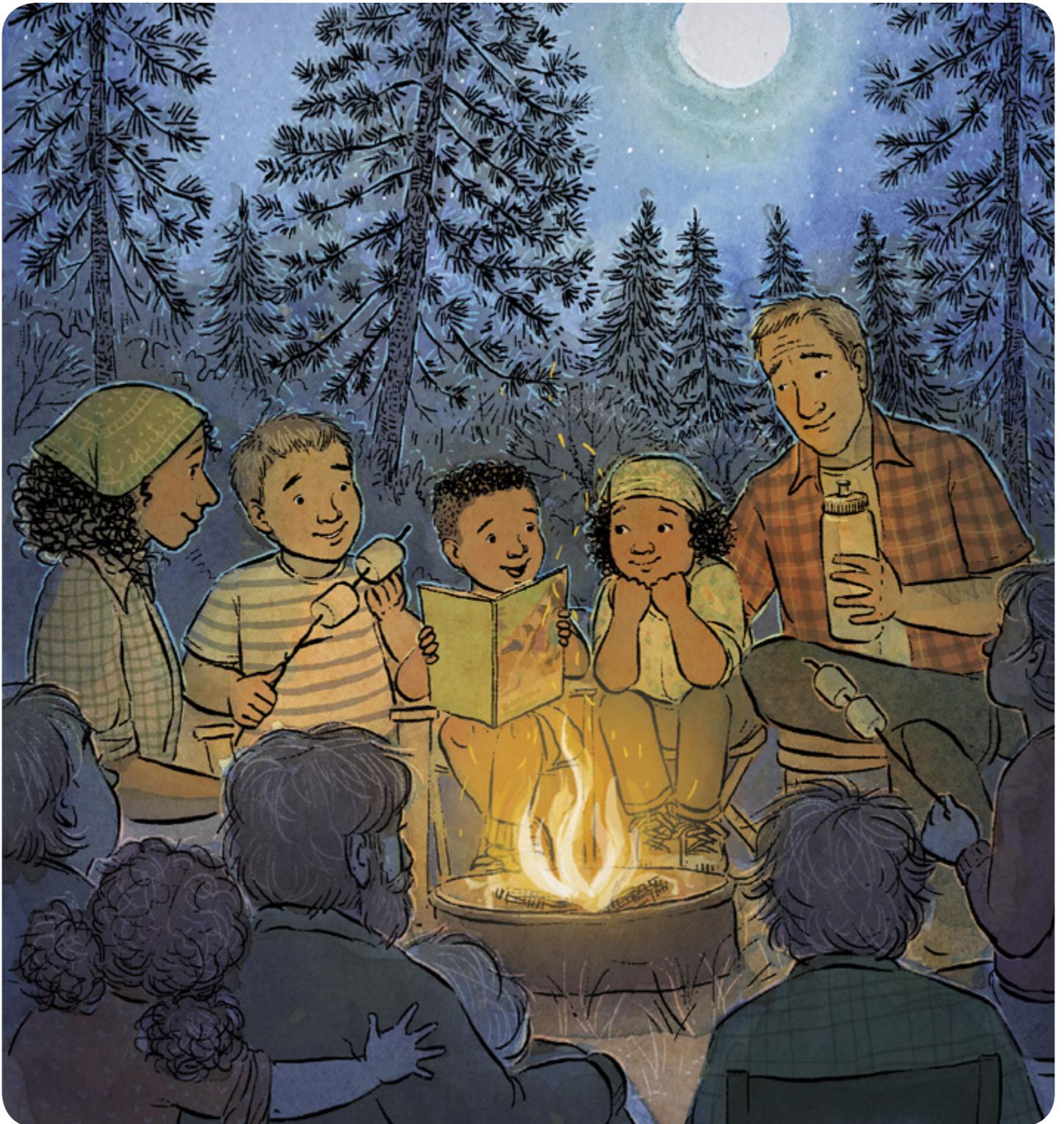
Peter was now the prophet who would lead the Church on earth.  
Jesus promised that the Holy Ghost would be with them.



After teaching His followers, Jesus  
returned to heaven.



The Apostles started traveling and  
teaching people in different lands.



I can help share the gospel too. I can be a good friend and stand up for what's right. ●

*Read what Jesus taught in Matthew 28 and Acts 1.*

# Jesus Wants Me to Share the Gospel



# Dear Parents,

Jesus told His disciples to take the gospel to “all the world” (Mark 16:15). This month’s magazine can give your family ideas for sharing the gospel wherever you live. If everyone with this magazine shared the gospel with just one other family, imagine how many more people would learn about Jesus! Here are some questions you could talk about as you read each story:

- Is there someone our family can invite to Primary, a baptism, or a Church activity?
- What can our family do this month to share the gospel through our example?
- Do our friends and neighbors know we are Christians?

As a family, mark all of the times someone in these stories shares the gospel. Then make your own family mission plan. And let us know how it goes!

Let’s fill the world with goodness!  
*The Friend*

**New *Friend* section**  
**50 E. North Temple St.,**  
**Room 2393**  
**Salt Lake City, UT 84150,**  
**USA**  
**liahona@ChurchofJesus**  
**Christ.org**



**Find the Liahona hidden inside!**

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