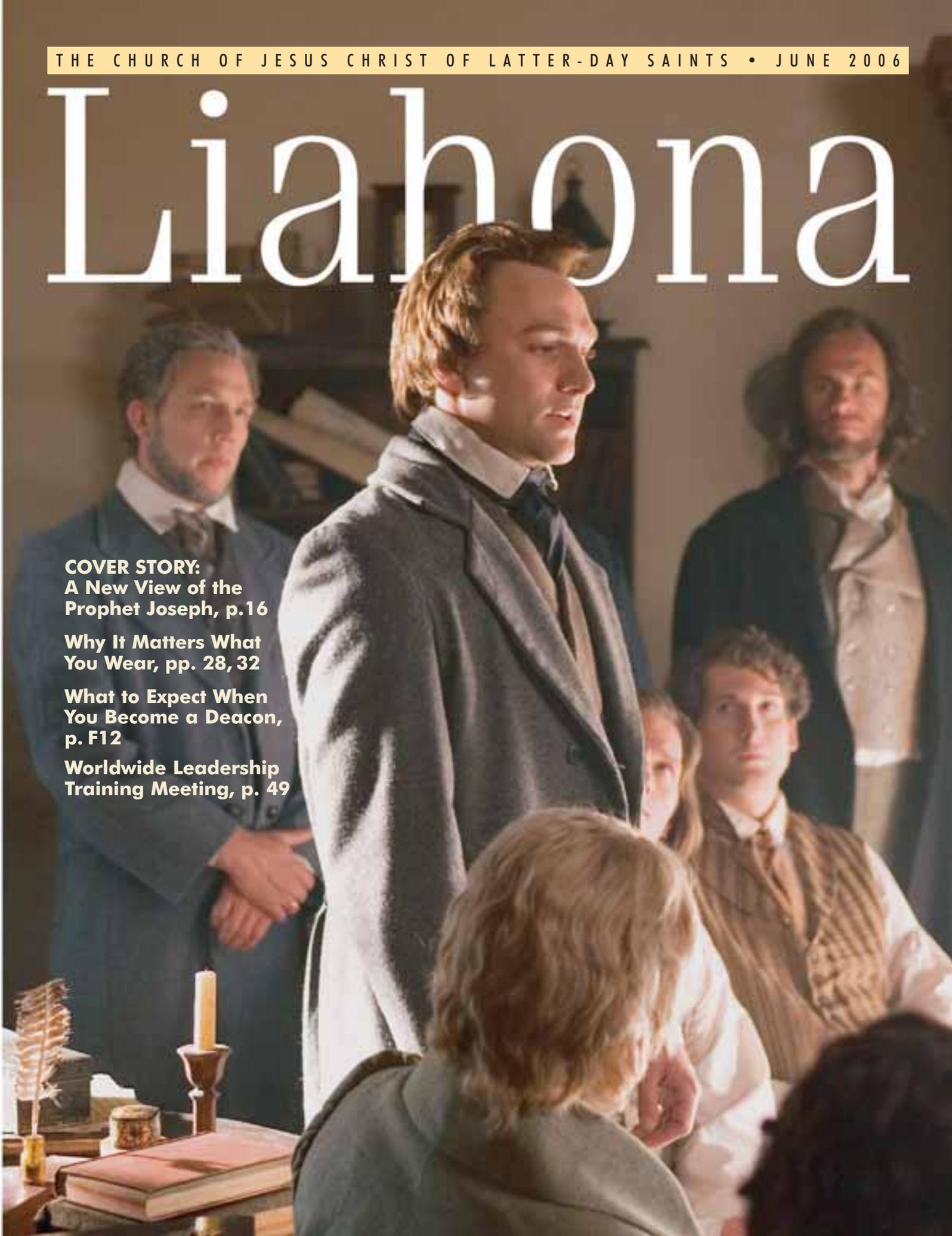


Liahona

A photograph of a man in a grey coat speaking to a group of people in a room. The man is standing in the center, looking to the right. He is wearing a grey coat over a white shirt and a dark tie. In the background, there are other people, some standing and some sitting. The room has a warm, dimly lit atmosphere with a candle in a holder on a table in the foreground. There are books and a quill pen on the table. The overall scene suggests a historical or religious setting.

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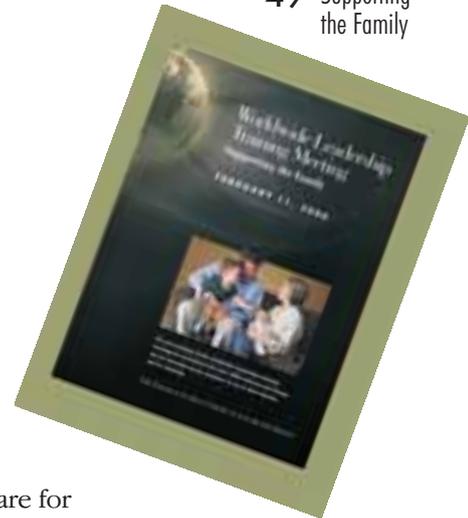
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*These ideas can help you use
the Liahona to enhance
your teaching in the
classroom as well as in
the home.*

"The Profile of a Prophet,"

p. 10: Invite two family
members to act as
lawyers, and have them read the
question-and-answer part of the
conversation in the article. Show
President Hugh B. Brown's list of
characteristics of a true prophet,
and have family members, acting as
witnesses, tell how Joseph Smith

demonstrated those qualities. Read
the last three paragraphs of the arti-
cle, and testify of the blessings of
following a living prophet.

"Questions and Answers,"

p. 22: Practice sharing a copy
of the Book of Mormon
with a family member
by explaining what the book is,
sharing a favorite verse, and inviting
him or her to read selected verses
or chapters. Have the family mem-
ber receiving the copy ask some
questions. The family can discuss
how to answer them.



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- 38 Come Learn and Have Fun *Paul VanDenBerghe*



28 A Sense of the Sacred



As you look for the CTR ring hidden in this issue, think of blessings you receive for keeping the commandments.

“A Sense of the Sacred,” p. 28: Show pictures of people wearing different types of clothing and ask where they should be worn. Use the article to define “Sunday best” and explain how appropriate clothing shows respect for Heavenly Father. Have family members list places that are sacred. Plan ways to dress appropriately in sacred places.

“A Firm Decision,” p. F6: Role-play the two Word of Wisdom situations Elder E. Israel Pérez describes, without giving away his decision.

After each role play, let family members guess how Elder Pérez reacted. Finish the stories, and use his counsel to discuss decisions that family members can make now to combat future temptations.

“The Butter Dish,” p. F10: Ask a family member to teach the law of tithing using 10 coins or other small objects. Tell the story of the butter dish, and discuss why the dish meant so much to Emma. Share personal experiences and testimonies about the law of tithing.

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- F2 Come Listen to a Prophet's Voice: Thankful for Missionary Work *President Gordon B. Hinckley*
- F4 Sharing Time: Keep the Commandments *Linda Magleby*
- F6 Friend to Friend: A Firm Decision *Elder E. Israel Pérez*
- F8 From the Life of President Wilford Woodruff: The Martyrdom of the Prophet
- F10 The Butter Dish *Patricia R. Jones*
- F12 Welcome to the Aaronic Priesthood and Young Men *Charles W. Dablsquist II*
- F15 Fun Page: Scripture Figure
- F16 Flannel Board Sunday Box

F2 Thankful for Missionary Work



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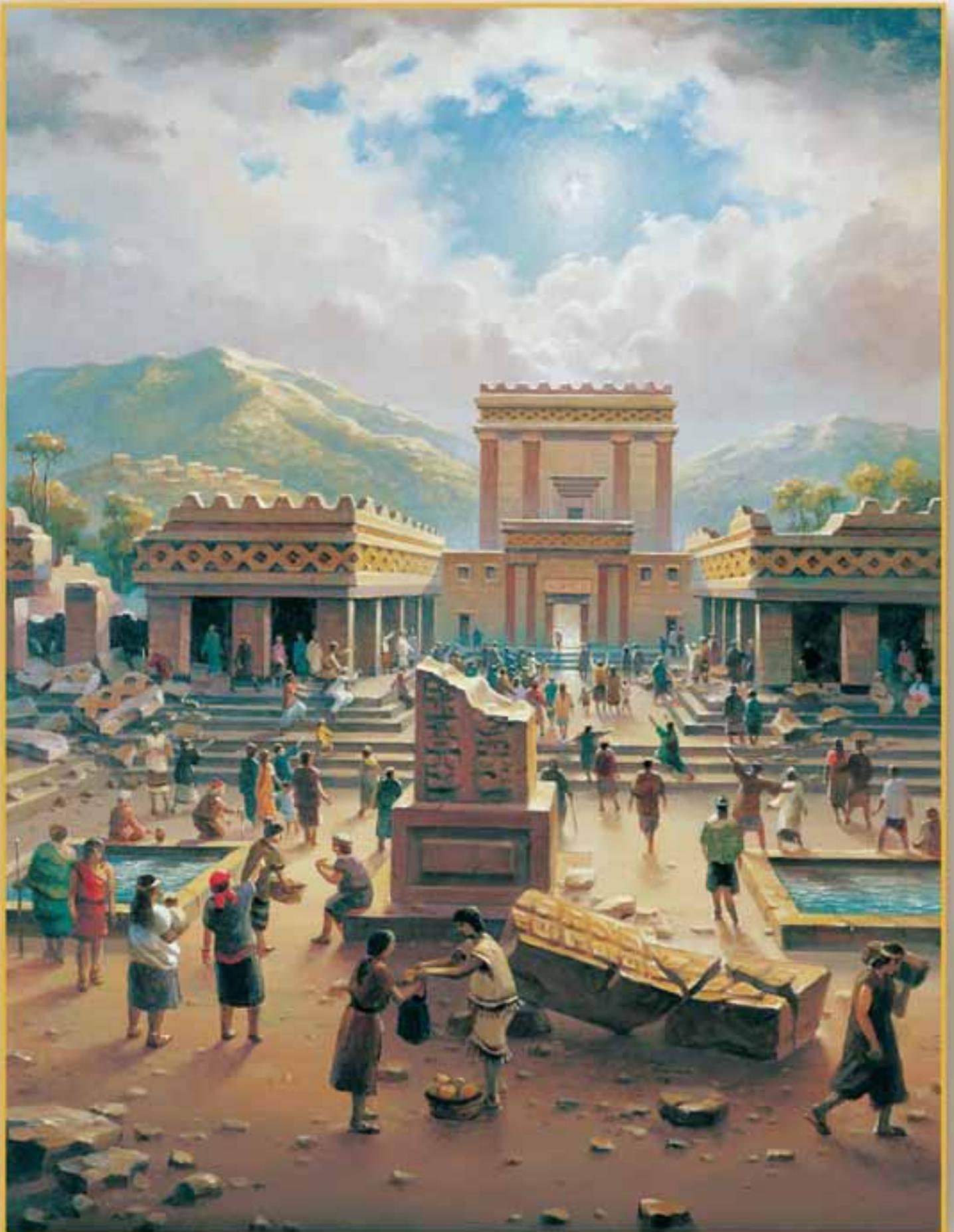
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THE FRIEND COVER

Photograph by Ruth Schönwald.

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Voice of the Spirit

BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

I feel deeply my responsibility to teach sacred things. I am so aware that the world is changing and will be vastly different from the one I have known. Values have shifted. Basic decency and respect for good things are eroding. A moral blackness is settling in. In many ways our young people are the hope of the future, like valuable diamonds that shine better against a dark background.

I turn to a scriptural text found in the Doctrine and Covenants: “Give ear to the voice of the living God.”¹ The voice of the Spirit is available to all. The Lord said, “The Spirit enlighteneth every man [and every woman] . . . that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit.” He further said that “every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father.”² Some people are seeking to find the abundant life. Paul made it clear that it is “the spirit [that] giveth life.”³ Indeed, the Savior said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”⁴

Joy Is a Gift

One might ask, then what are the fruits of the Spirit? Paul answered this by saying they

are “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”⁵ The joy we seek is not a temporary emotional high, but a habitual inner joy learned from long experience and trust in God. Lehi’s teaching to his son Jacob declares, “Men are, that they might have joy.”⁶ To achieve this great objective, we must “give ear to the voice of the living God.”

I wish to testify as a living witness that joy does come through listening to the Spirit, for I have experienced it. Those who live the gospel learn to live “after the manner of happiness”⁷ as did the Nephites. All over the world, in the many countries where the Church is established, members could add their testimonies to mine. Abundant evidence verifies the promise of peace, hope, love, and joy as gifts of the Spirit. Our voices join in a united petition for all of God’s children to partake of these gifts also.

Voices of the World

But we hear other voices. Paul said, “There are . . . so many kinds of voices in the world”⁸ that compete with the voice of the Spirit. The



I wish to testify as a living witness that joy does come through listening to the Spirit, for I have experienced it.

Spirit's voice is ever present, but it is calm. Said Isaiah, "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."⁹ The adversary tries to smother this voice with a multitude of loud, persistent, persuasive, and appealing voices:

- Murmuring voices that conjure up perceived injustices.
- Whining voices that abhor challenge and work.
- Seductive voices that offer sensual enticements.
- Soothing voices that lull us into carnal security.
- Intellectual voices that profess sophistication and superiority.
- Proud voices that rely on the arm of flesh.
- Flattering voices that puff us up with pride.
- Cynical voices that destroy hope.
- Entertaining voices that promote pleasure seeking.
- Commercial voices that tempt us to "spend money for that which is of no worth, [and our] labor for that which cannot satisfy."¹⁰
- Delirious voices that spawn the desire for a "high." I refer not to a drug- or alcohol-induced high, but to the pursuing of dangerous, death-defying experiences for nothing more than a thrill. Life, even our own, is so precious that we are accountable to the Lord for it, and we should not trifle with it. Once gone, it cannot be called back.

Bombarded with Messages

Today we are barraged by multitudes of voices telling us how to live, how to gratify our passions, how to have it all. At our fingertips we have software, databases, television channels, interactive computer modems, satellite receivers, and communications networks that suffocate us with information. There are fewer places of refuge and serenity. Our young people are bombarded with evil and wickedness like no other generation. As I contemplate this prospect, I am reminded of the poet T. S. Eliot's words: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"¹¹

It may be harder for our rising generation to be faithful, perhaps in some ways even more challenging than pulling a handcart across the plains. When someone died in the wilderness of frontier America, that person's physical remains were buried and the handcarts continued west, but the mourning survivors had hope for their loved one's eternal soul. However, when someone dies spiritually in the wilderness of sin, hope may be replaced by dread and fear for the loved one's eternal welfare.

Many in the younger generation have been conditioned by the world to want it all and to want it now. They do not want to save or work. Such self-centered, impatient desires make them susceptible to temptation. The Book of Mormon identifies four categories of enticements that Satan appeals to:

- Getting gain.
- Gaining power over the flesh.
- Gaining popularity in the eyes of the world.
- Seeking the lusts of the flesh and the things of the world.¹²

Satan's tactic is to "turn their hearts away from the truth, that they become blinded and understand not the things which are prepared for them."¹³ He creates a smoke screen that obscures our vision and diverts our attention.

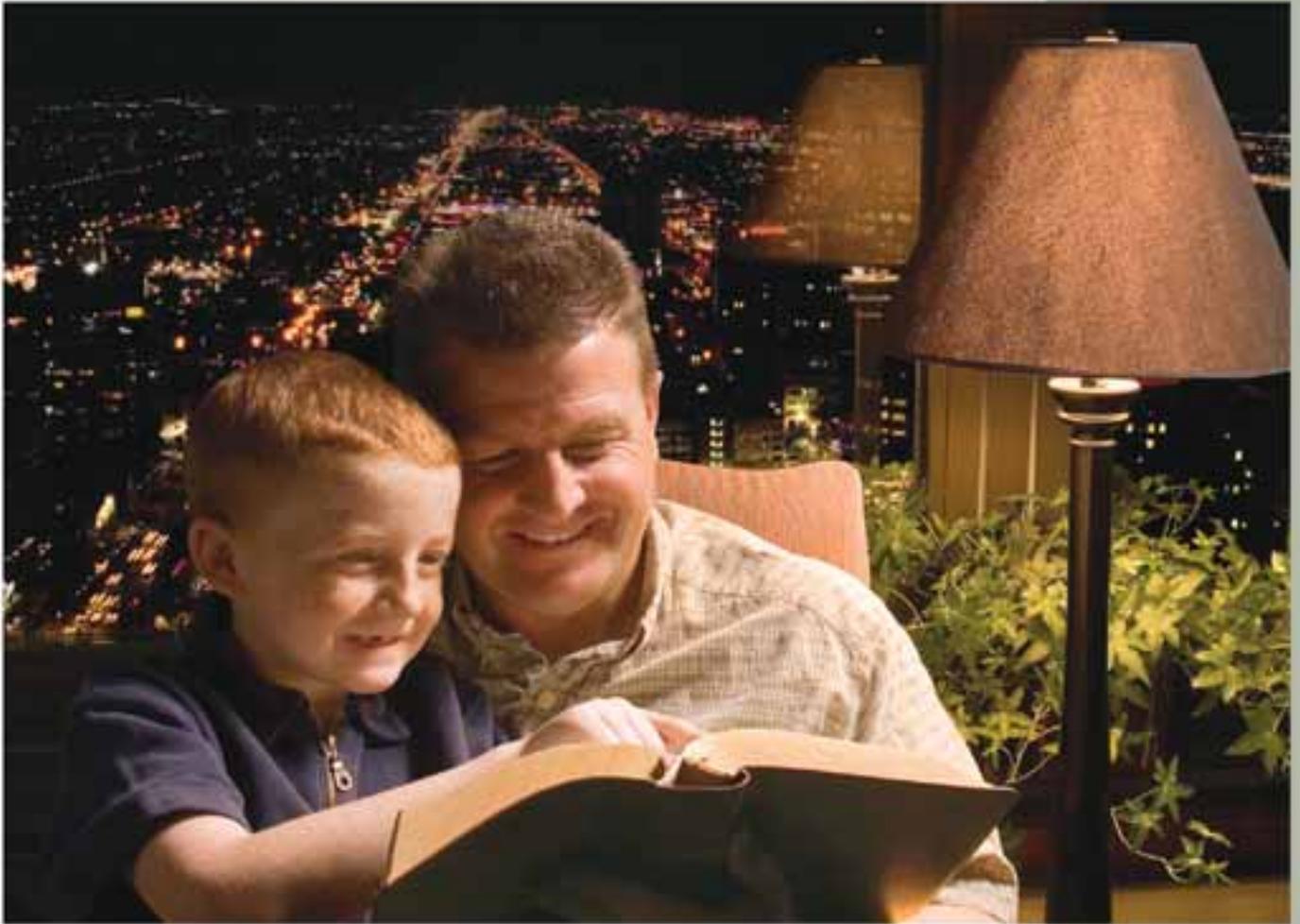
President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945) stated: "If we are faithful in keeping the commandments of God His promises will be fulfilled to the very letter. . . . The trouble is, the adversary of men's souls blinds their minds. He throws dust, so to speak, in their eyes, and they are blinded with the things of this world."¹⁴

Hearing Righteous Voices

How are we possibly going to select which voices we will listen to and believe? The implications for us as individuals are staggering. To spiritually survive, we must do at least these four things.



*As tiny drops
of water
shape a
landscape, so our
minute-by-minute
choices shape our
character.*



First, we must exercise moral agency wisely. Amaleki tells us how we can make proper choices: “There is nothing which is good save it comes from the Lord: and that which is evil cometh from the devil.”¹⁵ Every moment demands that we choose, over and over again, between that which comes from the Lord and that which comes from the devil. As tiny drops of water shape a landscape, so our minute-by-minute choices shape our character.

Second, we must have a purpose. The late prime minister David Ben-Gurion of Israel once made a statement about Leon Trotsky, one of the architects of the Russian Communist revolution. Trotsky, he said, was no leader. He was brilliant, but he was no leader because he had no purpose.¹⁶ Everyone in life needs to have a purpose. As members of Christ’s Church, we are to

consider the end of our salvation.¹⁷ Someone has said, “You must stand up for something, or you will fall for everything.”

The more righteous part of the Nephites had to focus their attention in order to hear the voice that preceded the Savior’s appearance among them. “They heard a voice as if it came out of heaven; and they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; and it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center, insomuch that there was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn.”¹⁸ They heard the voice a second time and did not understand. When they heard the voice the third time, they “did open their ears to hear it; and

I suggest a simple solution for selecting the channel to which we attune ourselves: follow the voice of the Spirit. This solution is peaceful in a world enamored of that which is loud, incessant, and fast paced.

their eyes were towards the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came.”¹⁹ If we are to hearken to the voice of the Spirit, we too must open our ears, turn the eye of faith to the source of the voice, and look steadfastly towards heaven.

Third, we must strengthen our testimony. We all need to study the plan of salvation and learn of our relationship to God. As we walk by faith, we will have confirmed in our hearts spiritual experiences which will strengthen our faith and testimony.

Fourth, we must search the scriptures, which are “the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.”²⁰ The Lord also said of His word, as found in the scriptures, “For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you.”²¹

I suggest a simple solution for selecting the channel to which we attune ourselves: listen to and follow the voice of the Spirit. This is an ancient solution, even eternal, and may not be popular in a society that is always looking for something new. It requires patience in a world that demands instant gratification. This solution is quiet, peaceful, and subtle in a world enamored of that which is loud, incessant, fast paced, garish, and crude. This solution requires you to be contemplative while your peers seek physical titillation. (This may seem foolish in a time when it is not worth remembering much of the trivial tripe to which we are exposed.) This solution is one unified, consistent, age-old message in a world that quickly becomes bored in the absence of intensity, variety, and novelty. This solution requires us to walk by faith in a world governed by sight.²² With the eye of faith we are to see eternal, unseen, spiritual verities, while the masses of mankind depend solely on temporal things which can be known only through the physical senses.

We need to learn how to ponder the things of the Spirit and to respond to its promptings—to filter out the static generated by Satan. As we become attuned to the Spirit, we “shall hear a word behind [us], saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.”²³ Harkening to the “voice of the living God” will give us “peace in this world, and eternal life in the

world to come.”²⁴ These are the greatest of all the gifts of God.²⁵ ■

NOTES

1. D&C 50:1.
2. D&C 84:46–47.
3. 2 Corinthians 3:6.
4. John 6:63.
5. Galatians 5:22–23.
6. 2 Nephi 2:25.
7. 2 Nephi 5:27.
8. 1 Corinthians 14:10.
9. Isaiah 32:17.
10. 2 Nephi 9:51.
11. “Choruses from ‘The Rock,’ ” *The Complete Poems and Plays* (1930), 96.
12. See 1 Nephi 22:23.
13. D&C 78:10.
14. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (2002), 30–31.
15. Omni 1:25.
16. See Academy of Achievement, “Interview: Shimon Peres,” Internet, <http://www.achievement.org>.
17. See D&C 46:7.
18. 3 Nephi 11:3.
19. See 3 Nephi 11:4–5.
20. D&C 68:4.
21. D&C 18:35.
22. See 2 Corinthians 4:18; 5:7.
23. Isaiah 30:21.
24. D&C 59:23.
25. See D&C 14:7.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerfully studying this message, share it using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. Following are some examples:

1. Turn on a radio, and tune it to different stations. Point out how some stations come in clearly and some have static. Compare the static to voices of the world and the clear reception to being in tune with the voice of the Spirit. Share some of President Faust’s counsel on listening to the Spirit.
2. To discuss how to better hear the Spirit’s voice, talk with the family about some of the 11 voices President Faust mentions that can mask our reception of the Spirit or about the 4 ways he teaches “to spiritually survive.” Ask family members to share experiences they have had in recognizing and following the voice of the Spirit.
3. Ask family members to read the following scriptures that President Faust cites: John 6:63; 2 Corinthians 3:6; D&C 50:1; 84:46–47. Invite them to find the common theme in these verses. Read parts of the article that describe the blessings that can come from following the voice of the Spirit. Testify of the power of the Spirit in your own life.

Wearing Two Names

To represent the Savior, I had to reconcile with my father.

BY JEAN BRICE LAGOUA

A year after I joined the Church, I had a desire to serve a full-time mission. During my interview with the bishop to fill out my application, he asked me, “Do you have any problems with anyone that you have not yet resolved?”

I answered no, because I told myself that I didn’t, ignoring the bad feelings between my father and myself. I declared myself worthy and ready to serve.

The days that followed were extremely painful. The idea that I would have to reconcile with my father bitterly invaded my soul. My father never worried about his children. We all had reached the point where we no longer spoke to him. If I was ever asked about my father, I answered without remorse, “He is dead.”

I really couldn’t see any reason to try to reconcile with someone who wouldn’t take time to listen to me. I didn’t feel that I had wronged him. On the contrary, I felt that he was the one who needed to come see me and ask for my forgiveness. Nevertheless, the idea that I needed to go see my father continued to torment me.

One evening I went to visit him. He lived some 220 miles (360 km) away. The first hour of our conversation was a time for insults, mutual accusation, and words that truly hurt. In spite of our angry words, my intention to reconcile was strong. With the help of the Spirit of God, we finally managed, after five hours, to end with positive feelings.

After many tears were shed, my father and I were able to embrace, happy to finally understand the core of the problem that had kept us so angry at each other for so long. At the end, my father took a glass of warm water and, while speaking, slowly poured out the contents of the glass, as we do in Africa to represent a reconciliation. He then gave me his blessing after reviewing all that had happened in the past and committing to repent of his mistakes.

I am so grateful to Heavenly Father, who inspired me to seek such a discussion that gave way to mutual repentance. As a missionary in the Ivory Coast Abidjan

Mission I was happy to wear a badge on which was inscribed two names: Lagoua, my father’s name, and Jesus Christ, my Savior’s name. ■



The Fall

of Adam and Eve



A continuing series examining doctrines unique to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Most Christian churches teach that the Fall was a tragedy, that if Adam and Eve had not partaken of the forbidden fruit, they and all their posterity could now be living in immortal bliss in the Garden of Eden. But truth revealed to latter-day prophets teaches that the Fall was not a tragedy—without it Adam and Eve would have had no posterity. Thus, the Fall was a necessary step in Heavenly Father’s plan to bring about the eternal happiness of His children.

No Death, No Posterity, No Progress

“If Adam had not transgressed,” Lehi taught his son Jacob, “he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. . . .

“And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.

“But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

“Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:22–25).

After Adam and Eve partook of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, their eyes were opened, and Eve expressed gladness at the opportunity their transgression made possible: “Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient” (Moses 5:11).

Partaking of the fruit brought mortality, with its many opportunities to choose between good and evil, and

enabled Adam and Eve to bear children. Thus the Fall opened the door for Heavenly Father's children to come into the world, obtain physical bodies, and participate in "the great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8). "Therefore this life became a probationary state," a time to learn and grow, to repent and overcome weakness, "a time to prepare to meet God" (Alma 12:24).

Transgression, Not Sin

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) said: "I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin. . . . This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin . . . for it was something that Adam and Eve had to do!"¹

Regarding this distinction, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles observed: "This suggested contrast between a *sin* and a *transgression* reminds us of the careful wording in the second article of faith: 'We believe that men will be punished for their own *sins*, and not for Adam's *transgression*' (emphasis added). It also echoes a familiar distinction in the law. Some acts, like murder, are crimes because they are inherently wrong. Other acts, like operating without a license, are crimes only because they are legally prohibited. Under these distinctions, the act that produced the Fall was not a sin—inherently wrong—but a transgression—wrong because it was formally prohibited. These words are not always used to denote something different, but this distinction seems meaningful in the circumstances of the Fall."²

Even though Adam and Eve had not sinned, because of their transgression they had to face certain consequences, two of which were spiritual death and physical death. Physical death came to Adam and Eve at the end of their earthly lives, but spiritual death occurred as they were cast out of the Garden of Eden, being cut off from the presence of God (see Alma 42:9).



All descendants of Adam and Eve inherit certain effects from the Fall, but because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ we are accountable only for our own sins.

Original Sin

The result of our first parents' transgression, explained President Smith, "was banishment from the presence of God and bringing . . . physical death into the world. The majority . . . [of Christians] maintain that every child born into this world is tainted with 'original sin,' or partakes of Adam's transgression in his birth. The second Article of Faith contradicts this foolish and erroneous doctrine."³ All descendants of Adam and Eve inherit certain effects from the Fall, but because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ we are held accountable only for our own sins. Children who die before the age of accountability are "alive in Christ"

(Moroni 8:12) and have no need of repentance or baptism (see Moroni 8:8–11).

Commandments in the Garden

The Lord gave Adam and Eve commandments in the Garden of Eden, two of which were to multiply and replenish the earth (see Genesis 1:28) and to not partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (see Genesis 2:17). These two commandments were designed to place Adam and Eve in a position where they had to make a choice. President Smith taught: "The Lord said to Adam that if he wished to remain as he was in the garden, then he was not to eat the fruit, but if he desired to eat it and partake of death he was at liberty to do so."⁴ Faced with this dilemma, Adam and Eve chose death—both physical and spiritual—which opened the door for themselves and their posterity to gain knowledge and experience and to participate in the Father's plan of happiness leading to eternal life. ■

NOTES

1. *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 1:114–15.
2. "The Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 72.
3. *Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. (1957–66), 1:82.
4. *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 4:81.

THE *Profile* OF A PROPHET

BY PRESIDENT HUGH B. BROWN (1883–1975)

Hugh B. Brown was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, on October 24, 1883, to Lydia Jane and Homer Manly Brown. When he was 15, his family moved to Canada. On June 17, 1908, he married Zina Young Card, daughter of Charles O. Card (founder of Cardston, Alberta, Canada) and granddaughter of Brigham Young, in the Salt Lake Temple. They were the parents of six daughters and two sons. President Brown practiced law, first in Canada and later in the United States. He served overseas as a major in the Canadian army during World War I. From 1946 to 1950 he was a professor of religion and coordinator of veterans' affairs at Brigham Young University. In 1953, while working as president of Ricbland Oil Development Company of Canada, Ltd., he was called to serve as an Assistant to the Twelve Apostles. On April 10, 1958, he was ordained an Apostle, and on June 22, 1961, he was sustained as a counselor to President David O. McKay. He served in the First Presidency until President McKay's death on January 18, 1970, when he resumed his position in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He died on December 2, 1975.

I should like to be for a few minutes a witness in support of the proposition that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in our day and that this is His Church, which was organized under His direction through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I should like to give some reasons for the faith I have and for my allegiance to the Church. Perhaps I can do this more quickly by referring to an interview I had in London, England, in 1939, just before the outbreak of [World War II]. I had met a very prominent English gentleman, a member of the House of Commons, formerly one of the justices of the Supreme Court of England. In my conversations with this gentleman on various subjects, "vexations of the soul" he called them, we talked about business and law, about politics, international relations and



Only by the whisperings of the Holy Spirit can one come to know the things of God. By those whisperings I say I know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God.

war, and we frequently discussed religion. He called me on the phone one day and asked if I would meet him at his office and explain some phases of the gospel. He said: "I think there is going to be a war. If there is, you will have to return to America, and we may not meet again." His statement regarding the imminence of war and the possibility that we would not meet again proved to be prophetic. When I went to his office, he said he was intrigued by some things I had told him. He asked me to prepare a brief on Mormonism . . . and discuss it with him as I would discuss a legal problem.

He said: "You have told me that you believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet. You have said to me that you believe that God the Father and Jesus of Nazareth appeared





to Joseph Smith. I cannot understand how a barrister and solicitor from Canada, a man trained in logic and evidence, could accept such absurd statements. What you tell me about Joseph Smith seems fantastic, but I think you should take three days at least to prepare a brief and permit me to examine it and question you on it.”

I suggested that we proceed at once and have an examination for discovery, which is briefly a meeting of opposing sides in a lawsuit where the plaintiff and defendant, with their attorneys, meet to examine each other’s claims and see if they can find some area of agreement, thus saving the time of the court later on. I said perhaps we could see whether we had some common ground from which we could discuss my “fantastic” ideas. He agreed to that quite readily.

I can only give you, in the few minutes at my disposal,

a condensed and abbreviated synopsis of the three-hour conversation which followed. In the interest of time I shall resort to the question-and-answer method rather than narration. I began by asking, “May I proceed, sir, on the assumption that you are a Christian?”

“I am.”

“I assume you believe in the Bible—the Old and New Testament?”

“I do!”

“Do you believe in prayer?”

“I do!”

“You say that my belief that God spoke to a man in this age is fantastic and absurd?”

“To me, it is.”

“Do you believe that God ever did speak to anyone?”

“Certainly. All through the Bible we have evidence of that.”

“Did He speak to Adam?”

“Yes.”

“To Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Joseph, and on through the prophets?”

“I believe He spoke to each of them.”

“Do you believe that contact between God and man ceased when Jesus appeared on the earth?”

“No, such communication reached its climax, its apex at that time.”

“Do you believe that Jesus was the Son of God?”

“He was.”

“Do you believe, sir, that after Jesus was resurrected a certain lawyer, who was also a tent maker by the name of Saul of Tarsus, when on his way to Damascus, talked with Jesus of Nazareth, who had been crucified, resurrected, and had ascended into heaven?”

“I do.”

“Whose voice did Saul hear?”

“It was the voice of Jesus Christ, for He so introduced Himself.”

“Then, . . . I am submitting to you in all seriousness

that it was standard procedure in Bible times for God to talk to man.”

“I think I will admit that, but it stopped shortly after the first century of the Christian era.”

“Why do you think it stopped?”

“I can’t say.”

“You think that God hasn’t spoken since then?”

“I am sure He hasn’t.”

“There must be a reason; can you give me a reason?”

“I do not know.”

“May I suggest some possible reasons: perhaps God does not speak to man anymore because He cannot. He has lost the power.”

He said, “Of course that would be blasphemous.”

“Well, then, if you don’t accept that, perhaps He doesn’t speak to men because He doesn’t love us anymore. He is no longer interested in the affairs of men.”

“No,” he said, “God loves all men, and He is no respecter of persons.”

“Well, then, if He could speak and if He loves us, then the only other possible answer, as I see it, is that we don’t need Him. We have made such rapid strides in science, we are so well educated, that we don’t need God anymore.”

And then he said, and his voice trembled as he thought of impending war: “Mr. Brown, there never was a time in the history of the world when the voice of God was needed as it is needed now. Perhaps you can tell me why He doesn’t speak.”

My answer was: “He does speak. He has spoken, but men need faith to hear Him.”

Then we proceeded to prepare what I may

call a “profile of a prophet.” . . . We agreed, between us, that the following characteristics should distinguish a man who claims to be a prophet.

A. He will boldly claim that God [has] spoken to him.

B. Any man so claiming would be a dignified man with a dignified message; no table-jumping, no whisperings from the dead, no clairvoyance, but an intelligent statement of truth.

C. Any man claiming to be a prophet of God would declare his message without any fear and without making any weak concessions to public opinion.

D. If he were speaking for God, he could not make concessions although what he taught would be new and contrary to the accepted teachings of the day. A prophet bears witness to what he has seen and heard and seldom tries to make a case by argument. His message and not himself is important.

E. Such a man would speak in the name of the Lord, saying, “Thus saith the Lord,” as did Moses, Joshua, and others.

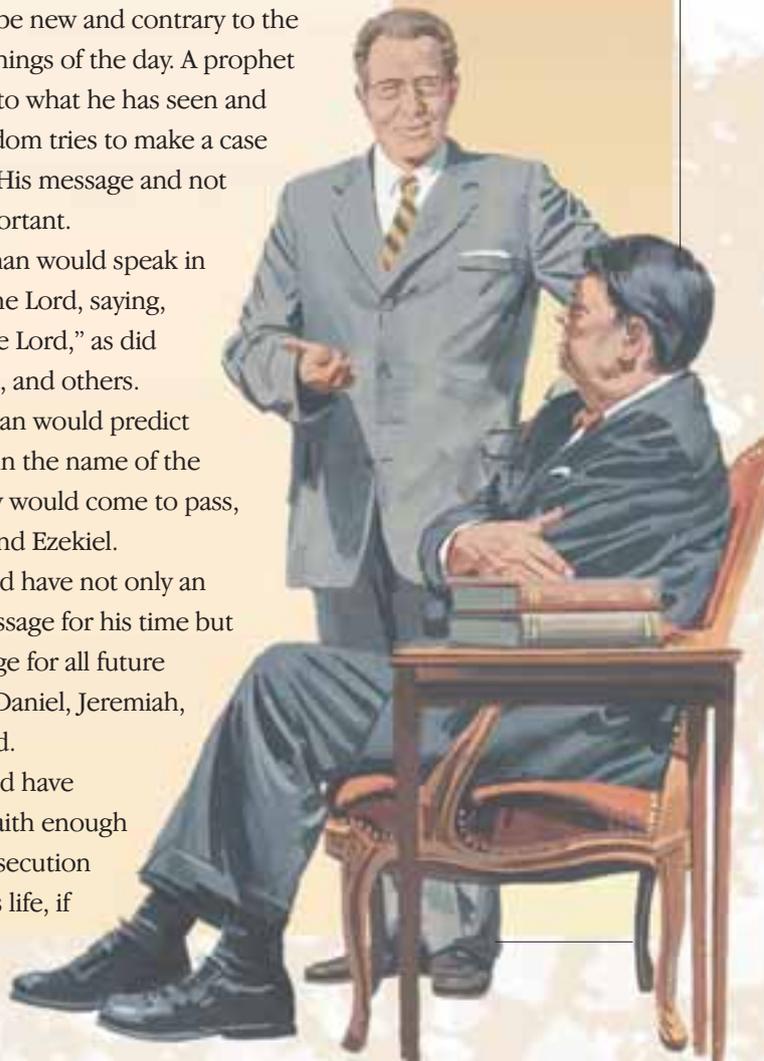
F. Such a man would predict future events in the name of the Lord, and they would come to pass, as did Isaiah and Ezekiel.

G. He would have not only an important message for his time but often a message for all future time, such as Daniel, Jeremiah, and others had.

H. He would have courage and faith enough to endure persecution and to give his life, if

Mr. Brown,” he said, “there never was a time in the history of the world when the voice of God was needed as it is needed now. Perhaps you can tell me why He doesn’t speak.”

My answer was: “He does speak. He has spoken, but men need faith to hear Him.”



He sat and listened intently. Then he said: "Mr. Brown, I wonder if your people appreciate the import of your message."

need be, for the cause he espoused, such as Peter, Paul, and others did.

I. Such a man would denounce wickedness fearlessly. He would generally be rejected or persecuted by the people of his time, but later generations, the descendants of his persecutors, would build monuments in his honor.

J. He would be able to do superhuman things, things that no man could do without God's help. The consequence or result of his message and work would be convincing evidence of his prophetic calling. "By their fruits ye shall know them" [Matthew 7:20].

K. His teachings would be in strict conformity with scripture, and his words and his writings would become scripture. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).

Now, I have given but an outline which you can fill in and amplify and then measure and judge the Prophet Joseph Smith by the work and stature of other prophets.

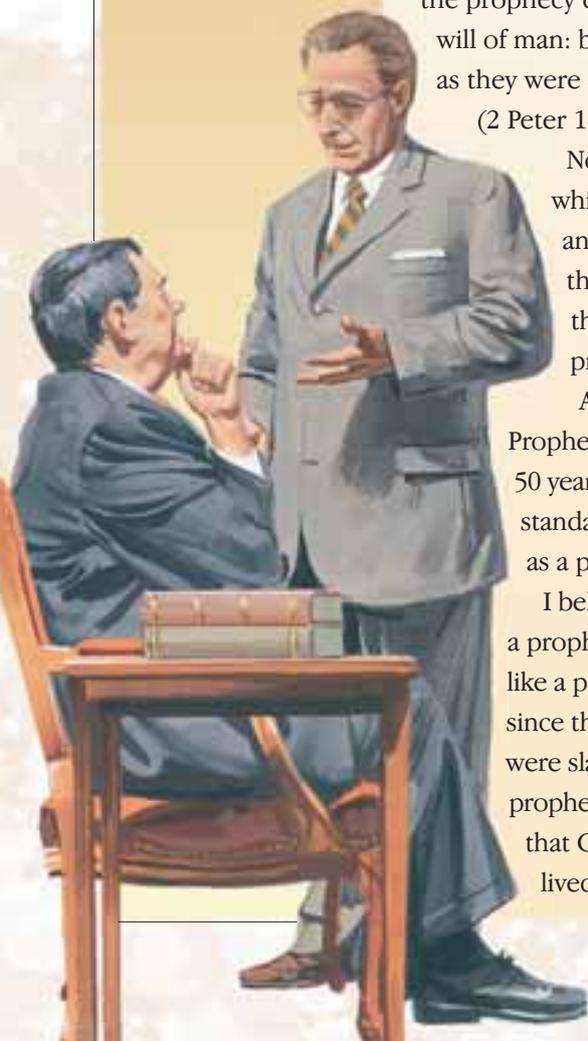
As a student of the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith for more than 50 years, I say to you . . . , by these standards Joseph Smith qualifies as a prophet of God.

I believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God because he talked like a prophet. He was the first man since the Apostles of Jesus Christ were slain to make the claim which prophets have always made, [namely,] that God had spoken to him. He lived and died like a prophet. I

believe he was a prophet of God because he gave to this world some of the greatest of all revelations. I believe that he was a prophet of God because he predicted many things which have come to pass, things which only God could bring to pass.

John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, declared, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" [Revelation 19:10]. If Joseph Smith had the testimony of Jesus, he had the spirit of prophecy, and if he had the spirit of prophecy, he was a prophet. I submit to you, and I submitted to my friend, that as much as any man who ever lived he had a testimony of Jesus, for, like the Apostles of old, he saw Him and heard Him speak. He gave his life for that testimony. I challenge any man to name one who has given more evidence of the divine calling of Jesus Christ than did the Prophet Joseph Smith.

I believe the Prophet Joseph Smith was a prophet because he did many superhuman things. One was translating the Book of Mormon. Some people will not agree, but I submit to you that the Prophet Joseph Smith in translating the Book of Mormon did a superhuman work. I ask you . . . to undertake to write a story on the ancient inhabitants of America. Write as he did without any source of material. Include in your story 54 chapters dealing with wars, 21 historical chapters, 55 chapters on visions and prophecies, and, remember, when you begin to write on visions and prophecies you must have your record agree meticulously with the Bible. You write 71 chapters on doctrine and exhortation, and, here too, you must check every statement with the scriptures or you will be proven to be a fraud. You must write 21 chapters on the



ministry of Christ, and everything you claim He said and did and every testimony you write in your book about Him must agree absolutely with the New Testament.

I ask you, would you like to undertake such a task? I would suggest to you too that you must employ figures of speech, similes, metaphors, narrations, exposition, description, oratory, epic, lyric, logic, and parables. Undertake that, will you? I ask you to remember that the man that translated the Book of Mormon was a young man who hadn't had the opportunity of schooling that you have had, and yet he dictated that book in just over two months and made very few, if any, corrections. For over 100 years, some of the best students and scholars of the world have been trying to prove from the Bible that the Book of Mormon is false, but not one of them has been able to prove that anything he wrote was not in strict harmony with the scriptures. . . .

Joseph Smith undertook and accomplished other superhuman tasks; among them I list the following: He organized the Church. (I call attention to the fact that no constitution effected by human agency has survived 100 years without modification or amendment, even the Constitution of the United States. The basic law or constitution of the Church has never been altered.) He undertook to carry the gospel message to all nations, which is a superhuman task still in progress. He undertook, by divine command, to gather thousands of people to Zion. He instituted vicarious work for the dead and built temples for that purpose. He promised that certain signs should follow the believers, and there are thousands of witnesses who certify that this promise has been fulfilled.

I said to my friend, “. . . I cannot understand your saying to me that my claims are fantastic. Nor can I understand why Christians who claim to believe in Christ would persecute and put to death a man whose whole purpose was to prove the truth of the things they themselves were declaring, namely, that Jesus was the Christ.



I could understand them for persecuting Joseph if he had said, 'I am Christ,' or if he had said, 'There is no Christ,' or if he had said someone else is Christ. Then Christians believing in Christ would be justified in opposing him. But what he said was, 'He whom ye claim to serve, declare I unto you. . . . I testify that I saw Him and talked with Him. He

is the Son of God. Why persecute me for that?' . . .

Perhaps some of you are wondering how the judge reacted to our discussion. He sat and listened intently; he then asked some very pointed and searching questions, and at the end of the period he said: "Mr. Brown, I wonder if your people appreciate the import of your message. Do you?" He said, "If what you have told me is true, it is the greatest message that has come to this earth since the angels announced the birth of Christ."

This was a judge speaking, a great statesman, an intelligent man. He threw out the challenge: "Do you appreciate the import of what you say?" He added: "I wish it were true. I hope it may be true. God knows it ought to be true. I would to God," he said, and he wept as he said it, "that some man could appear on earth and authoritatively say, 'Thus saith the Lord.'"

As I intimated, we did not meet again. I have brought to you very briefly some of the reasons why I believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. But undergirding and overarching all that, I say to you from the very center of my heart that by the revelations of the Holy Ghost I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. While these evidences and many others that could be cited may have the effect of giving one an intellectual conviction, only by the whisperings of the Holy Spirit can one come to know the things of God. By those whisperings I say I know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God. I thank God for that knowledge. ■

An excerpt from the edited and published version of a speech delivered at Brigham Young University on October 4, 1955; punctuation, capitalization, and spelling modernized.

Joseph Smith

Prophet of the Restoration



The world in general would not have noted the birth of a baby boy to a struggling farm family in rural Vermont on December 23, 1805. The event was little noticed on earth, but not so in the heavens. This birth had been long ago prophesied, even down to the name of the baby—Joseph (see 2 Nephi 3:15).

This obscure boy was only 14 when the heavens opened to him in a vision of God the Father

and His Son, and young Joseph later learned that his name “should be had for good and evil among all nations” (Joseph Smith—History 1:33).

Today his name lives for good in the hearts of millions. His story is told in a new movie, *Joseph Smith The Prophet of the Restoration*. These scenes are taken from that film, which is now being shown in many Church visitors’ centers around the world.

Young Joseph being comforted by his father before painful surgery (above); carried on the back of his older brother Alvin (right); receiving direction during the appearance of Moroni in his room (opposite page); studying the Bible (inset, opposite page).







The film shows the Prophet Joseph's contemplative, spiritual side (left) as well as key events in his life.



Courting his wife Emma (inset, above left); rejoicing with Emma after the birth of their child (above); rebuking prison guards for their foul talk (left); retrieving the golden plates from the Hill Cumorah (lower left); suffering in Liberty Jail (below).



LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SMITH; RIGHT BOTTOM: PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE



Producing

JOSEPH SMITH THE PROPHET OF THE RESTORATION

How do you tell in 68 minutes the story of someone whose accomplishments were larger than life? In this case, with long-range planning, intense preparation, prayer—and the kind of help that film production companies ordinarily do not get. Those involved in filming *Joseph Smith The Prophet of the Restoration* can attest that there was help with the project beyond what they could have accomplished on their own—help, for example, with casting lead actors and with two perfect days for scheduled filming in the middle of a run of bad weather.

The result is a film that depicts the Prophet Joseph Smith as a man with human qualities but with extraordinary ability to respond to divine direction and to lead others according to that direction.

Production of the film required careful coordination and planning. For example:

- Filming took place over several months in Nauvoo; Upstate New York; the historic Upper Canada Village

near Ottawa; Lincoln’s New Salem Village near Springfield, Illinois; the Mississippi River; Manchester, England; and the Church’s Motion Picture Studio near Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

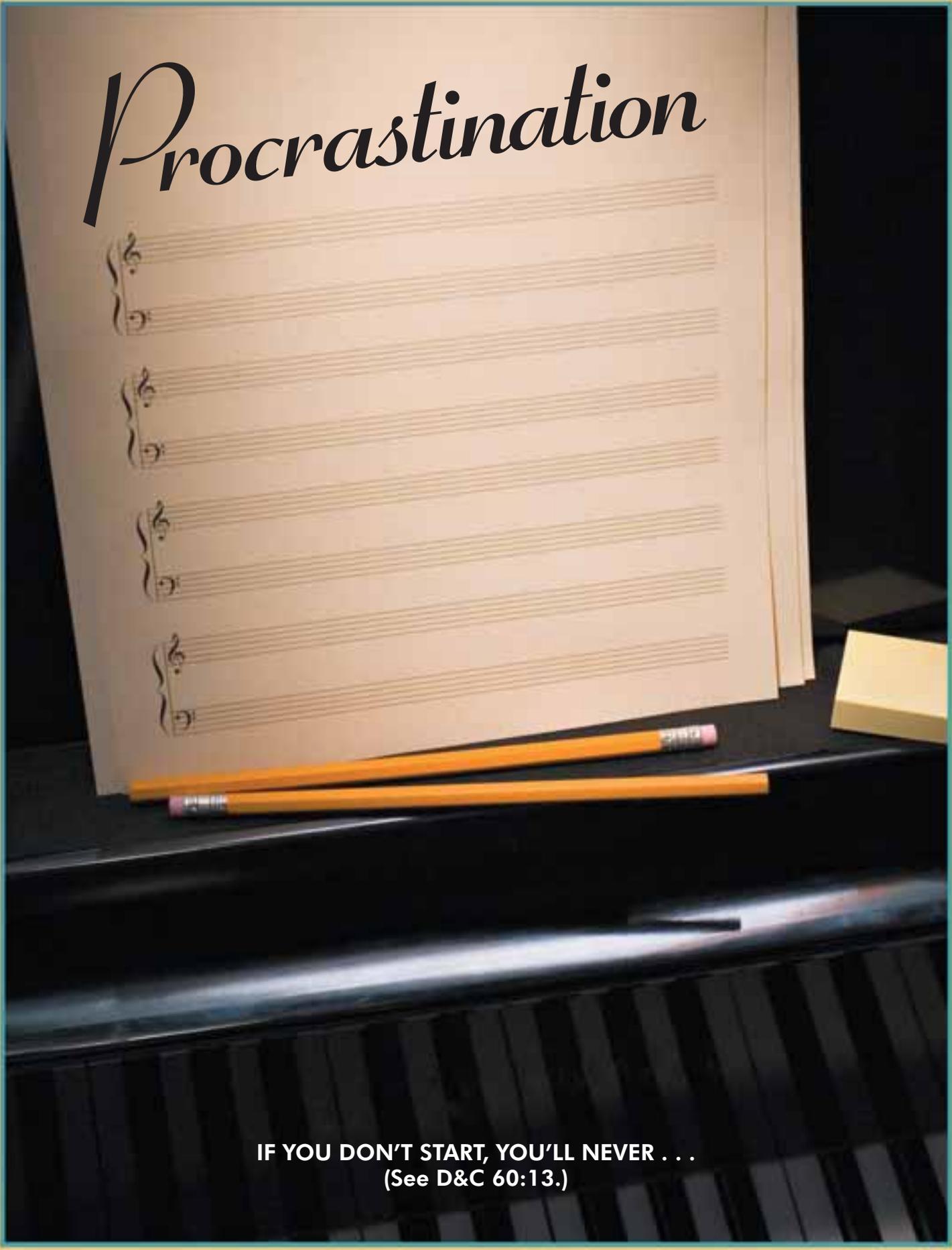
- The film has a principal cast of about 40 individuals. A crew of more than 100 took part in the production, and some scenes included up to 300 local actors as extras. In addition, many locals were hired to help with makeup, hairdressing, and so on, for on-location shooting.
- Wardrobes were extensively researched to create costumes authentic to the early 1800s.
- The film was produced under the direction of the First Presidency and through the Church’s Audiovisual Department. It premiered on December 17, 2005, one week before the 200th anniversary of Joseph Smith’s birth, in the Legacy Theater of the Joseph Smith Memorial Building on Temple Square. ■

Behind-the-scenes work for the production included extensive support from the film crew, makeup artists, and hairdressers (left and below right); spreading snow for a winter scene in Nauvoo (right); and creation of a cramped jail cell on a studio stage (below).



PHOTOGRAPH OF FILMSTRIP © ULTIMATE SYMBOL

Procrastination



**IF YOU DON'T START, YOU'LL NEVER . . .
(See D&C 60:13.)**

Questions & Answers

“What’s the best way to introduce the Book of Mormon to a friend who is a member of another faith?”

L I A H O N A

The best way to share the Book of Mormon is to pray for and follow the inspiration of the Spirit. That means you might share it differently with each friend.

To prepare yourself to share the Book of Mormon, you may want to read the Book of Mormon introduction. It gives a good overview of the book, in terms that you can use when explaining it to your friend.

If your friend doesn’t know what the Book of Mormon is, explain it briefly. Tell him or her that it’s another testament of Jesus Christ, that it is scripture written by prophets who lived on the American continent. You could explain that the Book of Mormon was written for our day and translated by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Then bear your testimony of the Book of Mormon.

After you share a copy of the Book of Mormon, encourage your friend to begin reading it. You could suggest a few passages to start with. Missionaries often invite people

Pray for inspiration to know how best to introduce the Book of Mormon to a friend.

Prepare yourself by studying and praying about the Book of Mormon.

Explain the Book of Mormon simply, suggest a few passages for your friend to start reading, and share your testimony of the book.

If you don’t have a copy to share, your friend can get a free copy of the Book of Mormon through a pass-along card or www.mormon.org.

to read the introduction, 3 Nephi 11, and Moroni 10:3–5. You could even share some favorite verses and tell your friend what they mean to you.

If you don’t have a copy of the Book of Mormon to share, refer your friend to www.mormon.org or give him or her a pass-along card. Your friend can get a free copy of the book by requesting it on the Web site. The copy will be delivered by mail or by the missionaries, whichever way your friend prefers.

It’s important to share the Book of Mormon with people because it testifies of Christ and of the Restoration of the gospel. President Gordon B. Hinckley said recently: “The Book of Mormon has come forth by the gift and power of God. It speaks as a voice from the dust in testimony of the Son of God. It speaks of His birth, of His ministry, of His Crucifixion and Resurrection, and of His appearance to the righteous in the land Bountiful on the American continent.



“It is a tangible thing that can be handled, that can be read, that can be tested. It carries within its covers a promise of its divine origin. Millions now have put it to the test and found it to be a true and sacred record” (“The Great Things Which God Has Revealed,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 81–82).

Invite your friend to be one of the millions who have read and prayed about the Book of Mormon and have come to know of its truth.

READERS



I always had the desire to share the Book of Mormon, but I never found an ideal way. In time, I gained confidence in the doctrines of

the gospel and desired to share with everyone the same joy that I felt when following Jesus Christ. Only then did I discover that to present the Book of Mormon to another person I should bear my testimony of the changes that it brought in my life and in the lives of

other people. If we are good friends, they will learn from our example that this testimony is true, and they will have the desire to acquire it.

Gisela M., 21, Mozambique



Once a friend of mine of another religion was celebrating her birthday. I resolved to present her with a copy of the Book of Mormon. I wrote in the dedication that this was the most precious thing I could

give her and wrapped it. This aroused her curiosity, and she began to read it that same instant.

Marcus A., 16, Brazil

Sharing the Book of Mormon can be scary, but I know that if you pray for help and the guidance of the Spirit beforehand, things will go well. As for the last four copies I have given away, I have marked some of my favorite scriptures (including Moroni 10:3–6) with a red pencil, then placed a note card in the book to mark the page. That way the person I am giving it to will have a place to start. A 500-page book can be intimidating. I also usually explain that the people in the Book of Mormon are the “other sheep” Christ was referring to in John 10:16. Then I share my testimony with the person I am giving it to.

Rebecca C., 17, Illinois, USA



First find common ground by telling your friend that we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and in the Bible as the word of God. Then tell him or her we believe in another book of scripture called the Book of Mormon and that it also testifies that Jesus is the Christ. You can share some Bible scriptures that talk about the Book of Mormon such as Psalm 85:11; Isaiah 29:11–12; Ezekiel 37:15–17; and John 10:16.

Christopher W., 16, California, USA

The best way for me to share the Book of Mormon is to always carry my scriptures with me to school and on vacations. Reading the Book of Mormon gives me a great chance to share it with others because they want to know what I’m reading. This has worked very well for me, and I’ve had two of my friends ask me for a Book of Mormon. I help them understand that God doesn’t just remember one nation, but everyone.

Matilde C., 18, Peru



I*f we have the desire and we pray about it, we can receive inspiration on . . . how to share the Book of Mormon with a neighbor. . . . Let’s each find the best way according to our best possibilities.”*

Elder Charles Didier of the Presidency of the Seventy, in “Teaching from the Heart,” *Liahona and Ensign*, June 2004, 13.



A good way to present the Book of Mormon is to say, “I would like to give you a book that contains the history of a people who lived in the Americas.” I would write in a dedication about my feelings and respect for the Book of Mormon. I would also ask the Lord to help my friend understand that the Book of Mormon is an inspired book.

Ana B., 15, Brazil

Present the Book of Mormon accompanied by the Bible. That way, you can explain that it is another testament of Christ and that these two books complement each other. You can also explain that Christ came to America and that the account of His visit in the Book of Mormon helps us better understand the life of Christ. I know this book is true and that it helps us in our lives and will help our friends.

Cathy U., 17, France

Liahona and readers’ responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Youth readers: Send your answer, along with your name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and photograph (including your parent’s written permission to print the photo) to:

Questions and Answers 7/06

50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150–3220, USA

Or e-mail: liahona@ldschurch.org

Please respond by July 15, 2006.

QUESTION

“I’ve come back to church and tried to make a fresh start in life after making some mistakes, but I’m afraid of falling again. How can I overcome this fear?” ■

Exercising Charity and Nurturing Those in Need



Prayerfully select and read from this message the scriptures and teachings that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Share your experiences and testimony. Invite those you teach to do the same.

Blessings of Belonging to Relief

Society: In keeping with the Relief Society's motto, "Charity never faileth," each sister is encouraged to develop and exercise the pure love of Christ in all aspects of her life. She is also encouraged to nurture and care for those in her family, her ward, and her community.

What Is Charity?

Moroni 7:47: "Charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"We often equate charity with visiting the sick, taking in casseroles to those in need, or sharing our excess with those who are less fortunate. But really, true charity is much, much more.

"Real charity is not something you give away; it is something that you acquire and make a part of yourself. And when the virtue of charity becomes implanted in your heart, you are never the same again. . . .

"Perhaps the greatest charity comes when we are kind to each other, when we don't judge or categorize someone else, when we simply give each other the benefit of the doubt or remain quiet. Charity is accepting someone's differences, weaknesses, and shortcomings; having patience with someone who has let us down; or resisting the impulse to become offended. . . . Charity is refusing to take advantage of another's weakness and being willing to forgive someone who has hurt us.

Charity is expecting the best of each other" ("The Tongue Can Be a Sharp Sword," *Ensign*, May 1992, 18–19).

Moroni 7:48: "Pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love."

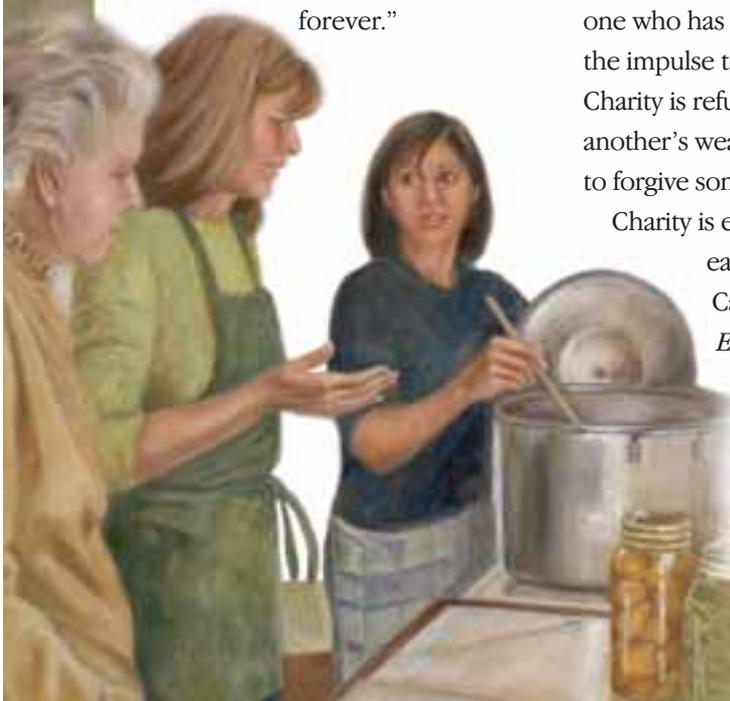
How Can We Exercise Charity and Nurture Those in Need?

Anne C. Pingree, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency:

"I testify as did Alma that 'by small and simple things are great things brought to pass' [Alma 37:6]. In our homes, those small and simple things—our daily acts of charity—proclaim our conviction, 'Here am I; send me.' I leave my witness that the greatest act of charity in time and all eternity was the Atonement of Jesus Christ. He willingly laid down His life to atone for my sins and yours. I express my devotion to His cause and my desire to serve Him always, wherever He calls me" ("Charity: One Family, One Home at a Time," *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 110).

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95): "We entreat you to minister with your powerful influence for good in strengthening our families, our church, and our communities. . . .

"Those who follow Christ seek to follow his example. His suffering in behalf of our sins, shortcomings, sorrows, and sicknesses should motivate us to similarly reach out in charity and compassion to those around us. It is most appropriate that the motto of the longest-standing women's organization in the world—the Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—is 'Charity Never Faileth'" ("Stand Firm in the Faith," *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 97). ■



THE ANSWER IN THE BOOK

BY ANDREW CONFER,
AS TOLD TO MILES T. TUASON

Elder Confer, teach me,” said the voice on the other end of the line, “but don’t teach me about the Book of Mormon.” Christine Yong, our new investigator, was wanting to know more about our religion.

As missionaries in the Singapore Mission, my companion and I were

excited to have an investigator like Christine. She and her sister Sara seemed to be sincerely interested in the gospel. But during the weeks we had shared the gospel with them, they had some doubts about Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. We weren’t about to give up on them though, so we set up another appointment.

I went with our branch mission leader, Patrick Lim, while my companion went with another member to other appointments. Brother Lim and I planned to teach Christine about

repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. We usually invited people to be baptized when we talked about baptism. But both of us wondered, given all

the challenges she was facing, whether Christine would be ready for baptism. We prayed for the Spirit before meeting with her.

During the discussion, Christine seemed to understand repentance and baptism. But as Brother Lim taught about receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, Christine voiced her concerns.

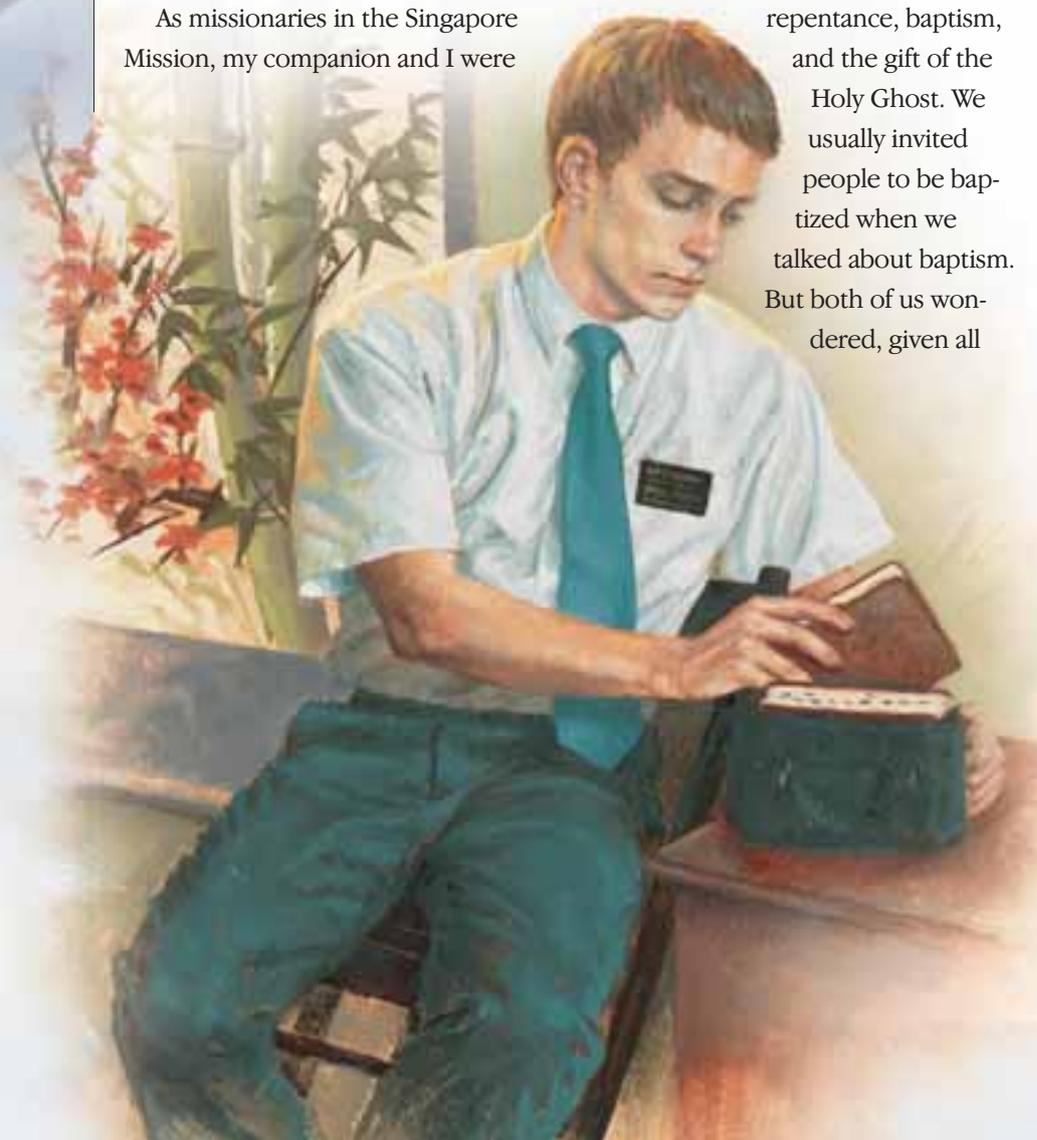
“Elders, I’m not sure if God is there and if He would really answer my prayer,” she hesitantly admitted.

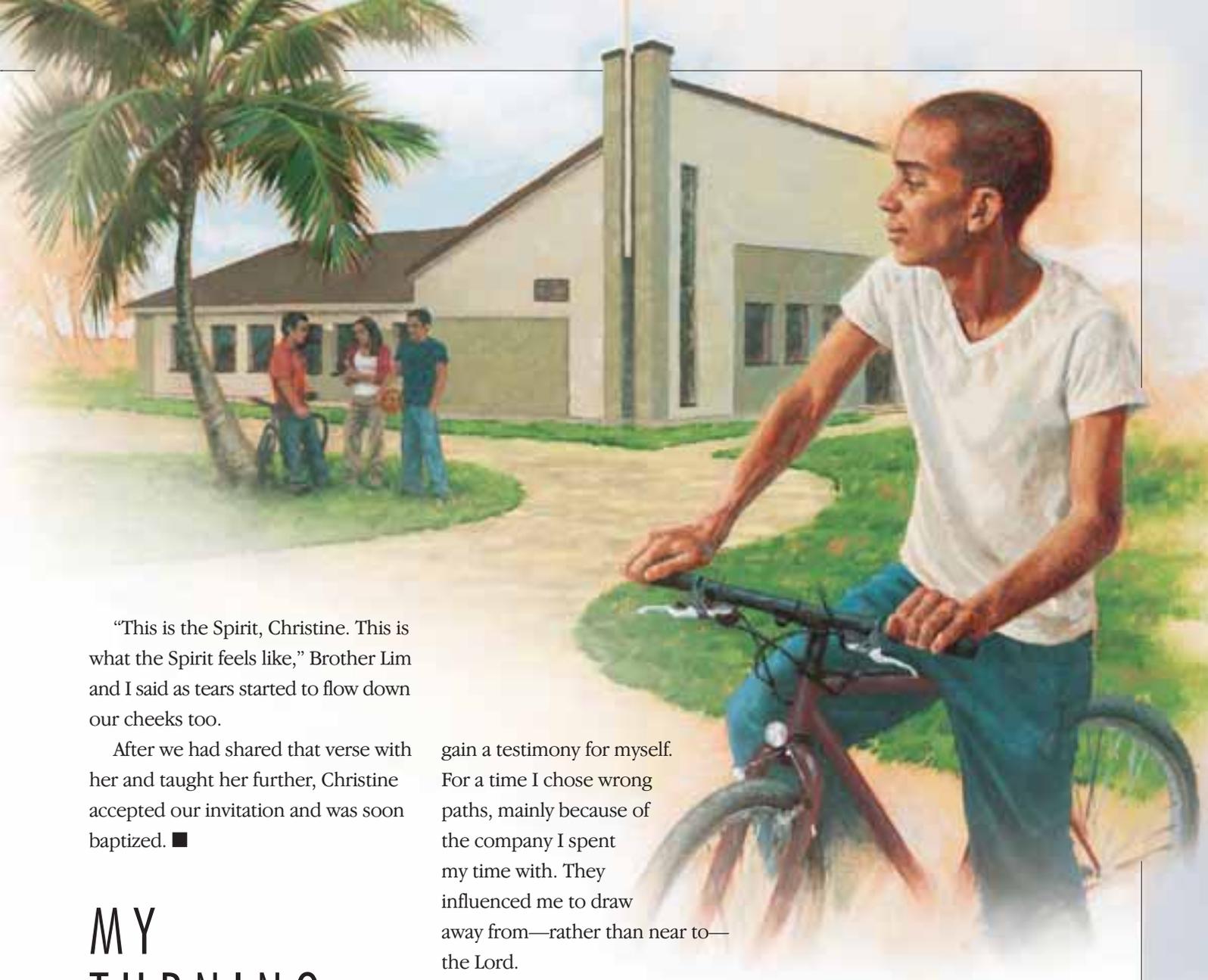
We described to her the calm, peaceful feelings the Spirit brings, but she wasn’t familiar with the influence of the Holy Ghost. She had tried to pray and read the scriptures, but things just didn’t seem to be coming together.

For a moment, we were at a loss for answers. Then a scripture came to my mind, and I felt impressed to share it, even though it was in the Book of Mormon—the book she had requested us not to teach from. I asked Christine to read Ether 12:6: “I would show unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.”

As I explained that our faith in the Lord is tested before we receive an answer from Heavenly Father, I felt the Spirit strongly in my heart. I prayed Christine would feel it too. And she did.

“I’m so touched. I’m really very touched,” Christine said, as tears flowed down her cheeks.





“This is the Spirit, Christine. This is what the Spirit feels like,” Brother Lim and I said as tears started to flow down our cheeks too.

After we had shared that verse with her and taught her further, Christine accepted our invitation and was soon baptized. ■

MY TURNING POINT

BY ELSWORTH GILLETT

I grew up a member of the Church in Belize, but I wasn't always a faithful follower of the Lord. My family was among the first members in Belize, but we had many trials. My father left us, leaving my mother jobless with three kids.

My mother's faith in the Lord allowed us to overcome our trials. My mom worked hard to support us and to bring us to the Lord, but I had to

gain a testimony for myself. For a time I chose wrong paths, mainly because of the company I spent my time with. They influenced me to draw away from—rather than near to—the Lord.

My turning point was when I started to spend most of my time with youth of the Church. I witnessed the marvelous spirit they had. It brought an unusual joy in my life. Seeing my friends going out to serve the Lord on their missions brought an even greater spirit.

Serving a mission was the last thing on my mind until I decided to turn to the Lord in prayer to find out if this was the way for me. As I prayed I felt the Holy Spirit's power bursting in my heart. I have never before witnessed such marvelous power. It led me to know that a mission was right for

me. I talked to my branch president, prepared spiritually and financially, and later served a full-time mission.

I can now say without any doubt that I know that this is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and that President Gordon B. Hinckley is a living prophet, seer, and revelator, called by God to declare His word and to bring all people to our Heavenly Father's fold. As Moroni said, you need to read the Book of Mormon, ponder it in your heart, pray, and you will receive answers to the questions in your heart (see Moroni 10:3–5). ■

A Sense of the



We dress formally at church and other sacred occasions not because we are important, but because the occasion is important.

BY ELDER D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

A while back a young woman from another state in the United States came to live with some of her relatives for a few weeks. On her first Sunday she came to church dressed in a simple, nice blouse and knee-length skirt set off with a light, button-up sweater. She wore hose and dress shoes, and her hair was combed simply but with care. Her overall appearance created an impression of youthful grace.

Unfortunately, she immediately felt out of place. It seemed like all the other young women her age or near her age were dressed in casual skirts, some rather distant from the knee; tight T-shirt-like tops that barely met the top of their skirts at the waist; no socks or stockings; and clunky sneakers or flip-flops.

One would have hoped that seeing the new girl, the other girls would have realized how inappropriate their manner of dress was for a chapel and for the Sabbath day and immediately changed for the better. Sad to say, however, they did not, and it was the visitor who, in order to fit in, adopted the fashion of her host ward.

This example illustrates one of my concerns. Speaking of society in general, I am afraid that many of my generation have not taught your generation to have a feeling for sacred things. In this article I hope to help you

refine your ability to recognize what is sacred and to respond with reverence for all that is holy. Of the many sacred things for which we should show reverence—the scriptures, prophets, one’s body, Deity—I will focus on respect for sacred places and events.

Much of what I want to convey cannot really be passed from one person to another. It must grow from within. But if I can help you think about some things, the Spirit may work in you so you will not need anyone to tell you what is sacred or how to respond—you will feel it for yourself. It will be part of your nature; indeed, much of it already is.

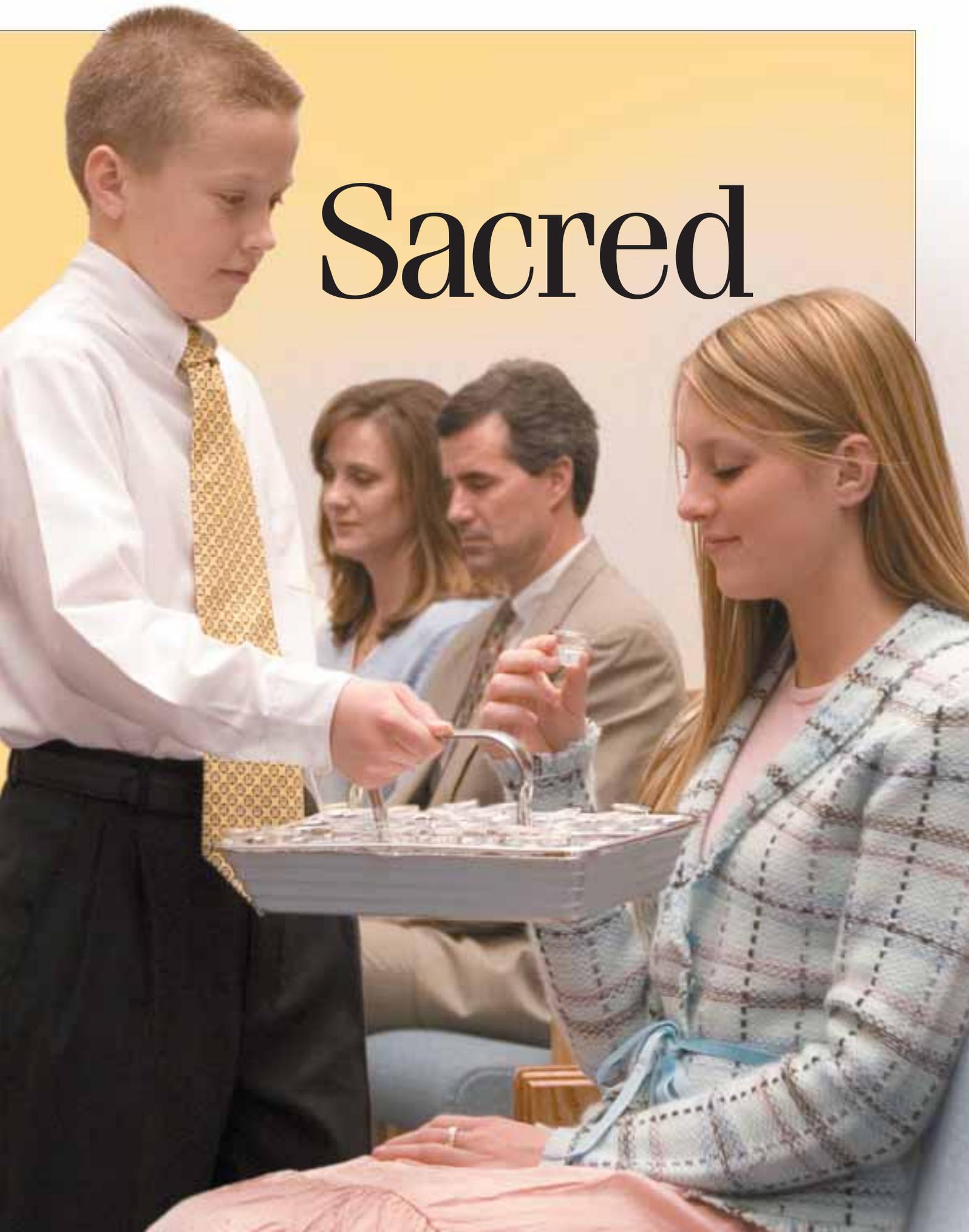
Sunday Best

Our temples and meetinghouses are dedicated to the Lord as sacred space. On each temple is found the words *Holiness to the Lord—the House of the Lord*. A sense of the sacred should lead us to act and speak with reverence in and around these buildings. It would lead us to dress a certain way when we are there.

As immodest dress dishonors the body—God’s most sacred creation—immodest, casual, or sloppy dress and grooming at sacred times and places mocks the sacredness of the Lord’s house and what is taking place.

Years ago my ward in Tennessee used a high school for Church services on Sundays while our chapel, which had been damaged

Sacred



Y*ou are a Saint of the great latter-day dispensation—look the part.*



by a tornado, was being repaired. A congregation of another faith used the same high school for their worship services while their new chapel was being constructed.

I was shocked to see what the people of this other congregation wore to church. There was not a suit or tie among the men. They appeared to have come from or to be on their way to the golf course. It was hard to spot a woman wearing a dress or anything other than very casual pants or even shorts. Had I not known that they were coming to the school for church meetings, I would have assumed that there was some kind of sporting event taking place.

The dress of our ward members compared very favorably to this example, but I am beginning to think that we are no longer quite so different as more and more we seem to slide toward that lower standard. We used to use the phrase “Sunday best.” People understood that to mean the nicest clothes they had. The specific clothing would vary according to different

cultures and economic circumstances, but it would be their best.

It offends God when we come into His house, especially on His holy

day, not groomed and dressed in the most careful and modest manner that our circumstances permit. Where a member from the hills of Peru must cross a river to get to church, the Lord surely will not be offended by the stain of muddy water on his white shirt. But how can God not be pained at the sight of one who, with all the clothes he needs and more and with easy access to the chapel, nevertheless appears in church in rumpled cargo pants and a T-shirt?

It has been my experience as I travel around the world that members of the Church with the least means somehow find a way to arrive at Sabbath meetings neatly dressed in clean, nice clothes, the best they have, while those who have more than enough are the ones who may appear in casual, even sloppy clothing.

Does Dress Matter?

Some say dress and hair don’t matter—they say it’s what’s inside that counts. I believe that it is what’s inside a person that truly counts, but that’s what worries me. Casual dress at holy places and events is a message about what is inside a person. It may be pride or rebellion or something else, but at a minimum it says, “I don’t get it. I don’t understand the difference between the sacred and the profane.”

In that condition people are easily drawn away from the Lord. They do not appreciate the value of what they have. I worry about them. Unless they can gain some understanding and capture some feeling for sacred things, they are at risk of eventually losing all that matters most. You are a Saint of the great latter-day dispensation—look the part.

These principles apply to activities and



events that are sacred or that deserve reverence: baptisms, confirmations, ordinations, blessings of the sick, administration of the sacrament, and so forth. The Doctrine and Covenants tells us that in the ordinances of the priesthood “the power of godliness is manifest” (D&C 84:20). I appreciate priests, teachers, and deacons who wear ties and dress shirts (white, if possible) to officiate in the administration of the sacrament. They are demonstrating an appreciation and respect for God and for the event.

Recently I read a note from a man who was urging his companions to wear a suit and tie when they appeared together at a public event honoring their organization. Their service was civic, not religious in nature, and we would not term it sacred, but he understood the principle that some things deserve respect and that our manner of dress is a part of that expression. He said he was going to dress more formally “not because I’m important, but because this occasion is so important.” His comment states an important truth. It is really not about us. Acting and dressing in a way to honor sacred events and places is about God.

Blessings of Reverence

When you develop a deepening reverence for sacred things, the Holy Spirit becomes your frequent and then constant companion. You grow in understanding and truth. The scriptures speak of it as a light that grows “brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24). That process is also described as progressing from grace to grace. The Savior Himself progressed in that way until He received a fulness, and you may follow in His footsteps (see D&C 93:12–20). That is where a sense of the sacred will lead you.

On the other hand, those who do not appreciate holy things will lose them. Absent a feeling of reverence, they will grow increasingly casual in attitude and conduct. They will drift from the moorings that their covenants with God could

provide. Their feelings of accountability to God will diminish and then be forgotten. Thereafter, they will care only about their own comfort and satisfying their uncontrolled appetites. Finally, they will come to despise sacred things, even God, and then they will despise themselves.

Acting and dressing in a way to honor sacred events and places shows our reverence for the Lord.

Treat Sacred Things with Care

Always remember, as holiness grows within and you are entrusted with greater knowledge and understanding, you must treat these things with care. The Lord said, “That which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:64). He also commanded that we must not cast pearls before swine or give

that which is holy to dogs (see 3 Nephi 14:6; D&C 41:6), meaning sacred things should not be discussed with those who are not prepared to appreciate their value.

Be wise with what the Lord gives you. It is a trust. You would not, for example, share the content of your patriarchal blessing with just anyone.

All things sacred and holy are to be revealed and brought together in this last and most wonderful dispensation. With the Restoration of the gospel, the Church, and the priesthood of Jesus Christ, we hold an almost incomprehensible store of sacred things in our hands. We cannot neglect or let them slip away.

Rather than letting your life drift into carelessness, may it be one of increasing exactness in obedience. I hope you will think and feel and dress and act in ways that show reverence and respect for sacred things, sacred places, sacred occasions. It is my prayer that a sense of the sacred will distill upon your soul as the dews from heaven. May it draw you close to Jesus Christ, who died, who was resurrected, who lives, who is your Redeemer. May He make you holy as He is holy. ■

From a Church Educational System satellite broadcast address given on November 7, 2004.

Modesty Matters

Dressing modestly is a challenge in today's world. Here, Church members share their responses to the following questions: How do you ensure that your clothing is modest? How have you promoted modesty in your family, ward, or stake (or branch or district)? What insights have you gained about the importance of modesty?

Whom Did I Want to Be?

An event some years ago changed my attitude toward modesty. As I got ready to go to a Mutual activity, I put on some short shorts; it never occurred to me that they were inappropriate. The activities planned for that Tuesday included having the missionaries give us some practical advice about missionary work. One of the last empty seats was next to me. For a brief moment the elders began to argue, as discreetly as they could, over who had to sit next to me. Though they never said so specifically, I understood they were uneasy because of the way I was dressed.

At that moment, notwithstanding my embarrassment, I began to understand what it meant to be modest. I realized that I was making virtuous young men feel uncomfortable—and that I could also be making unvirtuous men feel *too* comfortable. I began to better understand what type of person I wanted to be with and, more important, what type of person I wanted to be. From that



moment on, I was not only prepared for the changes I was about to make, but I looked forward to making them.

Chelsea Anderson, Ohio, USA

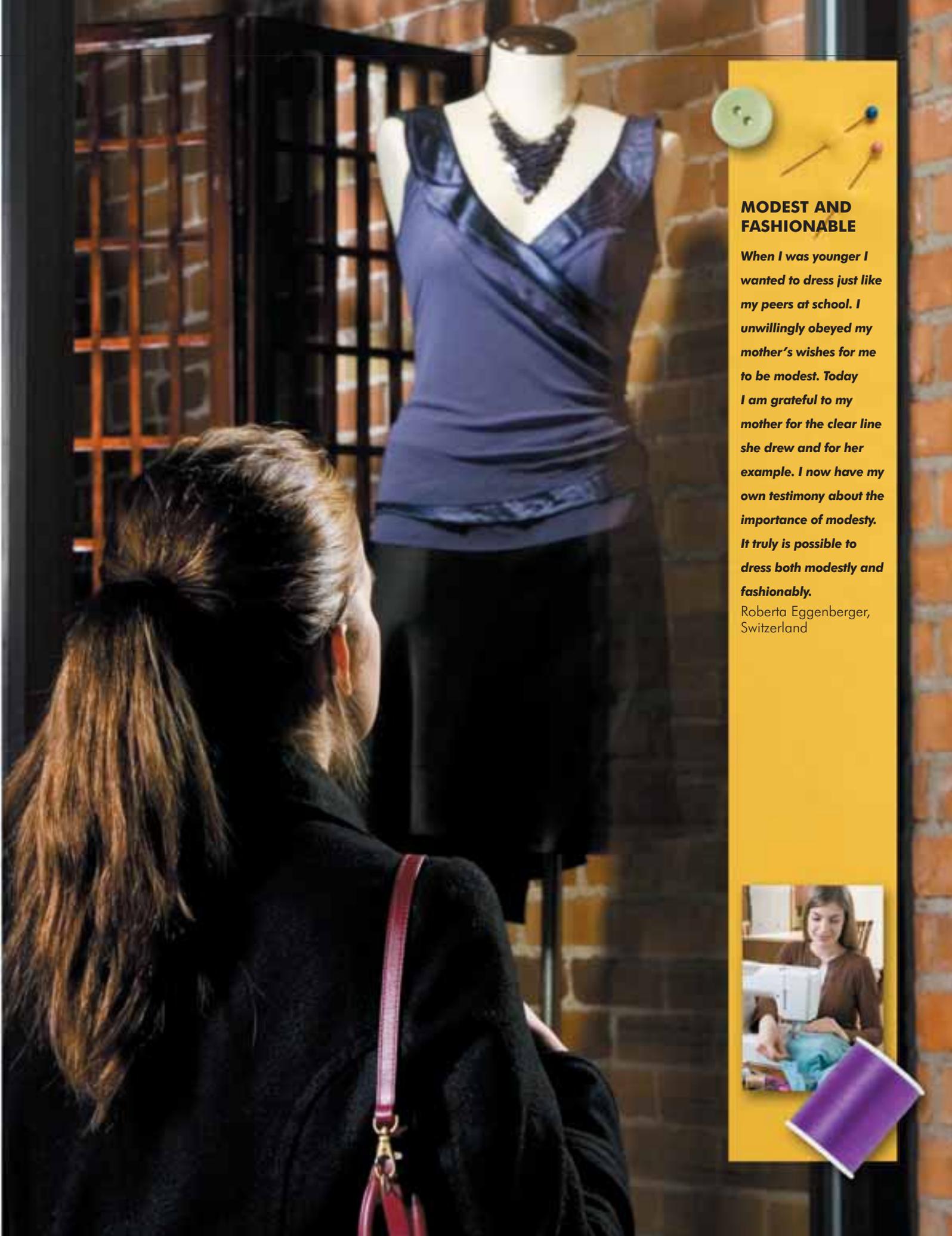
A Modesty Fashion Show

In October 2004 the Young Women and Young Men organizations in our stake had an event called “Modesty in Dress,” based on the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth*. It consisted of a fashion show divided into three parts: casual wear, sportswear, and formal wear. We asked each of the young men and young women to select three changes of clothing, and we helped them choose which clothes were suitable. We invited their leaders and parents to this activity. We emphasized scriptural verses about the body being a temple (see 1 Corinthians 6:19–20) and the counsel of our prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley. The activity had a positive effect; the young people in our stake are more concerned now about grooming and dressing in an appropriate way.

Teresa de Jesús Contreras de Ramírez, Mexico

Modesty Tips

Modesty is definitely a challenge in today's world, especially for teenage girls. I know—I am one. But you *can* be modest all the time and still wear what's in style. Here are some tips I have found helpful:



MODEST AND FASHIONABLE

When I was younger I wanted to dress just like my peers at school. I unwillingly obeyed my mother's wishes for me to be modest. Today I am grateful to my mother for the clear line she drew and for her example. I now have my own testimony about the importance of modesty. It truly is possible to dress both modestly and fashionably.

Roberta Eggenberger,
Switzerland



TESTIMONIES OF MODESTY

My understanding of why I should dress modestly came gradually after I joined the Church. I now look with great respect upon modestly dressed people whose eyes shine with the light of chastity. Dressing modestly is not always easy, but if we make the effort, God is bound to help us.

Olga Khripko,
Ukraine

I believe we show our humility and respect to our Heavenly Father when we look decent and clean and are appropriately covered.

Sharlene Cherry,
Philippines



- Buy several long tank tops in different colors that you can tuck into your pants so your tummy won't show with a shorter shirt.

- Sew a strip of fabric onto the bottom of shorter shirts.

- If a shirt is mostly cotton, buy a size larger than you normally would so when you wash it, it won't be too tight or too short.

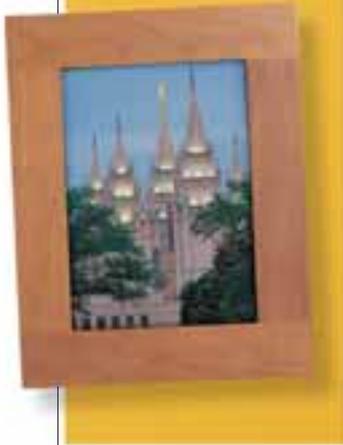
- Buy long boy's shorts when they are available during the summer.

- If the top part of a dress is immodest, consider cutting off the top and altering the dress to make a fancy skirt; then find a nice top to match.

- Start shopping early for the prom and other special events so you won't be tempted to buy something immodest at the last minute.

A lot of girls give up on being modest because they think it is just too hard. But I can tell you that it can be done!

Jami Elsmore, Nevada, USA





A PROTECTION AGAINST TEMPTATION

“Modesty in dress and manner will assist in protect-

ing against temptation. It may be difficult to find modest clothing, but it can be found with enough effort. . . . You can be attractive without being immodest. . . . Draw some rigid parameters, a line in the sand, as it were, beyond which you will not go.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Stay on the High Road,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2004, 114.

A Daily Reminder

I have a picture of the Savior and a picture of the London England Temple in my wardrobe. When I open it to get my clothes, I am always reminded to keep myself clean and modest so that I can one day go to the temple and worship there.

Carolyn Bailey, England

Tight Fit Is Also Immodest

Many people think immodest dress relates only to an insufficiently covered body. But a tight fit is also immodest, even when the body is fully covered. This applies to men as well as women. Many do not realize that tight clothing draws attention to the anatomy, which distracts from the purpose of education, business, leadership, or worship. Adequate ease in the fit of our clothes allows the viewer’s attention to go to the other person’s face for more effective communication.

Judith Rasband, Utah, USA

The Body Is a Temple

Bahia, Brazil, where I live, has a very hot climate, which makes it a little hard for people to dress modestly. But I feel something special when I dress in a way that invites the Spirit to be with me. I know that the body is a temple of God and that it should be treated with respect.

Stephan Cerqueira Levita, Brazil

A Matter of Prayer

After a discouraging day of prom-dress shopping with two of my daughters, we returned home in weary tears. We had not found one modest dress. I encouraged my daughters to take their desires to the Lord in prayer. They looked at me quizzically, not at all certain that a wardrobe concern was prayer-worthy. I promised them

that Nephi’s conviction in 1 Nephi 3:7 applies to the mundane as well as the monumental: “I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.” My daughters agreed to pray about the problem, and within a week we found beautiful dresses in unexpected places

that we could alter to be perfectly appropriate.

We continue to make modesty a matter of prayer. I have learned to follow small promptings from the Spirit, even if it means

driving a distance, searching through sample racks, or making substantial alterations. I want my daughters to know that I value modesty enough to go out of my way.

Jerie Jacobs, California, USA

A Panel Discussion

One possibility for promoting modesty among young women is a panel discussion with the young men. This approach drew together the young people of our ward in serious consideration of this gospel principle.

Some of the priests we invited to participate were less than enthusiastic at first because they did not want to offend the young women who would be their audience. To help set the young men at ease, we met beforehand to talk about what they could say about modesty and how to present their ideas properly.

We felt the Spirit during the panel discussion. The young women joined in the discussion and listened closely to what the young men had to say. One of the panel members told them, “Could we start by not seeing





BEAUTY WITHIN

I did not understand the concept of modesty before I was a member of the Church. Within a few months of my baptism, I learned that a piece of clothing would not make me more beautiful—rather, beauty comes from within. I am striving to serve the Lord in the way He asks us.

Roseangela Barreto, Brazil

any immodesty at Church meetings?”

The young women responded very positively to the advice from their friends.

John Wilkinson, Utah, USA

The Body Is a Gift

During my last year of high school, I decided I had to strengthen my testimony before I left for college. I studied all I could about the Savior’s life and His atoning sacrifice. As I did so, the reality of His love struck me so powerfully that it brought me to tears. I realized that I am indeed a beloved daughter of God. As the magnitude of this sank deep into my very being, I realized that dressing modestly is not just to prevent the boys from thinking bad thoughts. It is a way to show our appreciation for one of the most wonderful gifts God has given us: a body.

May I suggest that Church members be taught to be modest because they love and respect themselves and the Lord and they want to honor His gift. I never had a strong testimony of modesty until I learned to love Heavenly Father and the Savior more deeply.

Brenda Petty, Idaho, USA

Try Shopping Online

Coming out of the Los Angeles California Temple one day, I was dismayed to notice that some bridesmaids were wearing immodest dresses. I then saw that the bridesmaids in another group were wearing dresses that were modest yet very pretty. I asked where they had found such lovely dresses, and they enthusiastically chorused, “Online.”

The Internet can be a good source of modest clothing. ■

Anne Elwell, California, USA



YOUR DRESS IS A REFLECTION OF WHO YOU ARE

“Prophets of God have always counseled His children to dress modestly. The way you dress is a reflection of what you are on the inside. Your dress and grooming send messages about you to others and influence the way you and others act. When you are well groomed and modestly dressed, you invite the companionship of the Spirit and can exercise a good influence on those around you. . . .

“Immodest clothing includes short shorts and skirts, tight clothing, shirts that do not cover the stomach, and other revealing attire. Young women should wear clothing that covers the shoulder and avoid clothing that is low-cut in the front or the back or revealing in any other manner. Young men should also maintain modesty in their appearance. All should avoid extremes in clothing, appearance, and hairstyle. Always be neat and clean and avoid being sloppy or inappropriately casual in dress, grooming, and manners. Ask yourself, ‘Would I feel comfortable with my appearance if I were in the Lord’s presence?’ ”

For the Strength of Youth (*pamphlet, 2001*), 14–16.



Did You Know?

It Happened in June



June 1, 1801: Brigham Young, second President of the Church, was born in Vermont. He died at the age of 76 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

June 19, 1836: Lorenzo Snow, fifth President of the Church, was baptized near Kirtland, Ohio, when he was 22 years old.

June 27, 1844: The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were



killed at Carthage Jail, in Illinois. John Taylor, third President of the Church, said their martyrdom would remind the world that “the Book of Mormon, and this book of Doctrine and Covenants of the church, cost the best blood of the nineteenth century” (D&C 135:6).

June 18, 1850: President John Taylor (1808–87), then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and other missionaries arrived in France to open the French Mission.

Leadership Tip

Have you ever read Jacob 5? We mean *really* read it? If you look closely you’ll find that this longest chapter in the Book of Mormon—a parable about the Lord of the vineyard, his servant, and olive trees—contains some valuable lessons on leadership. Read Jacob 5 again looking at the example of the Lord of the vineyard. See what kind of leader he is. Notice his patience, his willingness to listen to counsel, his love for those around him, and you will have begun to learn some of the lessons you can learn from the Lord of the vineyard.

“I testify that our prayers, offered in humility and sincerity, are heard and answered. It is a miraculous thing, but it is real.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “An Humble and a Contrite Heart,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 103; *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 89.

Scotland Youth on Parade

Two dozen youth from the Dundee Second and Dundee Bingham Wards in the Dundee Scotland Stake took part in the first-ever Lord Provost of Dundee Youth Parade. More than 1,000 young people participated in the event, which was held to recognize the outstanding young people of Dundee, their talents, and their service to the people in the city.



After the parade through the town, the lord provost (mayor) addressed the crowd. Following this, some of the youth groups demonstrated activities such as soccer, hockey, cheerleading, tae kwon do, and baton twirling.

The Dundee young men and young women were excited for the opportunity to represent the Church on this historic occasion and plan to take part in the event every year.



Come Learn and

hAVE FUN



BY PAUL VANDENBERGHE
Church Magazines

High in the Altiplano—the high plains of the Andes Mountains on the border of Bolivia and Peru—lies Lake Titicaca. At 12,500 feet (3,800 m) above sea level, it's the world's highest lake navigable to large boats. It is also the legendary birthplace of one of the oldest American civilizations, the Inca. Legend says that the sun sent founders of the Incan civilization down to earth on Titicaca Island.

The lake's water stays at an almost constant temperature of 51° F (11° C); that's pretty brisk for swimming—downright cold for a baptism. But it was in Lake Titicaca that Roberto Carlos Condori Pachuri, 16, was baptized last year. Sometimes the village doesn't have enough water to fill the font at the meetinghouse in El Alto, Bolivia, so they

go to the lake. Roberto Carlos remembers his baptism well, but it's not because of the water. It's because of the warm spirit he felt when he became a member of the Church.

Roberto Carlos was introduced to the Church by his friend José Luis Mamani Kari, 15. "I came to seminary," says Roberto Carlos. "It was the first time I entered a Church building, and I was a little scared." But he quickly found out he was welcome. In fact, usually 15 of the 30 or so youth who attend seminary each week are not Church members. Youth from the Batallas Branch, Titicaca Bolivia District, attend seminary on Thursday evenings and study at home during the week.

"I invite my friends to come and learn something," says Ángela Daniela Sanjines Flores, 16, "and then we have fun after." Why

Roberto Carlos Condori Pachuri of Bolivia was introduced to the Church by a friend and started attending seminary. "I liked the things I was learning," he says. Last year Roberto Carlos was baptized in Lake Titicaca.

do they come? “The truth is that some come to play and have fun, others want to learn, and others come because their friends invite them.”

Roberto Carlos wanted to attend seminary for all these reasons. “I liked the things I was learning, and I have lots of friends here,” he says. “We play soccer or volleyball after class.” It was at seminary and in meeting with the elders that he learned about ancient prophets, a living prophet today, and Christ’s visit to the Americas. It was through learning the truths of the gospel that Roberto Carlos joined the Church.

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) had a motto to remind us of our duties as member missionaries: “Do it!” He promised that as we testified of the Restoration we would be blessed. José Luís knows this is true.

“It felt good,” says José Luís, to see Roberto Carlos

accept the gospel. “I wanted to share my testimony, so I did.”

Courage in Cochabamba

In Cochabamba, about 160 miles (260 km) southeast of El Alto, the youth attend early-morning seminary.

Outside Church functions, these teens often feel pressure from peers to lower their standards. “Being a member of the Church here is hard because I’m surrounded by many people who want me to do bad things,” says Cristhian Pérez, 19, of La Chimba Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Cobija Stake. “That’s why I think our friends are one of the most important things.” Even though many of these young men and young women may be





the only member in their school or even in their family, they can always count on each other for support. Cristhian continues, “The way we help each other in the Church is by going to seminary together and doing activities together.”

“We’re like a family, and we take care of each other,” agrees Miriam Eugenia Copa Fernández, 19, of the Alalay Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Jaihuayco Stake. “It’s a really good way to start the day, because it makes me happy all day.”

The spiritual support that these youth offer each other as they learn and grow together revolves in a cycle of strength.

“Seminary has helped me overcome my weaknesses and temptations and has helped me make better decisions,” says Nefía Flores, 18, of the América Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Cobija Stake. As the young men and young women build stronger testimonies, they become better examples to their friends.

“The four years I’ve spent in seminary have been a big help to me because every lesson and every piece of counsel has helped me face a particular challenge,” says Luís Carlos

Gonzales Jaimes, 19, of La Chimba Ward, who is preparing to serve a mission.

Since there is a temple in Cochabamba, many of the youth in the area go there often to find strength. “Having a temple here in Cochabamba makes us very happy. We have the chance to visit there every week,” says Harold Reinaldo Salazar, 18, of the Petrolero Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Jaihuayco Stake. “When we do baptisms there, it’s an unforgettable experience.”

Because they see the strength of testimony in their friends’ actions, like when they attend the temple, these young people know they can look to each other for spiritual power.

“I respect them a lot,” says Miriam of her friends. “They are strong spiritually and prepared to face all the challenges they have. I trust them. They have powerful testimonies of the Church. They are courageous. They are fun.”

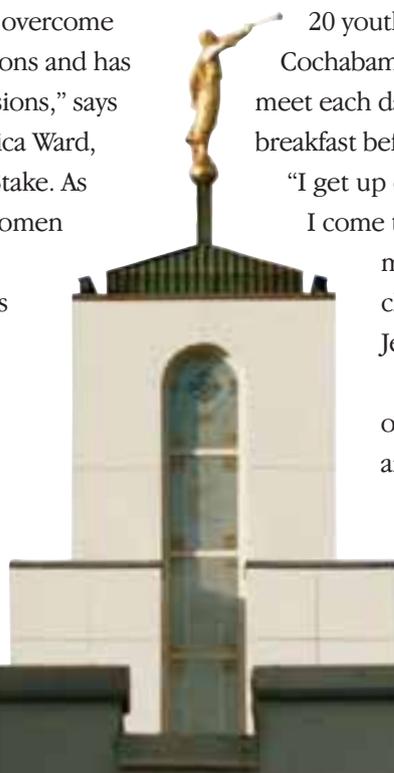
Breakfast with Friends

In the eastern part of the city, about 20 youth from the Colcapirhua Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Los Alamos Stake, meet each day at 5:30 a.m. for a simple breakfast before seminary begins at 6:00.

“I get up early because I know that if I come to seminary it’s going to help me have the Spirit and be closer to God all day,” says Jenny Linares, 18.

Breakfast usually consists of bread with sugar and *mate*, an herbal drink, or *api*, a drink made with ground purple and white corn. But the youth come to seminary more for spiritual

Having a temple in Cochabamba is a great blessing to the youth of the area. Many of them go to the temple every week. Members of this seminary class from Cochabamba say they are more than friends—they are like family. From left to right: Nefía Flores, Alejandra Gamboa, Luís Carlos Gonzales Jaimes, Miriam Eugenia Copa Fernández, Cristhian Pérez, Yescenia Salgado, and Harold Reinaldo Salazar.





Attending seminary every morning makes a difference in how the youth of Santa Cruz live. “We need to move forward and put into practice the

principles we have been taught in seminary classes,” says Adán Quintela Aparicio, 18, of the Estación Ward, Santa Cruz Bolivia Cañoto Stake. “It is a great privilege to have the seminary program in the Church, where we can learn so many things that help us for the rest of our lives.”

Confronted on all sides with temptation and pressure to relax their standards, the youth of Bolivia have found protection and support in gospel truths.

“Seminary has been like a shield in my life,” says María D. Justiniano, 18, of the Carmen Branch, Santa Cruz Bolivia El Bajío Stake. “It has been a shield, because it protects me each day at school. For example,

the schoolteachers come up with evolutionist theories and things like that, and in seminary they prepare us well. We have the ability to think on our own and to feel in our hearts that God truly was the Creator of this world.”

What all these youth in Bolivia agree on—from the high altitude of the Altiplano to the heat of Santa Cruz—is that as they meet together, they grow stronger in the gospel and are better able to withstand the temptations of the world. “When a stick is alone it can easily be broken,” explains Franz Condori. “But when many sticks are joined together they cannot be broken. When there is unity in a group, it is difficult for someone or something to break us. We help each other.” ■

nourishment than for food. “It’s fun to come to seminary,” says Luly Bravo, 14. “The youth brighten your day in the morning. We come to learn more about our Father in Heaven and His Son.”

“The truth is that the four years of seminary have made me think a lot about a mission,” says Diego Díaz, 18. “That’s why I am graduating from seminary, so I can go on a mission.”

Franz Condori, 20, of the Arocagua Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Universidad Stake, agrees. He was baptized four years ago and plans to serve a mission soon.

“When I became a member of this Church, I had already set the goal to go on a mission, and the four years in seminary have helped me a lot,” he says. “I know the scriptures we always read and study will help me answer the questions I might be asked when I become a missionary.”

Strong in Santa Cruz

About 180 miles (290 km) east of Cochabamba is Santa Cruz. In that distance the climate changes; it is much hotter here. But more important things do not change.



Above, from left to right: “Four years in seminary have helped me a lot.” —Adán Quintela Aparicio

“We can learn so many things that help us for the rest of our lives.” —Franz Condori

“Seminary has been like a shield in my life.” —María D. Justiniano

Being Watched

By Kimberly Webb
Church Magazines

When I found the address I had scrawled in my notebook, I thought the place looked creepy. It was a big, old, gray house that had been converted into apartments, but it looked more like a haunted house in a black-and-white movie. Still, I wanted to meet Rachael, so I marched up the rickety steps.

Earlier, when I stared at the housing ads tacked to a board in the institute building, the ads had blurred together like a patchwork quilt made of paper and pushpins. But one ad stood out. It showed a stick figure saying, “This is me, Rachael. I like running, jazz music, and chocolate.” I laughed. It didn’t say much about the apartment, but the roommate seemed fun.

After talking to Rachael for a while, I decided that the feeling inside her apartment seemed welcoming. I dismissed my first impression and moved in a few weeks later.

The next morning Rachael left on a two-week family vacation. An eerie feeling sank in the minute she was gone, but I brushed

it off and busied myself unpacking. “I’m nervous because I’m not used to being here,” I reasoned. “I need time to adjust.”

It was almost midnight when I came down with an itchy sore throat. “I must be allergic to something,” I thought. I hunted around until I found Rachael’s scented candles. I decided to put them outside.

I had discovered earlier that the entryway light didn’t work, so I left the front door open a crack, letting a sliver of light spill out. Barefoot, I hurried through the darkness onto the porch.

Suddenly I froze.

The night air was still. I couldn’t hear a thing. But I *felt* someone approaching.

I hurried through the darkness onto the porch. Suddenly I froze. I couldn’t hear a thing. But I felt someone approaching.



“Get back into your apartment before someone else does.” The Spirit’s instructions were unmistakable and urgent.

Still grasping the candles, I raced through the darkness into my living room and slammed the door. As soon as I locked it, the doorknob turned. My jaw dropped. I watched the doorknob slowly twist back and forth without a sound.

Someone had been hiding in my entryway! He had tried to follow me inside, only a moment too late. Now nothing but a flimsy wooden door stood between us. Instinctively, I hit the door with my fist as hard as I could.

I don’t know how long I stood there silently praying, waiting for something to happen. Finally a peaceful feeling assured me that the threat had passed and I would be safe for the night.

The next morning my mom called. She and Dad were gone on vacation, or I might have called them sooner. Before I could tell Mom what had happened, she said, “I’ve been worried about you! I keep getting the impression that your entryway is a danger zone. Is it well lit? It would be so easy for someone to hide there.”

I shivered to realize how close I had come to being attacked—so close that my mom had sensed the danger from 200 miles (320 km) away.

Then she told me she had been trying to call me the day before to

warn me of her impression. “I couldn’t catch you on the phone, so I prayed. I knew I couldn’t protect you, but Heavenly Father could.”

Mom was right. A stranger had hidden in my entryway, watching me. Higher powers had also been watching and had told me what to do.

I know that the Lord won’t always protect me from tragedy, but as I follow Him, He won’t let His plan for my life be thwarted. It was His will for me to be protected that night, and I am grateful He was watching over me. ■

Just Five More Minutes

By Elaine Brown Preslar

Our family enjoys nature. We spend almost every Saturday outside—hiking, camping, bike riding, or sightseeing in the summer; and sledding, skiing, or taking walks in the snow in the winter. These are wonderful family times that give my husband and me opportunities to converse with our three children.

One summer day we hiked around a lake in a nearby forest. It was perfect weather: sunny and warm with a refreshing, cool breeze from the lake. As we made our way down the

trail, we pointed out the wildflowers and trees. We discussed how much Heavenly Father must love us to create such beauty for our enjoyment. We tried to decide which was the most beautiful place we had seen. One child suggested nearby Yellowstone National Park. Someone



Jacob, age 7, said, “I think the most beautiful place in the world is where all the things about Jesus are.”

else suggested a favorite camping spot. We thought about our trip to the ocean and the beauty of a cross-country ski trail with trees covered in glistening snow.

Our youngest child, Jacob, age 7, who had been quietly listening to our discussion, said, "I think the most



Small Decisions, Eternal Blessings

By Víctor Pino Fuentes

I first heard the gospel as a child when my parents welcomed the missionaries to our home in Antofagasta, Chile. I grew up in the Church, but I did little to gain a personal testimony. Consequently, I eventually fell from activity and found myself facing life's challenges without the divine power of the gospel to help me. My faithful mother, however, continued to love me and remained a quiet example of righteousness.

Although I married a Church member, neither of us felt the urgency or necessity of living the standards we had been taught in our youth. But as time went by, life in our home changed radically for the worse.

Because of the difficult problems we were facing, my wife decided to start attending church with our daughter. I had no desire to go with them, yet they returned home each week and shared what they had learned.

Some time later I began to receive visits from home teachers, two faithful brethren who somehow envisioned my divine potential even though I couldn't.

Slowly, a change began to take place in my heart, but I refused to acknowledge it at first. Every Sunday my wife would iron my

clothes with the hope that I would attend church with her. I was too stubborn to put on the clothes, but I started going to sacrament meeting in jeans and a T-shirt. As less-active members often do, I sat on the bench nearest the door so I could be the last one in and the first one out without having anyone speak to me.

After several months I realized I was not being a good example to my children or blessing my family with the priesthood as I should. I made the decision to never again miss a day of church. I had watched the application of gospel principles brighten my life, and I realized that this simple decision should have been made long ago.

How eager the Lord was to bless my family and me! My wife and I and our children were soon sealed to each other in the Santiago Chile Temple.

I am grateful for a mother who diligently taught me the principles of the gospel, for a wife who encouraged me through her love and example to live them, for faithful home teachers, and for a Father in Heaven who patiently waited for me to live the gospel so He could bless me more than I thought possible. ■



beautiful place in the world is where all the things about Jesus are.” Things about Jesus? My mind searched for a connection, and then I realized that Jacob meant Temple Square in Salt Lake City. With the magnificent temple, trees, fountains, and flower gardens, Temple Square is indeed a beautiful place. But to Jacob, Temple Square means more than the outward beauty of nature alone.

Born with a complex congenital heart defect, Jacob is the veteran of three heart surgeries and numerous medical tests, with many more surgeries anticipated. His doctor frequently comes to Idaho, but for Jacob’s surgeries and some tests, we must travel to Primary Children’s Medical Center in Salt Lake City. These trips are often filled with anxiety and worry about Jacob’s health, and we have found that a trip to Temple Square helps calm our nerves and reminds us of Heavenly Father’s plan and of our need to trust in Him.

The night before Jacob’s most recent and most complicated surgery, we took him to the Temple Square visitors’ center, where we sat together looking at that glorious statue of the Savior—the *Christus*. Peaceful, warm, and safe in a parent’s lap and not wanting to leave, Jacob sat uncharacteristically still and kept asking to stay for “just five more minutes,” until our time there stretched past an hour. When at long last we needed to leave, we all felt at peace and ready to cope with

whatever the surgery would bring.

I believe that Temple Square is beautiful to Jacob not because of what he *sees* there but because of what he *feels* there. Heavenly Father’s gifts of peace, hope, and comfort are more beautiful than anything Jacob can remember seeing with his physical eyes.

Understanding Heavenly Father’s plan and accepting and trusting in His will can bring indescribable peace and joy. When we become discouraged, upset, or afraid, there is somewhere to turn—not to a specific beautiful place but to our Savior Jesus Christ. And I think Jacob is right: nothing is more beautiful than that. ■

Reuniting the Dancing Couple

By Kurt Stättner

For 25 years I worked in downtown Wiener Neustadt, Austria. On a mild day in May, I strolled through the pedestrian zone during my lunch break and came upon a bookstore. Near the door were two large crates full of discounted books. I was curious to know what kind of literature was selling at such a low price, and I picked up the top book in one of the crates. With no particular interest in buying it, I

opened it and noticed the depiction of a dancing couple. To my great surprise, I also found the name Gretl Stättner. Instantly I recalled that this was the name of my father’s second wife. I had not thought about her for years.

My father was a customs official, but he was also an enthusiastic dancer and operated his own dance school. A few years after my parents’ divorce, my father met Gretl at the dance school. Their relationship was short, however, because my father died from a ruptured appendix when he was

only 35 years old. As he lay dying he must have hoped that Gretl would take me on, knowing that my mother did not look after me. For this reason, my father married Gretl just three hours before he died. Gretl, however, was extremely young and still under her parents’ influence. There was no way she could look after me, so I grew up in foster homes.

As I stood there holding the book, seeing not only the name Stättner but the dancing couple as well, I suddenly realized that this was my father’s legal wife. She had a right to be sealed to him.

My father met his second wife, Gretl, at his dance school. I knew she had a right to be sealed to him.

My investigation disclosed that Gretl had never remarried, that she had lived in Vienna and had operated a foot care salon there. I remembered her maiden name as well as the place her family, the Weißenbergs, had lived. My wife and I looked them up, but we were disappointed to

learn that no members of the family were still living. We visited the cemetery but made no further progress at first, because the stone at the family

plot contained only a list of surnames. After it occurred to us that someone, after all, had to pay for the grave and its maintenance, we asked the authorities for information about the grave's owner. We received a name leading us to Vienna and to a woman who turned out to be Gretl's niece. She provided us not only with all the required dates to perform Gretl's temple work, but also with information about all the family members who had passed away: parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

It also turned out that when my wife and Gretl's niece were young, they had entered the same high school at the same time, and both had graduated on the same day. How small the world can be.

My wife and I submitted all the family names to the temple and were then able to personally carry out the work in the Frankfurt Germany Temple. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity and am firmly convinced that my finding my stepmother's book was no mere coincidence.

Our conversation with Gretl's niece disclosed that Gretl had owned many books, and her niece had given some away, kept some, and sold some. Only a single book made its way to Wiener Neustadt, and I was the one who stumbled across it. ■





Timing of the Lord

The Church has changed my life and the lives of my loved ones. I have felt the Spirit on many occasions. Scripture study and articles written by our prophets and leaders have helped me a great deal. One article that was helpful was “Timing” (October 2003), by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. I trust in the Lord completely and know there is a time for everything. I would like to thank Elder Oaks for this article that has helped me so much and strengthened my testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Victor Santana Arias, Dominican Republic

Gems of Visual Art

My husband and I would like to thank you for the wide variety of beautiful photographs we have become accustomed to seeing in the *Liabona* and especially compliment you on the wonderful black-and-white images in the general conference issues. Many thanks to the skillful photographers who make these true gems of visual art possible.

How grateful we are to have eyes to see them and to read the contents of this magnificent magazine in our own language month after month. Thank you!

Carmen T. De Ruscitti, Venezuela

Desire to Preach the Gospel Floods My Soul

As I prepare for a full-time mission, I am studying inspirational materials, including the *Liabona*. I would like to express my gratitude for the February 2005 issue and especially for Elder and Sister Christensen’s beautiful article, “Seven Lessons on Sharing the

Gospel.” It inspired me and increased my desire to preach the gospel. As I thought about the article, I better understood how important this work is. The desire to preach the gospel is flooding my soul.

Iranilson Leite Machado, Brazil

A Charge of Righteousness

I would like to thank you for this wonderful magazine! We have very few Church materials in Russian, so every issue of the *Liabona* gives us a new charge of righteousness for a long time. Thanks also for the column Questions and Answers. These are the very questions that worry our youth.

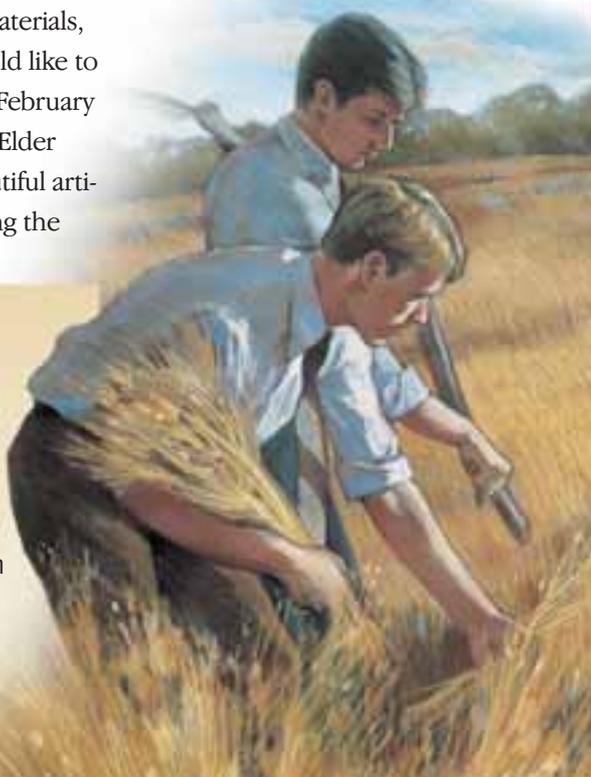
Sergei Antamanov, Russia



CALL FOR NEW TESTAMENT ART SUBMISSIONS

In 2007 we will be publishing material pertaining to the New Testament Sunday School curriculum. Professional fine artists may submit for consideration artwork of New Testament scenes. Please e-mail samples of your work to cur-artist-photographer@ldschurch.org, or mail color copies to New Testament Art, *Liabona* Magazine, 50 E. North Temple St., Room 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220,

USA. Please send only copies; copies will not be returned. Submissions should be mailed prior to October 31, 2006.



THE LORD'S HARVEST, BY MARILEE CAMPBELL, MAY NOT BE COPIED



Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting

Supporting the Family

FEBRUARY 11, 2006



The proceedings of the worldwide leadership training meeting are included in the June 2006 Liahona and Ensign and at www.lds.org for members to use in their families and in teaching.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF
LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan

ELDER DAVID A. BEDNAR

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



The Doctrinal Ideal of Marriage

We have been counseled strongly by the First Presidency to devote our best efforts to the strengthening of marriage and the home. Such instruction has never been more needed in the world than it is today, as the sanctity of marriage is attacked and the importance of the home is undermined.

Even though the Church and its programs support marriage and

family and generally are successful at doing so, we should always remember this basic truth: no instrumentality or organization can take the place of the home or perform its essential functions.¹ Consequently, today I will speak with you primarily as men and women, as husbands and wives, and as mothers and fathers and secondarily as priesthood and auxiliary leaders in the Church. My assignment is to discuss the essential role of eternal marriage in our Heavenly Father's plan of happiness.

We will focus on the doctrinal ideal of marriage. My hope is that a review of our eternal possibilities and a reminder about who we are and why we are here in mortality will provide direction, comfort, and sustaining hope for us all, regardless of our marital status or personal present circumstances. The disparity between the doctrinal ideal of marriage and the reality of daily life may seem at times to be quite large, but you gradually are doing and

becoming much better than you probably recognize.

I invite you to keep in mind the following questions as we discuss principles related to eternal marriage.

Question 1: *In my own life, am I striving to become a better husband or a wife, or preparing to be a husband or a wife, by understanding and applying these basic principles?*

Question 2: *As a priesthood or auxiliary leader, am I helping those I serve to understand and apply these basic principles, thereby strengthening marriage and the home?*

As we prayerfully ponder these questions and consider our own marriage relationships and our responsibilities in the Church, I testify the Spirit of the Lord will enlighten our minds and teach us the things we need to do and to improve (see John 14:26).

Why Marriage Is Essential

In "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles proclaim "that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children."² This keynote sentence of the proclamation teaches us much about the doctrinal significance of marriage and emphasizes the primacy of marriage and family in the Father's plan. Righteous marriage is a commandment and an essential step in the process of creating a loving



family relationship that can be perpetuated beyond the grave.

Two compelling doctrinal reasons help us to understand why eternal marriage is essential to the Father's plan.

Reason 1: *The natures of male and female spirits complete and perfect each other, and therefore men and women are intended to progress together toward exaltation.*

The eternal nature and importance of marriage can be fully understood only within the overarching context of the Father's plan for His children. "All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and . . . has a divine nature

and destiny."³ The great plan of happiness enables the spirit sons and daughters of Heavenly Father to obtain physical bodies, to gain earthly experience, and to progress toward perfection.

"Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose"⁴ and in large measure defines who we are, why we are here upon the earth, and what we are to do and become. For divine purposes, male and female spirits are different, distinctive, and complementary.

After the earth was created, Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden. Importantly, however,

God said it was "not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18; Moses 3:18), and Eve became Adam's companion and helpmeet. The unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females were needed to implement the plan of happiness. Alone, neither the man nor the woman could fulfill the purposes of his or her creation.

By divine design, men and women are intended to progress together toward perfection and a fulness of glory. Because of their distinctive temperaments and capacities, males

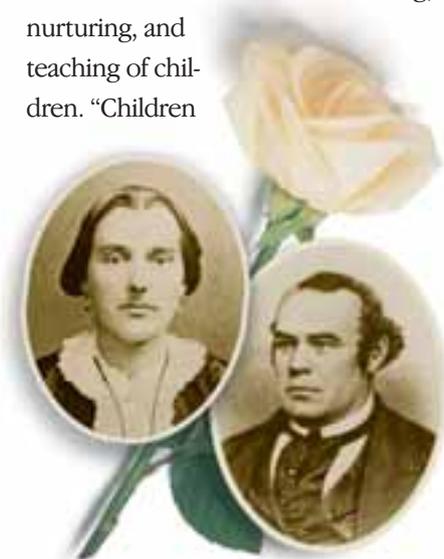
and females each bring to a marriage relationship unique perspectives and experiences. The man and the woman contribute differently but equally to a oneness and a unity that can be achieved in no other way. The man completes and perfects the woman and the woman completes and perfects the man as they learn from and mutually strengthen and bless each other. “Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, *in the Lord*” (1 Corinthians 11:11; italics added).

Reason 2: *By divine design, both a man and a woman are needed to bring children into mortality and to provide the best setting for the rearing and nurturing of children.*

The commandment given anciently to Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force today. “God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife. . . . The means by which mortal life is created [are] divinely appointed.”⁵ Thus, marriage between a man and a woman is the authorized channel through which premortal spirits enter mortality. Complete sexual abstinence before marriage and total fidelity within marriage protect the sanctity of this sacred channel.

A home with a loving and loyal husband and wife is the supreme setting in which children can be reared in love and righteousness and in which the

spiritual and physical needs of children can be met. Just as the unique characteristics of both males and females contribute to the completeness of a marriage relationship, so those same characteristics are vital to the rearing, nurturing, and teaching of children. “Children



Elder Parley P. Pratt expressed beautifully the blessings that come as we learn about, understand, and strive to apply the doctrinal ideal of marriage.

are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.”⁶

Guiding Principles

The two doctrinal reasons we have reviewed about the importance of eternal marriage in the Father’s plan of happiness suggest guiding principles for those who are preparing to marry, for those who are married, and for our service in the Church.

Principle 1: *The importance of eternal marriage can be understood only within the context of the Father’s plan of happiness.*

We frequently speak about and highlight marriage as a fundamental unit of society, as the foundation of a strong nation, and as a vital sociological and cultural institution. But the restored gospel helps us to understand that it is so much more!

Do we perhaps talk about marriage without adequately teaching the importance of marriage in the Father’s plan? Emphasizing marriage without linking it to the simple and fundamental doctrine of the plan of happiness cannot provide sufficient direction, protection, or hope in a world that grows increasingly confused and wicked. We would all do well to remember the teaching of Alma—that “God gave unto [the children of men] commandments, *after* having made known unto them the plan of redemption” (Alma 12:32; italics added).

Elder Parley P. Pratt expressed beautifully the blessings that come to us as we learn about, understand, and strive to apply in our lives the doctrinal ideal of marriage:

“It was Joseph Smith who taught me how to prize the endearing relationships of father and mother, husband and wife; of brother and sister, son and daughter.

“It was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies



and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love. . . .

“I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling, which would lift my soul from the transitory things of this grovelling sphere and expand it as the ocean. . . . In short, I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also.

“Yet, at that time, my dearly beloved brother, Joseph Smith, had . . . merely lifted a corner of the veil and given me a single glance into eternity.”⁷

As men and women, as husbands and wives, and as Church leaders, can we see how the importance of eternal marriage can be understood only within the context of the Father’s plan of happiness? The doctrine of the plan leads men and women to hope and prepare for eternal marriage, and it defeats the fears and overcomes the

uncertainties that may cause some individuals to delay or avoid marriage. A correct understanding of the plan also strengthens our resolve to steadfastly honor the covenant of eternal marriage. Our individual learning, our teaching, and our testifying in both the home and at church will be magnified as we ponder and more fully understand this truth.

Principle 2: *Satan desires that all men and women might be miserable like unto himself.*

Lucifer relentlessly assails and distorts the doctrines that matter most to us individually, to our families, and to the world. Where is the adversary focusing his most direct and diabolical attacks? Satan works unremittingly to confuse understanding about gender, to promote the premature and unrighteous use of procreative power, and to hinder righteous marriage precisely because marriage is ordained of God and the family is central to the

plan of happiness. The adversary’s attacks upon eternal marriage will continue to increase in intensity, frequency, and sophistication.

Because today we are engaged in a war for the welfare of marriage and the home, in my latest reading of the Book of Mormon I paid particular attention to the ways the Nephites prepared for their battles against the Lamanites. I noted that the people of Nephi “were *aware of the intent* of [their enemy], and therefore they did prepare to meet them” (Alma 2:12; italics added). As I read and studied, I learned that *understanding the intent of an enemy* is a key prerequisite to effective preparation. We likewise should consider the intent of our enemy in this latter-day war.

The Father’s plan is designed to provide direction for His children, to help them become happy, and to bring them safely home to Him. Lucifer’s attacks on the plan are intended to make the sons and daughters of God confused and unhappy and to halt their eternal progression. The overarching intent of the father of lies is that all of us would become “miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27), and he works to warp the elements of the Father’s plan he hates the most. Satan does not have a body, he cannot marry, and he will not have a family. And he persistently strives to confuse the divinely appointed purposes of gender, marriage, and family. Throughout the world, we see growing evidence of the effectiveness of Satan’s efforts.

More recently the devil has attempted to combine and legally validate confusion about gender and marriage. As we look beyond mortality and into eternity, it is easy to discern that the counterfeit alternatives the adversary advocates can never lead to the completeness that is made possible through the sealing together of a man and a woman, to the happiness of righteous marriage, to the joy of posterity, or to the blessing of eternal progression.

Given what we know about our enemy's intent, each of us should be especially vigilant in seeking personal inspiration as to how we can protect and safeguard our own marriages—and how we can learn and teach correct principles in the home and in our Church assignments about the eternal significance of gender and of the role of marriage in the Father's plan.

Principle 3: *The ultimate blessings of love and happiness are obtained through the covenant relationship of eternal marriage.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the focal point in a covenant marriage relationship. Please notice how the Savior is positioned at the apex of this triangle, with a woman at the base of one corner and a man at the base of the other corner. Now consider what happens in the relationship between the man and the woman as they individually and steadily “come unto Christ” and strive to be “perfected in Him” (Moroni 10:32). Because of and through the Redeemer, the man and

the woman come closer together.

As a husband and wife are each drawn to the Lord (see 3 Nephi 27:14), as they learn to serve and cherish one another, as they share life experiences and grow together and become one, and as they are blessed through the uniting of their distinctive natures, they begin to realize the fulfillment that our Heavenly Father desires for His children. Ultimate happiness, which is the very object of the Father's



Husband and wife draw closer together as they individually and steadily come unto Christ.

plan, is received through the making and honoring of eternal marriage covenants.

As men and women, as husbands and wives, and as Church leaders, one of our paramount responsibilities is to help young men and women learn about and prepare for righteous marriage through our personal example. As young women and men observe worthiness, loyalty, sacrifice, and the honoring of covenants in our marriages, then those youth will seek to emulate the same principles in their courting and marriage relationships. As young people notice that we have

made the comfort and convenience of our eternal companion our highest priority, then they will become less self-centered and more able to give, to serve, and to create an equal and enduring companionship. As young women and men perceive mutual respect, affection, trust, and love between a husband and a wife, then they will strive to cultivate the same characteristics in their lives. Our children and the youth of the Church will learn the most from what we do and what we are—even if they remember relatively little of what we say.

Unfortunately many young members of the Church today are fearful of and stumble in their progress toward eternal marriage because they have seen too much of divorce in the world and of broken covenants in their homes and in the Church.

Eternal marriage is not merely a temporary legal contract that can be terminated at any time for almost any reason. Rather, it is a sacred covenant with God that can be binding in time and throughout all eternity. Faithfulness and fidelity in marriage must not simply be attractive words spoken in sermons; rather, they should be principles evident in our own covenant marriage relationships.

As we consider the importance of our personal example, do you and I discern areas where we need to improve? Is the Holy Ghost inspiring our minds and softening our hearts and encouraging us to do and to become better? As priesthood and

auxiliary leaders, are we focusing our efforts on strengthening marriage and the home?

Husbands and wives need time together to fortify themselves and their homes against the attacks of the adversary. As we strive to magnify our callings in the Church, are we unintentionally hindering husbands and wives and mothers and fathers from fulfilling their sacred responsibilities in the home? For example, do we sometimes schedule unnecessary meetings and activities in a way that interferes with the essential relationship between a husband and a wife and their relationships with children?

As we sincerely ponder these questions, I am confident the Spirit is even now helping and will continue to help each of us learn the things we should do at home and in the Church.

The Spiritual Resources We Need

Our responsibilities to learn and understand the doctrine of the plan, to uphold and be examples of righteous marriage, and to teach correct principles in the home and at church may cause us to wonder if we are equal to the task. We are ordinary people who must accomplish a most extraordinary work.

Many years ago, Sister Bednar and I were busy trying to meet the countless competing demands of a young and energetic family—and of Church, career, and community responsibilities. One evening after the children were asleep, we talked at length about



One of our paramount responsibilities is to help young men and women learn about and prepare for righteous marriage through our personal example.

how effectively we were attending to all of our important priorities. We realized that we would not receive the promised blessings in eternity if we did not honor more fully the covenant we had made in mortality. We resolved together to do and to be better as a husband and a wife. That lesson learned so many years ago has made a tremendous difference in our marriage.

The sweet and simple doctrine of the plan of happiness provides precious eternal perspective and helps us understand the importance of eternal marriage. We have been blessed with all of the spiritual resources we need. We have the fulness of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. We have the Holy Ghost and revelation. We have saving ordinances, covenants, and temples. We have priesthood and prophets. We have the holy scriptures and the

power of the word of God. And we have The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I testify that we have been blessed with all of the spiritual resources we need to learn about, to teach, to strengthen, and to defend righteous marriage—and that indeed we can live together in happiness as husbands and wives and families in eternity. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

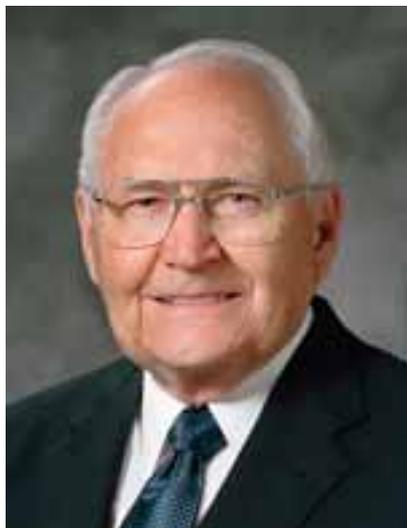
NOTES

1. See First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999; or *Liabona*, Dec. 1999, 1; *Ensign*, June 1999, 80.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
3. *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
4. *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
5. *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
6. *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
7. *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1938), 297–98.

A Solemn Responsibility to Love and Care for Each Other

ELDER L. TOM PERRY

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Balancing Our Responsibilities

The subject I have been assigned is the following sentence from the proclamation on the family: “Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.”¹ I want to approach this subject in a very different manner than you might be familiar with in

other training meetings. I will not quote much from handbooks; instead, I want to talk to you heart to heart about your service in our Father in Heaven’s kingdom. The purpose will be to see if together we can better understand how to balance our responsibilities to love and care for our families with the other special callings our Father in Heaven has given to us.

As the Church was being organized on April 6, 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation that is now recorded in the 21st section of the Doctrine and Covenants. A portion of the revelation reads:

“Behold, there shall be a record kept among you; and in it thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ,

“Being inspired of the Holy Ghost to lay the foundation thereof, and to build it up unto the most holy faith. . . .

“Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

“For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith” (D&C 21:1–2, 4–5).

Among the first instructions given to this newly organized Church was to follow the inspiration and revelation that comes from the Lord, through His prophet, in fulfilling our responsibilities to build His kingdom. He has promised to direct us in the course that should be ours to carry on this great work.

The Prophet’s Counsel

I think President Gordon B. Hinckley, our prophet today, gave us the key to balance our responsibilities in an earlier worldwide leadership training meeting, held on June 21, 2003. In that broadcast he stated:

“Yours . . . is the privilege of standing in the shadow of the Redeemer of the world as we carry forward this work. Yours is the opportunity to speak of the beauty of the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in behalf of His sons and daughters. Could there be a greater privilege than this?

“Rejoice in the privilege which is yours. Your opportunity will not last forever. Too soon there will be only



In all periods of history, God has given His divine law to safeguard and protect the holy union between husband and wife.

the memory of the great experience you are now having.

“None of us will accomplish all we might wish to. But let us do the best we can. I am satisfied that the Redeemer will then say, ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant’ (Matthew 25:21).”²

As you remember, in that broadcast he explained our fourfold responsibility. The first applies to the subject we are addressing in this broadcast. He stated:

“First, it is imperative that you not neglect your families. Nothing you have is more precious. Your wives and your children are deserving of the attention of their husbands and fathers. When all is said and done, it is this family relationship which we will take with us into the life beyond. To paraphrase the words of scripture, ‘What shall it profit a man

though he serve the Church faithfully and lose his own family?’ (see Mark 8:36).”³

This has been a continuing message from our prophets since the early days of the organization of the Church. The most important place for gospel teaching and leadership is in the family and in the home. If we follow these instructions, we will give assignments and plan programs, activities, and classes which will complement and support our families.

Establishing Proper Priorities

How we use our time and keep our lives in balance is fundamental to how we will perform our family duties and our Church service. Discipline yourself to follow the prophet’s counsel on how you prioritize the use of your time.

Your Eternal Companion

Begin by discussing with your eternal companion how much time you need together to strengthen your marriage, to demonstrate the love you have for each other. That is your first priority.

The Church is to help individuals and families come unto Christ and obtain eternal life. Eternal life is God’s greatest gift to His children, and it is obtained only through a family relationship. This relationship must start with the union between husband and wife, which is sacred to the Lord and is something not to be trifled with. The marriage covenant is essential for the Lord’s plan and is the purpose for which He created the heavens and the earth. In all periods of history, He has given His divine law to safeguard and protect the holy union between husband and wife.



The most important instruction children will ever receive should come from their parents.

Your Children

Second, consider the spiritual needs of your children. How much time is necessary to be certain you are being close to them? It is your responsibility as fathers and mothers to provide adequate time to teach them, for the most important instruction children will ever receive should come from their parents. We need to be familiar with what the Church is teaching our children so that we can be in harmony with that teaching in our instructions to each child. For example, the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth*, quoting the proclamation on the family, gives young people this counsel about families:

“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and

maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.”⁴

The pamphlet continues:

“Being part of a family is a great blessing. Your family can provide you with companionship and happiness, help you learn correct principles in a loving atmosphere, and help you prepare for eternal life. Not all families are the same, but each is important in Heavenly Father’s plan.

“Do your part to build a happy home. Be cheerful, helpful, and considerate of others. Many problems in the home are created because family members speak and act selfishly or unkindly. Concern yourself with the needs of other family members. Seek to be a peacemaker rather than to tease, fight, and quarrel. Remember that the family is the most sacred unit of the Church.”⁵

Providing for Your Family

Our third priority is to provide for our family units. Again from the proclamation on the family:

“By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families.”⁶

We need to maintain good skills to be gainfully employed. In a changing world, we must keep up-to-date, or our skills will become obsolete. Even though we are busy in Church assignments, we should not pass up opportunities to increase our development and improve the welfare of our families. This requires that we invest adequate time and thought to preparing for the future.

This counsel applies to the sisters as well as the brethren. Although the responsibility to provide for the family belongs primarily to fathers, the

proclamation indicates that “disability, death, or other circumstances”⁷ may also require you sisters to use and develop your skills to provide for your families.

Church Service

Fourth in our priority is our commitment to the time we spend in Church activities. Active Latter-day Saint families value their Church time and make choices in their family life to make room for it.

Leaders need to be especially sensitive to different family situations when they extend calls and create expectations. Families with young children where both parents have demanding calls that take them out of the home are the most likely to feel that Church activities interfere with their family life. Church leaders can help by acknowledging and validating members’ efforts to balance Church

We can increase our association with our families while we serve in Church callings.



service with their family responsibilities.

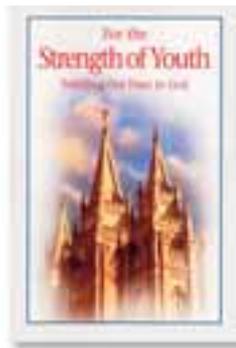
Involving Family Members

There are ways to increase our association with our families while we serve in our Church callings by involving our families, when appropriate, in our Church service. Let me give you one personal example.

My father served as my bishop during the early years of my life. He was a busy man with a demanding legal practice. He was also active in civic affairs and in demand as a public speaker. And, of course, he was the father of six children. I was always grateful that my father had his priorities right. Mother was always his first priority. It was evident by the way he treated her. This was followed by a real dedication to each of his children.

When I was about six years old, I received a red wagon as a Christmas gift. It was exactly like this one in

miniature. The little red wagon provided a real bond between my father and me. In his busy life, he had to find ways of involving his



family in activities without diminishing his own productivity.

Much of his service as a bishop occurred during the Great Depression in the 1930s. Many of our ward members were in desperate need. As the bishop, he had the responsibility of supplying the means to sustain their lives. This seemed to be a good activity for a bishop, his son, and the little red wagon.

I would come home from school and find stacks on the side of the garage—flour, sugar, wheat, and other commodities. I knew that that evening my father and I would have the opportunity of being together.

When he would arrive home, the little red wagon was loaded with supplies to take to a family. The two of us, walking and talking together, would complete our welfare assignment by delivering the commodities to those in need.

I was able to witness firsthand the love and care a good priesthood leader had for his ward members. More important, I had an opportunity of spending precious time with my father.

Focusing on Basic Priorities

Let me encourage you to do what we taught you in the first worldwide leadership training meeting. We remind you that all units of the Church are at different stages of development, and all units have different needs. When we are planning our Church programs, the families





must be taken into consideration.

Again, we caution you not to burden your membership with more than one Church calling, plus home teaching and visiting teaching. Discipline yourself to stick to the basic priorities, and you will be surprised how the inspiration of the Lord will direct you as you carry on your responsibilities to be a servant in His kingdom.

The ultimate focus of the restored Church is to facilitate and bring about opportunities for us to assist the Lord in His work to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. We do this primarily by strengthening families. In an age of moral decline, political uncertainty, international unrest, and economic instability, our focus on strengthening and stabilizing families must be enhanced and magnified. The very purpose of the

Church is to assist families in obtaining salvation and exaltation in the eternal kingdom of heaven.

The Family Guidebook

Several years ago we published a special *Family Guidebook*. It was for the use of members, especially those who are new converts or have limited Church experience. We encourage you to use it. It begins with a statement:

“The family is the basic unit of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the most important social unit in time and eternity. God has established families to bring happiness to His children, allow them to learn correct principles in a loving atmosphere, and prepare them for eternal life.



“The home is the best place to teach, learn, and apply gospel principles.”⁸

Again, we encourage you to refer to this booklet’s helpful teachings.

The Savior’s Example

Our Lord and Savior ministered personally to the people, lifting the downtrodden, giving hope to the discouraged, and seeking out the lost. By His words and actions, He showed the people that He loved and understood and appreciated them. He recognized the divine nature and eternal worth of each individual. Even when calling people to repentance, He condemned the sin without condemning the sinner.

Like our Savior, as Church leaders we should love the people we serve, showing care and concern for each one individually. May the Lord bless us in the sacred responsibility He has given us is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
2. “Rejoicing in the Privilege to Serve,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 24.
3. *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 22.
4. *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
5. *For the Strength of Youth* (pamphlet, 2001), 10.
6. *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
7. *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
8. *Family Guidebook* (2001), 1.

The Family Guidebook (item no. 31180) may be obtained through Church distribution centers and service centers.

Parents Have a Sacred Duty

BONNIE D. PARKIN

Relief Society General President



Family Responsibilities

If I could have one thing happen for parents and leaders of this Church, it would be that they feel the love of the Lord in their lives each day as they care for Heavenly Father's children. It may not be something that I say that touches your heart, but what the Spirit whispers to you. Follow those sweet promptings.

I distinctly remember when the proclamation on the family was given: September 23, 1995. I was seated in the Tabernacle at the general Relief Society meeting. President Hinckley was the concluding speaker. He

presented "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." Stillness was in the congregation but also a sense of excitement, a reaction of "Yes—we need help with our families!"

I remember feeling it was so right. Tears ran down my cheeks. As I looked at the sisters seated near me, they seemed to be experiencing similar feelings. There was so much in the proclamation that I couldn't wait to get a copy and study it. The proclamation affirms the dignity of women.

And to think that it was first given to the women of the Church at the general Relief Society meeting—I know President Hinckley values women.

We are all here as Church leaders. We're busy. But I have to remember—just like you do—that our first responsibility is to our own family. Remember, they are one of the few blessings we get to take with us to the eternities!¹

Newel K. Whitney was a bishop in the early Church in Kirtland. Like you bishops today, he must have been pretty busy doing lots of good things. But he was chastened by the Lord and commanded to "set in order *bis* family" (D&C 93:50; italics added). Sisters

and brothers, this counsel applies to all of us.

Many of you are parents or grandparents, or someday you may be. But married or not, we are all members of families. Take a minute and think about your own family. What do you love about them? One thing I love about mine is I rejoice that my four sons love to be together.

What doctrine on the family does the proclamation teach? I'd like to focus on one paragraph: "By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners."²

I love the words "by divine design." Parenting is part of our Heavenly Father's divine design for His children. As parents, we have divine responsibility to provide, protect, and nurture our families.

How can these guidelines—to *provide*, *protect*, and *nurture*—help us to rear righteous children?

Provide

The proclamation says parents provide "the necessities of life." But what are those necessities? Yes, they are a roof overhead, and they are food on the table. But because of the gospel plan, we know there is more than



that. They include skills—the things that build character. Let’s look at just a few.

We provide for our children as we teach them how to work. Let me tell you about my grandson Jacob. He did not want to go to school. His mother had tried so many things. Finally she sat him down and said, “Daddy’s job is to go to work and earn money. My job is to stay home and take care of you and your brothers and sister. And your job, Jacob, is to go to school.” When Jacob understood the principle, he accepted it and went to school.

We also teach our children to work by expecting them to do chores and, when appropriate, to work outside the home. We help our children provide for their lifetimes by teaching them the value of work. Start early! My husband says the greatest gift his father gave him was independence—because he taught him to work.

Managing our finances also helps us to be good providers. As parents, plan together to live on a budget.

Teach your children the difference between wants and needs. Don’t place unreasonable financial demands on your spouse. When President Hinckley counseled us to get out of debt, a father I know sat down with his married children and asked them about their finances. He was surprised to find that two had serious debt. He then asked them if he could help them make a plan.

Education and training enable parents to provide. Encourage your children to get all the education they can. In some countries, young people cannot qualify for Perpetual Education Fund loans because they have not completed secondary schooling. In today’s world, it is so important that parents continue to learn.

Protect

The second guideline I would like to talk about is *protect*. Protection from what? From harm—both physical and spiritual. We protect when we teach our children that they have divine worth, when we go to church as a family, when we have family home evening, when we have family prayer, when we study the scriptures together. That’s all pretty simple stuff, but I testify to you that it provides powerful protection.

The proclamation teaches that parents have a sacred duty to protect their children. Abuse can be emotional, such as talking down to a spouse or a child, treating them as worthless, or withholding love and affection. Fathers do not protect their families when they beat or strike their wives or children. A West African sister said that before joining the Church, her father beat her mother and the children. “Now,” she said, “he treats us with respect and tenderness because he understands we are children of God.”

Parents protect their children by knowing their choice of friends. One teenage girl was angry when her father questioned her about her evening’s activities. The father explained that the proclamation said he should be a protector of his family and that he loved his daughter, and that was why he wanted to be sure she was safe.

We must also protect our children from the influences of the media. Know what your children are watching on the television, in the theaters, and in their friends’ homes. If you have a computer in your home, make sure it is a tool for those things that are “virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy” (Articles of Faith 1:13).

We are protected as we follow the living prophet. How have you been protected as a family by following President Hinckley’s counsel to read



the Book of Mormon? I recently received a note from a sister in England. She wrote:

“My family has struggled in the last year with a father who has chosen not to attend church any longer. He has been active all his life and has been in bishoprics. My heart has cried to the Lord about what I can do to not feel resentment and bitterness. I have family home evening and prayer on my own with the children. While in the temple I felt prompted, because of the challenge to read the Book of Mormon, to not have scripture time alone with the children but take the children and the scriptures to my husband, wherever he may be in the house. So off we march, every night at 9:00, to find him. He reads with us—not at first, but now he does. He is coming to church, meeting with us



in family home evening, and leading gospel discussions. My children were the Lord’s feet and carried the words of redeeming love to my husband. This has been a great blessing to my family.”

Nurture

The third and the last guideline is *nurture*. What does nurturing look like? What does it feel like? What does it sound like? Nurturing looks like, feels like, and sounds like this scripture: “By persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness” (D&C 121:41–42). Let me share just a few examples.

I think nurturing looks like disciplining with love. One young mother stops her child



when he doesn’t obey. She cups her hands around his face, looking him in the eyes, and says, “Listen to my words.” We must teach our children to make wise choices, but we can’t remove the consequences of their actions. Remember, the basis of our Heavenly Father’s plan is agency.

What does nurturing feel like? Much of the teaching and relationship building in families takes place in those brief, unplanned moments dur-

ing our daily routine. The dinner table is a place to connect with each other, share our daily activities, listen to and encourage each other, and even laugh together. I know laugh-

ter lightens the load. Dear mothers and fathers, make a regular mealtime for the people you love.

Are you done parenting when your children are all grown and on their own? No, the deal is that you’re never



done. But we're in this great business of creating eternal families. While my husband and I were serving a mission in England, one of our sons and his family came to visit. I remember him saying, "We came because we needed to be nurtured." Once a parent, always a parent. Isn't that the best? As I finished reading the Book of Mormon in December, I was struck with the realization that even Mormon counseled his adult son Moroni: "My son, be faithful in Christ; . . . may Christ lift thee up . . . and his mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory and eternal life, rest in your mind forever" (Moroni 9:25).

What does nurturing sound like? Sometimes it's hard to get more than one-word answers from a teenager. Here's a question that I've found to be extremely helpful in changing that: "What is the biggest challenge or struggle you have right now?" This question opens the door for youth to share. And when they do, just listen! Don't judge or counsel or anything else. Just listen. You'll be amazed at the connections and bonds that will be formed. Bishops and counselors, this very same question can be powerful as you interview the youth in your wards.

Nurturing sounds like family prayer. One of my most lasting memories of my father is kneeling with my brothers and sister by my parents' bed in their small room and hearing my father plead with Heavenly Father to bless our mother, who was in the

hospital. Hearing my father pour out his heart helped me know that there was a God in heaven who listens. Pray for your children about their schoolwork and for their protection during the day. Our children know of our love and expectations when they hear us pray for them.

Strengthening Families

As a leader, how do you strengthen and support the families of those you serve? You can use those same guidelines—provide, protect, and nurture—to strengthen your ward families.

Leaders support parents by honoring them, not by stepping in front to take over a child. You can be a mentor, you can share like interests, but defer to how the parents would like to have things done. One mother shared: "It has often seemed to me that the last people my teenage sons wanted to listen to were my husband and me. At times, my sons, yielding to peer pressures, have turned the parent volume down. I'm thankful for wise Church leaders who have counseled our sons. They never took over our role as parents. They listened but gave support to *our* guidance and redirected them back to us."

As families, we all have needs. Just a few heartfelt words about mothers who parent alone: Let me share with you the story of a mother of five whose husband was deployed overseas. She relates:

"When my husband left in early February, we had reliable vehicles.

However, by November, they had broken down, and we were not able to repair them. During this same time, my 17-year-old son let me know that he wasn't planning to serve a mission because he wasn't sure if the gospel was true. If ever there was a time in my life that I needed the blessings of the priesthood, it was then. I don't remember all the details or when and where, but I distinctly remember receiving more than one blessing from caring priesthood holders during that time. I always knew that I could call on my home teachers and they would be there. Neither one could fix my van, but they could give me much-needed priesthood blessings, and they found someone who could fix the car."

Devoted home teachers made a difference for this family, and they can make a difference for all single-parent families as they come to know them, gain their trust, and provide priesthood blessings. Bishops, high priests group leaders, and elders quorum presidents, these mothers need the blessings of the priesthood in their home, as do our remarkable single sisters.

President Hinckley warned about the "slow stain of the world" 10 years ago when the proclamation was issued. This prophetic declaration reaffirms the Lord's "standards, doctrines, and practices relative to the family."³ In contrast, the world tries to dictate the roles of women and motherhood. Women today are told they need a



Leaders support parents by honoring them, not by stepping in front to take over a child.

thriving career, organizations to belong to, and, if they have resources, children. The honored role of mother is increasingly out of fashion. Let me make it clear: we must not allow the world to compromise what we know is given to us by divine design.

Sisters, let me speak directly to you for just a few minutes. As members of the Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is our blessing and our responsibility to nurture and sustain the family unit. Everyone belongs to a family, and every family needs to be strengthened and protected.

My greatest help in becoming a homemaker came first from my own mother and grandmother and next from the Relief Society sisters in the different wards where we have lived. I learned skills; I saw modeled the joys that come from creating a home where others want to be. Effective January 2006, there were new guidelines for home, family, and personal enrichment meetings and activities.

They provide increased flexibility in order for all sisters to participate in Relief Society. Now, Relief Society leaders, make sure that the meetings and the activities you plan will strengthen the homes of all your sisters.

Visiting teaching is another vehicle to support the family. I hope all of you have opportunity to be visiting teachers. Visiting teachers not only strengthen a sister spiritually but are also in a unique position to nurture and to assess needs. Relief Society leaders, be proactive in your welfare committee meetings, and report on spiritual and temporal needs identified by your visiting teachers.

The Pure Love of Christ

For those of you who are married, think back. What made you fall in love with your spouse? Remembering this can give you a forgiving heart. Express your love to each other. A wife can make a difference in her husband's life as she builds his self-confidence. A husband can brighten even the

darkest day with three simple words: "I love you." One of the greatest gifts parents can give their children is to show them they love each other.

Our role as parents in rearing righteous children is to provide, protect, and nurture, and we do that as equal partners. We do the same as leaders. Being a leader is hard work. Being a parent is hard work. We get discouraged, but we just keep going. I think we learn so much about the pure love of Christ in our families and through Church service.

As parents and leaders, we need to give to our children the love our Heavenly Father extends to us. In Moroni 8:17 we read, "I am filled with charity, which is everlasting love." Add to this the Lord's words: "Clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace" (D&C 88:125). I invite you, in all of your dealings, to put on the mantle of charity, to envelop your family in the pure love of Christ.

As families and leaders, may the Lord bless you to encircle those you love with the mantle of charity, that all of us may return to the presence of our Father in Heaven and live with Him together forever. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "Rejoicing in the Privilege to Serve," *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 22.
2. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
3. "Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 100.

Heavenly Homes, Forever Families

PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

First Counselor in the First Presidency



Building an Eternal Home

It is in a spirit of humility that I represent the First Presidency as the concluding speaker for this meeting. We have been inspired and edified by the remarks of Elder Bednar, Elder Perry, and Sister Parkin. Our thoughts have centered on home and family as we have been reminded that “the home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions.”¹

A home is much more than a house built of lumber, brick, or stone. A home is made of love, sacrifice,

and respect. We are responsible for the homes we build. We must build wisely, for eternity is not a short voyage. There will be calm and wind, sunlight and shadows, joy and sorrow. But if we really try, our home can be a bit of heaven here on earth. The thoughts we think, the deeds we do, the lives we live not only influence the success of our earthly journey, they also mark the way to our eternal goals.

Some Latter-day Saint families are comprised of mother, father, and children, all at home, while others have witnessed the tender departure of one, then another, then another of their members. Sometimes a single individual comprises a family. Whatever its composition, the family continues—for families can be forever.

We can learn from the master architect—even the Lord. He has taught us how we must build. He declared, “Every . . . house divided against itself shall not stand” (Matthew 12:25). Later He cautioned, “Behold, mine house is a house of order . . . and not a house of confusion” (D&C 132:8).

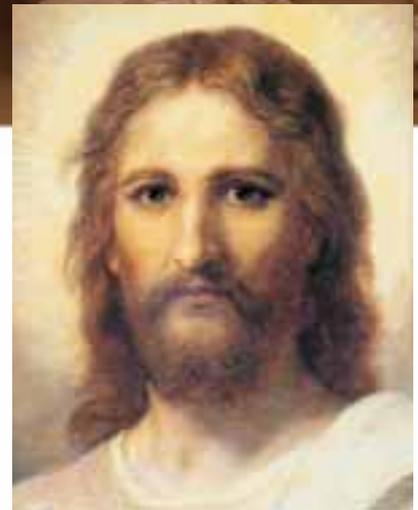
In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith at Kirtland, Ohio, December 27, 1832, the Master counseled, “Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 88:119; see also 109:8).

Where could any of us locate a more suitable blueprint whereby he could wisely and properly build? Such a house would meet the building code outlined in Matthew, even a house built “upon a rock” (Matthew 7:24, 25; see also Luke 6:48; 3 Nephi 14:24, 25), a house capable of withstanding the rains of adversity, the floods of opposition, and the winds of doubt everywhere present in our changing and challenging world.

Some might question, “But that revelation was to provide guidance for the construction of a temple. Is it relevant today?”

I would respond, “Did not the Apostle Paul declare, ‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?’” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Let the Lord be the general contractor for our building project. Then each of us can be subcontractors responsible for a vital segment of the whole project. All of us are thereby builders. In addition to building our own homes, we also have the



The Master counseled, “Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith.”

responsibility to help build the kingdom of God here upon the earth by serving faithfully and effectively in our Church callings. May I provide guidelines from God, lessons from life, and points to ponder as we commence to build.

Kneel Down to Pray

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6). So spoke the wise Solomon, son of David, king of Israel.

On this, the American continent, Jacob, the brother of Nephi, declared, “Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith” (Jacob 3:1).

This divinely inspired counsel comes to us today as crystal-clear water to a parched earth. We live in troubled times.

Just a few short generations ago, one could not have imagined the world in which we now live and the problems it presents. We are surrounded by immorality, pornography, violence, drugs, and a host of other ills which afflict modern-day society.

Ours is the challenge, even the responsibility, not only to keep ourselves “unspotted from the world” (James 1:27) but also to guide our children and others for whom we have responsibility safely through the stormy seas of sin surrounding all of us, that we might one day return to live with our Heavenly Father.

The training of our own families requires our presence, our time, our best efforts. To be effective in our training, we must be stalwart in our examples to our family members and available for private time with each member, as well as time for counseling and guidance.

We often feel overwhelmed by the task before us. However, help is ever

at hand. He who knows each of His children will answer our fervent and heartfelt prayer as we seek help in guiding them. Such prayer will solve more problems, alleviate more suffering, prevent more transgression, and bring about greater peace and contentment in the human soul than any other way.

Besides needing such guidance for our own families, we have been called to positions where we have responsibility for others. As a bishop or counselor, as a priesthood quorum leader or an auxiliary leader, you have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others. There may be those who come from part-member or less-active families; some may have turned from their parents, disregarding their pleadings and counsel. We could well be the instrument in the Lord’s hands to make a difference in the life of one in such a situation. Without the guidance of our Heavenly Father, however, we cannot do all that we have been called to do. Such help comes through prayer.

A prominent American judge was asked what we, as citizens of the countries of the world, could do to reduce crime and disobedience to law and to bring peace and contentment into our lives and into our nations. He thoughtfully replied, “I would suggest a return to the old-fashioned practice of family prayer.”

As a people, aren’t we grateful that family prayer is not an out-of-date practice with us? There is real meaning behind the oft-quoted adage, “The family that prays together stays together.”

The Lord Himself directed that we have family prayer when He said, “Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed” (3 Nephi 18:21).

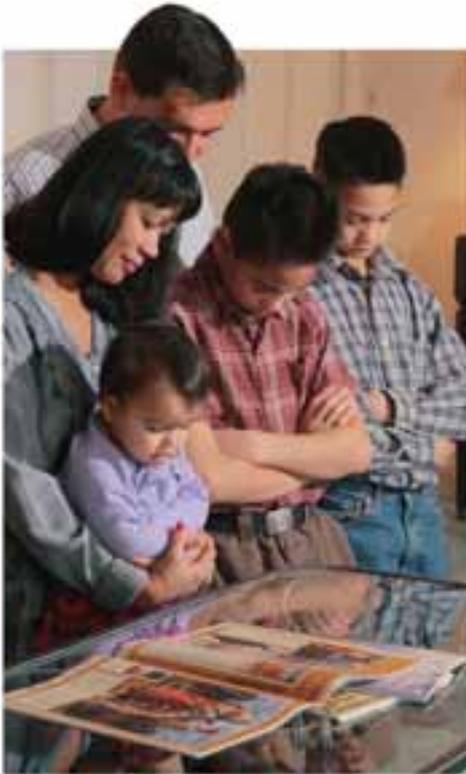
As parents, as teachers, and as leaders in any capacity, we cannot afford to attempt this potentially perilous journey through mortality without heavenly assistance to aid us in guiding those for whom we have responsibility.

As we offer unto God our family prayers and our personal prayers, let us do so with faith and trust in Him. Kneel down to pray.

Step Up to Serve

For our example, we turn to the life of the Lord. Like a glowing searchlight of goodness is the life of Jesus as He ministered among men. He brought strength to the limbs of the cripple, sight to the eyes of the blind, hearing to the ears of the deaf, and life to the body of the dead.

His parables preach power. With the good Samaritan, He taught, “Love thy neighbor” (see Luke 10:30–35). Through His kindness to the woman taken in adultery, He taught compassionate understanding (see John 8:3–11). In His parable of the talents,



He taught us to improve ourselves and to strive for perfection (see Matthew 25:14–30). Well could He have been preparing us for our role in building an eternal family.

Each of us—whether a priesthood leader or an officer in an auxiliary organization—has responsibility to his or her sacred call. We have been set apart for the work to which we have been called. In Doctrine and Covenants 107:99 the Lord said, “Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.” As we help to bless and strengthen those for whom we have responsibility in our Church callings, we will in effect be blessing and strengthening their families. Thus, the service we perform in our families and in our Church callings can have eternal consequences.

Many years ago, as a bishop in a large and diverse ward of over a thousand members located in downtown Salt Lake City, I faced numerous challenges.

One Sunday afternoon I received a phone call from the proprietor of a drugstore located within our ward boundaries. He indicated that earlier that morning, a young boy had come into his store and had purchased an ice-cream sundae from the soda fountain. He had paid for the purchase with money he took from an envelope, and then when he left, he had forgotten the envelope. When the proprietor had a chance

to examine it, he found that it was a fast-offering envelope with the name and telephone number of our ward printed on it. As he described to me the boy who had been in his store, I immediately identified the individual—a young deacon from our ward who came from a less-active family.

My first reaction was one of shock and disappointment to think that any of our deacons would take fast-offering funds intended for those in need and would go to a store on a Sunday and buy a treat with the money. I determined to visit the boy that afternoon in order to teach him about the sacred funds of the Church and his duty as a deacon to gather and to protect those funds.

As I drove to the home, I offered a silent prayer for direction in what I should say to compose the situation. I arrived and knocked on the door. It was opened by the boy’s mother, and I was invited into the living room. Although the room was barely lighted, I could see how small and run-down it was. The few pieces of furniture were threadbare. The mother herself looked worn out.

My indignation at her son’s actions that morning disappeared from my thoughts as I realized that here was a family in real need. I felt impressed to ask the mother if there was any food in the house. Tearfully she admitted that there was none.

She told me that her husband had been out of work for some time and that they were in desperate need not only of food but also of money with which to pay the rent so that they wouldn’t be evicted from the tiny house.



The service we perform in our families and in our Church callings can have eternal consequences.

I never did bring up the matter of the fast-offering donations, for I realized that the boy had most likely been desperately hungry when he stopped at the drugstore. Rather, I immediately arranged for assistance for the family, that they might have food to eat and a roof over their heads. In addition, with the help of the priesthood leaders in the ward, we were able to arrange employment for the husband so that he could provide for his family in the future.

As priesthood and auxiliary leaders, we are entitled to the Lord’s assistance in magnifying our callings and fulfilling our responsibilities.

Seek His help, and when the inspiration comes to you, move on that inspiration concerning where to go, whom to see, what to say, and how to say it. We can think a thought to death, but only when we move upon the thought do we bless human lives.

May we be true shepherds of those for whom we have responsibility. John Milton wrote in his poem "Lycidas," "The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed" (line 125). The Lord Himself said to Ezekiel the prophet, "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that . . . feed not the flock" (Ezekiel 34:2-3).

Ours is the responsibility to care for the flock, for the precious sheep, these tender lambs, are everywhere to be found—at home in our own families, in the homes of our extended families, and waiting for us in our Church callings. Jesus is our Exemplar. Said He, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep" (John 10:14). We have a shepherding responsibility. May we each step up to serve.

Reach Out to Rescue

On the journey along the pathway of life, there are casualties. Some depart from the road markers which lead to life eternal only to discover that the detour chosen ultimately leads to a dead end. Indifference, carelessness, selfishness, and sin all take their costly toll in human lives. There are those who, for unexplained reasons, march to the sound of a

different drummer, later to learn they have followed the Pied Piper of sorrow and suffering.

In 1995 the First Presidency took note of those who had strayed from the fold of Christ and issued a special statement entitled "An Invitation to Come Back." The message contained this appeal:

"To you who for any reason find yourselves outside the embrace of the Church, we say come back. We invite you to return and partake of the



happiness you once knew. You will find many with outstretched arms to welcome you, assist you, and give you comfort.

"The Church needs your strength, love, loyalty, and devotion. The course is fixed and certain by which a person may return to the full blessings of Church membership, and we stand ready to receive all who wish to do so."

Perhaps an oft-repeated scene will bring closer to home your personal opportunity to reach out to rescue. Let us look in on a family with a son

named Jack. Throughout Jack's early life, he and his father had many serious arguments. One day when he was 17, they had a particularly agitated one. Jack said to his father, "This is the straw that breaks the camel's back. I'm leaving home, and I will never return!" He went to his room and packed a bag. His mother begged him to stay, but he was too angry to listen. He left her crying in the doorway.

Leaving the yard, he was about to pass through the gate when he heard his father call to him, "Jack, I know that a large share of the blame for your leaving rests with me. For this I am truly sorry. I want you to know that if you should ever wish to return home, you'll always be welcome. And I'll try to be a better father to you. I want you to know that I love you, and I'll always love you."

Jack said nothing but went to the bus station and bought a ticket to a distant point. As he sat in the bus watching the miles go by, his thoughts turned to the words of his father. He began to realize how much courage, how much love had been required for his father to say what he had said. Dad had apologized. He had invited him back and had left the words ringing in the summer air, "I love you."

Jack knew that the next move was up to him. He realized the only way he could ever find peace with himself was



May we be true shepherds of those for whom we have responsibility.

to demonstrate to his father the same kind of maturity, goodness, and love that Dad had shown toward him. Jack got off the bus. He bought a return ticket and began the journey home.

He arrived shortly after midnight, entered the house, and turned on the light. There in the rocking chair sat his father, his head bowed. As he looked up and saw Jack, he arose from the chair; they rushed into each other's arms. Jack later said, "Those last years that I was home were among the happiest of my life."

Here was a father who, suppressing passion and bridle pride, reached out to rescue his son before he became one of that vast "lost battalion" resulting from fractured families and shattered homes. Love was the binding band, the healing balm; love so often felt, so seldom expressed.

From Mount Sinai there thunders in our ears, "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12), and later, from that same God, the injunction, "Live together in love" (D&C 42:45).

Following the Lord's Blueprint

Kneel down to pray. Step up to serve. Reach out to rescue. Each is a vital page of God's blueprint to make a house a home and a home a heaven.

Balance is key to us in our sacred and solemn responsibilities in our own homes and in our Church callings. We must use wisdom, inspiration, and sound judgment as we care for our families and fulfill our Church callings, for each is vitally important. We cannot neglect our families; we must not neglect our Church callings.

Let us build with skill, take no shortcuts, and follow His blueprint. Then the Lord, even our building inspector, may say to us, as He said when He appeared to Solomon, a builder of another day, "I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually" (1 Kings 9:3). We will then have heavenly homes and forever families and will be able to help, to strengthen, and to bless other families as well.

I pray most humbly and sincerely that this blessing may come to each of us. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTE

1. First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999; see *Liahona*, Dec. 1999, 1; or *Ensign*, June 1999, 80.

THE FAMILY

A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

WE, THE FIRST PRESIDENCY and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

ALL HUMAN BEINGS—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

IN THE PREMORTAL REALM, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

WE DECLARE the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

HUSBAND AND WIFE have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a

sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

THE FAMILY is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

WE WARN that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

WE CALL UPON responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

the Friend



Thankful for Missionary Work

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

The boat on which I traveled to England docked at Plymouth the night of July 1, 1933. The three of us missionaries aboard took the boat train to London, arriving late at night. The next day I was assigned to go to Preston, Lancashire. After what seemed like a long, lonely train ride, I met my companion at the station, and he took me to our “digs,” a short distance from Vauxhall Chapel where the first LDS missionary sermon had been preached in 1837.

My companion then announced that we would go into town and hold a street meeting. I was terrified. We sang a hymn and offered prayer. Then he called on me to speak. A crowd gathered. They looked menacing to me. The world was then in the bottom of the Depression, and Lancashire had been particularly hard-hit. The people were poor. They wore wooden clogs on their feet. Their dress reflected the hard times in which they lived. They were difficult to understand; I was a westerner from the United States, and they spoke with a Lancashire dialect.

Those first few weeks I was discouraged. I wrote a letter home to my good father and said that I felt I was wasting my time and his money. He wrote a very short



When President Hinckley was a young man, he served a full-time mission to the British Isles. He tells us some of his experiences.

letter to me which said: “Dear Gordon, I have your recent letter. I have only one suggestion: forget yourself and go to work.” Earlier that morning my companion and I had read these words of the Lord: “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it” (Mark 8:35).

Those words of the Master, followed by my father’s letter, went into my very being. I went into our bedroom and got on my knees and made a pledge to the Lord. I covenanted that I would try to forget myself and lose myself in His service.

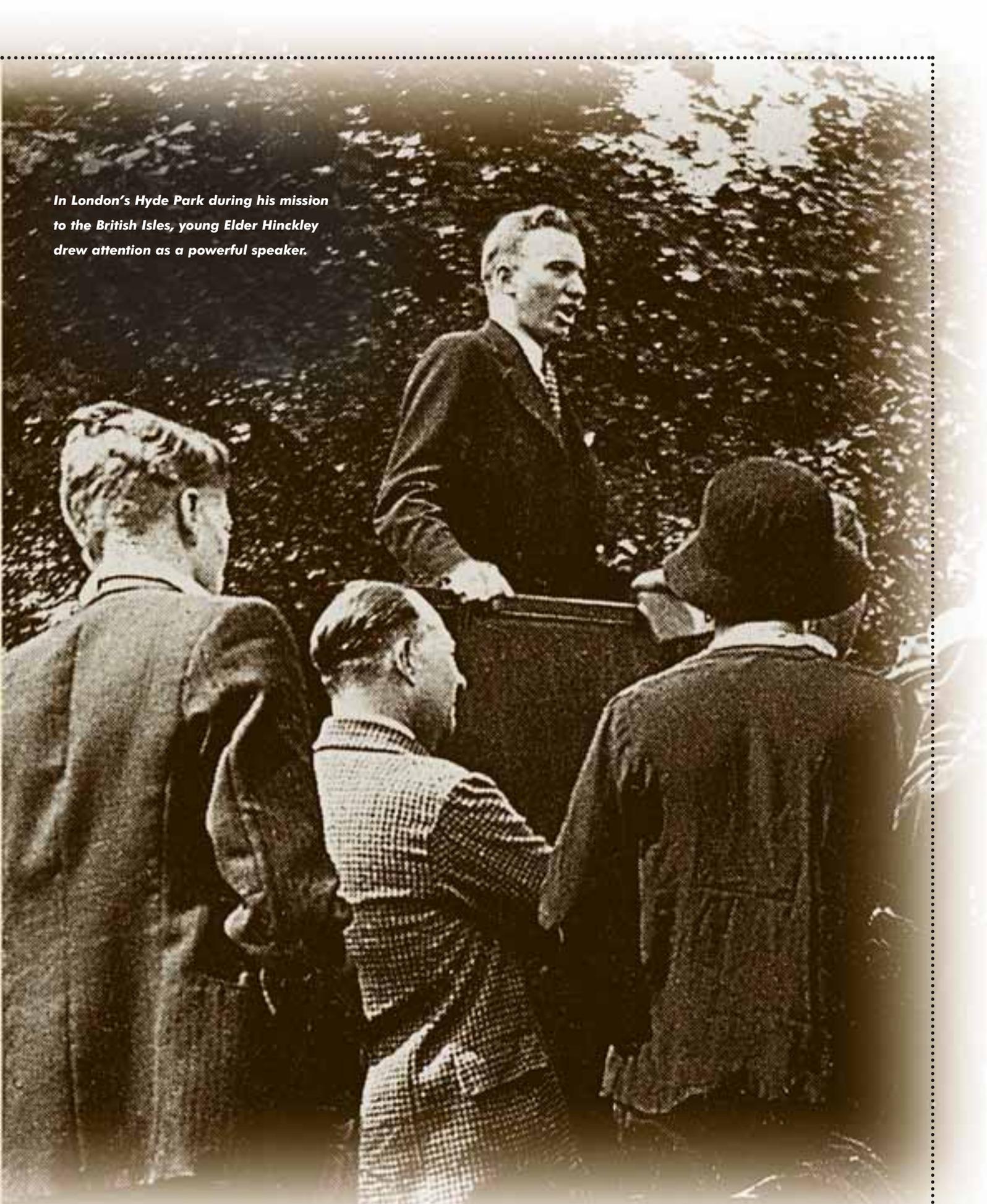
That July day in 1933 was my day of decision. A new light came into my life and

a new joy into my heart. The fog of England seemed to lift, and I saw the sunlight. I had a rich and wonderful mission experience, for which I shall ever be grateful.

God be thanked for the glorious gospel of His Beloved Son, restored to earth. May we remember that each of us has the privilege and opportunity to make our own declaration of faith, courage, and truth that will help bring to fulfillment the God-given mandate [command] to take the gospel to the world. ●

From “Taking the Gospel to Britain: A Declaration of Vision, Faith, Courage, and Truth,” Ensign, July 1987, 2–7, and “Missionary Journal,” Ensign, July 1987, 8–11.

In London's Hyde Park during his mission to the British Isles, young Elder Hinckley drew attention as a powerful speaker.



MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will follow Heavenly Father's plan for me.

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will remember my baptismal covenant and listen to the Holy Ghost.

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will choose the right. I know I can repent when I make a mistake.

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will be honest with Heavenly Father, others, and myself.

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will use the names of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ reverently. I will not swear or use crude words.

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will do those things on the Sabbath that will help me feel close to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will honor my parents and do my part to strengthen my family.

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will keep my mind and body sacred and pure, and I will not partake of things that are harmful to me.

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will dress modestly to show respect for Heavenly Father and myself.

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will only read and watch things that are pleasing to Heavenly Father.

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will only listen to music that is pleasing to Heavenly Father.

MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will seek good friends and treat others kindly.

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MY GOSPEL STANDARDS

I will live now to be worthy to go to the temple and do my part to have an eternal family.

KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS

“Therefore, if ye do keep his commandments he doth bless you and prosper you” (Mosiah 2:22).

BY LINDA MAGLEBY



Daniel and other youth were selected by King Nebuchadnezzar to be taught the language and customs of the land. The king ordered that the youth be fed his meat and wine. Daniel wanted to be obedient to Heavenly Father’s commandments, so he asked that he and his friends be allowed to eat healthy foods and drink only water for 10 days. After 10 days Daniel and his friends were healthier than all the other children. Because Daniel and his friends were not afraid to obey Heavenly Father’s commandments, they were blessed (see Daniel 1).

While 10-year-old Trace and his friends were watching television, a show came on that Trace knew he should not watch. After a few minutes he felt awful inside. Finally, he had the courage to say, “I can’t watch this show.” Two of his friends said that they couldn’t watch the show either. They changed the channel. Later, Trace’s mom told him that the feeling he had was the Holy Ghost telling him to choose the right. Trace and his friends were blessed with a feeling of peace because they obeyed Heavenly Father’s commandments.

Daniel was obedient in ancient times, and like Trace we can be obedient today. The Holy Ghost will help us know what is right and true. The Holy Ghost will direct us and help us return to Heavenly Father and Jesus.

Activity

To make My Gospel Standards cards, remove page F4, paste it on heavy paper, then cut along the dark lines. Try one of these activities.

1. Sit in a circle with your friends or family. As you sing a song or hymn, pass one of the cards around the circle. Stop singing, and have the person holding the

card read the standard aloud, then tell how it could help him or her choose the right. Play again.

2. Choose a card to memorize, and try to live that standard for a week. Read it each day, and think about how you can follow that standard. Report your experiences to someone in your family.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Display a poster of the Ten Commandments, or list them on the chalkboard (see Exodus 20:3–17). On 20 pieces of paper write the numbers 1 through 10 twice—one number per paper. Place them in scattered order facedown on the floor. Working in pairs (a younger child with an older child), play a matching game by having the younger child toss a beanbag on a paper. Turn the paper over, and have the older child toss a beanbag on another paper. If that paper matches the first number, remove those papers and have the children recite the commandment out loud and show or tell a way we can keep that commandment. If there is no match, turn both papers back over and give the next pair a turn. Continue until all of the commandments have been shared. Use a personal experience to explain how you have been blessed by obeying a commandment.

2. Use stations to help the children learn the Beatitudes. Begin by telling the story of the Sermon on the Mount. Use Gospel Art Picture Kit 212 (Sermon on the Mount). Divide the children into four groups, and have each group rotate through the stations. At each station tell a story using a Gospel Art Picture Kit picture that illustrates a beatitude. Discuss how the children can live the teaching, and sing a song that reinforces the principle. For example, read Matthew 5:6 (“hunger and thirst after righteousness”), show Gospel Art Picture Kit 217 (Woman at the Well), discuss what you can do to follow Jesus Christ, and sing a song about the Savior; read Matthew 5:9 (“peacemakers”), show Gospel Art Picture Kit 311 (The Anti-Nephi-Lebies Burying Their Swords), discuss how you can be a peacemaker in your home or at school, and sing a song about kindness. ●

A FIRM DECISION

“Choose ye this day, to serve the Lord God who made you” (Moses 6:33).



From an interview with Elder E. Israel Pérez, who served as an Area Seventy from 1997 to 2005; by Melvin Leavitt, Church Magazines

My parents and my three older brothers were baptized in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, when I was just six years old. I am grateful that they had the wisdom and courage to accept the truth. My parents and marvelous Primary teachers taught me the eternal principles of the gospel. I came to love our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, and to know that Heavenly Father always blesses us if we are obedient.

The first time I was assigned to give a short talk, I was worried because I couldn't pronounce the letter *R* correctly. I wondered, "How can I do this?" My mother told me, "God will bless you, and all will turn out well." That's exactly what happened, and I never again had any problem with the letter *R*.

At the age of eight I was baptized in borrowed white trousers. They were too long, but my mother tucked the legs up and fastened them with a few stitches. This worked fine until they got wet. As I stepped out of the water the weight of the wet cloth broke the stitches. I tripped over my borrowed pants and fell to my knees. The thought immediately came to me that this was a reminder to always kneel and pray for the help of our Heavenly Father in everything.

When I became a deacon I had a feeling that I should make some important decisions about my life. I decided that I would never drink liquor, that I would never smoke a

cigarette, and that I would be obedient. Once when I was 16 years old, I was in a restaurant with some friends from church. A man who knew one of us came in. He said, "I want to invite all of you to drink some liquor right here and now."

I remember standing up and saying, “None of us drink liquor. And if you want to drink, go find somewhere else to do it.”

This man was in his early 20s and much larger than I was—a very strong man—and he became mad. He brought a glass of liquor to me and said, “I’m going to make you drink this!”

I said, “Don’t try it. There could be unfortunate consequences.” He tried to grab me and force me to drink the liquor. The next thing I knew, the man was lying on the floor. I really didn’t have the strength to

It doesn’t matter where we are or whom we are with, we can always stand by our principles. If we make a firm decision once and for all, when temptations arise we don’t have to think, “What am I going to do?” or “What am I *not* going to do?” The decision is already made.

We are never alone. Even though His creation is so immense, our Father in Heaven knows that you live and that I live. He knows our hearts. He knows our thoughts. He has given us His perfect plan of happiness because He loves us. He is always searching for ways to bless us. ●



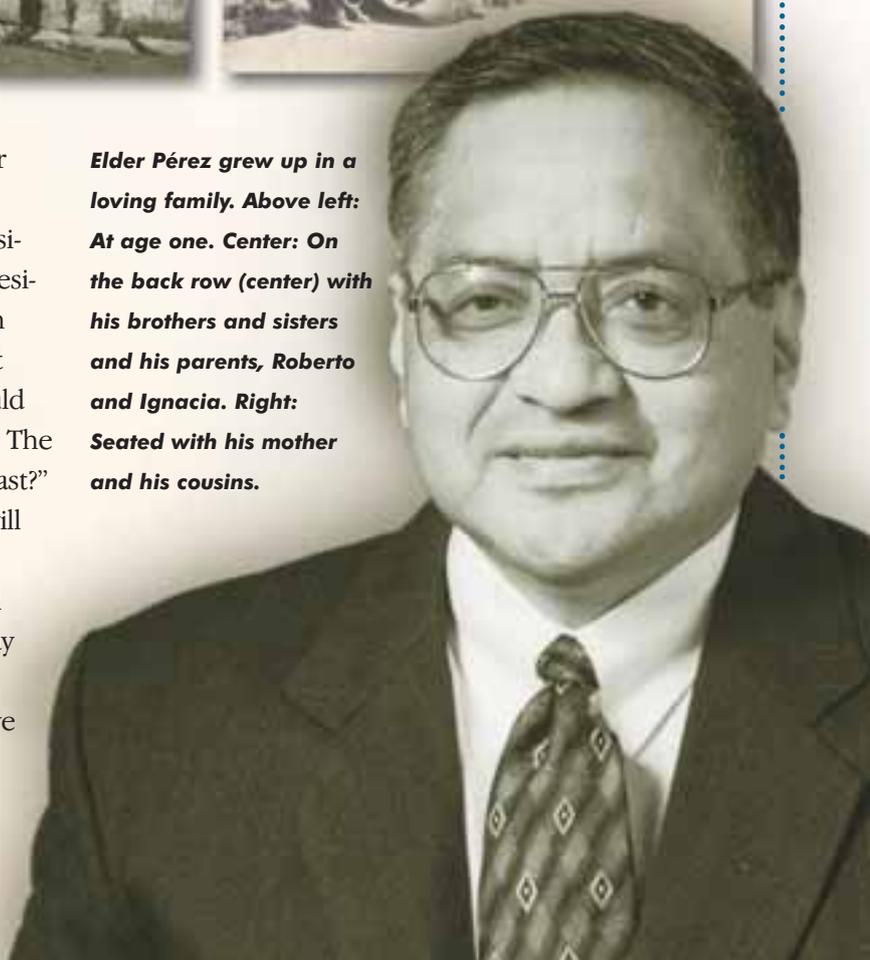
defend myself against that man, but Heavenly Father provided what I lacked.

Much later, when I was a husband, father, and businessman, I was invited to attend a lunch with the president of the Republic of Guatemala. I found myself in a room with many other guests. When the president entered, waiters poured liquor so that everyone could join in a toast. But I covered my glass with my hand. The president said, “Mr. Pérez, won’t you join me in a toast?”

I replied, “Mr. President, if you’re asking me if I will wish you success in your government, I will. But if you’re asking me if I will drink liquor, I will not. I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If that is a problem, I can leave right now.”

He said, “No, no.” They drank their liquor, and we sat down. A little later the president said, “Tell me something of your church,” and I did.

Elder Pérez grew up in a loving family. Above left: At age one. Center: On the back row (center) with his brothers and sisters and his parents, Roberto and Ignacia. Right: Seated with his mother and his cousins.





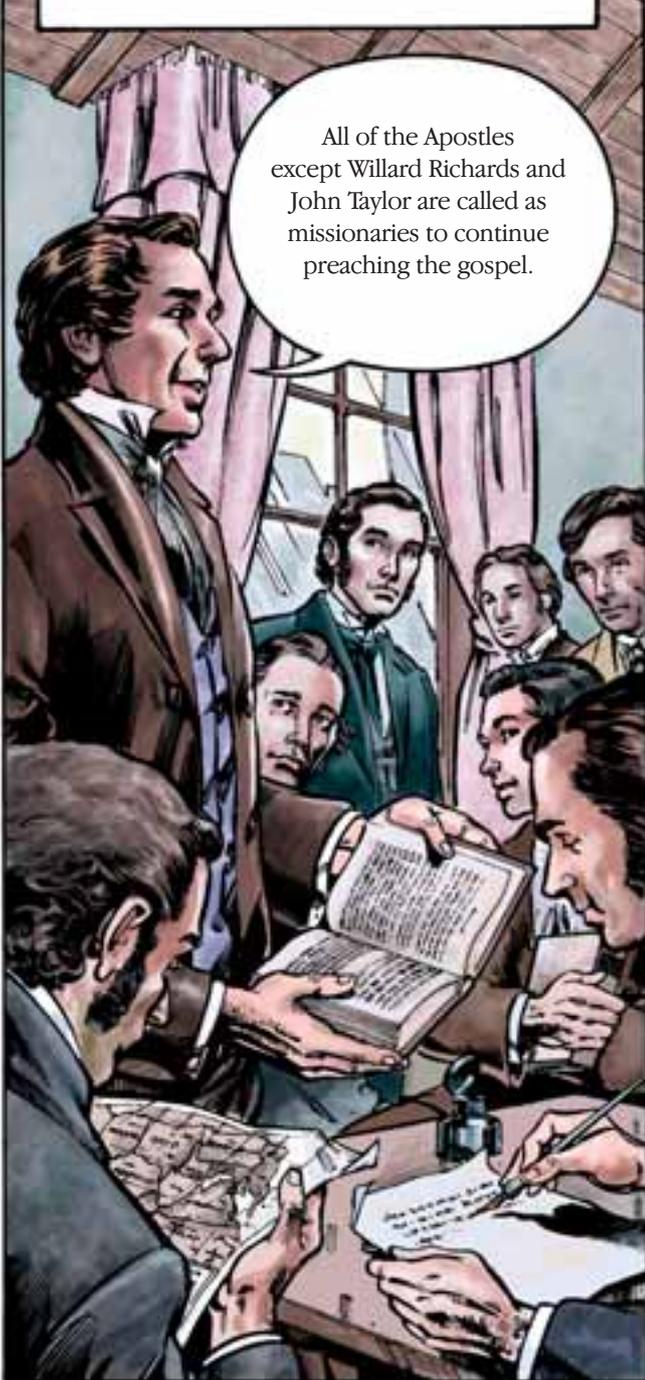
FROM THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF

The Martyrdom of the Prophet

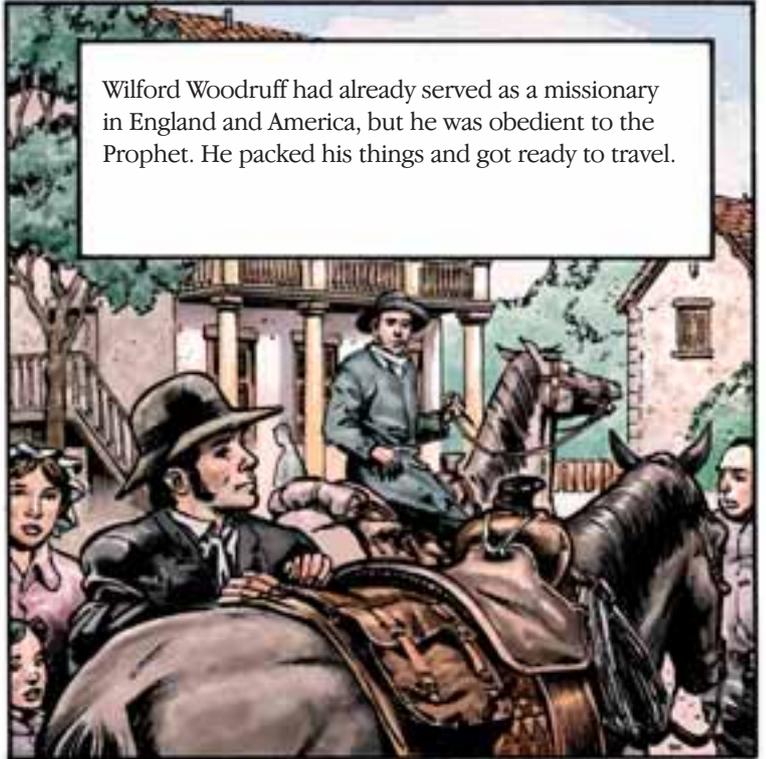


In April 1844, President Joseph Smith called the Twelve Apostles to serve missions in the Eastern United States.

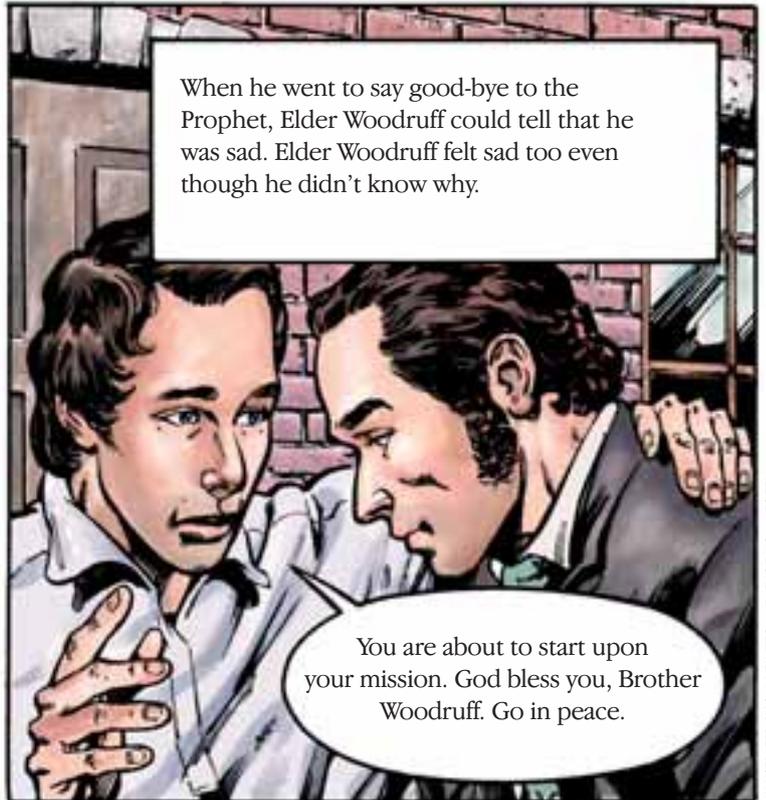
All of the Apostles except Willard Richards and John Taylor are called as missionaries to continue preaching the gospel.



Wilford Woodruff had already served as a missionary in England and America, but he was obedient to the Prophet. He packed his things and got ready to travel.

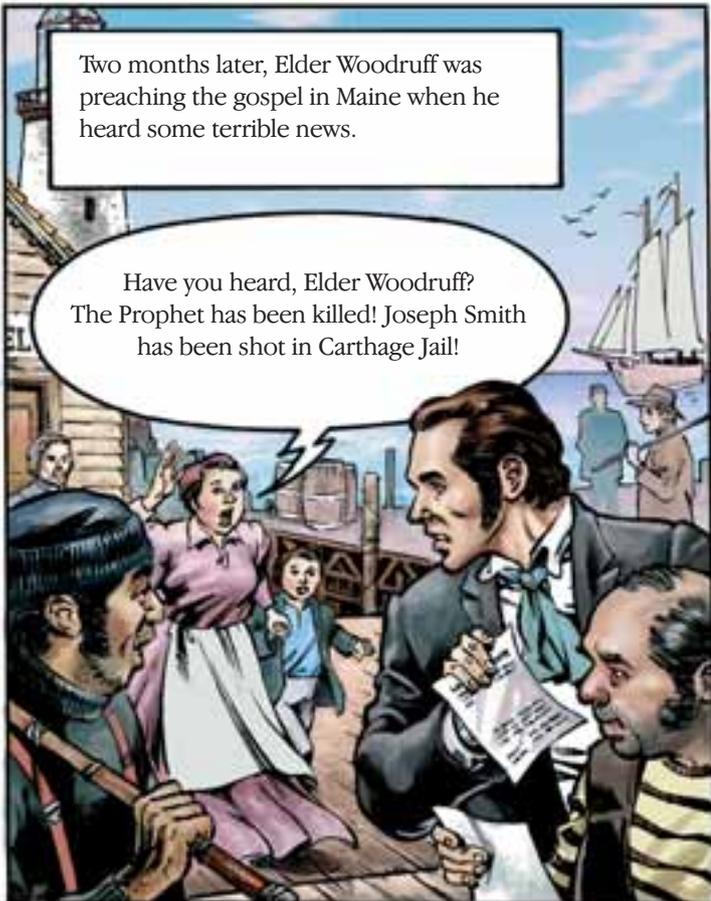


When he went to say good-bye to the Prophet, Elder Woodruff could tell that he was sad. Elder Woodruff felt sad too even though he didn't know why.



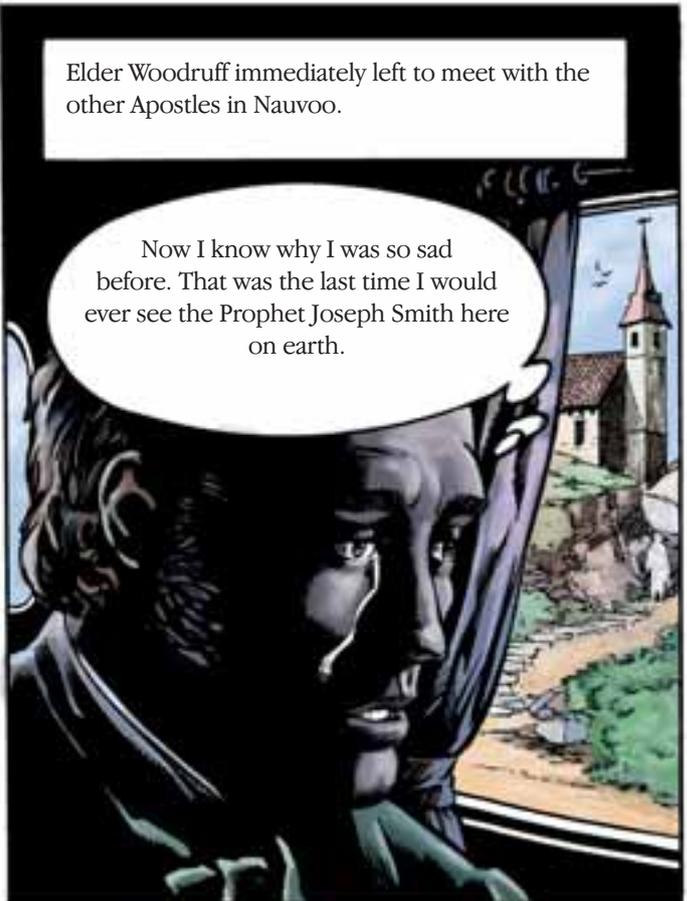
You are about to start upon your mission. God bless you, Brother Woodruff. Go in peace.

ILLUSTRATED BY SAL VELUTTO AND EUGENIO WATOZZI



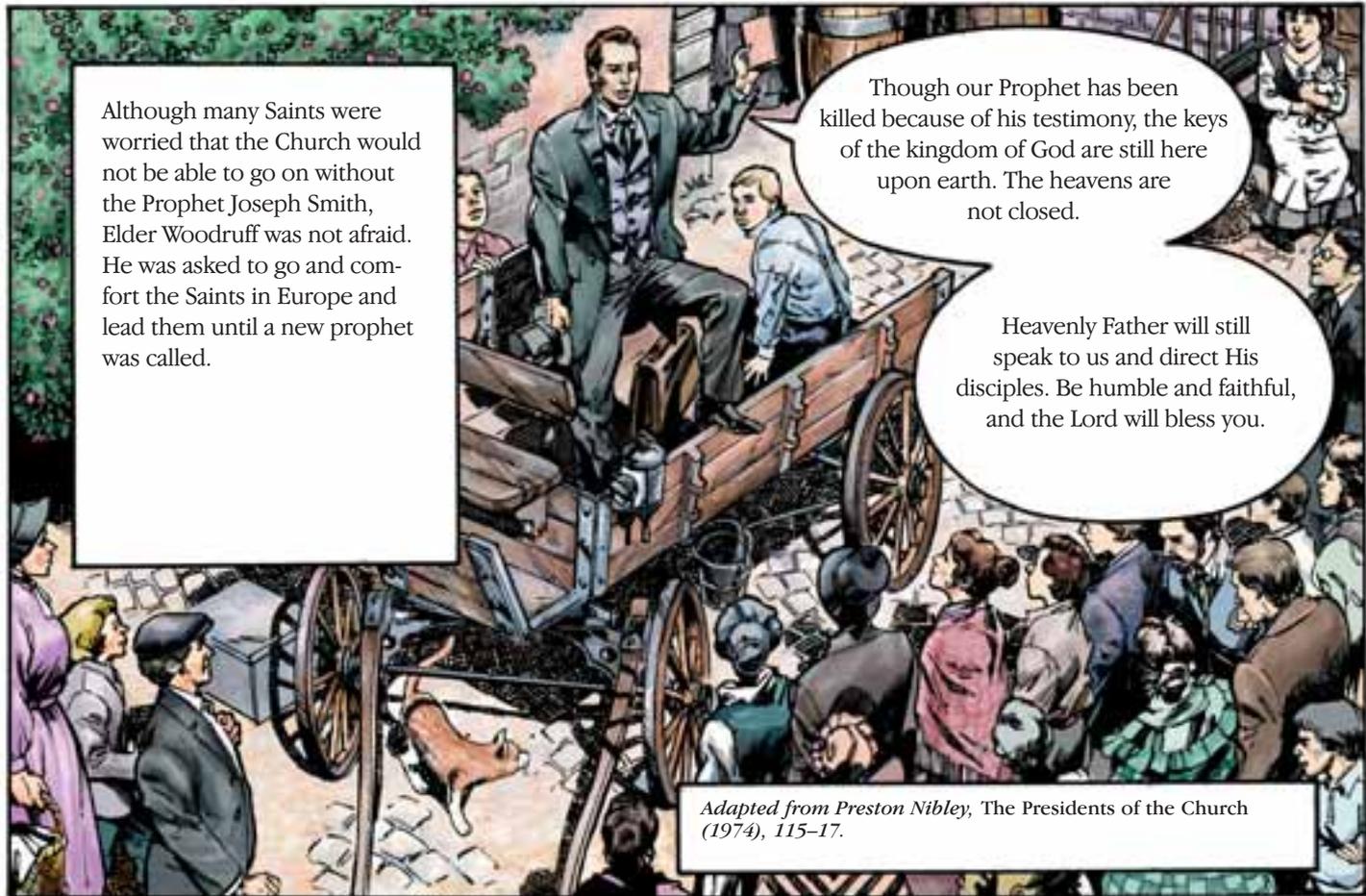
Two months later, Elder Woodruff was preaching the gospel in Maine when he heard some terrible news.

Have you heard, Elder Woodruff? The Prophet has been killed! Joseph Smith has been shot in Carthage Jail!



Elder Woodruff immediately left to meet with the other Apostles in Nauvoo.

Now I know why I was so sad before. That was the last time I would ever see the Prophet Joseph Smith here on earth.



Although many Saints were worried that the Church would not be able to go on without the Prophet Joseph Smith, Elder Woodruff was not afraid. He was asked to go and comfort the Saints in Europe and lead them until a new prophet was called.

Though our Prophet has been killed because of his testimony, the keys of the kingdom of God are still here upon earth. The heavens are not closed.

Heavenly Father will still speak to us and direct His disciples. Be humble and faithful, and the Lord will bless you.

Adapted from Preston Nibley, The Presidents of the Church (1974), 115-17.



The Butter Dish

"Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Genesis 28:22).

BY PATRICIA R. JONES

Based on a true story

Here comes the rest of the family," Athena called to her mother. "They're just in time for your birthday dinner!"

"Please put a vase of flowers on the table and set out the butter dish," Mother said. When Athena set the beautiful etched-glass dish on the kitchen table, the sun's rays shone through it, splashing rainbows across the walls. Mother ran a finger gently over the delicate glass design. Closing her eyes, she relived again the story she had heard so many times.

Twelve-year-old Louisa Bishop gently rocked her baby sister, Emma, in the old, hand-carved rocker. Their mother lay in bed, her face almost as pale as the white pillows. A deadly illness called diphtheria had struck the children of the family, killing three of Louisa's five siblings. Exhausted from overwork and grief, Louisa's mother also became sick. Just when it seemed that happiness would never shine on their world again, little Emma had been born. Louisa, now recovered, lovingly

Happy
Birthday

cared for her baby sister so their mother could rest and get well. Emma adored her big sister in return.

As the years passed, Emma and Louisa became closer and closer friends. By the time Emma was 11 years old, Louisa had married, and her husband had left to serve a mission in England. Emma was delighted to go to Louisa's cabin each day to help out.

One day Emma paused in her sweeping and watched quietly as Louisa emptied the butter out of her sparkling glass butter dish and into a jar. "I hope she isn't doing what I'm afraid she's doing," Emma thought.

Louisa stepped to the washbasin and poured in some clean water from the pitcher. Then she carefully washed the butter dish and laid it on a dish towel to dry. Turning to Emma, she handed her the jar of butter. "Now, Emma dear, I need you to take this to the bishop and pay my tithing."

Emma folded her arms and shook her head. "I won't do it!" she exclaimed. "You need that butter more than the bishop does."

Louisa's mouth drew into a stern line, but her eyes twinkled with amusement. "Emma," she softly scolded, "tithing is a law that must be kept. If I am willing to do a big thing like letting my husband serve a mission so far away, then surely I can do a small thing like giving up some butter."

Emma wasn't convinced. "But it's a big thing when you have so little."

"Don't worry," Louisa told her with a smile. "I have faith that the Lord will provide."

Emma looked closely and saw that her sister's eyes were glistening with tears.

Louisa truly believed what she was saying! Emma took the jar of butter and walked out the door without another word, though she still had doubts.

When she returned to Louisa's cabin, Emma



"Always pay your tithing and leave the outcome in the hands of the Lord."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Earthly Debts, Heavenly Debts," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 41.

stopped in the doorway and stared, her mouth wide open. The butter dish was back on the table, and inside was a pound of butter! Emma's eyes asked the question her lips could not—where had the butter come from?

Louisa smiled. "I told you the Lord would provide," she said. She took a clean dish from the cupboard and placed the butter in it. Then she stepped again to the washbasin and filled the bowl with clean water. She washed out the beautiful glass butter dish and lid. But instead of setting them on a dish towel to drip dry, she dried them and handed both to Emma.

"I want you to have these," she said. "And whenever you look at them, I want you to remember that the Lord will always take care of us if we keep His commandments. Remember that, Emma. Tithing comes first." Emma's eyes misted with tears as she accepted the butter dish.

All her life Emma remembered the lesson she had learned. Each year as her family gathered on her birthday, she told the story again. After Emma's death, the butter dish was passed down through the family. And everyone who saw the dish heard the story of how Emma learned to always pay her tithing. ●

Adapted from the journal of James Richard Lofthouse, Emma's son.



“Walk after the holy order of God” (Alma 7:22).

WELCOME

to the Aaronic Priesthood and Young Men



A special message to boys soon to turn 12.

BY CHARLES W. DAHLQUIST II
Young Men General President

I'm thrilled to welcome you into the Aaronic Priesthood. What an exciting time in your life! The week before I turned 12 I could hardly wait to be ordained a deacon, and I hope you feel the same way. Let's talk about a few of the things you can look forward to.

To Begin With

Before you turn 12, you will meet with the bishop or branch president to discuss your worthiness and preparation to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. After you turn 12, your name will be presented in sacrament meeting for a sustaining vote. The Aaronic Priesthood will be conferred upon you, and you will be ordained to the office of a deacon. Your family is invited to share this wonderful moment with you.

Aaronic Priesthood

Your experience in the Aaronic Priesthood will include these three things:

brotherhood, instruction, and service. You will work together, learn together, achieve together, and serve together.

Do you feel a little nervous about passing the sacrament for the first time? Please don't worry. Before you are given any assignment, one of your leaders will explain exactly what

to do. Someone will be right there to help you, just as you will help a new deacon in the future.

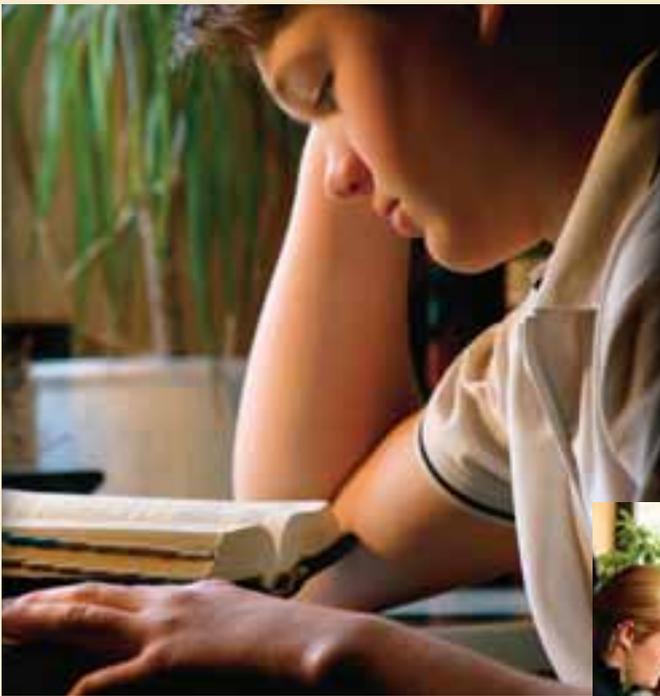
In priesthood meetings you will learn that the Aaronic Priesthood “holds the keys of the ministering

of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism . . . for the remission of sins” (D&C 13:1) and that it is the duty of Aaronic Priesthood holders to “invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59). You will continue learning the principles of the gospel and how to follow the Savior.

The Aaronic Priesthood is a preparatory priesthood. It prepares you for the Melchizedek Priesthood as well as a lifetime of service. You will be involved in serving members of the ward or branch and the







community. Real joy in life comes from serving others. And as you serve, your talents will grow and develop. You might hold positions of leadership. These experiences will help prepare you for missionary service.

Duty to God Award

The First Presidency has said, “We desire all young men to strive to earn the . . . Duty to God Award.”¹ This program helps you grow through setting and achieving worthy goals. You will work with Aaronic Priesthood leaders, your bishop or branch president, and your mother and father.

Here are a few of the program’s requirements: during your years as an Aaronic Priesthood holder you will do things like read the scriptures daily, prepare a few meals for your family, wash and iron your clothes for a month, and complete the “My Personal Journal” section of your Duty to God booklet.

When you have earned your deacon, teacher, and priest Duty to God certificates, you will be eligible to receive your Duty to God medallion. This is a great achievement, but the real blessing of the program is that it will help prepare you to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and the temple endowment, serve a full-time mission, marry in the temple, and become a faithful husband and father.

General Priesthood Session and More

In addition to the weekly Aaronic Priesthood meetings in your ward or branch, each April and October you will join with priesthood holders all around the world in the priesthood session of general conference. There apostles and prophets will teach you how to do your priesthood duties and become a better person. There will also be firesides and other special activities throughout the year. You are in for a spiritual, intellectual, and social feast.



Mutual

The weekly activity for the Young Men and Young Women organizations is called Mutual. It’s an opportunity for the youth of the ward or branch to meet together in a social setting and apply the gospel principles taught in Sunday meetings. As a deacon you’ll do things at Mutual that 12- and 13-year-old boys like to do. How can you be sure? Because you will help choose the activities. As you become a teacher and then a priest, the activities will change to meet your interests. Once a month you will meet with the young women. This will help you learn how to build wholesome relationships with all young women.

While earning your Duty to God Award, you will study the scriptures, prepare meals for your family, and do many other things that help prepare you for the Melchizedek Priesthood, the temple endowment, a mission, marriage, and parenthood.

Honoring the Priesthood

My patriarchal blessing says, “Honor thy father and thy mother, but above all, honor the priesthood, for it will be your salvation.” The same will be true for you. I look forward to working with you as we strive together to follow Jesus Christ, whose priesthood you will soon hold. ●

NOTE

1. First Presidency Letter, Sept. 28, 2001.

Scripture Figure



As you retell scripture stories, this figure can represent any young woman in the scriptures, such as Esther, one of the ten virgins, or a handmaiden. The figure can be mounted on heavy paper, colored, cut out, then made into a stick puppet, flannel board figure, or paper sack puppet. Make several figures, and color the hair and clothing differently for each one. ●



Stick Puppet

Note: If you do not wish to remove pages from the magazine, this activity may be copied, traced, or printed from the Internet at www.lds.org. For English, click on "Gospel Library." For other languages, click on the world map.



Flannel Board Figure



Paper Sack Puppet



Flannel Board Sunday Box

You can make a box to use to tell flannel board stories and to hold a collection of Sabbath-day activities.

To make a Sunday Box, you will need glue; crayons; markers; scissors; a ruler; flannel or other fabric; a large box (see photograph below); and drawings, photos, gospel pictures, or stickers (optional).

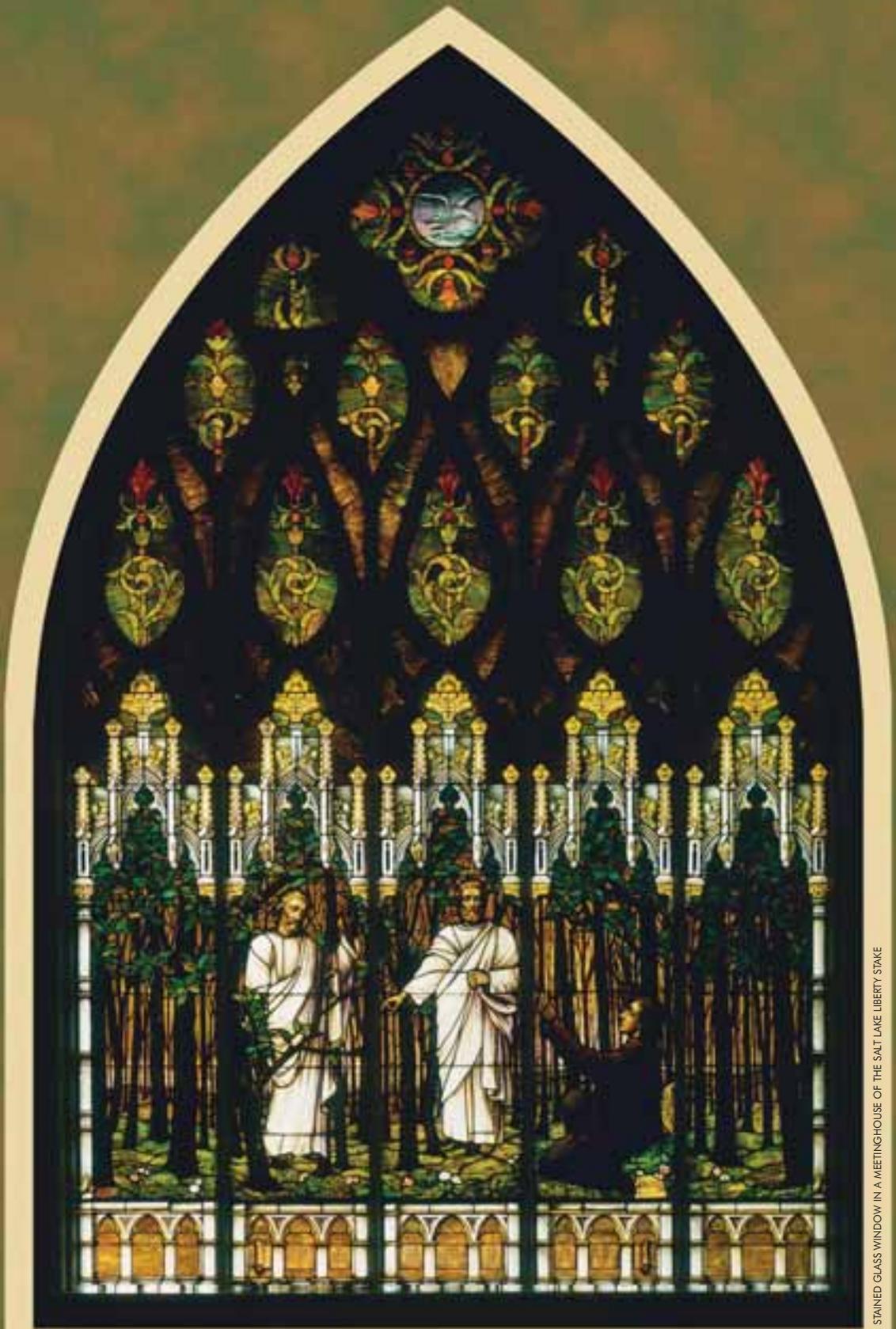
1. Cut the flannel or other fabric $1/8''$ (3 mm) less

than the length and width of one side of the box; then glue it onto the box (see photograph).

2. Decorate the rest of the box as you like, perhaps with drawings, pictures, illustrations of gospel stories, or photos of your family doing Sunday activities.

3. Fill the box with games, puzzles, picture stories, and other activities provided in the *Liabona* or at Primary, or use some you have made. ●





STAINED GLASS WINDOW IN A MEETINGHOUSE OF THE SALT LAKE LIBERTY STAKE

First Vision, by Lucy Thurston Kinney

"I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).



A new film details the life of Joseph Smith, “the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, [who] has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it” (D&C 135:3). See “Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration,” p. 16.