

Liahona



How Can I Help?

When Loved Ones Leave
the Church, page 30

Learning from Those Who
Have Come Back, page 26

How Understanding Church
History Helps, page 12

THE
CHURCH
IS HERE

Punta Arenas Chile





PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES

The Church is strong in Chile, from the desert towns of the north to metropolitan Santiago in the center to the Punta Arenas stake in the south, with its seven wards and two branches. Here are some more facts about Chile and the Church there:

Church members  **595,526**

3.3  percent of the population who are members of the Church

77 stakes,
590 congregations,
10 missions 

100  family history centers

temples: Santiago (dedicated 1983), Concepción (dedicated 2018), Antofagasta (announced 2019)  **3**

2,653  miles (4,270 km) from the northern border of Chile to the southern border, 217 miles (350 km) from east to west

1956 First congregation organized

1972 First stake organized

1988 Fourth country in the world to reach 50 stakes

1994–96 26 new stakes created





From the *Liahona*

Content in this issue was created before the COVID-19 pandemic. Some details may not be currently applicable. Please adapt suggestions as needed according to current Church and government guidelines.

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When I Felt Deceived about the Church

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How We Strengthen Our Faith—Together

In our study of the Book of Mormon this month, we learn about Korihor, who convinced many Church members that they had been deceived by the prophets but later acknowledged that he himself had been deceived by Satan and had deceived others. We learn about the Zoramites, a whole people who separated themselves from the Church. And we see Alma the Younger, who had once actively fought against the Church, seek to strengthen his own adult children against choices that would lead them away from the Lord and His Church.

Some of us have family members or friends who choose to no longer participate in the Lord’s restored Church. This can be painful for those of us who feel our faith so strongly. We want to help, but many of us wonder how.

One magazine issue could never cover every reason for why faith cools or explain exactly how to respond if it

does. Everyone’s journey of faith is different. But with this issue we hope to provide some help, such as:

- One man’s experience coming back to the Church and what he has learned from it (see page 26).
- The importance of welcoming everyone (see 40).
- Suggestions for parents on how to navigate their relationships with adult children who have chosen a different path (see page 30).
- Helpful perspectives on Church history and how it can strengthen our faith (see page 12).

We hope these articles provide a starting point for you to seek divine guidance for your personal circumstances.

Sincerely,
Adam C. Olson
Managing Editor



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By Chakell Wardleigh

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How I'm Preparing for a Temple in India

By Yeshwanth Kosireddy

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What It Takes to Receive Our Righteous Desires

By Marc Deo Dela Cruz

A young adult in the Philippines shares how he found faith when his plans for the future changed.

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Prepress: Joshua Dennis

Printing Director: Steven T. Lewis

Distribution Director: Nelson Gonzalez

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AN INVITATION TO ARTISTS WORLDWIDE

You are invited to create new works of art for the upcoming 12th International Art Competition, sponsored by the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City, Utah.

All artistic media, styles, and cultural approaches are welcome. Selected entries will be displayed at the Church History Museum and online.

This juried competition draws from artists around the world in an effort to encourage the creation of quality art by Latter-day Saints, to showcase the breadth and diversity of Latter-day Saint cultural production, and to expand the Church History Museum's collection.

- Theme: "All Are Alike unto God," inspired by 2 Nephi 26:33
- Submission dates: February 1–June 1, 2021
- Ages: Artists must be age 18 or older
- Awards: Artists whose works will be selected for exhibition will be notified in October 2021
- Exhibition dates: March 2022 to October 2022

Visit [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/artcompetition](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/artcompetition) for the detailed rules, eligibility requirements, online registration, and to view inspiring works from past competitions. ■



"[The Lord] doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men; and he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile."

—2 Nephi 26:33



All Are Alike unto God



Ignatius and Adelaide Baidoo

Accra, Ghana



Ignatius and Adelaide have seen how the Church's literacy program and emphasis on home-centered gospel learning have blessed the members of their stake and family.

CHRISTINA SMITH, PHOTOGRAPHER

Ignatius:

I became involved in the gospel literacy program as a member of the stake presidency. I visited a class and realized that it's not only for those who cannot read and write. It's for all of us to better understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Come, Follow Me and home-centered gospel learning will also help families read the scriptures together and learn from each other.

Adelaide:

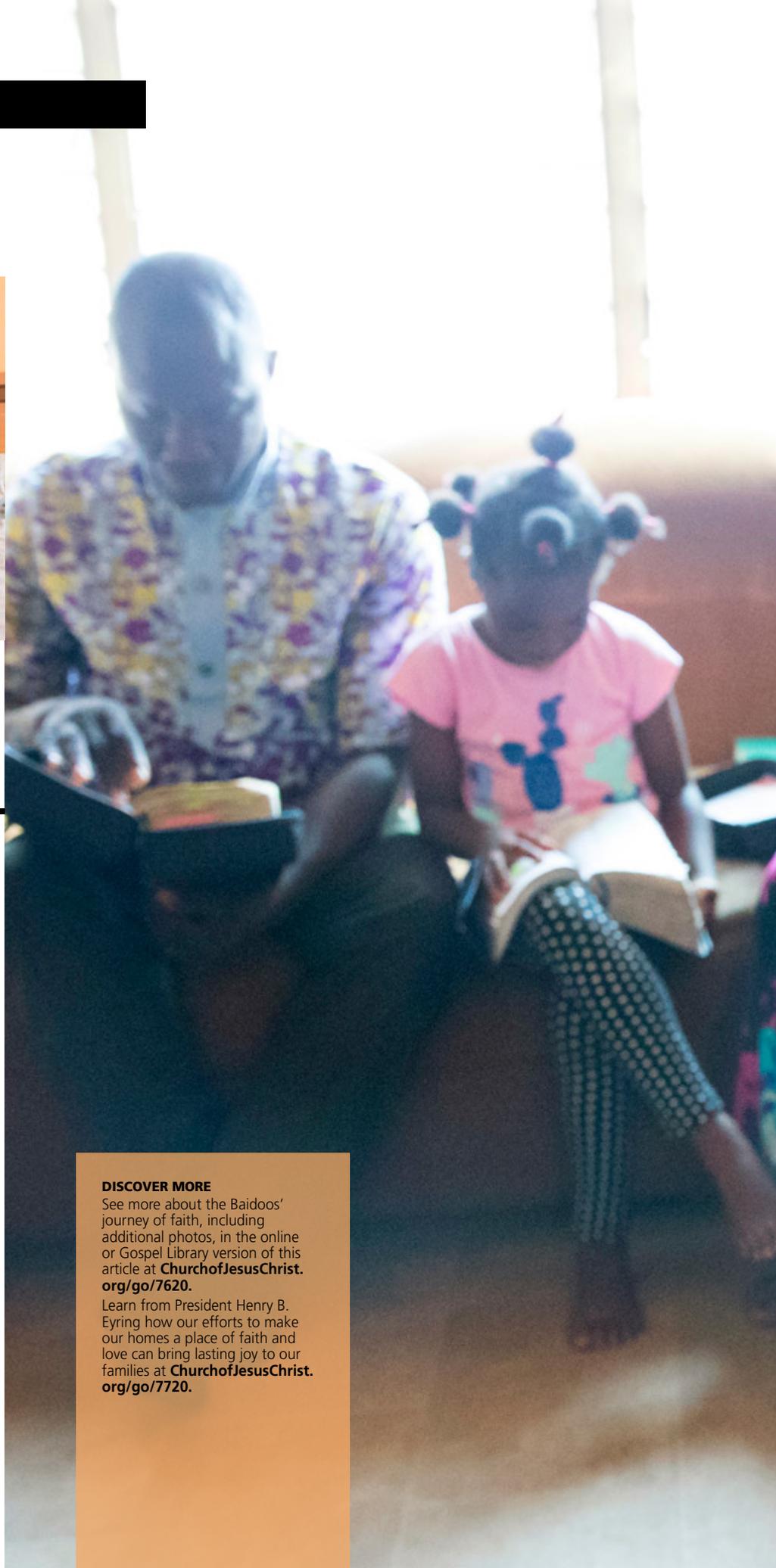
In our family, we try and do all that we can. Everybody gets involved. I am so happy with how my children help each other as we read the Book of Mormon together. They love the Book of Mormon. We've had a nice time reading and sharing our testimonies together.

Ignatius:

President Russell M. Nelson has said, "Exaltation is a family matter."¹ I love my wife and children. I want to be with them and our Heavenly Father forever, so we need to help each other.

NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Come, Follow Me," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 89.



DISCOVER MORE

See more about the Baidoos' journey of faith, including additional photos, in the online or Gospel Library version of this article at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/7620](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/7620).

Learn from President Henry B. Eyring how our efforts to make our homes a place of faith and love can bring lasting joy to our families at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/7720](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/7720).



Ministering Principles

MINISTERING THROUGH CHURCH ACTIVITIES





One way we can minister to our fellow ward members, neighbors, and friends is through Church activities. Whether you plan an activity around the needs or interests of someone you minister to or you invite them to participate in activities or service opportunities for others, activities on a ward, stake, or even multistake level can provide meaningful and entertaining ways to foster unity and strengthen members.

Church activities can also open the door to many opportunities to minister. For example, Church activities can provide opportunities to participate in service projects that bless others and build positive relationships in the community. Church activities can also be a chance to reach out to less-active members of the Church and to friends of other faiths or friends with no religious affiliation.

Including many people in Church activities creates an opportunity for the Lord to bless and strengthen our wards and branches, our neighborhoods, and our communities.

Building Positive Relationships

Winter was coming, and David Dickson had no idea how to keep his family warm.

David, his wife, and two daughters had just moved to the rural city of Fredonia, Arizona, USA, a high-desert landscape surrounded by majestic red cliffs, sagebrush, and evergreens.

The home the Dicksons had rented relied on a wood-burning stove as its primary heat source. David quickly learned that gathering firewood was a necessary skill because winters in Fredonia are full of snow and ice.

“I didn’t have any firewood or a chainsaw or even the knowledge of how to use one!” David says. “I didn’t know what I was going to do.”

Some ward members asked David if his family had enough wood to get through the winter. “It didn’t take them long to realize that I didn’t,” David says. “The elders quorum soon offered to help me gather wood. Overwhelmed with gratitude, I accepted their offer.”

David soon found out that this wood-gathering trip was typical of many well-planned, well-organized, and well-attended ward activities. One Saturday morning, David, the elders quorum, and other ward members headed into the mountains in a caravan of trucks and trailers.

“In a single afternoon, thanks to their tools and know-how, ward members provided my family with a woodpile that lasted us the better part of two winters,” David says. “Even more important, I was taught everything I needed to know about gathering wood on my own. By the time I left Fredonia, I knew how to handle a chainsaw, and I helped out on more ward wood-gathering activities than I can count.”

Such ward activities not only built positive relationships among members of the Church but also built positive relationships with everyone in the community.

“I remember one woman, not a member of the Church, who was new to the area,” David says. “She had been reduced to burning wood paneling from her home to keep warm. Once we learned about her plight, we made sure she had enough firewood to get through the winter. She was so thankful she could barely speak.”

Ministering efforts in Fredonia ensured that everyone stayed safe and warm through the winter.





Reaching Out to Others

While serving a mission in Romania, Meg Yost and her companion regularly visited a family who hadn't attended church in a long time. "The Stanicas were among the earliest members of the Church in Romania," Meg says, "and we loved them."

When it came time to plan and organize a branch activity, leaders decided that the branch would have a "Pioneer Night." This would be an evening to celebrate the courageous pioneers who crossed the United States to get to the Salt Lake Valley. It would also be an opportunity to honor the pioneers of the Church in Romania.

"We thought it would be a great way for some of the members to bear testimony of their conversion and how they have seen the Church grow in Romania," Meg says. "We immediately thought that the Stanica family should be involved. We invited them to participate, and they were excited!"

On the night of the activity, the Stanicas still hadn't arrived when it was time to start.

"We were worried that they wouldn't come," Meg recalls. "But just in time, they walked through the door. The Stanicas bore a beautiful testimony of the gospel and the Church. They also got to socialize with other members whom they hadn't seen in a long time."

The members of the branch opened their arms and welcomed the Stanicas. The next Sunday, Meg was pleasantly surprised to see Sister Stanica at church.

"When I visited the branch a few months later, she was still coming!" Meg says. "I think the chance to bear her testimony and to feel involved and needed in the branch really helped her."

4 Ideas for Ministering through Church Activities

- **Plan activities that meet needs:** Activities are a great way to meet many different needs. They may be planned to meet the specific needs of an individual or group. They should also meet the needs of those who participate, whether that need is to get to know each other better, learn more about the gospel, or feel the Spirit.
- **Invite everybody:** As you plan activities, make a special effort to invite those who would benefit from participating. Keep in mind new members, less-active members, youth, single adults, people with disabilities, and people of other faiths. Extend the invitation with their best interests in mind, and express how you would love to have them come.
- **Encourage participation:** Those you invite will get a lot more out of the activities if they have the opportunity to participate. One way to encourage participation is to have individuals use their gifts, skills, and talents during the activity.
- **Welcome everyone:** If your friends attend an activity, do all you can to make them feel welcome. Likewise, if you see people you don't know, be friendly and welcome them too! ■

DISCOVER MORE

On ChurchofJesusChrist.org, you can watch the video "Inviting Others to 'Come and Help'" to see how easy it can be to invite others to serve with us.





OPEN YOUR HEART

“We should always be attentive and look for new faces when attending Church activities and meetings. . . . We can do simple things to help these new

friends feel embraced and welcome . . . , such as giving a warm greeting, smiling sincerely at them, . . . introducing them to other members, and so forth. As we open our hearts to our new friends . . . , we are acting in the spirit of ministering.”

Elder Ulisses Soares of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “One in Christ,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 38.

MINISTER BY INVITING

Check for upcoming ward or branch activities. Think of those you minister to and consider inviting them to activities.



SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Send us your experiences of ministering to others or being ministered to. Go to liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org and click “Submit an Article or Feedback.”



**By Elder
Quentin L. Cook**

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

Sidebars by
Church historians
Kate Holbrook and
Matt Grow

Church History

A SOURCE OF STRENGTH AND INSPIRATION

In this article, from a worldwide devotional held at Nauvoo, Illinois, on September 9, 2018, Elder Quentin L. Cook and Church historians Kate Holbrook and Matt Grow answer questions about Church history posed by young adults from throughout the world.

Elder Cook: Church history can be a significant source of faith, but for some people, it has been misunderstood or overlooked. Some people have even purposely misrepresented stories of the past to sow doubt.

In learning *credible* history of the Church, we will bind our hearts together with the Saints of yesterday and today. We will find examples of imperfect people like you and me who went forward with faith and allowed God to work through them to accomplish His work. I promise that studying the history of the Church can deepen your faith and desire to live the gospel more fully.

RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH OF WOMAN FROM GETTY IMAGES; FAR RIGHT: ADDISON PRATT AND HIS JOURNAL, FRENCH POLYNESIA, 1844

As we learn more about the Saints of the past, we will be strengthened in fulfilling our own mission as a daughter or a son of God.

The story of the Restoration is a story of sacrifice, determination, and faith. We are all part of the Restoration and Church history. Each of us has a mission to accomplish in this life that will help the gospel to fill the earth. As we learn more about the Saints of the past, we will be strengthened in fulfilling our own mission as a daughter or a son of God.

In the over 24 years that I have served as a General Authority, the desire of the Brethren has been to be as transparent as possible, both in terms of Church history and in doctrine. We feel that the effort to put forth new resources—particularly *The Joseph Smith Papers*, the Gospel Topics Essays, Church History Topics, and now the multi-volume *Saints*¹—is a wonderful way of getting people to study things in context that are true and that will help them

understand the gospel of Jesus Christ in a credible way.

One of my favorite accounts in *Saints* is the story of Addison Pratt going to the South Pacific. He had about 60 baptisms. My wife, Mary, and I had a chance to visit the Austral Islands, French Polynesia, where Addison Pratt taught.

One of the most remarkable experiences I've ever had was to hear a young woman there say, "I am a seventh-generation member of the Church." Addison Pratt had baptized her distant ancestor before the Saints went to Utah.

Wherever you are in this world, whatever lineage you come from, you're important, you're part of Church history. We very much need you and want you. You will bless people's lives.



Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon

When I was in my teenage years, we thought that my older brother wouldn't get to serve a mission because the ward was allowed to send only one young man at a time on a mission. Everybody else had to be available for the military draft. But our bishop and stake president found out that they could send one more. So, they talked to my brother about it, and he came home and told my parents.

My father was a wonderful man, but he was not active in the Church. His response was negative—but for an unusual reason. He wasn't critical of the Church or even of a mission, but my brother was preparing for medical school. My father said, "You've prepared yourself to go to medical school. You've

Why isn't the Church more open about some of the controversial things in its history?

By Kate Holbrook

When I was four years old, my mother and my grandmother worked at the Beehive House, Brigham Young's old house in Salt Lake City, Utah. They taught me all about Brigham Young and that he had many wives. About 10 years later, I learned that Joseph Smith had many wives. I didn't learn about seer stones, which Joseph used to help translate the Book of Mormon, until I was an adult. The Church did not hide information from me, but the historical information was not as emphasized when I was young.

What I did learn in my Sunday meetings and my seminary classes was what the main work of the Church is. I learned to repent. I learned to bring my life into harmony with the gospel of Jesus Christ. I learned how to establish a relationship with my Father in Heaven. These are the things in my life that I hold most dear. I know that for some people, it can be really painful to learn about something you

thought you should have known but didn't know. That's why Matt and I do the work we do. We hope that that experience for people will now become a part of the past because we have the book *Saints*, which portrays a full history for people.



How do we know if a source about Church history is reliable?

By Matt Grow

I've worked for the Church for the past nine years writing about history. I've seen the attitude of our General Authorities with relationship to our history. The conversations are not about "How do we hide or censor history?" Rather, the conversations are about "How do we make history accessible, available, and understandable?"

We all know that the challenge in the information age is not to find answers—we're surrounded by answers—but to discern between good answers and bad answers, good information and bad information. There are so many discussions online about our history, and most of these discussions produce a lot more heat than light.

Be careful about sources of information that just seek to tear people down. Look instead for sources of information that are based on the records left by the people themselves and that seek to be fair to them. It is really easy to play "gotcha" with the past, to pull a quotation or an incident out of context and make it look alarming.

As a historian, I try to follow the advice of a British novelist. He said: "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there" (L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* [1953], prologue). That means when we visit the past, we don't want to be an "ugly tourist." We want to try to understand people within their own context and their own culture. We want to be patient with what we perceive as their faults. We want to be humble about the limits of our own knowledge. And we want to have a spirit of charity about the past.



taken the classes. You can do more good if you go to medical school than you can if you go on a mission."

That evening, this faithful, wonderful brother of mine sat with me, and the two of us talked. We concluded that there were really three questions that would determine his response to our father. The first one was, "Was Jesus Christ the Savior of the world?" The second one was, "Is the Book of Mormon the word of God?" And the third one was, "Was Joseph Smith a prophet?" I realized that the answers to those three questions would affect almost every decision I would make for the rest of my life.

I had always loved the Savior and I had read the Book of Mormon, but realizing how significant those answers were, I prayed that night and received through the Holy Ghost a profound favorable answer to those questions. Jesus Christ is the Savior, the Book of Mormon is the word of God, and Joseph Smith was a prophet. I testify that these things are true.

Plural Marriage

I want to make three points about plural marriage. First, it's clear that there was a lot of sacrifice in plural marriages. There was a lot of love and unity, but there was also sacrifice, and parents in those marriages taught their children to sacrifice. Many of the children of those plural marriages took the gospel of Jesus Christ across the world and blessed many lives.

Second, there were some, such as Vilate Kimball, who received their own personal revelation—before they even knew fully about what was coming—that this doctrine came from God.²

And third, in the senior councils of the Church, there's a feeling that plural marriage, as it was practiced, served its purpose. We should honor those Saints, but that purpose has been accomplished.

Now, there are unanswered questions. But I want you to know that we have a loving Heavenly Father who has a perfect plan, that His plan is one of happiness, and that we have a Savior who did everything for us. We can trust in Them.

Why are the accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision a little different?

By Matt Grow

Joseph Smith recorded or asked his scribes to record four different accounts of the First Vision. The accounts tell a consistent story, but there are differences. That shouldn't surprise us. If there were complete uniformity among the accounts, that's when I, as a historian, would become suspicious because that's just not the way memory works. We see the same pattern in other accounts in history or in the scriptures (see Acts 9:7; 22:9).

Also keep in mind how hard it is to capture a sacred experience in language. Joseph called language a "little, narrow prison" (in *History of the Church*, 1:299). Think about your own most sacred experiences. How easy is it to put them into words? We should celebrate that we have multiple accounts because they give us new insight and new perspective. Go read the four accounts of the First Vision in the Gospel Topics essays. Doing so will deepen your appreciation of what happened that day.

What role did the Urim and Thummim play in the translation of the Book of Mormon?

By Kate Holbrook

Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God. The Urim and Thummim, mentioned in the Book of Mormon, was buried with the plates. When Moroni gave Joseph the gold plates, he also gave him the Urim and Thummim. The seer stone, which Joseph also used to translate, was not buried with the plates. It was something that Joseph had found on his own years earlier that helped him to feel in tune with spiritual revelation. So he used both.

Emma Smith, one of his scribes, later remembered that whenever Joseph sat down to start translating again, he wouldn't ask, "Now, where was I? Where did we leave off?" He would just start right at the point where they had left off. If you look at a page of Joseph Smith's personal journal that he wrote three years after translating the Book of Mormon, it's full of crossed-out words, incomplete thoughts, and broken sentences. When you look at a page of the dictated Book of Mormon, there's none of that. It's complete, beautiful prose—complete sentences, nothing crossed out.

That is all interesting to think about, but what matters to me more is the contents of the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon is where King Benjamin taught me to prioritize generosity over judgment, where Alma taught me what it means when I get baptized, what I promise to do for and with my fellow Saints. The Book of Mormon is where Mormon and Moroni taught me about how important charity is and what to do to obtain it. This book has shaped who I am and how I see the world.





Why did they practice plural marriage in the early days of the Church?

By Kate Holbrook

Book of Mormon instruction about plural marriage says that monogamy is the Lord’s wish for His people, but there are rare exceptions when He commands the practice of plural marriage to raise up a righteous people (see Jacob 2:30). This is the rare exception that Joseph Smith was commanded to instigate. Joseph dragged his heels for years to implement this practice, but eventually he did implement it because he wanted to be obedient to God’s commandment to him. He tried to practice plural marriage in the middle of the 1830s, but it was really in 1841 that he slowly, more officially, began to introduce the practice to his trusted associates. They were shocked. They pled in prayer with their Father in Heaven for understanding of this principle, and they received personal spiritual witnesses that it was right for them at that time.

Plural marriage, practiced officially for about 50 years, was something people could choose. Scholars are still trying to determine how many adult Latter-day Saints actually were in plural marriages, but we know that it was generally a minority of the Saints. And we know that many of them were the most devout, stalwart members of our Church. In 1890, President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) issued a manifesto that was to end the practice of plural marriage. When some people heard this manifesto, they were relieved. Plural marriage had been hard for them. When others heard this manifesto, they were devastated. They had sacrificed so much, and they had testimonies of this principle.

Some Church members wonder what our past practice of plural marriage means for the afterlife. Church leaders have taught that plural marriage is not necessary for exaltation or for eternal glory. Although I’m personally grateful that monogamy is the rule and that plural marriage is the exception, I do not discount the testimonies and honorable obedience of our spiritual ancestors who practiced this principle. They were being obedient, and they had a testimony that it was right.



Temple and Covenants

In Kirtland, Ohio, one of the incredible things that happened was the building and dedication of the Kirtland Temple. The dedicatory prayer, which Joseph received by revelation, appears in the 109th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. In that prayer he asked the Lord to accept the Saints’ workmanship and sacrifice in building the temple.

One week after the dedication of the temple, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had another vision. This occurred on Easter, which was also Passover. The Lord came in vision and accepted the house. He told the Saints that they should rejoice for having, “with their might, built this house to my name” (Doctrine and Covenants 110:6). After that vision closed, three ancient prophets appeared: Moses, who restored the keys for the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth; Elias, who committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham; and Elijah, who restored the keys of the sealing power (see Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–16).

The restoration of those keys was absolutely essential to accomplishing the Lord’s purposes. We needed not only the Book of Mormon but also those keys and temple ordinances. Those keys have never been more important than they are now.

I have noticed that when one of the

Twelve Apostles is called as the prophet, his heart turns toward the ordinances of the temple in a dramatic way. I was privileged to be at the dedication of the Nauvoo Illinois Temple with President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008). I

ABOVE: KIRTLAND TEMPLE BY AL ROUNDS; RIGHT: MOSES, ELIAS, AND ELIJAH, BY GARY ERNEST SMITH

remember how deeply touched he was to have this temple built and how important it was to him to bring temples to the Saints. President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) continued that effort and received the same inspiration from heaven that President Hinckley did. And we have seen that inspiration in a dramatic fashion with President Russell M. Nelson. The mantle of prophet has come upon him, and he has had an increased sense of the preciousness of temple ordinances.

One of his first messages as President of the Church was to encourage people to go to the temple, receive their ordinances, and stay on the covenant path. Right after that, he said that if for any reason you have fallen off the covenant path, get back on that path.³

How did temple work bless the early Latter-day Saints?

By Matt Grow

When Joseph Smith died, the walls of the Nauvoo Temple were less than halfway done, and soon it became apparent to President Brigham Young (1801–77) that the Saints would again be driven out. So he asked the Lord: “Should we stay here and finish the temple, knowing that we will have to abandon it almost as soon as it’s done, or should we go now?” The answer came clearly, “Stay” (see Brigham Young diary, Jan. 24, 1845, Church Archives; Ronald K. Esplin, “Fire in His Bones,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1993, 46). The ordinances of the endowment and of sealing were so important that the Saints needed to stay.

And so for the next year, they poured all they had into the temple. Toward the end, their homes were being burned around Nauvoo, and the Saints were preparing to go west just as they were finishing the temple. In December 1845, enough of the temple was completed that the Saints could dedicate part of it, give endowments to those who were worthy, and seal husbands and wives to each other.

Over the next few months, they worked around the clock to prepare everyone spiritually for the great trek west. To me it’s profound and sacred that I am sealed by that same power to my wife, children, parents, and generations who have gone before and generations yet unborn. That is what the Restoration has made possible.

Can you share an event from the Restoration that has strengthened your testimony?

By Kate Holbrook

I remember the story of Emma Smith trying to escape the persecution in Missouri. The Mississippi River was only partially frozen—not enough that a wagon with people and their possessions could travel on it. It is a wide river, and it was dangerous to cross. Emma had a six-year-old child holding onto one side of her skirt, an eight-year-old on the other side, a two-year-old in this arm, and an infant in that arm.

The sister-in-law of one of Joseph’s scribes had sewn cotton bags that buttoned around the waist. In those bags under her skirt, Emma carried the only copy of Joseph’s translation of the Bible, which he had been working on for months. With the documents and with her children, she took one step after another across that frozen river, hoping she wouldn’t fall in.

To me, that is the consummate signal of courage and faith—that when you need to do something for what you believe, you just move forward, one foot in front of the other.





“Be of Good Cheer”

Many of you have trials and tribulations. Some of that comes because there is agency. Some of that comes because there is an adversary. But you need to know that we have a loving Father in Heaven and that the Atonement of Jesus Christ can bless us in ways we perhaps don't fully understand.

Some historians say that the number of Saints who escaped from Missouri to Nauvoo during the winter of 1838–39 was as high as 8,000. It was winter. Where was Joseph? He was in Liberty Jail, heartbroken over what the Saints were experiencing. He felt that he had been abandoned.

In that precarious circumstance, he received some of the most beautiful scripture—sections 121, 122, and 123 of the Doctrine and Covenants. They are significant. I hope you will read them. *Saints* has a short account of this event:

“Joseph cried out in behalf of the innocent saints. ‘Oh Lord,’ he pleaded, ‘how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened toward them?’

“‘My son, peace be unto thy soul,’ the Lord responded. ‘Thine adversity and thine affliction shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shall triumph over all thy foes.’

“The Lord assured Joseph that he was not forgotten. ‘If the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee,’ the Lord told Joseph, ‘know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience and shall be for thy good.’



“The Savior reminded Joseph that the Saints could not suffer more than He had. He loved them and could end their pain, but He chose instead to suffer affliction with them, carrying their grief and sorrow as part of His atoning sacrifice. Such suffering filled Him with mercy, giving Him power to succor and refine all who turned to Him in their trials. He urged Joseph to hold on and promised never to forsake Him.”

Elder Heber C. Kimball (1801–68) had thought that the justices of the Missouri Supreme Court were going to free Joseph, but they decided not to. Heber returned to Liberty Jail and, not allowed into the dungeon, called down to Joseph with the bad news.

Joseph was warm and friendly to him. “Be of good cheer,” he said. Then he instructed Heber to “get all the Saints away as fast as possible.”⁴

There's a lesson for you in that: be of good cheer regardless of your challenges. If certain things tempt you, get away from them. Rely on the Holy Ghost. The example of Joseph in Liberty Jail and the Saints fleeing from Missouri to Nauvoo are wonderful examples of strength and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As an Apostle, I bear witness of Jesus Christ. I am a sure witness of His divinity. I want you to know that He guides and directs the Church in a way that will bless all of us. I testify to you that He lives. ■

To watch the full devotional, go to [devotionals.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/devotionals).

NOTES

1. These sources can be found at [history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
2. See Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (1945), 327.
3. See Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Apr. 2018, 7.
4. See *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days, Vol. 1, The Standard of Truth: 1815–1846* (2018), 389–90; saints.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

Picturing Pioneers in India

By **Taunalyn Rutherford**

Adjunct professor, Religious Education, Brigham Young University

Meeting pioneer members of the Church in India has changed the way I picture pioneers.

“Whenever I think about pioneers,” as the Primary song goes, “I think of brave women and men.”¹ Stories of Latter-day Saint pioneers who blazed trails of faith have always inspired me. As a young mother, the stories of pioneer women reminded me of my latter-day blessings. I could give birth in a hospital rather than a handcart!

The definition of a pioneer as “one who goes before to prepare or open up the way

for others to follow”² describes Latter-day Saint pioneers on wagon and handcart trails gathering to Zion. But it also describes modern pioneers and the trails of faith they forge all over the world.

When my five children were all enrolled in school, I began graduate studies in religious history. I chose to research The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in India as the topic for my PhD dissertation. My research in India has changed the way I picture pioneers.



A mission was established in Bangalore in 1993, and a temple will soon be built here.

Pillars of the Church

Years earlier, as a young college student in 1986, I had traveled to South Asia with the Brigham Young University Young Ambassadors. It was a life-changing experience that included spending a day in Calcutta (now called Kolkata) with Mother Teresa. It was equally exciting to meet Latter-day Saints who were modern-day pioneers in India and Sri Lanka.

One of these members was Raj Kumar, who found the Church when he attended a performance of the BYU Young Ambassadors in 1982. When we met him, he had recently returned from his mission to Fresno, California, USA. He still wore his missionary name tag and continued to teach anyone in Delhi who would listen. Raj was one of approximately 600 members in India at the time, but to me he seemed like a lone Latter-day Saint in a sea of hundreds of millions of people.



In 1986, I met Raj Kumar after his mission. Still wearing his missionary name tag, he shared the gospel with anyone who would listen.



Siblings Suvarna and Sarala Katuka joined the Church in 1984 and later served missions.

I was inspired by Raj Kumar's example as I chose to serve a mission. Raj also blazed a trail of faith for some of the first native Indian missionaries to serve in the country. Suvarna Katuka and his fellow missionaries had received some missionary training in Chennai. Their mission president, stationed in Singapore, assigned Raj to give them additional training in Delhi.

Suvarna Katuka remembers how their missionary work changed because of Raj Kumar's example and training. They were able to replace feelings of fear with greater faith and courage. Suvarna explained, "That's when I think my real conversion started. I felt the Holy Ghost, and that is when I decided to help build the kingdom here in India."³

Suvarna had joined the Church in Rajahmundry. He, along with five brothers and one sister, was baptized in 1984. On the day of his baptism, Suvarna was ordained a priest and set apart as the second counselor in the branch presidency. He was also promised in a blessing that if he remained faithful, he would be a "pillar of the Church in India."

Suvarna's sister Sarala also served a mission. Before she left, she introduced the gospel to her friend Swarupa. When Suvarna returned from his mission, he was blessed by his sister's missionary work and married Swarupa. That small branch in Rajahmundry has now become



Elders Kandavalli, Sharma, Katuka, and Raju.



The family of Elsie and Edwin Dharmaraju on the day they were baptized.

The devoted service of many Church members in India has truly made them pillars of the Church.

a stake. Many returned missionaries from Rajahmundry have become leaders within the Church throughout India.

I met the children of Suvarna and Swarupa Katuka while teaching at BYU in 2014. Josh Katuka had recently finished serving a mission in Bangalore, India, and his sister Timnah had just received her call to the same mission. When I asked Timnah and Josh if they knew Raj Kumar, they said, “Yes, he’s our uncle!” Raj Kumar had married Sarala.

I am grateful to the Katukas for introducing me to several other pioneers as they helped me travel in India. Many of them trace their pioneer trail back to the love and example of the Katuka family. At one point, Suvarna and Swarupa had the opportunity to emigrate to Canada. But they turned it down because they felt that the Lord needed them to stay in India and build the kingdom of God there. Their devoted service has truly made them pillars of the Church.

Pioneer Members in Bengaluru and Hyderabad

During the last half of the 20th century, the Church has been established in diverse cities in India through pioneer members.⁴ Each story witnesses how the Lord has been leading people to the restored gospel.

Michael Anthoney, a pioneer member in Bangalore (now Bengaluru), miraculously connected with a Church member in 1970. When Delwin Pond, a bishop in Utah, went to a chiropractor because of back pain, he saw a magazine article at the chiropractor’s office for a nonprofit organization that sponsored students in India. He felt a strong prompting to support one of these students. This led to a 10-year anonymous correspondence that culminated in the Ponds making contact with Michael and sharing the gospel with him. Michael was baptized in 1981 and served a mission in Salt Lake City in 1982. He returned



Delwin Pond (center) introduced Michael Anthony to the Church in 1981.



Hyderabad, a city of over 8 million people and home to the first stake in India.

to India early because his mother was critically ill, so he served the final three months of his mission in Bangalore, where he taught several of his friends and others who became members of the first branch there.⁵ Now plans are underway to build a temple in Bengaluru.

Elsie and Edwin Dharmaraju joined the Church in Samoa and were called by President Spencer W. Kimball to return back to their home in Hyderabad as missionaries to their family. In 1978, 22 of Elsie and Edwin's family members were baptized, and from this beginning the first stake in the country was organized in Hyderabad in 2012.⁶

The members of the Hyderabad Stake today picture themselves as latter-day pioneers. Their stake Pioneer Day celebrations have commemorated the trek of the early pioneers as well as modern pioneer journeys. Their celebrations have included square dancing, commemorative hikes, and even handcart rides.

In their 2014 Pioneer Day celebration, they placed blocks of ice in a row behind the

church and invited members to remove their shoes and walk across the ice, thinking about how the early pioneers crossed icy rivers. At the conclusion of their celebration, the members of the Hyderabad stake were encouraged to remember the spirit of early pioneers and that "all of them are pioneers for their families."⁷

They also listened to John Santosh Murala, then serving in the mission presidency, talk about how his aunt Elsie and uncle Edwin Dharmaraju came to Hyderabad to teach their family the gospel. John was the youngest of the 22 pioneer members to be baptized in 1978.

When I visited Hyderabad in 2014, John Murala told me his story and much of the Church history that he has been diligently gathering. He also introduced me to his wife, Annapurna, who told me one of the most powerful Latter-day pioneer stories I have ever heard.



Annapurna and John Murala, who were pioneer members in Hyderabad, are shown here helping with a handcart trek reenactment and on the day they were sealed in the Hong Kong Temple.



Members of the Hyderabad stake commemorate Pioneer Day through song, dance, and even handcart rides.



The stake center of the Hyderabad India Stake, organized in 2012 by President Dallin H. Oaks.

Church members in India picture themselves as pioneers for their families as they persevere in living the gospel.

Annapurna was 12 years old in 1991 when her brother Murthy was taught the gospel by two missionaries in Hyderabad. Annapurna’s parents didn’t allow her to listen to the missionaries or attend church. However, Murthy gave her a Book of Mormon and a constant stream of Church literature for her to read. For seven years, Annapurna studied the gospel on her own and gained a strong testimony of its truth. She dreamed of being baptized, serving a mission, and being married in the temple but did not have permission from her parents.

Annapurna faced a difficult decision in her life when she was introduced to John Murala. John had remained strong in his testimony since his baptism in 1978 and was looking for a member of the Church to marry. After a very brief meeting where Annapurna shared her testimony of the gospel, John was convinced that he had met his future wife. Annapurna

knew that if she married John, she would be able to be baptized and one day be sealed in the temple. However, at about the same time, Annapurna’s parents were planning to arrange a marriage for her.

Annapurna made the difficult decision to leave home and marry John. She felt it was the only way she could join the Church. She said she was “totally heartbroken” to leave her parents. But even today she affirms, “For everybody’s salvation, . . . for my posterity and for my parents and their ancestors, to do their temple work, I had to take that step.”⁸

John and Annapurna are grateful that her parents have now accepted their marriage. Many members in India have made sacrifices, just like the early pioneers, to become members of the Church. Yet these Saints pressed forward with faith because they picture themselves as pioneers and welding links for their



Artist rendering of the Bengaluru India Temple. The site will also include a meetinghouse, a distribution center, Church offices, and housing for temple patrons.

families on both sides of the veil. I cherish the many stories of faith, sacrifice, and courage that I have heard from members blazing trails in new gospel frontiers. I still think about pioneers pulling handcarts and crossing icy rivers, but now I can picture modern pioneers in India and all over the world.

Ultimately, all pioneer trails have been blazed by individuals following in the footsteps of the Savior Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, Christ is called “the pioneer of [our] salvation” (see Hebrews 2:10, New Revised

Standard Version). Jesus Christ has prepared the way for us to return to our heavenly home. True pioneers follow and point us to Christ, who is leading this marvelous work and wonder in the latter-days. ■

NOTES

1. “Whenever I Think about Pioneers,” *Children’s Songbook*, 222–23.
2. *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), “Pioneer.” See also Thomas S. Monson, “Led by Spiritual Pioneers,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Aug. 2006, 3.
3. Suvarna Katuka, oral history interview by Taunalyn Rutherford, May 2014, Delhi, India.
4. Many of the pioneer stories from India can be found in the Church History section of the Gospel Library under “Global Histories.”
5. See “A History of the Church in India,” comp. Jerry C. Garlock (unpublished, 1995), 49–50.
6. See “I Will Establish a Church by Your Hand,” history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
7. See “Hyderabad Stake Pioneer Day Activity,” lds.org.in/hyderabad-stake-pioneer-day-activity.
8. Annapurna Guru Murala, oral history interview by Taunalyn Rutherford, Hyderabad, India, May 7, 2014. See also Rochelle Welty and Jan Pinborough, “God Had His Own Plans for Me,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2003, 30–32.



By Travis Ewell

Several years ago, I was following a conversation on social media between two of my former mission companions. These were men whom I loved and respected.

They were discussing questions they had about the Church and its doctrine. It soon became clear that they both had left the Church. It shocked and disturbed me. I had never heard of some of the things they were discussing. I felt like I had to know if these things had any merit. So I began looking into the arguments of those who had concerns about the Church.

Some of the things I read over the next two years led me to question everything about the Church. Some who go through this feel sad. They grieve for the loss of their faith. I became angry. I felt that the Church had deceived me. I wasn't sure what was real or whom I could trust.

I had a difficult time going to church. I asked to be released from my calling. My relationship with my wife, Cheri, and my family was strained. I continued to go to church, but it was really just for show and to try and keep my family together. Life was a mess. I couldn't feel the Spirit and questioned whether or not I had ever really felt the Holy Ghost.

When my oldest child, Kayson, was leaving on his mission, I cast a gloomy cloud over what should have been a joyous occasion. After two years, most of my family knew what I was going through. When they all went to the temple with Kayson for his first time, I was not there.

Through all of it, I felt so alone.

Support All around Me

One day my brothers got together to talk to me about what I was going through. I don't really remember what



When I Felt Deceived about the Church

Why I left. And why I came back.

they said, but I knew it was done out of love. As we talked, I started to realize what I was missing. It became the catalyst for change. It should have been me to ordain Kayson an elder. It should have been me to escort him through the temple. It should have been me to give him a father's blessing before he left. Those most important events in his life were meant for me to be there, not someone else. I remember asking myself, "What am I doing?"

Shortly after, a good friend felt inspired to introduce me to a member of his stake presidency. This kind man listened intently to my story and seemed to know what I was going to say before I said it. We talked for hours. My story, my questions, the logic I had been exposed to were so similar to what others had shared with him. I began to realize that there were reasonable answers for many of my concerns and that many of my questions, while sincere, had been planted by people intent on damaging faith.

Were all my questions and concerns immediately resolved? No, of course not. But my heart was softened enough to realize a great truth: questions are good, but some questions are more important than others.¹ Was losing my family and standing before God worth a few unanswered questions? When I focused first on the questions that were most important and put God back in first place in my heart, I began to find answers that reassured me that I was getting back on the right path.

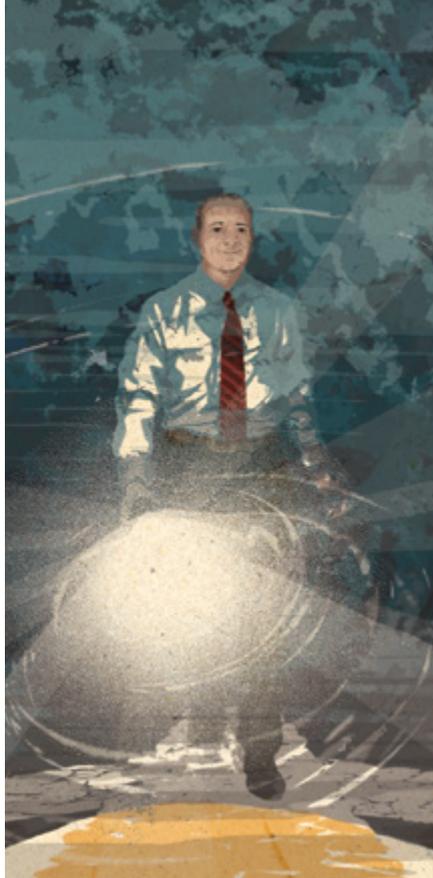
My stake president and bishop also reached out to me. They were a great help to me and Cheri during some dark times. They never gave up. They and my family on both sides of the veil were instrumental in helping me. I know that Heavenly Father knows and loves us. He puts people in our path when we need them. We just need to be willing to accept their help.

What to Do If It's You

I know there are others out there who may be going through something similar. It may be you or someone you know.

I know that the Savior established His Church with the authority to provide the ordinances and covenants we need to return to Him. Satan is working overtime to discredit the Lord's Church using any means possible. Raising questions and creating doubts is easy. Falling into his traps can happen to anyone. Relying on the information and answers that others provide can be far easier than doing the work of discovering truth for ourselves “by study and *also* by faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118; emphasis added). But ultimately, that's what God requires.

If you are struggling with questions or doubts about the Church or your faith, you won't find truth by reading blogs or listening to podcasts from those who disagree with the Church or have left it. But you



When I focused first on the questions that were most important and put my heart back in God's hands, I began to find answers that reassured me that I was getting back on the right path.

also probably won't be satisfied with shallow answers, and you might not like the suggestion to “put your questions on the shelf.”

I learned that we cannot always live on borrowed light, but instead we must turn to God who is the source of all light and truth (see Doctrine and Covenants 93:26). We must study it out in our own minds, but we must also ask God if what we are thinking is right (see Doctrine and Covenants 9:8). We must learn for ourselves, as Joseph Smith did (see Joseph Smith—History 1:20), and be patient in our searching (see Alma 32:41). But learning by faith means we must prove the truth by living it (see John 7:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:21).

When I was studying things antagonistic to the Church, I felt like I was literally in the mists of darkness (see 1 Nephi 8:23–24; 12:17). When I grabbed hold of God's word and took that first step toward Him, that was all He needed to send His Spirit to touch my heart.



UNANSWERED QUESTIONS VS. DOCTRINAL CERTAINTIES

“I can live with some human imperfections, even among prophets of God—that is to be expected in mortal beings. I can live with some alleged scientific findings contrary to the Book of Mormon; time will correct those. And I can live with some seemingly historical anomalies; they are minor in the total landscape of truth. But I cannot live without the doctrinal truths and ordinances restored by Joseph Smith, I cannot live without the priesthood of God to bless my family, and I cannot live without knowing my wife and children are sealed to me for eternity. That is the choice we face—a few unanswered questions on one hand versus a host of doctrinal certainties and the power of God on the other.”

Elder Tad R. Callister was serving in the Presidency of the Seventy when he gave this address, “What Is the Blueprint of Christ's Church?” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Jan. 12, 2014), broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



Is Hope Enough?

A few weeks after Kayson left on his mission, my stake president visited me. I caught him up on what had happened during those weeks after my brothers had talked with me. I said I would like to get a new temple recommend. He asked if I could answer the recommend questions properly. I confessed, “President, I don’t think I can say I know that the Church is true yet, but I sure hope with all my heart that it is. And I am going to live my life in accordance with that hope. Is that enough?”

He paused for a moment then said, “Travis, that will always be enough.”

There are some things I’m still waiting to understand, but some things have become very clear to me. I know that Heavenly Father loves me. I know that we might wander and struggle for a time. But I know that through Christ, His Atonement, and the hope it brings, it is possible to return to the path that leads back to Him. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. See Lawrence E. Corbridge, “Stand Forever,” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 22, 2019), speeches.byu.edu.

IDEAS FOR HELPING SOMEONE YOU LOVE

Like me, many people who have questions or doubts feel like they don’t belong in the Church. But we can’t afford to close the door on them or others. The Savior commanded His people to “continue to minister” to them because we never know when they will return to Him and be healed (see 3 Nephi 18:22–32).

Here are five ways we can continue to minister to those who are wrestling with doubt so that they will feel welcome, whether or not they choose to come back.

1. **Continue to love.** Throughout my wrestle, I felt like I was alone. Of course, Heavenly Father had not given up on me, and neither had my family or Church leaders. Feeling His love through them helped me know I could go back.
2. **Continue to reach out.** Loving others shouldn’t depend on their beliefs, their participation at church, or even how they feel about us. Jesus asks us to reach out to more than those who are already in our circle (see Matthew 5:46–47).
3. **Continue to hope.** We fast, we pray, we watch and wait patiently, and we never give up hope. “God has devised means to save each of His children” (Henry B. Eyring, “To My Grandchildren,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 71).
4. **Respect their agency.** Have hope but respect their decisions. We don’t need to convince them or argue doctrine with them. Like the prodigal son, many of us need some event in life that will soften our hearts first.
5. **Treat them with dignity, not like they’re bad.** Avoid statements that are judgmental, critical, or belittling. Reasonable people can have beliefs different than ours, and we should give them the same respect we hope they’ll give us.

I don’t think I can say I know that the Church is true yet, but I hope that it is and I am going to live my life in accordance with that hope.



You Love, He Saves

We prayed that our children's hearts would be changed. Then came an uncomfortable (and liberating) realization.

By Krista Rogers Mortensen

My husband and I raised our children in the gospel. We had family scripture study every morning, family prayer, and weekly family home evening. We attended church, ate dinner together, and went on family vacations. Our children regularly attended the temple to perform baptisms for the dead, they graduated from seminary, and two of them served missions.

And then as adults, they started exploring paths and ideas that were different from the things we had taught them. One by one, our children stopped participating in the Church until only one of our five children still chose to attend. We shed many tears over our children and wondered if we had failed as parents or if there was something we could have done differently.

For a long time, we pled with the Lord to change their hearts, and finally the Lord

answered our prayers. But not in the way we expected.

Instead of simply changing our children's hearts, He showed us that we needed to start by changing our own hearts. While parents play an important role in teaching their children, He reminded us that Jesus Christ is their Savior and Judge.

In my determination to save my children, I had spent many hours praying, reading my scriptures, and going to the temple, thinking that if I did all of the right things, I would qualify for God's intervention—as if somehow my actions would lead God to override their agency and force them to believe as I do.

My husband and I wanted so badly to save them, but our version of saving looked more like lecturing, nagging, or showing disapproval of their choices, which ultimately led



to contention. We realized that in our desperation to bring our children back, we were actually driving them away. The more they felt our judgment and disappointment, the more they avoided us.

My prayers changed to a plea for my own heart to be changed. I realized that my reasons for wanting my children to change came from the wrong place. I prayed for more love. I also prayed to overcome my feelings of shame and embarrassment that my family didn't look anything like the perfect families my friends displayed on social media with photos from their children's temple marriages or grandchildren's baptisms.

As I turned to the Savior for healing, my heart began to soften toward my children. I realized that to love them as He loves them meant making some changes. To Him, love wasn't a method—it was the motivation that drove everything He did. He said He didn't do “anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world” (2 Nephi 26:24).

Trusting in the Savior's ability to do His work (see 2 Nephi 27:20) allowed me to focus on loving my children and turning the saving over to the Lord. It didn't mean giving up on trying to help them, but when loving them became the driving force behind my interactions with them, it changed *how* I interacted.

I started to see them in a different light. I began focusing on their strengths and their talents and began to see what loving, generous, intelligent, and good people they were.

My husband and I listened more and talked less. We asked questions about their lives and their interests. Instead of judgment, we showed curiosity. We replaced criticism and disappointment with expressions of love, and our children could feel that it was genuine.

What Helped Me

prayer

a plea for my heart to change



perspective

seeing my children in a different light

love

don't just talk—listen



trust

my efforts are in partnership with God's

Our home became a place where they could feel love and acceptance. They stopped hiding things from us and started being honest and open about what was going on in their lives. We grew closer.

Our family is still a work in progress, but our children enjoy coming to our home and spending time with us now. They feel safe in our presence, and through our love I hope they can feel God's love for them. I don't know if in this lifetime they will return to the things they were taught as children, but I know that they are in the Savior's hands. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

They Set Aside Their Trials

By Natalie Jones, Utah, USA

That day, Kendra, Brent, and Tyson were true examples of Christlike ministering.

We all experience ups and downs in life, but 2013 was a particularly difficult year for our family. We experienced many unexpected and costly home and auto repairs. My husband, Ryan, lost his job, and our youngest son was born with complications and had to spend a few weeks in the neonatal intensive care unit. I also struggled with postpartum depression. These circumstances, combined with being parents of four young children, strained us financially and emotionally.

Ryan found new employment, but he worked long hours and was out of town for weeks at a time. Our

five-year-old son, Wesley, began having anxiety about his dad being gone so often. He constantly woke up during the night from nightmares.

Our extended family supported me when they could, but I still felt exhausted and alone most of the time. I knew that Heavenly Father loved and was aware of my family, but I felt like we were drowning.

One afternoon, while Ryan was out of town for work, I drove my kids home from school and desperately prayed for help. Later that night, my neighbor Kendra knocked on our door. She knew about our situation and asked how I was doing. I had no

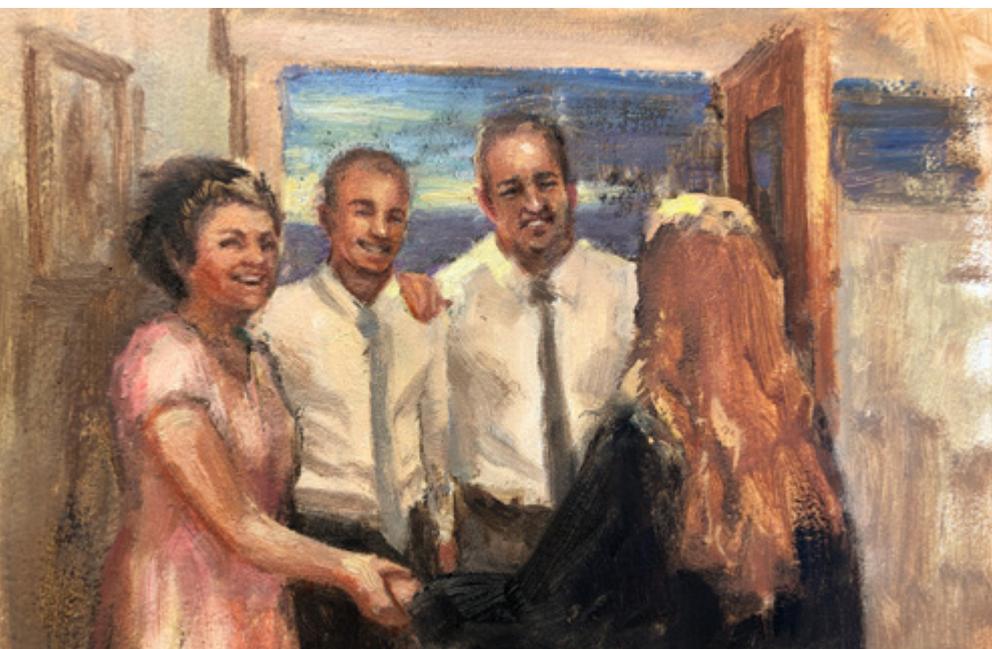
intention of complaining to her, and she was the last person I would have asked for help. Her husband, Brent, had been battling cancer for the past four years.

I told Kendra I was fine, but she sincerely asked again. Tearfully, I opened up to her about my struggles. When I told her about Wesley's anxiety and nightmares, she asked if I would like Brent to give Wesley a blessing.

A while later, Kendra, Brent, and their oldest son, Tyson, came to our door dressed in church clothes. Brent was frail. I'm sure it took all the energy he had to come to our house. He gave Wesley a blessing, and Tyson gave me a blessing.

That day, Kendra, Brent, and Tyson were true examples of Christlike ministering. They set aside their own trials to sincerely offer us love and compassion. I felt blessed that Heavenly Father answered my prayer in this tender way. Brent died two weeks later.

That day in our home, Brent stood as a witness of God through righteously exercising the priesthood (see Mosiah 18:9). To me, it is sacred that his ministering to our family was one of his last acts on earth. ■



The Brave Airman

By Wayne L. Bell, South Dakota, USA

No one dared answer the drill instructor, but surprisingly, one young man raised his hand.

Many years ago, I joined the United States Air Force to serve my country. Soon I found myself at boot camp in Texas, USA. The weeks passed slowly as I endured the many things one typically experiences at boot camp.

One day I attended a large meeting of over 200 airmen, all in training just like me. The meeting began with one of our drill instructors—who regularly shouted loud and vulgar things—yelling out, “Does anyone object to the way I’m running things around here?”

Of course, no one dared answer, but surprisingly, one young man raised his hand.

“Airman, stand up!” the instructor shouted. “What do you object to?”

We all listened intently as the young man loudly declared, “I object to you taking my Savior’s name in vain. It hurts my soul. I would ask that you stop.”

The room fell completely silent. The instructor stared at him and then asked him what religion he belonged to. The brave airman proudly said, “I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints!”

The instructor thanked the airman for his courage to speak out, and the meeting continued. This act

had a tremendous effect on me. I often thought that I would like to have the kind of courage that airman had.

experience in boot camp with the brave airman. My wife and I met with the missionaries, and we were soon baptized.



After boot camp and medical training, I was assigned to an air force base in Colorado, USA. One day, I received a letter from my oldest brother stationed in the Philippines. He had joined the air force about a year before I did. He told me that he had become a member of the Church, and he wanted me to meet with the missionaries. I immediately recalled the

A few months later, I had the missionaries visit my younger brother. He and his wife were also baptized. My brothers and I now have large families with grandchildren. We all love the Lord and His Church.

I don’t know the brave airman’s name. I never saw him again, but I will be eternally grateful for his courage to stand up for what he believed. ■

Waiting on the Promise

By Juana Moreno de Ruiz, Sonora, Mexico

My daughter has distanced herself from the Church, but I know that she will be blessed by the things she was taught about the gospel.

Three months before turning 21 years old, I was baptized along with my sister, my mother, and my eight-year-old nephew. Over the years, we have held tight to the gospel despite our many challenges.

When my husband and I got married, we were determined to stay active in the Church. As children came, my husband and I strived to be good parents and to teach the gospel in our home.

One day I attended a conference with our one-year-old daughter. In the conference, an Area Seventy talked about the responsibility of parents to teach the gospel to their children. He then made a promise that left a huge impression on me. He said: “If, after everything you can do to teach the gospel, one of your children leaves the Church, they will still be blessed because of the memory of the things they experienced at home.”

The words of that Area Seventy filled me with hope because I had nieces and nephews who had left the Church. Years later my daughter, the same one-year-old I held in my arms during that conference, left the Church

when she turned 17. She had met someone who was not rooted in the gospel, and they got married. She never went to church after that.

This was painful for me. I asked myself over and over what we did wrong. Her father and I always tried to keep

the commandments and serve in the Church. We love our children and want the best for them. After many tears and questions, we finally concluded that children grow, exercise their agency, and don't always believe the things they're taught at home.

Unfortunately, my daughter's marriage fell apart, and she still doesn't want to come back to the Church. All I can do is remember the promise that she will remember and be blessed

because of the things she was taught at home.

I continue to pray for my daughter. I love her with all my heart, and it hurts me to see her distanced from the Church. But I know that, despite my imperfections, the things I taught her are right and true. I know that Heavenly Father is just and loving and that He listens to our prayers. Without any doubt in my heart, I know that if I do my part, He will answer them in the moment He sees right. ■



“Who Hit My Son?”

By Sandra Beatty, Ontario, Canada

I envisioned myself yelling at the person who had hit my son, but then I came face to face with the driver.

I had just dropped off my daughter at a friend's house when I received a call from my husband, Jonathan. He told me that our 11-year-old son, Aiden, had been hit by a car while he and Jonathan were crossing the street.

The driver had made a left turn in front of Jonathan and didn't see Aiden on his bike. The driver hit the front of Aiden's bike. He flew up into the air, still holding onto the bike, and hit his head on the side of the car when he came down. Then he landed on the road with his bike on top of him. Thankfully, he was wearing a helmet. The driver and several other people stopped to help while Jonathan called for an ambulance.

My mind and emotions suddenly went into a frenzy. I sped toward the intersection where the accident had occurred, hoping to catch the ambulance so I could be with Aiden.

Thoughts of lashing out at the driver raced through my mind. “What on earth was the driver thinking?” I thought. “Were they drunk? Were they on their phone?” I was furious and beyond worried.

I had no idea how badly Aiden was hurt.

When I arrived at the scene, the ambulance had already left. Only a couple of police cars and a car parked on the side of the road remained at the scene. A distressed-looking woman stood next to the car.

I approached her and asked, “Did you see who hit my son?”

She quietly said, “I did.”

I envisioned myself yelling at the careless person who had hit my son, but when I came face to face with the driver, the negativity disappeared. I found myself crying and hugging her. She apologized, and I told her that everything would be OK. I found out later that those were the exact words Aiden had said to her before the police arrived. In the end, Aiden made it through with only some scrapes and bruises.

I am grateful that at that pivotal moment, our loving Heavenly Father blessed me with the strength to extend forgiveness instead of hate, even when I didn't ask Him to. I know He is aware of us and always offers us His help. ■





Alma 23–29

JUNE 29–JULY 5

Following their conversion, the faithful Lamanites wanted a new name to distinguish themselves from other Lamanites and to symbolize their conversion to Jesus Christ. They called themselves the Anti-Nephi-Lehies (see Alma 23:16–17). We distinguish ourselves today by taking Jesus Christ’s name upon us.

DISCUSSION

How does taking upon you Christ’s name in your daily thoughts and actions motivate you to be a better disciple of Him?

What Is the Importance of a Name?

A Symbol of Our Conversion



At baptism we covenant to take upon ourselves the name of Christ. Each time we take the sacrament, we renew that covenant. What do we covenant to remember and do as we take upon us His name? (See Mosiah 18:8–9; Doctrine and Covenants 20:77.)

A Witness of Christ



The Apostles are “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:23). We can be witnesses of Christ too. How can you stand with the prophet and apostles and be a witness of the name of Christ to people around you?

A Source of Power



Recently, President Russell M. Nelson has implored us to call the Church by its correct name: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He promised that power will pour down upon the Saints as we do so (see “The Correct Name of the Church,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 89). What are some things you can do to better use the correct name of the Church and help others do the same?





Alma 30–31

JULY 6–12

How Can We Withstand False Teachings?

Korihor was an antichrist who preached “against the prophecies which had been spoken by the prophets, concerning the coming of Christ” (Alma 30:6). He preached other falsehoods and led “away the hearts of many” (Alma 30:18).

Even though this happened more than 2,000 years ago, many people today preach similar things. What can we do to fortify ourselves against false teachings in our day?

DISCUSSION

Who teaches falsehoods today? What messages do they send? What has God given us to withstand falsehoods and learn truth?

▶ We Can Gain Our Own Testimony

Korihor taught people “that there should be no Christ” and “no atonement,” and he denied the existence of God (see Alma 30:12, 17, 28).

How can we know that God and Jesus Christ live? What scriptures and personal experiences have strengthened your testimony about Them?

▶ We Can Rely on Revelation

Korihor denied the spirit of prophecy and revelation. He tried to get people to believe that “no man can know of anything which is to come” and “ye cannot know of things which ye do not see” (Alma 30:13, 15).

We can look to the prophets and apostles to receive God’s word for our time. How does following the prophet protect you against false teachings?

▶ We Can Remember That Truth Is Truth

Korihor told people that there was no way that they could know what is true (see Alma 30:24), but President Russell M. Nelson has taught: “Some things are simply true. . . .

“ . . . Truth is based upon the laws God has established.

. . . Eternal laws operate in and affect each of our lives, whether

we believe them or not” (“The Love and Laws of God” [Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 17, 2019], speeches.byu.edu). How can we discover God’s truths, and how do they bless our lives?





Alma 32–35

JULY 13–19

Why Does Alma Share the Story of Moses and the Brass Serpent?

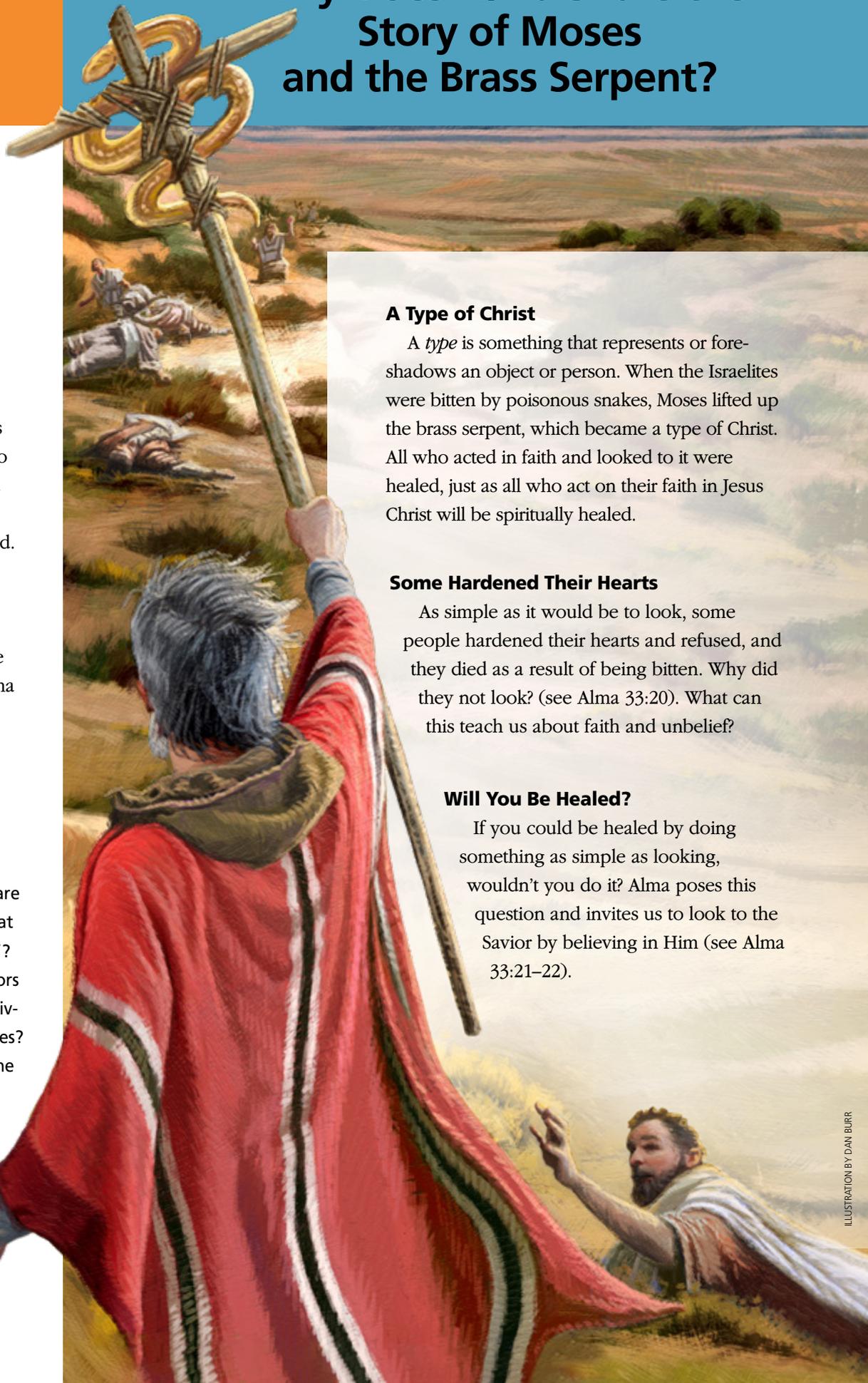


After Alma compares the word of God to a seed (see Alma 32:28–43), people asked him how to plant the seed. Alma used the account of Moses and the brass serpent from Numbers chapter 21 as an example of acting in faith (see Alma 33:19–23).

DISCUSSION

The Israelites only had to look to be healed. What are some gospel principles that seem as easy as “looking”? What attitudes or behaviors sometimes keep us from living simple gospel principles?

How can you look to the Savior in the things you experience each day?



A Type of Christ

A *type* is something that represents or foreshadows an object or person. When the Israelites were bitten by poisonous snakes, Moses lifted up the brass serpent, which became a type of Christ. All who acted in faith and looked to it were healed, just as all who act on their faith in Jesus Christ will be spiritually healed.

Some Hardened Their Hearts

As simple as it would be to look, some people hardened their hearts and refused, and they died as a result of being bitten. Why did they not look? (see Alma 33:20). What can this teach us about faith and unbelief?

Will You Be Healed?

If you could be healed by doing something as simple as looking, wouldn't you do it? Alma poses this question and invites us to look to the Savior by believing in Him (see Alma 33:21–22).



Alma 36–38

JULY 20–26

How Does Repentance Turn Sorrow to Joy?

Alma shared his conversion experience with his son Helaman. Alma told him how he was “racked with eternal torment” because of “all [his] sins and iniquities” (Alma 36:12–13). How do you feel when you experience guilt from sin?

Born of God

After three days of internal torment, Alma had a thought that eased the torment he had felt (see Alma 36:19). He testified that he had “been born of God” (Alma 36:23). What thought led to his being born of God? (See verse 18.)

Joy after Great Sorrow

Alma experienced great sorrow because of his sins, but when he remembered and called upon Jesus Christ, his sorrow was replaced with the sweet and exquisite joy of forgiveness (see Alma 36:20).

Trust in God

By remembering the Atonement of Jesus Christ, Alma learned to trust in God and knew he would be lifted up at the last day (see Alma 36:3). How has remembering and relying on the Savior’s Atonement brought you joy?

DISCUSSION

What can you do to continually trust in the Lord and remember His atoning sacrifice?

How can you bring more souls unto repentance that they might also experience great and everlasting joy?



I Experience Same-Sex Attraction—

Would Church Members Welcome Me Back?

By Bouke “Bob” S. Ecoma Verstege

Note from the author: I share my story as an expression of my gratitude for the Church leaders and members who welcomed me with open arms, helped me return to full activity, and have served alongside me as fellow disciples of Christ.

On July 27, 2013, after a long battle with Alzheimer’s disease, my life partner of 25 years passed away. Jay Eldredge was a world-renowned cardiologist. We had both served missions for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when we were younger but then distanced ourselves from the Church because of same-sex attraction.

Jay’s death, although not unexpected, was devastating. I felt heartbroken and lost and alone.

While driving home after making the funeral arrangements, I felt the influence of the Spirit overwhelm me so strongly that I had to pull over to the side of the road. I knew that God was speaking to me, calling me back to Him, but I was resistant. “Can’t you see that I’m suffering?” I said aloud. “I can’t face going back to church right now.”

But the more I protested, the more the Spirit pulled at me, inviting me back to church.





Would I Be Accepted?

I was deeply worried about returning to church. I hadn't been to a sacrament meeting in 25 years. Would they even accept me? Would I accept them? What would the bishop say? I felt anxious and unsettled and still heavy with grief.

But my testimony of the gospel had never wavered in all those years. Jay and I loved the Church and its guiding principles—namely, charity, mercy, and forgiveness. I knew that Christ was my Savior and that His Church was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I had known that since my conversion and baptism at the age of 14. I wasn't about to deny that now.

Finally, after mustering the necessary courage, I called the Linwood Ward in New Jersey, USA, to find out what time sacrament meeting started.

As Sunday approached, the adversary put many obstacles in my path that could have easily prevented me from attending. How grateful I am that the Holy Ghost persisted.

I felt nervous as I entered the building, but the opening hymn in sacrament meeting reassured me that I was home again. The hymn "Come, Come, Ye Saints" (*Hymns*, no. 30) invited the Spirit so powerfully that tears flowed down my face. I knew in that instant that Heavenly Father was aware of me and the deep sadness I was feeling.

That hymn has become an unofficial anthem of sorts for the Church, but it has become my personal anthem as well.

"Come," the hymn invites me. "Though hard to you this journey may appear, grace shall be as your day."

My journey *was* hard. But grace *did* attend me as promised.



FULL-FLEDGED MEMBERS

“Someone who is following the covenants and the standards and teachings of the gospel of Christ—though they

may be dealing with same-sex attraction—really there’s no reason they cannot be fully participative [or] be a full-fledged member of the Church and hold callings and speak and enter the temple and serve there. And all the other opportunities and blessings that can come from Church membership will be available to them.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “LGBT People Who Live God’s Laws Can Fully Participate in the Church” (video), ChurchofJesusChrist.org/topics/gay.

Bishop Darren Bird and the rest of the congregation were wonderful and welcoming. They accepted me as their brother in Christ.

Reconciling with God, through Christ

The words of “Come, Come, Ye Saints” took on greater meaning to me, however, as I felt Heavenly Father directing me on how I should proceed.

*We’ll find the place which God for us prepared,
Far away in the West,
Where none shall come to hurt or make afraid;
There the Saints will be blessed.*

I went west and bought a home in Fountain Hills, Arizona, USA, where I met Bishop Jerry Olson. When I requested to meet with him and shook his hand, the Spirit impressed upon me that this man would help bring me back into full activity in the Church.

As I began visiting with the bishop and embarking on this reconciliation with

Heavenly Father, I witnessed many spiritual miracles. I was open with the bishop, for which he was grateful. He said that helped him better understand where I had been and where I was now in my relationship with God. He also lovingly informed me that this was the first time that he had had an opportunity to minister to someone with same-sex attraction, and he asked for my patience and forgiveness if he said or did anything to offend me throughout the process.

I thanked him for his honesty and said, “Well, this is my first time as well. We’ll learn together.”

Thus began a wonderful journey and friendship!

Soon I had an action plan on how to become a member in good standing again. I accepted the loving and prayerful counsel with a grateful heart and began the process.

Solace in the Temple

Later, as I followed that counsel and worked hard to draw closer to Christ, I accepted a call to serve in the elders quorum and received a temple recommend. In the holy temple, as I communed with Heavenly Father, He showed me how much He loves all His children. I felt solace and a deep desire to please Him.

Months later, a new bishop was called, with whom I have also developed a loving friendship. Bishop Larry Radford knew of my circumstance and appreciated my service in the elders quorum, where he



ILLUSTRATION BY JENNA PALACIOS

said I had served with love and devotion not only for the quorum but also—and more importantly—for God. His kind words and encouragement helped me feel that the Lord and my fellow Saints were pleased with my service.

I now faithfully serve as the ward clerk.

Understanding Who I Am

Having same-sex attraction and being an active member of the Church is not always easy. But as I put all my faith and trust in God, I can feel Him strengthening me. Critics will no doubt say that I'm not being true to who I am or that I'm disappointing the LGBT+ community.

I understand their frustration, and I obviously don't have all the answers. I can only speak of my own experience. And that experience has taught me this: I am Heavenly Father's son, a child of God. That's the one and only label that matters to me. As a result, I try not to allow the world's labels to define me. I fear that will limit my potential and eternal progression.

Satan is very clever. He knows that by using labels, he can divide us as a community and as a church.

With that perspective in mind, the choices I make are not based on my same-sex attraction but on how to be a true disciple of Christ *with* same-sex attraction. As Nephi said:

“O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh. . . .

“ . . . I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss; therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness. Behold, my voice shall forever ascend up unto thee, my rock and mine everlasting God” (2 Nephi 4:34–35).

Love of My Fellow Saints

Throughout my return, I felt the loving companionship of my leaders and fellow Saints, including active and less-active LGBT+ members. I found a place where I could thrive. I found among them the attributes of Christ that I had always associated with my faith: mercy, compassion, understanding, and, above all, love.

As I struggled along the path with my Savior, I felt comfort and peace as I turned to Him, knowing that I wasn't walking that path

alone. Several bishops were there beside me. Members of my quorum. Sisters in the ward. I even had a young man in the ward ask me if I would ordain him a priest. His kind invitation deeply moved me. He saw me as a man who holds the priesthood of God and who can exercise that priesthood in service to others.

These opportunities to serve and worship with my fellow Saints have lifted me and—along with the many blessings I've received from the Lord—helped me experience the love, understanding, and acceptance that I needed.

The Savior said, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John 14:18). Those words are true. I needed comforting, and He came to me, more abundantly than I could have imagined. ■



THE GOSPEL TENT

“The gospel tent truly is big enough for everyone with a desire to follow the Lord. Whenever someone says or feels contrary to that, I think of Bob Verstege and wish they could meet him and serve with him. Brother Verstege is a walking example of what the Atonement of Jesus Christ can do when put into action. As a bishop, I am lifted, taught, and encouraged by this humble man on a daily basis.”

Bishop Larry Radford, Fountain Hills Ward, Scottsdale Arizona North Stake

Young Adults

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Find these articles and more:

- At liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org
- In **YA Weekly** (under the Young Adults section in the Gospel Library)

Facing the Uncertain Future with Faith

I am a planner. I like to know what to expect out of every day, so that I can be prepared for it. But **how do I prepare for the future** when it is so distant and uncertain?

Life is vast. There is so much of it ahead! There is so much that could happen! There is so much I could do! **Sometimes the possibilities are overwhelming.**

There are plenty of things I want: a spouse, a good job, to live abroad, to own a cat, to write a novel, to learn Russian . . . But I also know that desires and goals change. Priorities shift.

One priority that must never shift is **our commitment to God and His plan**. With His foresight, **we can navigate through a future** that is full of questions because He will help us find the answers, one step at a time. We just have to make the best choice we can with each step.

In this section, young adults share their personal experiences of how they plan for their future with Heavenly Father's help and **how they move forward with faith** when faced with so much uncertainty.

When it comes to the future, there are so many questions, but that just means **there is so much potential**. We have potential too—divine potential to become like our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

And that makes our future glorious.



Meg Yost

Share Your Story

Do you have an experience to share? Or do you want to see articles about certain topics? If so, we want to hear from you! You can submit your articles or your feedback at liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



Why Heavenly Father Wanted Me to Get an Education

By Gloria Cornelio

No matter what
your righteous
desires are,
Heavenly Father
will provide a
way for you to
achieve them.

Since I was little, I always wanted to make my Heavenly Father and my present and future family proud. I wanted to get all the education I could to improve myself and my life.

In my country, Peru, quality education is very expensive and, in some areas, totally inaccessible. My family didn't have all the resources to support my education either. But my parents taught me that working hard, being diligent, and asking Heavenly Father for help can help make our righteous desires come true. And I planned to work hard.

In elementary and high school, I was diligent in my studies to be able to improve myself each year. After high school, I was admitted to Peru's top-ranked university and received a good scholarship. While there, I worked with several organizations, including an internship with a global organization, and had opportunities to lead many different types of projects.

During that internship, I felt like it would be a great opportunity for me to gain an education in English. So I decided to transfer to Brigham Young University–Idaho. It felt daunting, but I knew that Heavenly Father would help me to achieve this goal—I just needed to trust Him and do my part.





I was the first international student to receive a bachelor's degree through BYU-Pathway Worldwide.

A Change of Plans

I was set to go to BYU-Idaho, but during the application process, I felt a strong prompting that I should serve a mission before transferring there. So I followed Heavenly Father's will and was called to serve in Trujillo, Peru. When I returned home, I planned to go back to the university in Peru because I felt like I could get a degree there quickly. However, I found out that my scholarships there were revoked because I had left my studies for more than a year to serve my mission.

I was devastated and lost. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know why I had felt prompted to serve a mission if it meant losing my opportunity to get a college degree.

But one day, I remembered my mission president telling us about BYU-Pathway Worldwide. He had invited us to improve our English and to pursue this opportunity when we came back home—and I did!

My Journey with BYU-Pathway Worldwide

I knew that my mission president telling me about BYU-Pathway was not a coincidence. When I began the Pathway program, it required me to travel almost three hours each week to meet with my group. I sacrificed a lot, but I knew that getting an education was both important to me and to the Lord. And those sacrifices led to many blessings.

BYU-Pathway Worldwide was the window of opportunity I was looking for. It gave me access to education at an affordable cost, allowed me time to hold a job, and helped me get an education in English. And through it all, I found great friends who encouraged me to be brave and continue working toward my goals. I feel spiritually stronger and have become a better disciple of Jesus Christ.

Eventually, I was the first international student to receive a bachelor's degree through BYU-Pathway Worldwide. Education has opened amazing opportunities for me. I am now a welfare and self-reliance specialist for the South America Northwest Area of the Church, and I'm also a volunteer missionary for BYU-Pathway

in Peru. I see so much light in each student, and I encourage them to move forward just as I was encouraged by my friends during school. Through this journey, I've realized that Heavenly Father has been with me every step of the way.

Heavenly Father Wants Us to Succeed

My journey has strengthened my testimony of education. And I still plan to keep growing and learning as much as I can each day. We are on earth to progress, to be tested, to grow, to prove our obedience, and to rely on the Savior to become worthy to return to our Heavenly Father. Unto God, "all things . . . are spiritual"—including education (see Doctrine and Covenants 29:34). All the experiences we have and the knowledge we gain on earth will help us to be more like our Savior and will prepare us to make better decisions, to serve better in the world, and to be better instruments in His hands.

Education provides a way to gain knowledge and then to act, to stand for truth and right, and to live a life that our Heavenly Father wants for us—a life full of joy.

I know our Heavenly Father blesses our efforts, especially when our heart's desire is to progress and to serve Him and His children. I know that when He gives His children direction, "he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7). He wants us to succeed!

Each of us should take advantage of each opportunity for education and growth that the Lord puts in our path, whether it's through BYU-Pathway or any other educational opportunity. He loves us and will always guide us. He wants us to learn all we can here on the earth. And I know we can experience great miracles as we work joyfully and diligently and trust in His guidance. I know I have. ■



Gloria Cornelio is from Lima, Peru. She is passionate about making the impossible possible, serving others and improving lives, teaching, and always learning as much as she can, especially about other cultures.

To find out more about BYU-Pathway Worldwide, go to byupathway.org.



EDUCATION FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Young adults share how getting an education has been the key to feeling more hopeful about the future:

"I was born and raised in Honduras—a country full of opportunities but challenging in lifestyle. I grew up listening to stories about how my ancestors were always looking for opportunities to help make the next generation better.

"Thanks to my parents' sacrifices, my brother and I got the best education possible. I came to learn that education is not limited to a college degree. Education is linked to heaven.

"If we prepare, we will not fear. Education is a commandment from Heavenly Father, and He has given us the promise that inasmuch as we will keep His commandments we will prosper in the land (see 2 Nephi 1:20). Education has helped me create, grow, and prepare to be the strongest link of my generations, and it is allowing me to help others do the same."

—Sara M. Barlow, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

"Education has helped me recognize and unravel my role and place in the human family, and that brings me a lot of joy."

—Keriata Kurene, Canterbury, New Zealand

"Education makes me feel that with my future job, I can be a light in this world and preach the gospel."

—Claudio Acuña Thomas, Antofagasta, Chile

One Thing about the Future I *Can* Control

By Laura Campaner

That little voice in my head was getting hard to ignore. Here I was at age 28, still single and not really sure of what I wanted to do professionally even though I had a good career as a labor and delivery nurse. I felt like every aspect of my life wasn't working out. I was doubting life choices and didn't know which path to take. I just felt lost.

One day when I was feeling particularly down, a friend whom I hadn't talked to in a while called me. When he asked how I was doing, I explained all those feelings I had been struggling with. He listened and then said, "OK, but how are you doing spiritually?"

"Oh yeah, that's perfect," I responded automatically. "I've never felt closer to God in my life."

He replied, "Then you don't have to worry about anything else."

Confidence in God's Perfect Plan

Since the conversation, I realized two things. First, I realized that I am so grateful to have a strong testimony of the restored gospel and to be able to live the commandments and feel connected with heaven.

Being spiritually self-reliant is so important to me, and I'm still learning how to open the heavens in my life. Praying and studying the scriptures every morning are two simple things that I feel make the biggest difference in my ability to receive personal revelation. I also feel more connected with heaven when I make an effort to be kind, to live a healthy life so the Spirit can always be my companion, to obey the commandments, and to repent sincerely.



Second, I realized that my response to my friend's question wasn't totally right—I thought I was doing "perfect" spiritually, but I needed to have more faith, stop worrying so much, and trust God to take care of the things I can't control.

Even when some aspects of my life aren't going as well as I would like, I know that the important thing is to act in faith and show God that I use my agency to make good choices. I've learned that when life doesn't work out the way I expect it to, it's so that I can learn and grow in ways I wouldn't be able to otherwise.

I never imagined that in my 29th year I would find myself having doubts about my career and the next stage of my life. Still, even with all these unknowns, I have total confidence that God has a perfect plan for me. He knows exactly what's happening and what I need, and He will always take care of me (see Matthew 6:28–34). Just as Elder L. Todd Budge of the Seventy taught, "As difficult as it is to understand, especially at the times in our lives when the headwinds are strong and the seas are turbulent, we can take comfort in knowing that God in

His infinite goodness is always blowing us toward home" ("Consistent and Resilient Trust," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 48).

Trust More; Worry Less

Some days life feels just so difficult, but when I really think about it, I know that I don't have to worry. Little by little, I have come to realize that I need to trust God a little more and worry less about things I can't control. The one thing I *can* control about the future is trusting God and working on growing closer to Him every day.

When I feel lost, there is always enough light for me to take a step into the unknown and move forward. And as long as I exercise faith and keep my covenants, as long as I remember my true identity as a daughter of Heavenly Parents and try over and over again, things will happen when and how they're supposed to, and that's really all that matters. ■



Laura Campaner grew up in the south of France in a Spanish family. She works as a midwife and is always looking for new adventures. She's a people person and is fascinated by different cultures.



"At the times in our lives when the headwinds are strong, . . . we can take comfort in knowing that God in His infinite goodness is always blowing us toward home."

—Elder L. Todd Budge of the Seventy



More than anything, I love to cook.

I make pastries, cupcakes, little cookies, meat and rice dishes—anything, really! I also like to teach classes. I love it whenever I'm invited to teach a Young Women class.

I came to the FSY conference because I had a question I wanted answered. I have a scholarship to go to college, but I feel that I should serve a mission. If I go, I'll lose my scholarship. But if I stay and become a teacher, I can work and pay for my schooling at the same time. During FSY, one sister talked about her patriarchal blessing. I'm preparing to receive my own patriarchal blessing now, and I hope that when I receive it, I will know better what Heavenly Father has planned for me. I love the youth programs and FSY because they strengthen youth. Because the truth is, we all need peace.

For a while after I was baptized, I would stop going to church, then go back for a while, then stop again. But members of the ward visited me and invited me to come back. They told me the Church and the members missed and needed me. I decided to come back, and I've been active ever since. I realized how much I needed the Church. I can pray to Heavenly Father and feel good, and I can feel the Spirit. And so here I am!

Adriana T. (far left), age 17, Dominican Republic

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My Brand New, Old Family

If you let it, there's nothing the gospel can't change.

By **Leonardo Conceição**

The missionaries held up a photo. "What do you see?" they asked. "A happy family," I answered. "Are all families happy?"

I shook my head no. "You've seen *my* family," I explained.

I was a 16-year-old living in Brazil, where I had lived all my life. The missionaries had been teaching me for several weeks, but nobody else in my family wanted to listen. During that time, the missionaries had often seen my family fight and argue. My family and the grinning family in the photo had nothing in common.

One of the elders said, "Well, maybe your current family isn't this way. But you can build your future family differently."

When we ended the visit, they asked me again to pray about what we'd been studying. As always, I didn't exactly promise to do so. I enjoyed how I felt when the

missionaries visited, and the gospel made sense to me. But I was afraid of the answer I might receive. If the gospel was true, I would have to make a lot of changes.

A New Choice

After the elders left, I couldn't stop thinking about happy families. Ours wasn't even close. My dad wasn't in my life. My relationship with my mom wasn't great. Grandma was the one who took care of us, but none of us behaved like a family the way the missionaries taught. None of

us expressed love to each other or even spent much time together.

All my life I promised myself I would be a good dad someday. I would be the parent I never had. Yet as the missionaries taught me, I started realizing that I was doing the same things my parents did at my age. I stayed out late, did whatever I wanted, and lived like a rebel. Without meaning to, I was repeating the same story.

It was time to ask God.

When I finally prayed, I received the



The gospel shows us how to improve our families, no matter what our family situation looks like.



answer I had expected all along. The Church is true! Now it was time to make a choice.

A New Me

My grandmother had to give permission before I could be baptized. She was against it, but I persisted.

“Grandma, which Leonardo do you prefer?” I asked. “The one who was out drinking and smoking and coming home late? Or do you prefer who I am now? These changes are because of the gospel.”

Grandma finally agreed, and I was baptized and confirmed. From that moment, something interesting began to happen in my family—something I didn’t realize fully until a few years later.

A New Family

Right before I left for my mission to southern Brazil, Grandma attended stake

conference with me. Afterward we held a small testimony meeting with family and friends. To my surprise, Grandma wanted to say something.

“Ever since Leonardo joined your church, my family started becoming a *real* family,” she said. She then listed ways our entire family had grown closer: We now spent time together. We started saying “I love you” to each other, when we never had before. The fighting and arguing stopped. Real friendships developed among all of us. We had more to eat and were blessed with abundance in other areas.

I had noticed these changes too, but I hadn’t realized the timing could be linked back to when I was baptized.

“I may not be a member of your church,” she said, “but I am a friend of your church. And I know our family has been blessed because of Leonardo’s choice.”

A New Understanding

I could hardly believe it! And yet, as Grandma spoke of how our family had grown closer, I suddenly remembered the photo the missionaries had shown me years before. Back then, I thought my only way to have a happy family was with my future family.

But I was wrong. My current family was happy! We had grown to love each other.

Maybe none of my family members will join the Church in this lifetime. But even if they don’t, I know that God has already blessed us in so many ways. The gospel of Jesus Christ shows us how to improve our families, no matter what our family situation looks like. ■

The author now lives in Utah, USA.

Choosing the
Strait and Narrow
over the **Broad Way**



*There were two paths in front of me, and I knew
there was only one way to know which one to take.*



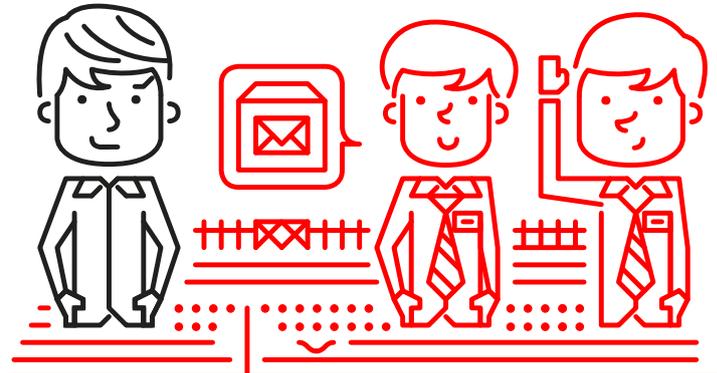
By Elder
Takashi Wada
Of the Seventy

I grew up in Nagano, Japan, with my parents. Religion was a part of everything that my family did. My father knelt before the Buddhist altar every morning and night. I didn't think of Buddhism as a religion—it was our way of life. It would have been easy for me to remain Buddhist for the rest of my life, but God has proved to me many times that the easy or popular way is not always the best way.

Textbook or Holy Book?

As a teenage boy, I struggled a lot with my identity. I wondered why I was on this earth and who I was supposed to become. When I was about 13, the principal of my school gave every student a copy of the New Testament with English and Japanese side-by-side. "It isn't for religious purposes," he said. "It is a very good translation, so use it to study English." When I opened it up though, it gave scripture references for when you feel lonely, need answers to your questions, or are struggling. I could relate to all of those situations!

I read about Jesus Christ. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). "Take up [your] cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). The words resonated with me even though I didn't fully understand them. I wondered who Jesus Christ is and what it means to have Him as a Savior. I wondered if I was the only one feeling such a connection to what was supposed to be a textbook.

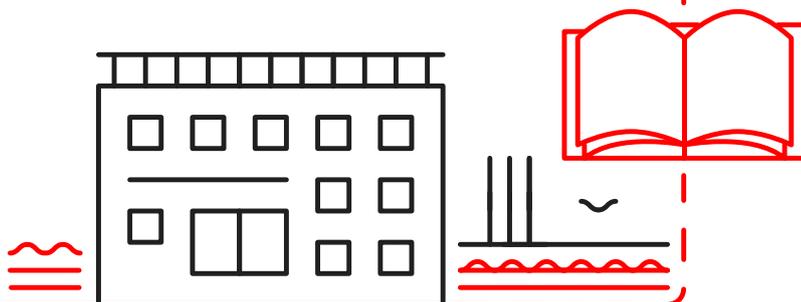


Run Away or Stay and Listen?

A few years later I met some missionaries for the first time. My parents had warned me about the young Christians who were going around preaching. As I was walking home, a tall American missionary with a kind smile stopped me. I didn't know what to do. I was afraid he would talk about his church. If he had, I might have run the other way! All he asked was how to find the post office. I told him and then walked home.

As I walked away, I felt something. *If I see the missionaries again, I thought, I will talk to them.*

Not long after that, I ran into a different set of missionaries. I was shocked that God would hear and answer the prayers of a boy like me, until I read about Joseph Smith. I had read in the New Testament to pray always, but God appearing to a man? It felt both radical and right. Rather than run away, I set up an appointment to have them teach me.





Make Excuses or Discover the Truth?

A month into meeting with the missionaries, they invited me to be baptized. I didn't want to turn them down, but I was hesitant to leave the tradition of my parents and everyone around me. There were two paths before me, and I knew there was only one way to know which one to take—I had to pray like Joseph Smith. I asked Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, if the things the missionaries had been teaching me were true.

That was my turning point. From then on, I knew for myself that the restored gospel is true. No one could take that knowledge away from me. I knew which path to follow, and nothing could change that.

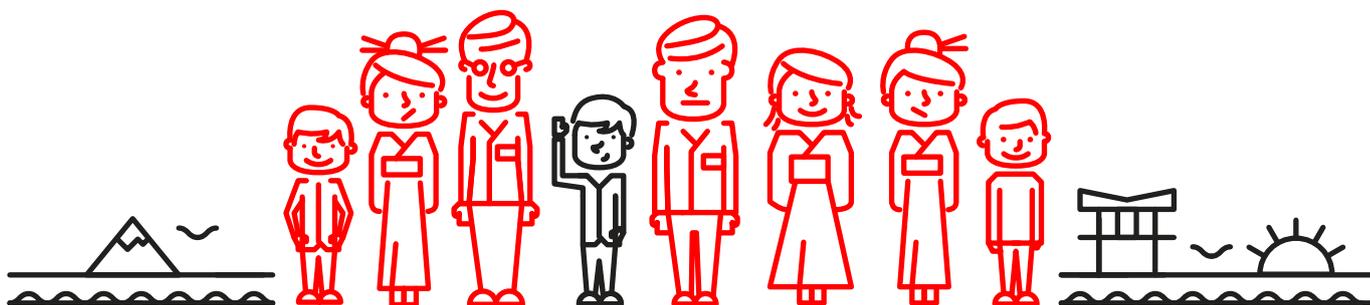
I had many questions when I was younger. I learned that I am a child of God, He loves me, He has a plan for me, and He wants to answer my prayers. This knowledge changed my entire perspective on life. I learned that who I am and what I do is significant.

Blend In or Stand Out?

Before I learned that I was a child of God, I wanted to blend in with everyone. I was afraid of standing out. But after I learned that I am a child of God, I realized I can stand out; I can be different.

Praying and realizing that I am a son of God gave me the courage to explain my feelings to my parents, but they didn't quite understand. They thought I was rebellious and too immature to make the decision to be baptized. They were embarrassed that

their son was following this strange religion rather than their traditions. I knew who I was and what I wanted, but I also wanted to honor my parents and hoped they would honor my religion.



Honor My Parents or Ignore Their Concerns?

I explained my situation to the sister missionaries. They had an idea—they could come talk to my parents so that they would feel better about this religion. I told them I was afraid my parents wouldn't want to talk to them. Then one of the sisters suggested that we fast together.

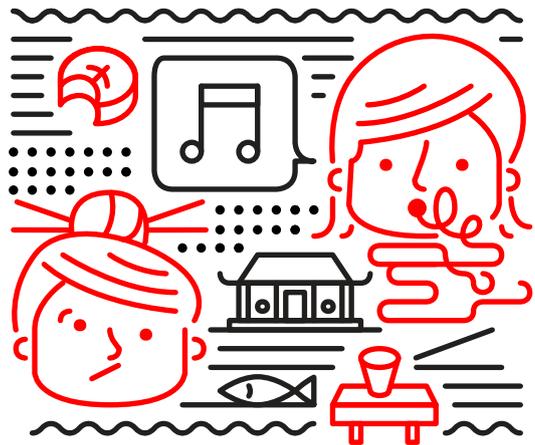
When I didn't eat breakfast, my mom was worried. "Why didn't you eat?" she asked. I explained that I was fasting, and that made her even more concerned.

"First you are going to this no-man's land of religion, and now you are not eating. I'm worried. I'm shocked! I'm going to call those missionaries."

She *did* call the sisters, and somehow they got themselves invited to our house for dinner!

We had a great time. The missionaries taught my parents the hymn "I Am a Child of God" (*Hymns*, no. 301), and we sang it together. My father loved that. After dinner with the sisters, neither of my parents was worried about me going to church. And I felt I was able to honor them by living the gospel because it really encompassed everything they had taught me. I thought if I loved them long enough and treated them kind enough, eventually they would understand. It took 35 years after my baptism, but my mother was baptized and went through the temple just a few years ago!

Knowing that I'm a child of God has impacted many of my life decisions. I also know that as we follow the Spirit and do what Heavenly Father asks of us, even when it seems hard, He will bless us. That is always the best choice. ■



MAKING GOOD USE OF YOUR TIME

When you put the Lord first, there's room for the rest.

By Natasha Andersen
Church Magazines

MATERIALS

- A clear jar
- Sand, gravel, rice, or pebbles
- Larger stones (about the size of golf balls, or about 5 cm across)

PREPARATION: Measure out your ingredients beforehand by putting the larger rocks in the jar first. Add just enough sand (or gravel, rice, or pebbles) to fill the jar to the top. You might want to shake the jar as you add the sand so that it fills in more empty space. Now dump the rocks and sand into separate containers before you teach this lesson.

How many different activities fight for your attention every day? We all have the same 24 hours to spend, but how we choose to use that time makes a big difference!

President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has said: "The number of good things we can do far exceeds the time available to accomplish them.

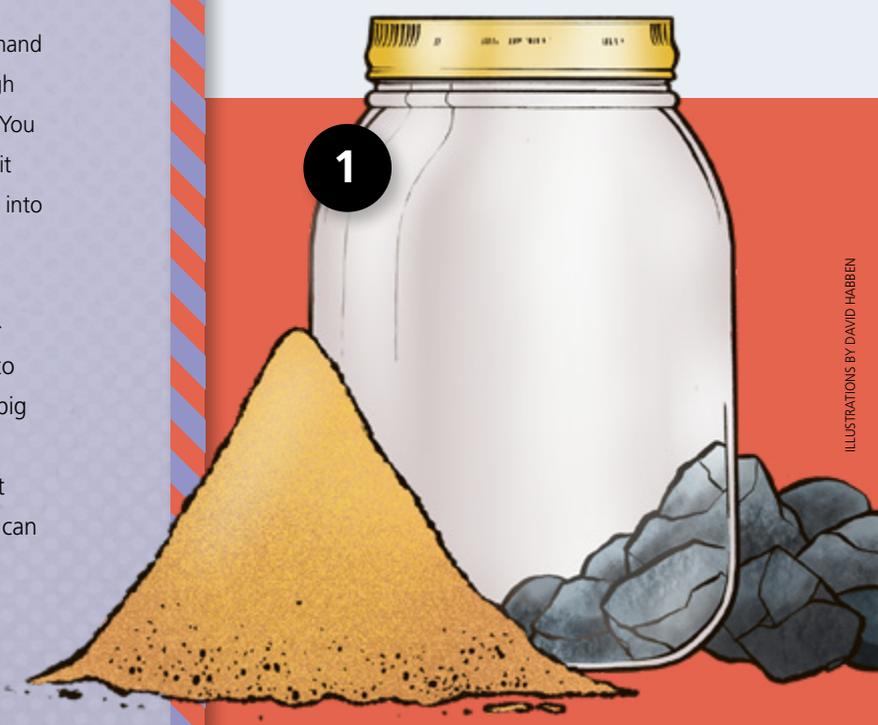
Some things are better than good, and these are the things that should command priority attention in our lives. . . . We have to forego some good things in order to choose others that are better or best." ¹

In this activity, you'll demonstrate what happens when we make the Lord's work our first priority.

1. FILLING TIME

There are lots of good activities we can use our time to pursue. Ask your family to share some of the things they spend their time doing each day.

Explain that the jar represents time. The rocks and sand represent the different things we can do with our time: the larger rocks stand for things the Lord has asked us to prioritize, like scripture study, service, temple and family history work, and church attendance, while the sand symbolizes other good



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID HABBEN

activities, like doing homework and spending time with friends.

2. PRIORITIZING OUT OF ORDER

Pour all the sand into the jar first, then add the larger rocks on top. When you add the sand first, there isn't enough space for all the larger rocks—just like how when we prioritize other activities over the things Heavenly Father has commanded us to do, we may run out of time for the things that are most important.

3. FALLING INTO PLACE

Jesus Christ commanded, "Seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness" (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38 [in Matthew 6:33, footnote a]). Discuss how you can prioritize your time by seeking the kingdom of God *first*.

Empty your jar and start over with the same items. Younger siblings may want to help. Have them put the larger rocks in the jar first. As you add the sand after, watch how it fills into the extra space around the larger rocks until all the sand fits inside.

Ask your family what they think this promise from President Russell M. Nelson might mean: "As you consistently give the Lord a generous portion of your time, He will multiply the remainder."²

PUTTING THE LORD FIRST

When we seek to do God's will *first*, He helps us to have enough time for other necessary and uplifting things. So if you're struggling to find enough time to finish homework, develop your talents, or get the sleep you need, ask the Lord what you can do to prioritize your time according to His plan. Set goals together as a family to put the Lord's work—and your relationship with Him—first each day. ■



NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, "Good, Better, Best," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 104, 107.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Stand as True Millennials," *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 29; *Liahona*, Oct. 2016, 51.



A PERSISTENT PROMPTING

ONE DAY while doing missionary work in the dusty streets of Kenya, my companion and I talked to a lady. She accepted the pamphlet we gave her but told us not to return.

A few days later we found ourselves on that same street, and we had a prompting to follow up with her. I asked myself, “Why are we going back when she told us not to return?” But we obeyed the prompting.

She was surprised when we got there but said that she was happy to see us. We began to teach a lesson, but it soon turned into an argument. My companion and I closed the lesson with a prayer and left, immediately agreeing not to go back. But the very next day, we *again* had a strong prompting to return. I didn’t want to go back, but my

companion said we should listen to the Spirit. So I swallowed my pride, and we went back. When we got there, I was shocked. The lady seemed like a different person. Her countenance had changed, and she was willing to listen to what we had to say. During our next visit, she asked us when she could be baptized.

Four weeks later, she was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After her confirmation, she embraced us and told us that she was ever so grateful we came back. I’ve learned that we should always listen to and act on promptings. Heavenly Father does prepare His children to receive the gospel, and He uses all of us to find them through the Holy Ghost. ■

Leaha M., KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

HOW CAN I BETTER FOLLOW SPIRITUAL PROMPTINGS?

1. **Pray for guidance.**
The Lord will direct you through the Holy Spirit (see Alma 37:37).
2. **Be humble.**
Meekness invites the Spirit (see Moroni 8:26).
3. **Don’t hesitate.**
The natural man tempts you to put off or ignore promptings (see Mosiah 3:19). Don’t second-guess when a good thought comes!
4. **Act immediately.**
Commit to always respond *immediately* to promptings from the Spirit (see Thomas S. Monson, “The Spirit Giveth Life,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 68–70).

THE REASON FOR RULES

I WAS EXCITED to go to youth conference, but then I found out there were lots of rules—for example, no cell phones and no going outside alone. It seemed like adults were constantly keeping an eye on us. But I had a great time, made a lot of friends, worked on a service project, and learned about the gospel.

During a testimony meeting on the last day of youth conference, one of the leaders talked about how much he loves us, the youth in the stake.

If you love us, why do we have so many restrictions here? I thought. At that same moment, like he could read my mind, he answered my question.

Leaders put rules in place, he said, not to annoy us but for our safety. The moment he said that, I was touched by the Spirit. I understood that Heavenly Father gives us commandments for the same reason. They are not to annoy us; they are to help us return safely to Him (see Doctrine and Covenants 82:2–9).

The Holy Ghost touched me and helped me to know that this is true. ■

Serge P., Île-de-France, France



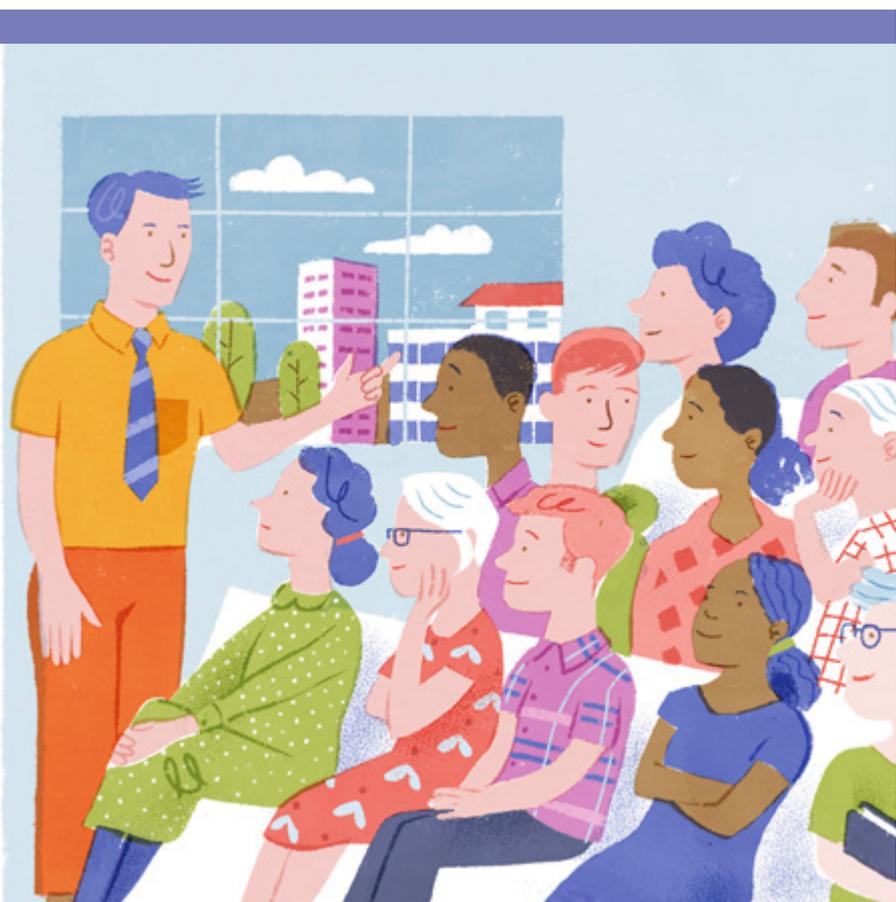
WHEN COULD I JOIN THE CHURCH?

WHEN I WAS around the age of five, my dad lost faith and decided to leave the Church. It was really hard, especially when I turned eight. I was so excited to get baptized, but then my dad said no. He wanted me to wait until I was older so that I really knew that I wanted to commit. And so I watched as my friends were baptized.

I remember being confused—if the Church was true, why was I being stopped from getting baptized? As a teenager, it was so hard seeing all the youth go to the temple because I wanted to go so badly. It was hard not being able to take part, but I always knew I would get my chance!

In May 2019, I was finally baptized at age 16. I remembered the many experiences I've had feeling the pure joy of the gospel and gaining a testimony. It was a very special experience, and through all the troubles I had getting to that day, I knew with all my heart that the gospel is true and always has been. ■

Trinity C., Colorado, USA



Testimony and Conversion

By Elder David A. Bednar

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

An important lesson about the connection between testimony and conversion is evident in the missionary labors of the sons of Mosiah. “As many as were brought to the knowledge of the truth, through the preaching of Ammon and his brethren, according to the spirit of revelation and of prophecy, and the power of God working miracles in them—yea, . . . as the Lord liveth, as many of the Lamanites as believed in their preaching, and were converted unto the Lord, never did fall away.

“For they became a righteous people; they did lay down the weapons of their rebellion, that they did not fight against God any more. . . .

“Now, these are they who were converted unto the Lord” (Alma 23:6–8).

Two major elements are described in these verses: (1) *the knowledge of the truth*, which may be interpreted as a testimony, and (2) *converted unto the Lord*, which I understand to be conversion to the Savior and His gospel. Thus, the powerful combination of both testimony and conversion unto the Lord produced firmness and steadfastness and provided spiritual protection.

A testimony is spiritual knowledge of truth obtained by the power of the Holy Ghost. Continuing conversion is constant devotion to the revealed truth we have received—with a heart that is willing and for righteous reasons. Knowing that the gospel is true is the essence of a testimony. Consistently being true to the gospel is the essence of conversion. We should know the gospel is true and be true to the gospel.

To set aside cherished “weapons of rebellion” such as selfishness, pride, and disobedience requires more than merely believing and knowing. Conviction, humility, repentance, and submissiveness precede the abandonment of our weapons of rebellion. Do you and I still possess weapons of rebellion that keep us from becoming converted unto the Lord? If so, then we need to repent now.

I promise that as we come to a knowledge of the truth and are converted unto the Lord, we will remain firm and steadfast and never fall away. ■

From an October 2012 general conference address.

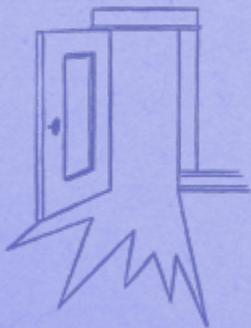
Amulek and Alma



They were **powerful missionary companions** who taught the gospel to many people.



God gave them power so they **couldn't be killed** or kept in prison.



Amulek was converted after an angel told him to **receive a prophet** (Alma) into his house.



Alma compared **faith in God's word** to planting a seed that will grow as we nourish it.



Alma was converted after an angel told him to **stop destroying** God's Church.

**WORRIED
ABOUT THE
FUTURE?**

Facing uncertainty, young adults share what they've done to trust God and prepare for the future.

44



YOUTH

**MY FAMILY WASN'T
A HAPPY ONE—UNTIL
I JOINED THE CHURCH**

54

OBJECT LESSON

**ROCKS AND
PRIORITIES**

60

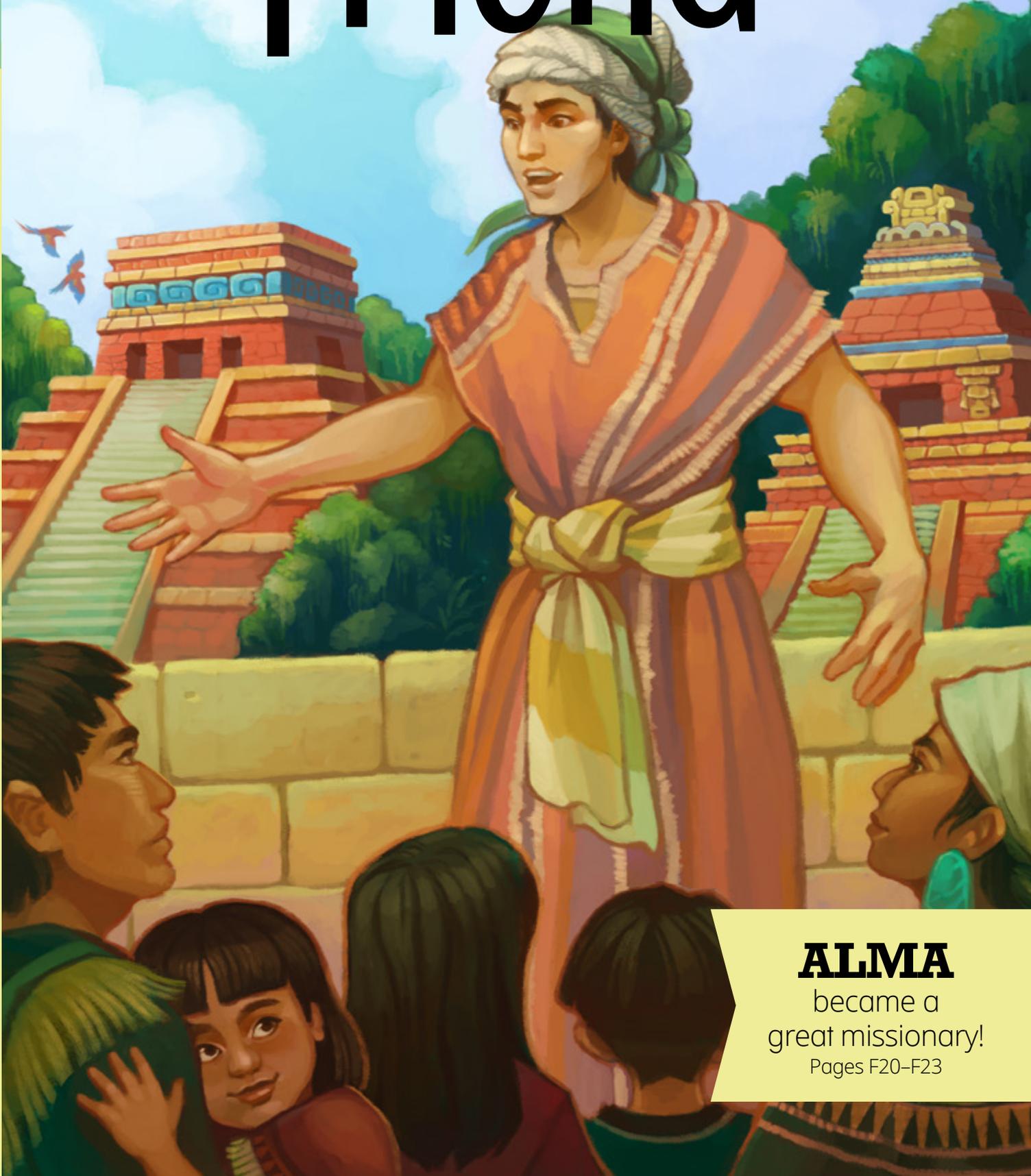
PARENTS

**HELP CHILDREN
UNDERSTAND THAT
OUR BODIES ARE
TEMPLES**

F4



the Friend



ALMA
became a
great missionary!
Pages F20–F23



By President
Dallin H. Oaks

First Counselor in the First
Presidency

Following the Pioneers



Once I walked along several trails where the early Church pioneers walked on their way to the Salt Lake Valley. I felt very humble to walk where the pioneers walked. But it's not as important to walk where they walked as it is to live like they lived.

The pioneers stepped forward with faith into a new religion, a new land, and a new way of doing things. They trusted God. We need **faith** too.

They followed what their leaders asked them to do. We need to be **obedient** too.

They used their talents and worked together to build Zion. We need to be **unified** too.

They didn't leave anyone behind. They made sure to include those who were having trouble on the trail. We need to be **inclusive** too.

We can honor the pioneers by following their examples. ●

Adapted from "Following the Pioneers," Ensign, Nov. 1997, 72–74.

I Can Be a Pioneer

Anyone who leads the way in helping make life better for their family is a pioneer. Find your way through the maze. Passing through these ways, you can be a pioneer when ...

Start

When I learn something new.

When I help start a good tradition.

When I do things to build my eternal family.

When I teach my family about the gospel.

Finish

Lila's Choice

Lila wanted to choose the right.



By Carolina Marín

(Based on a true story)

"My body is the temple my Father gave to me" (Children's Songbook, 153).

"It's scripture time!" Lila said.

Lila loved reading to her little sister, Ánika, and her baby brother, Svetan. Soon Lila would be getting baptized! To be ready, she wanted to read the scriptures every day.

Lila opened the scripture storybook to the first page. Ánika and Svetan snuggled close so they could see the pictures.

"Listen carefully because I'm going to ask you questions after," Lila said. Then she started reading the first chapter.

"Before we were born, we lived in heaven," Lila read. "We didn't have bodies yet. We were spirits."

Lila, Ánika, and Svetan looked at the pictures of people dressed in white.

"Ready for your first question?" Lila turned to Ánika. "Where did you come from before you were born?"

Ánika clapped her hands. "Heaven!"

"That's right," said Lila. "And where did Svetan come from?"

"He came from heaven too," Ánika said. Svetan giggled and put his fist in his mouth. Lila and Ánika laughed. Svetan was the cutest one-year-old in Argentina!

"Our whole family came from heaven," Lila said. "Jesus did too. He came to help us so we can live with Heavenly Father again." Lila pointed to the picture of Jesus on the page.

After she finished reading, Lila kept thinking about what it must have been like to live with Jesus in heaven. She wanted to be like Him. She wanted to always choose the right!

The next day at school, Lila's tummy rumbled as she waited in line for breakfast. She could almost taste the empanadas as Señora Ruiz slid them onto her plate. They smelled so good!



Then Señora Ruiz poured Lila a cup of milk. *Uh oh*, Lila thought. The milk looked darker than usual. Sometimes her school added coffee or tea to the drinks.

“Is there any coffee or tea in the milk today?” Lila asked.

Señora Ruiz waved her hand. “A little coffee,” she said. “You won’t even taste it.”

Lila thought for a moment. She remembered how she wanted to be like Jesus and choose the right. She knew drinking coffee was something the prophets said not to do.

“No, thanks. I won’t have milk today,” Lila said. She gave Señora Ruiz a smile. Then she sat down to eat.

That night, Lila helped Papi wash dishes in the kitchen. She was still thinking about the scripture story. She was thinking about the milk too.

“Papi?”

“Yes?” Papi said.

“Why did Heavenly Father want us to have bodies?”

Papi thought while he rinsed another plate. “Well, He gave us bodies so we could become like Him,” he said. “Your body is a home for your spirit. That’s what we mean when we say our bodies are temples.”

Lila nodded. She sang a song about that in Primary sometimes! “So that’s why Heavenly Father wants us to take care of our bodies?”

“Exactly,” Papi said.

“Today at school, they put some coffee in the milk,” Lila said. “I didn’t drink it, though. I’m trying to take care of my temple.”

“I’m proud of you,” Papi said. He dried his hands on a towel and gave Lila a hug.

Lila hugged Papi tight. She was happy to take care of the body Heavenly Father had given her. ●

The author lives in Corrientes, Argentina.

The family in this story lives in Argentina.

Read the next article to learn more about their country.



Hello
from
Argentina!

Hi!
**We're Margo
and Paolo.**

**Join us
as we visit
Argentina!**



Empanadas are a popular food in Argentina. They're a pastry filled with beef, corn, or fruit. Yum!

Argentina is a country in South America. It's more than 2,000 miles (3,219 km) long. In the north, it's very hot during summertime. In the south, there are frozen glaciers all year round!

Many interesting animals live in Argentina—jaguars, condors, and penguins!



Cowboys are called *gauchos* in Argentina. They raise cattle and horses.



Many people buy food at outdoor markets. This boy is helping his father carry a *sandía* or watermelon.



Meet some of our friends from Argentina!



When President Russell M. Nelson presented the new program of goals for children and youth, I set goals to run, be a good friend, and make my prayers better. I gave my testimony in sacrament meeting that I know that if I do this program, Heavenly Father will help me.

Gonzalo L., age 7, Buenos Aires, Argentina



When we read scriptures, we learn about Jesus Christ and how He loves us. That helps me to be happy. I know that He loves me.

Emma L., age 5, Buenos Aires, Argentina

**Are you from Argentina?
Write to us!
We would love to hear from you.**

**Thanks
for exploring
Argentina with us.
See you next time!**

Ushuaia is one of the closest cities to the South Pole in the world! There are three wards in that city.



This girl visited the Córdoba Argentina Temple on the day it was dedicated. Soon Argentina will have three temples!





The Little Bread Wagon

By Gayle Kinney-Cornelius

(Based on a true story)

“When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

Sammy opened his eyes and yawned. He could smell something yummy.

Mmmm, Papa is making bread! Sammy thought.

Papa baked bread for the family every Saturday. Sammy liked to watch him take the crispy brown loaves out of the oven. Papa always gave Sammy the first slice.

But today isn't Saturday, Sammy thought. *Why is Papa baking?*

Sammy got out of bed and went to the kitchen. He asked Papa what was going on.

“Do you remember what our bishop asked us to do?” Papa asked.

Sammy nodded. “He asked us to help people. And I helped Sister Martin take her bag upstairs, remember?”

“You did a good job,” Papa said. “I prayed about how I could help. I had the idea to bake bread to share.”

Sammy looked in the oven window. He counted the loaves of bread.

“One . . . two . . . three . . . four. Who will you give the bread to?”

“That’s something I need your help with,” Papa said. “There’s one loaf for Sister Martin. And two loaves for the Miller family. Who should we give the fourth loaf to?”

Sammy thought about it.

“What about Mr. Lee?” Sammy asked. Mr. Lee lived in their apartment building. He didn’t go outside very much. Mostly he just watched people from his window.

“That’s a great idea,” Papa said.

After the bread was done baking, Sammy helped Papa wrap the bread. Then he got his wagon. They put the loaves inside.

“The bread wagon is ready to roll!” Sammy said.

Papa helped Sammy pull the wagon. Sammy’s heart felt nice and warm, just like the bread they were about to share! ●

The author lives in Vermont, USA.





Different but Together

By **Bethany Bartholomew**
(Based on a true story)

*“Let them worship how, where, or what they may”
(Articles of Faith 1:11).*

Ellie and her family were going to visit their cousins who lived far away. Ellie was so excited! She hadn't seen her cousins in a long time.

Before the trip, Ellie's parents said they wanted to talk about something.

“When we get together with family, we always say prayers at meal time. And sometimes we talk about church, right?” Dad asked.

“Right!” Ellie said.

“Well, things will be a little different on this trip,”

Mom said. “Your aunt and uncle don't go to church anymore. And they don't like it when people talk to them about it.”

Ellie frowned. “Why not?”

“We don't know all the reasons,” Dad said. “But they love us very much. I think they don't want to argue with us or hurt our feelings. So they've asked us not to talk about church things with them.”

Ellie nodded.

“We can still read our scriptures and pray while we're there. But we'll do it in private,” Mom said.

“What about when we eat?” Ellie's sister asked.



“Let’s wait and see,” Mom said. “If they don’t pray before we eat, we can each say a prayer in our heart.”

“OK,” Ellie said. “I can do that!”

The next day, Ellie’s family piled into the car. They drove until late at night. When they finally got to their cousins’ house, Ellie’s aunt and uncle helped them get their bags out of the car. Then everyone went to bed.

The next morning, Ellie said a prayer before going to the kitchen for breakfast. She felt a little nervous about seeing her family. But then her aunt sat down next to her with a warm smile on her face.

“Some of us are going to your cousin’s salon later

today. Want to come?” she asked Ellie.

“A hair salon?” Ellie asked.

“Yep! You and your sister can get your hair done if you want.”

Ellie smiled and nodded. That sounded fun!

After breakfast, they took a bus to the salon. Ellie loved watching her cousin work. Her fingers flew back and forth as she combed and braided. After everyone’s hair was finished, they had a pretend fashion show in front of the salon mirror and giggled at their new looks.

The next day, it was raining hard. So everyone decided to stay inside and play board games. Ellie and one of her cousins were on a team against two of the older boys. They teased each other as they raced their game pieces around the board.

“We won!” Ellie yelled as she moved her game piece to the end of the board. They all gave each other high fives—even the older cousins, who pretended to be grumpy about losing.

After only a few days, it was time to head home. As Ellie climbed in the back of her family’s car, she heard her family saying goodbye.

“We’ll miss you!”

“Come back soon!”

“We love you so much!”

Ellie smiled and waved as their car pulled away. She had had a lot of fun. Even if they believed in different things, they could still be a happy family. ●

The author lives in Georgia, USA.

Cut out and glue, staple, or tie these pages together to make a book!

MY GROWING FAITH

Name:

1



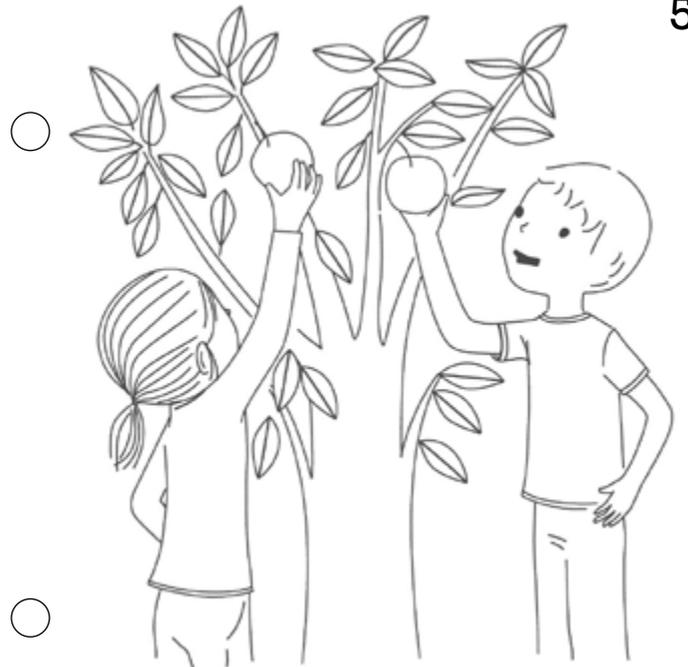
In the Book of Mormon, Alma said that faith is like a seed.

4



I help my faith in Jesus grow by praying and being kind to others.

5



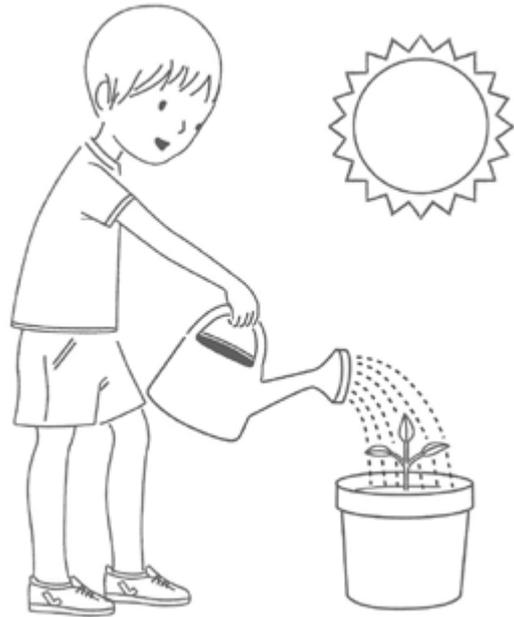
As a tree grows, it can give us sweet fruit.

2



I can plant my own seed of faith
by listening to what the prophets and
scriptures teach.

3



A seed needs water and sunshine
to help it grow.

6



As my faith grows, it will bring
sweet blessings into my life.

7



I will keep helping my faith
grow strong. Heavenly Father and
Jesus Christ love me!



**By Sister
Cristina B. Franco**
Second Counselor
in the Primary
General Presidency

The Secret Ingredient



Heavenly Father wants us to serve others. My Primary teacher was a great example of service. When we came to Primary, Sister Antonietti always brought a chocolate cake. I hated chocolate cake! Everyone else liked it. But I never ate it.

One day she asked me, “Why don’t you try a little piece? This cake is made with a special ingredient.”

I agreed to try it. And guess what? I liked it!

Many years later my mom told me what Sister Antonietti’s secret ingredient was. “Sister Antonietti didn’t have much money,” my mom said. “Each week she had

to choose between paying for a bus ride to Primary or buying the ingredients to make the chocolate cake for your class. She always chose the chocolate cake. So instead of riding the bus, she walked more than two miles [3 km], each way, regardless of the weather.”

Sister Antonietti’s secret ingredient was the love she had for others! What can you do to show your love for others? ●

Adapted from “The Joy of Unselfish Service,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2018, 55–57.





ILLUSTRATION BY MITCH MILLER

I can follow Jesus Christ in
small and simple ways.

(See Alma 37:6.)

The Surprise Mission Call



By Lucy Stevenson

Church Magazines
(Based on a true story)

Edwin Dharmaraju smiled as he walked out of the airport and into the sunshine. He could see palm trees lining the streets and smell the spices from a nearby market. He and his wife, Elsie, were back in India! They had been living in Samoa, but now they were home again.

Edwin and Elsie weren't here for just a visit, though. They had been called to serve as missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Edwin felt a little nervous. But he knew Heavenly Father would help them. Heavenly Father had already helped them so much.

Edwin and Elsie were born in India. But Edwin first heard about the Church while going to school in the United States. He went to church there once. He even read the Book of Mormon. But when he got back to India, he forgot about the Church.

Some years later, Edwin and Elsie felt like they should move to Samoa. Edwin was a bug scientist, and he took a job on the island doing research. It was there that Edwin and Elsie met the missionaries. When Edwin read the Book of Mormon again, he felt something special.



Elsie read the Book of Mormon too. They chose to be baptized, along with their sons and daughters.

After joining the Church, what Edwin wanted most was for his family back in India to learn about the gospel.

The problem was that there were no missionaries in India to teach them! Edwin and Elsie wrote a letter to Church headquarters asking them to send missionaries to India.

What came next was a big surprise. President Spencer W. Kimball called *them* to serve as missionaries in India!

And now, here they were.

Their first stop in India was Edwin's brother's house. Edwin's parents and siblings were there too. Right away, Edwin and Elsie started teaching them. Their family was happy to learn about the gospel.

A few weeks later, Edwin and his family gathered around the swimming pool in his brother's yard. The pool had been cleaned, painted, and filled with fresh water. Everyone was wearing white. The women wore flowing saris that draped over their shoulders. The men wore loose Indian-style jackets and trousers.

Edwin stood in the pool with his father. “Samuel David,” Edwin said, “having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Edwin felt happy as he baptized his father. He felt even happier when he baptized his mom next. By the end of the day, Edwin had baptized 18 people!

The next day, Edwin and Elsie rode a train for six hours. They visited more family members and taught them about the gospel. Edwin baptized four more of his relatives in a nearby river.

Finally, Edwin and Elsie took a 16-hour train ride to visit Elsie’s parents. Elsie’s father was a leader in another church. He didn’t get baptized, but he thought the Book of Mormon was a good book. He helped translate the Book of Mormon into Telugu, one of the languages spoken in India.

When Edwin and Elsie finished their mission, there were enough new members to start one of the first branches of the Church in India! Edwin and Elsie were happy when they returned to Samoa. They were grateful Heavenly Father had sent them on a mission! ●



Edwin and Elsie Dharmaraju served their mission in India in 1978. Now a beautiful temple is being built there!

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANI JONES

*I've never done anything really bad.
Do I still need to repent?
—Uncertain in Udine*

Dear Uncertain,

Everyone needs to repent, because no one is perfect! Repenting can be as simple as praying to Heavenly Father about how your day went and telling Him how you want to do better tomorrow. We ask Him for forgiveness when we've done something wrong, and He forgives us. Some people think repentance is a scary thing. But it's a happy thing! Repentance is a gift that Jesus Christ gave us so we can learn, grow, change, and become more like Him. President Nelson says that we should repent every day. As you do, you will feel more peace and power in your life.

With love,
The *Friend*

Try this!

Like the spoon taking away the pepper in this activity, repenting can make us clean from the wrong choices we make every day—big or small. Because of Jesus Christ and His Atonement, all of us have the opportunity to repent.

You will need:

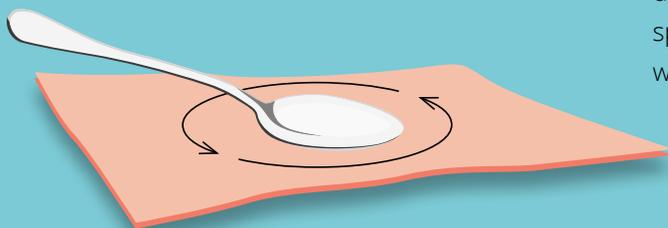
table salt
black pepper
plastic spoon
towel

1. Pour some salt onto a plate. This represents how we are pure and clean before we sin.

2. Sprinkle a little pepper on top of the salt. This represents the wrong choices we make.

3. Now take the plastic spoon and rub it on a towel.

4. Move the spoon slowly above the salt and pepper. The pepper will stick to the spoon! This is like being forgiven when we repent.



Small and Simple Puzzle

Like the Liahona that guided Lehi's family, simple things can help us solve big problems (see Alma 37:6, 38-44).

Can you find each of the pieces below in the puzzle?



What are small and simple ways you can follow Jesus?

Alma the Younger Repents

By Haley Yancey
Church Magazines



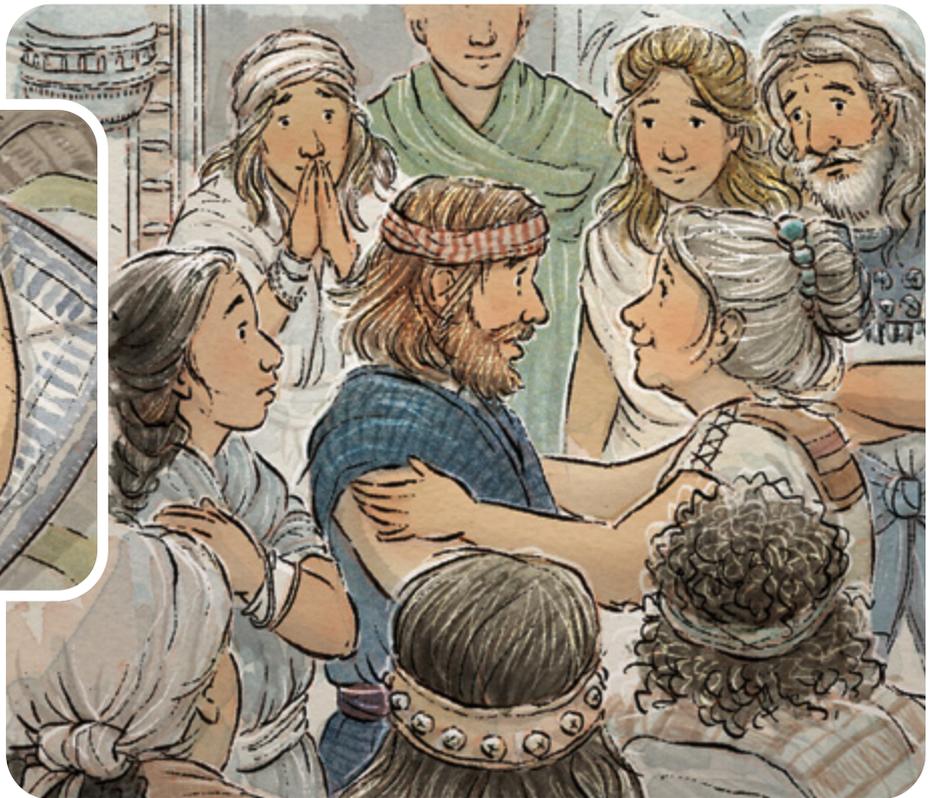
Alma was the prophet's son. He was named for his father, but he didn't believe what his father taught. He told people that the Church wasn't true.



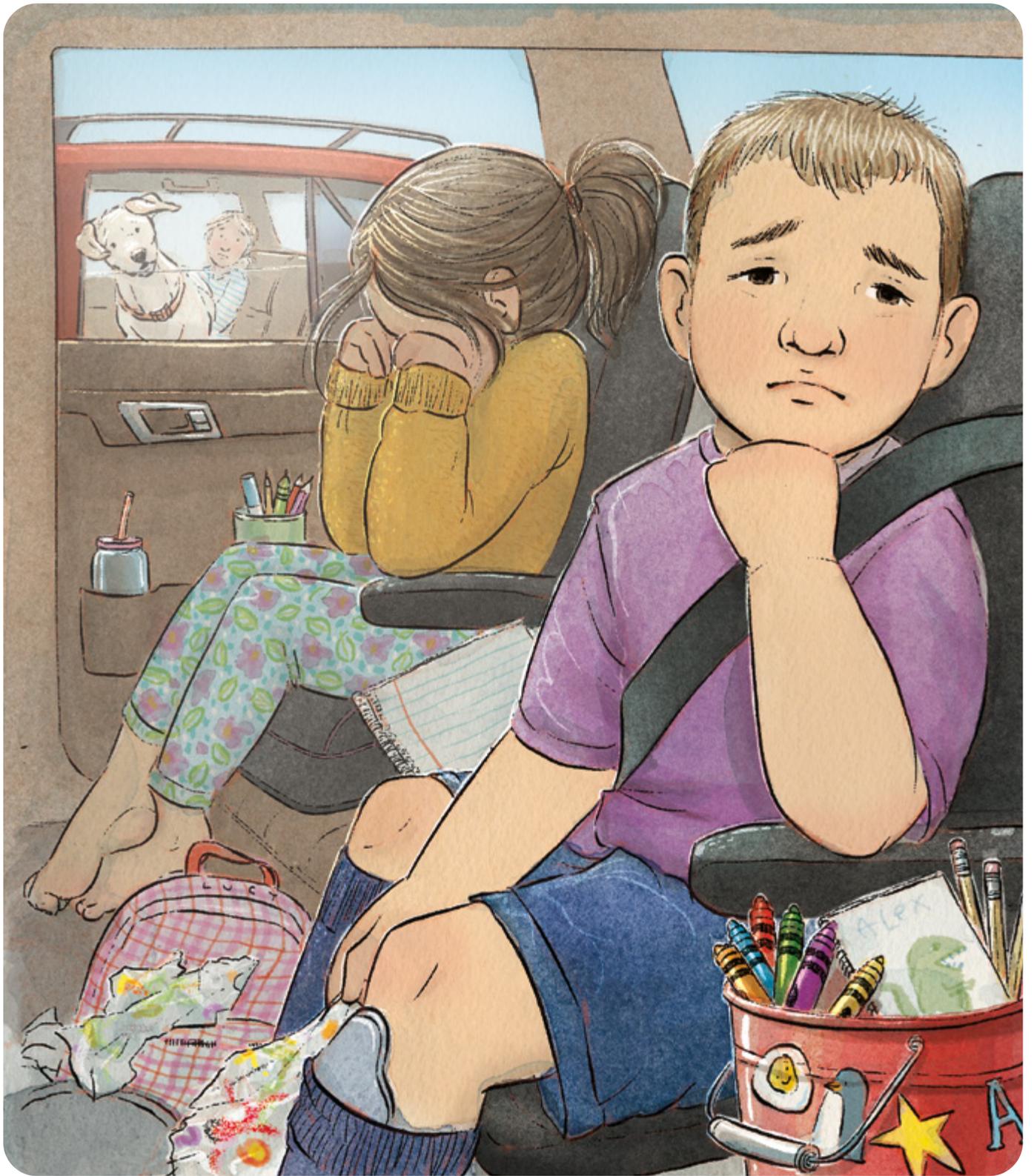
One day, an angel appeared to Alma. The angel told Alma to repent.



For three days, it was like Alma was asleep. He was thinking about his bad choices.



Then Alma prayed to be forgiven. And he was! He felt Jesus Christ's love. Alma woke up and taught others about how Jesus saved him.



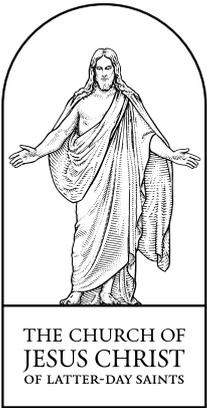
I can repent when I make a wrong choice. Jesus will always be there for me. ●

You can read about this story in Mosiah 27.

Alma Repented and Followed Jesus



When you make a wrong choice, what should you do?



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Dear Parents,

Sometimes we don't agree with other people. But we can still love them. We can also hold on to what we know is true. Read the story on page F10 with your children and talk about these questions:

How did Ellie's family show love?

How did Ellie's family keep their faith strong?

How can our family show love to other people, even when we don't agree?

We are all different, but every person is a child of God!

Share love,

The *Friend*

HOW TO SEND YOUR CHILD'S ARTWORK OR EXPERIENCE TO THE *LIAHONA*

Go to liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org and click on "Submit an Article or Feedback." Or email it to us at liahona@ChurchofJesusChrist.org along with your child's name, age, city of residence, and this permission statement:

"I, [insert your name], give permission to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to use my child's submission in the Church magazines, on Church websites and social media platforms, and possibly in other Church materials." We can't wait to hear from you!

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- F23** Coloring Page: Alma Repented and Followed Jesus



Find the Liahona hidden inside!

ON THE *FRIEND* COVER

Illustration by Rebecca Sorge Jensen

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ENGLISH