

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • JUNE 2010

Liahona



Keeping It Real: The Challenges and Blessings of Technology, pp. 18, 22

Honesty at School—the Real Test, p. 50

Children, Are You Ready to Pray? p. 70



Whither Thou Goest, by Sandy Freckleton Gagon

After Naomi's husband died, her two sons married—one to Orpah and the other to Ruth. About 10 years later Naomi's two sons died.

"Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

"And [Naomi] said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

"And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go: and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:14–16).

Ruth remained, married Boaz, and gave birth to Obed, through whom came David the king (see Ruth 2–4).



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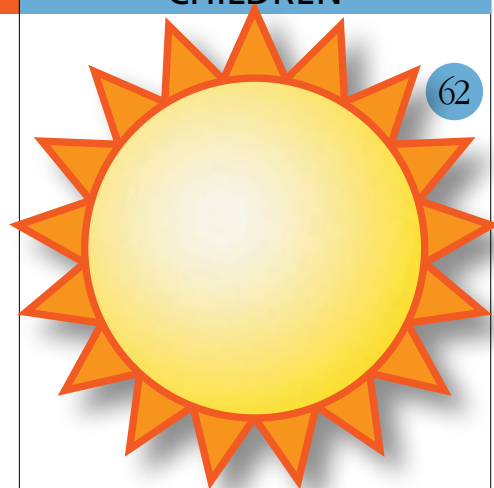
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More Online

Liahona.lds.org

FOR ADULTS

This issue of the *Liahona* contains a number of articles about Internet use. To find more information on the topic, including resources for children and parents **to promote safe Internet use**, visit www.gospeltopics.lds.org and read the topic "Internet."



In his article "Called and Set Apart to Serve" (page 16), Elder Kenneth Johnson of the Seventy explains the importance of being set apart for a calling. For more **information on specific callings**, visit "Serving in the Church" at www.lds.org.

This month Small and Simple Things (page 8) addresses the topic of family communication.

To learn more about strengthening your family, visit www.lds.org/hf and click "Building a Strong Family."



Learn more about Latter-day Saints in **Cambodia** at www.liahona.lds.org.

FOR YOUTH

In "To Cheat or Not to Cheat" (page 50), Shery Ann de la Cruz talks about an experience at school in which her integrity was put to the test. To learn more about **the importance of being honest**, visit www.gospeltopics.lds.org and read the topic "Honesty."

FOR CHILDREN

How are your e-manners? Find out by taking our online quiz found at www.liahona.lds.org. While you're there, you can also view a special video about media use.

To find more Coloring Pages like the one on page 73 as well as other fun activities, visit www.liahona.lds.org and click on "Children's Activities."



IN YOUR LANGUAGE

To find online Church materials in your language, visit www.languages.lds.org.





By President
Thomas S. Monson

Canaries with Gray on Their Wings

Nearly 60 years ago, while I was serving as a young bishop, Kathleen McKee, a widow in my ward, passed away. Among her things were three pet canaries. Two, with perfect yellow coloring, were to be given to her friends. The third, Billie, had yellow coloring marred by gray on his wings. Sister McKee had written in a note to me: “Will you and your family make a home for him? He isn’t the prettiest, but his song is the best.”

Sister McKee was much like her yellow canary with gray on its wings. She was not blessed with beauty, gifted with poise, or honored by posterity. Yet her song helped others to more willingly bear their burdens and more ably shoulder their tasks.

The world is filled with yellow canaries with gray on their wings. The pity is that so precious few have learned to sing. Some are young people who don’t know who they are, what they can be or even want to be; all they want is to be somebody. Others are stooped with age, burdened with care, or filled with doubt—living lives far below the level of their capabilities.

To live greatly, we must develop the capacity to face trouble with courage, disappointment with cheerfulness, and triumph with humility. You ask, “How might we

achieve these goals?” I answer, “By gaining a true perspective of who we really are!” We are sons and daughters of a living God, in whose image we have been created. Think of that: *created in the image of God*. We cannot sincerely hold this conviction without experiencing a profound new sense of strength and power.

In our world, moral character oftentimes seems secondary to beauty or charm. But from long ago the Lord’s counsel to Samuel the prophet echoes: “The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

When the Savior sought a man of faith, He did not select him from the throng of the self-righteous who were found regularly in the synagogue. Rather, He called him from among the fishermen of Capernaum. Doubting, unschooled, impetuous Simon became Peter, Apostle of faith. A yellow canary with gray on his wings qualified for the Master’s full confidence and abiding love.

When the Savior chose a missionary of



TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

When you teach . . . , it is often helpful to have learners look or listen for something specific" (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 55). To help family members understand President Monson's message, consider asking them to be prepared to share what they learn after reading the message together. Invite each person to share what he or she feels is an important point in the article. Conclude by bearing testimony of President Monson's message.

Teaching the word of God, as given through His prophets, can have a powerful influence on the lives of those we teach (see *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 50). President Monson states there is strength and power in knowing we are children of God. After reading the article, ask the family to share what helps them remember who they are.

zeal and power, He found him not among His advocates but amidst His adversaries. Saul the persecutor became Paul the proselytizer.

The Redeemer chose imperfect people to teach the way to perfection. He did so then. He does so now—even yellow canaries with gray on their wings. He calls you and me to serve Him here below. Our commitment must be total. And in our struggle, should we stumble, let us plead: "Lead us, oh lead us, great Molder of men, out of the darkness to strive once again."¹

My prayer is that we will follow the example of the Man of Galilee, who could be found mingling with the poor, the downtrodden, the oppressed, and the afflicted. May a true song come from our hearts as we do so. ■

NOTE

1. "Fight Song," Yonkers High School.

YOUTH

What Is True Beauty?

President Monson says in this message, "In our world, moral character oftentimes seems secondary to beauty or charm." Young women might struggle with their image of who they are and what they can become. Consider these thoughts about true beauty from Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy:

- A young woman whose countenance is aglow with both happiness and virtue radiates inner beauty.
- The virtuous smile is truly beautiful as it radiates in a totally natural way. This true beauty can't be painted on but is a gift of the Spirit.
- Modesty is an outward sign and requirement for inward beauty.
- If you are discouraged about your appearance, it will help to see yourself through the eyes of those who love you. Hidden beauty seen by loved ones can become a mirror for self-improvements.
- The kind of man a virtuous woman wants to marry also "seeth not" as the natural man seeth (see 1 Samuel 16:7). He will be drawn to the true beauty she radiates from a pure and cheerful heart. The same is true for a young woman looking for a virtuous young man.
- Our Father in Heaven expects all of His children to choose the right, which is the only way to lasting happiness and inner beauty.
- With the Lord, there is no competition. All have an equal privilege to have His image engraven upon their countenances (see Alma 5:19). There is no truer beauty.

To read the entire message, see Lynn G. Robbins, "True Beauty," *New Era*, Nov. 2008, 30. Young men can find similar advice in Errol S. Phippen, "Ugly Duckling or Majestic Swan? It's Up to You," *Liahona*, Oct. 2009, 36; *New Era*, Oct. 2009, 16.



CHILDREN

Sing Your Sweetest Song

President Monson told about Sister McKee's three canaries. Two were yellow all over. They looked perfect! The third didn't look perfect because it had gray spots on its wings. But Sister McKee loved it because it sang so sweetly.

Some people feel they are not as beautiful or as smart as others. But each person is valuable to the Lord. We can be faithful and brave and use our talents to serve others. Then we are like the yellow canary with gray on its wings. We are not perfect, but we are singing our sweetest song!

Color the picture of Sister McKee and her special canary. Then write down three ways you can sing your sweetest song for the Lord.



I can sing my sweetest song for the Lord by:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Renewing Covenants through the Sacrament



Teach these scriptures and quotations or, if needed, another principle that will bless the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you visit to share what they have felt and learned.

Jesus Christ Instituted the Sacrament

“Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to his Apostles, saying, ‘Take, eat’ (Matt. 26:26). ‘This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me’ (Luke 22:19). In a similar manner he took the cup of wine, traditionally diluted with water, said a blessing of thanks for it, and passed it to those gathered about him, saying: ‘This cup is the

new testament in my blood,’ ‘which is shed . . . for the remission of sins.’ ‘This do in remembrance of me.’ . . .

“Since that upper room experience on the eve of Gethsemane and Golgotha, children of the promise have been under covenant to remember Christ’s sacrifice in this newer, higher, more holy and personal way.”¹

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

We Renew Our Baptismal Covenants through the Sacrament

“When we are baptized, we take upon ourselves the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Taking upon us His name is one of the most significant experiences we have in life. . . .

“Each week in sacrament meeting we promise to remember the atoning sacrifice of our Savior as we renew our baptismal covenant. We promise to do as the Savior did—to be obedient to the Father and always keep His commandments. The blessing we receive in return is to always have His Spirit to be with us.”²

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

“I was with an eight-year-old girl on the day of her baptism. At the end of the day

HELPS FOR VISITING TEACHING

As you come to know a sister and her family, look for ways you might help her renew her covenants through the sacrament. If she does not attend sacrament meeting, could you invite her to attend or offer help for her to do so (transportation, assistance with children, a friend to sit by, and so on)?

PERSONAL PREPARATION

Luke 22:19–20

1 Corinthians 11:23–28

3 Nephi 18:1–12

she said with all confidence, ‘I have been baptized for a whole day, and I haven’t sinned once!’ But her perfect day did not last forever, and I am sure she is learning by now, like we all learn, that as hard as we try, we do not always avoid every bad situation, every wrong choice. . . .

“. . . It is not possible to make real change all by ourselves. Our own willpower and our own good intentions are not enough. When we make mistakes or choose poorly, we must have the help of our Savior to get back on track. We partake of the sacrament week after week to show our faith in His power to change us. We confess our sins and promise to forsake them.”³ ■

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president.

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “This Do in Remembrance of Me,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 67.
2. Robert D. Hales, “The Covenant of Baptism: To Be in the Kingdom and of the Kingdom,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 8; *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 8.
3. Julie B. Beck, “Remembering, Repenting, and Changing,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2007, 110–11.



Small & Simple Things

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

CHURCH HISTORY AROUND THE WORLD

Nigeria

During the 1950s, several Nigerians began learning about the Church through magazine articles and Church literature. They sent letters to Church headquarters expressing their desire to learn more about the Church's teachings.

In response, Church leaders looked into initiating missionary work in the country. However, a civil war, difficulties with visas, and the challenge of having enough local priesthood holders to administer the Church prevented leaders from establishing official Church units in the area.

The Church was finally able to establish a missionary presence in 1978. When the first missionaries arrived, they found large groups of people interested in the gospel. The first baptism was performed in November of that year, and on the same day, the first branch of the Church was organized.



By 1987 Church membership there had reached nearly 10,000, and in 1999, Nigeria had more members of the Church than any other African nation, with membership totaling 42,746. Nigeria now has a temple in Abuja, which was dedicated in 2005 by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008).

Above: Members of the Church in Nigeria gather to watch general conference.

Right: The Abuja Nigeria Temple.



The Church in Nigeria

Membership	83,919
Missions	4
Stakes and Districts	32
Wards and Branches	256
Temples	1

HOW TO IMPROVE FAMILY COMMUNICATION

- Turn off or put away electronic devices before you begin family gatherings such as meals, scripture study, and family home evening.
- Try to have at least one meal together every day.



- Plan regular family activities. They don't have to be complex. Have a picnic, go on a walk, or play a game together.
- Have family discussions in which everyone's opinions or concerns can be voiced. Listen intently without judging or lecturing, and don't interrupt each other.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR TIME?

There are 24 hours in a day. You probably spend much of that time sleeping and working (or studying), but you likely have a few hours each day that can be spent on other activities. How much of that time do you spend watching TV or surfing the Internet? If you spent only one hour each day on one of the following ideas, how many goals, projects, or tasks could you complete during a week? a month? a year?

- Reading the scriptures or memorizing scripture mastery verses.
- Participating in sports or exercise.
- Learning a new hobby or talent: cooking, singing, sewing, gardening, or playing a musical instrument, for instance.
- Participating in family home evening or spending time with your family.
- Reading a good book.
- Writing an uplifting letter to a missionary from your ward or branch.
- Learning a foreign language.
- Doing family history work.
- Going home or visiting teaching.
- Fulfilling your Church calling.
- Writing in your journal.

Read more about being a wise steward of your time in Elder David A. Bednar's article on page 22.

IN THE WORDS OF CHURCH LEADERS

Tithing—a Commandment Even for the Destitute

By Elder Lynn G. Robbins

Of the Seventy



In October of 1998 Hurricane Mitch devastated many parts of Central America. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) was very concerned for the victims of this disaster, many of whom lost everything—food, clothing, and household goods. He visited the Saints in the cities of San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa, Honduras; and Managua, Nicaragua. And like the words of the loving prophet Elijah to a starving widow, this modern prophet's message in each city was similar—to sacrifice and be obedient to the law of tithing.

But how can you ask someone so destitute to sacrifice? President Hinckley knew that the food and clothing shipments they received would help them survive the crisis, but his concern and love for them went far beyond that. As important as humanitarian aid is, he knew that the most important assistance



President Gordon B. Hinckley visited Church members in Honduras following the hurricane in 1998.

comes from God, not from man. The prophet wanted to help them unlock the windows of heaven as promised by the Lord in the book of Malachi (see Malachi 3:10; Mosiah 2:24).

President Hinckley taught them that if they would pay their tithing, they would always have food on their tables, they would always have clothing on their backs, and they would always have a roof over their heads.

From an April 2005 general conference address.

Increasing My Testimony

As I work to develop my testimony of Jesus Christ, I find that consistently doing simple things allows my testimony to grow. Because I strive to pray, go to church, read the Book of Mormon, and stand as a witness



of Christ, my testimony of the Savior continues to increase.

Although there are trials and problems that present themselves, I have been able to avoid things that would be harmful to me by listening to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, who

teaches me the paths I should choose.

As I follow the counsel given by the leaders of the Church, I feel my testimony grow and I know that I am coming closer to my Father in Heaven.

Eng Sodavy, Cambodia

AGENCY

IS ESSENTIAL TO OUR ETERNAL PROGRESS

Our Heavenly Father has given us agency. This ability to choose for ourselves is an essential part of the plan of salvation.

In the premortal Council in Heaven, our Heavenly Father presented His plan, which included the principle of agency. Lucifer rebelled and “sought to destroy the agency of man” (Moses 4:3). As a result, he and those who followed him were cast out. The rest of us chose Heavenly Father’s plan, which allowed us to come to earth and gain a physical body. It also provided a Savior, Jesus Christ, who would atone for our sins. Through repentance we could be forgiven. We shouted for joy (see Job 38:7)!

How we use the gift of agency in mortality affects our eternal happiness or misery. The scriptures teach us that “there is a law, irrevocably

decreed in heaven . . . , upon which all blessings are predicated” (D&C 130:20)—and to this law there is also “a punishment affixed” (Alma 42:22). Therefore, when we choose our course of action, we also choose the consequences of our actions (see Galatians 6:7). Although consequences may not be immediate, they will always follow. Choosing to follow God’s commandments leads us toward peace and eternal life. Choosing to accept Satan’s temptations leads us toward sin and heartache.¹

The Old Testament prophet Joshua set the example for us when he said, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

NOTE

1. See *True to the Faith* (2004), 12.

1. Our mortal life is a period of testing to see how we will use our agency (see Abraham 3:25).



After the Fall, Adam and Eve “had moral agency or the ability to choose between good and evil. This made it possible for them to learn and progress. It also made it possible for them to make wrong choices and to sin” (*Preach My Gospel* [2004], 49).



2. There must be “opposition in all things” so that we can see the differences between good and evil. This gives us the opportunity to choose. (See 2 Nephi 2:11–16; D&C 29:39.)



3. Our Heavenly Father gave each of us the Light of Christ so that we may know good from evil (see Moroni 7:12–17).



4. When we choose our course of action, whether good or bad, we also choose the consequences attached to our actions (see Deuteronomy 11:26–28; 30:15–20; Galatians 6:7; Revelation 22:12).



5. Because “[we] are permitted to act for [ourselves],” we are responsible for our actions (see Helaman 14:30–31).



6. When we choose to obey God’s commandments, our options increase, and we have more freedom (see 2 Nephi 2:27; D&C 58:26–28; 93:20).



7. When we choose to disobey God’s commandments, our options decrease, and we may become captive to wickedness (see 2 Nephi 2:29; John 8:34).



8. Our Heavenly Father “will not suffer [us] to be tempted above that [we] are able; but will . . . make a way to escape,” provided we choose to resist the temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13).



9. We must humble ourselves and “pray continually” so that we can resist temptation (see Alma 13:28). ■

“Wherefore, men are free . . . to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil” (2 Nephi 2:27).

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATTHEW REIER, EXCEPT AS NOTED; PHOTOGRAPH OF EARTH © CORBIS; ADAM AND EVE CAST OUT OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN, BY GARY KAPP; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION OF MAN AND POLICE OFFICER BY ROBERT CASEY

BUILT UPON THE ROCK



Orson F. Whitney was born on July 1, 1855, in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was ordained an Apostle on April 9, 1906, by President Joseph F. Smith. This article comes from an address he delivered in general conference on October 7, 1916.

By Elder Orson F. Whitney (1855–1931)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In 1847 the Latter-day Saints, under the leadership of President Brigham Young, . . . [were commanded] to organize themselves into companies of hundreds, fifties, and tens, preparatory to the long and wearisome ox-team journey to the Salt Lake Valley.

And now I would like to ask a few questions: Would it be wise or sensible in anyone at this time to attempt to carry out the terms of that revelation? What would you think of a man, in a day of railroads and automobiles and airplanes, who would yoke up an ox team here in Utah, and make a start for the Missouri River? . . .

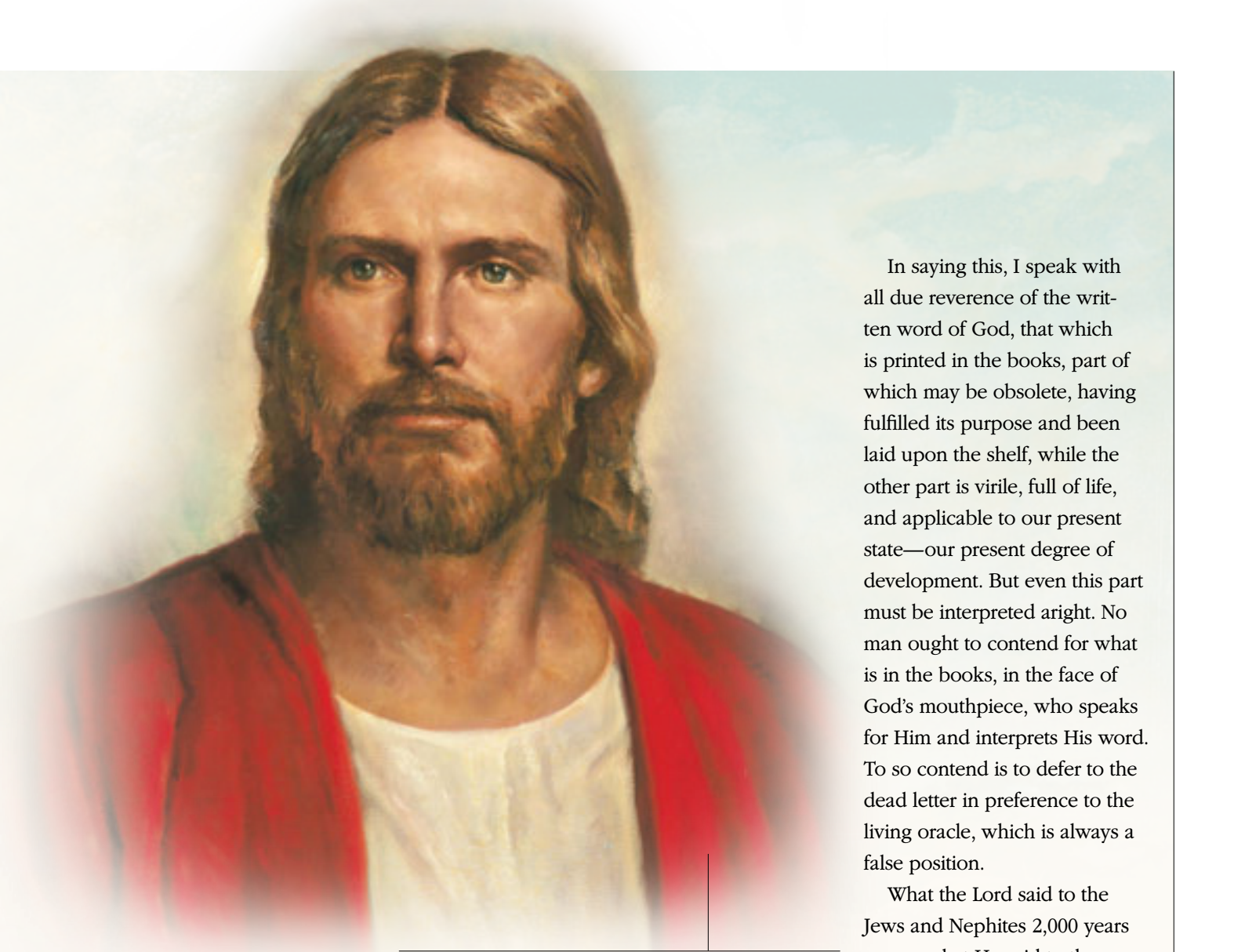
The lesson I wish to convey is this: we are a progressive people, for we are God's people, and as such we have the right to use these modern methods, these improved scientific facilities, which the Lord has provided and placed in our hands for the promotion of His marvelous work. . . .

What Makes Us Different?

Many years ago there came to Utah a learned prelate of [another] church . . . , and I had a conversation with him. He had been to a "Mormon" sacrament meeting and had much to say in criticism of our method of administering the Lord's

Supper, particularly our use of water instead of wine on such occasions. He said it made him shudder when he saw the people sipping the water; and he pointed out the fact, for it is a fact, that according to the Bible the Savior, when He instituted the sacrament among the Jews, used wine, declaring that it was His blood or that it represented His blood. I could add that the Book of Mormon also states that the Savior used wine when He introduced the sacrament among the Nephites.

My . . . friend, whether he knew it or not, had hit upon the great distinguishing feature that differentiates God's Church from all other churches under the sun—is this, that while they are founded upon books and traditions and the precepts of men, this Church is built upon the rock of Christ, upon the principle of immediate and continuous revelation. The Latter-day Saints do not do things because they happen to be printed in



In saying this, I speak with all due reverence of the written word of God, that which is printed in the books, part of which may be obsolete, having fulfilled its purpose and been laid upon the shelf, while the other part is virile, full of life, and applicable to our present state—our present degree of development. But even this part must be interpreted aright. No man ought to contend for what is in the books, in the face of God's mouthpiece, who speaks for Him and interprets His word. To so contend is to defer to the dead letter in preference to the living oracle, which is always a false position.

What the Lord said to the Jews and Nephites 2,000 years ago or what He said to the Latter-day Saints 50 or 60 years ago has no force whatever at this time unless it agrees with present-day revelation, with the Lord's most recent instructions to His people through His chosen or appointed servants or servant; and they who ignore this fact are liable to get into trouble. It is the latest word from God that must be heeded, in preference to any former revelation, however true.

The same God who says do thus and so today can repeal that commandment tomorrow, without being changeable or

a book. They do not do things because God told the Jews to do them; nor do they do or leave undone anything because of instructions that Christ gave to the Nephites.

Whatever is done by this Church is because God, speaking from heaven in our day, has commanded this Church to do it. . . . That is the constitution of the Church of Christ. If we use water instead of wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it is because Christ has so commanded.

The great distinguishing feature that differentiates God's Church from all other churches [is that] this Church is built upon the rock of Christ, upon the principle of immediate and continuous revelation.

God's Work Moves On

Divine revelation adapts itself to the circumstances and conditions of men, and change upon change ensues as God's progressive work goes on to its destiny. There is no book big enough or good enough to preside over this Church.



inconsistent. The legislature, meeting every two years, repeals old laws or such of its former enactments as have served their purpose; but no one thinks of charging the lawmakers with inconsistency or self-contradiction. How then can God be considered inconsistent if He says one thing today and changes it tomorrow or next month or next year in order to suit altered circumstances?

He commanded Abraham to slay his son, and Abraham was about to do so when the same God said, “Lay not thine hand upon the lad” [Genesis 22:12]. Abraham was under obligation . . . to obey the second command instead of the first; and he would have been a transgressor had he failed.

We Must Keep Up

I might continue the theme indefinitely but will close now with this thought. God’s work is progressive. It changes its appearance but never its principles. The truths upon which it is founded

[God] commanded Abraham to slay his son, and Abraham was about to do so when the same God said, “Lay not thine hand upon the lad.” Abraham was under obligation . . . to obey the second command instead of the first.

are eternal, unalterable, but there are many regulations that change and change and change, as the work of God goes on. The everlasting gospel is something more than a fire escape, the way out of a perilous situation. It is the

divine plan for human progress, the pathway to perfection; and the spirit of the gospel is the spirit of improvement, of advancement.

God’s work will go on, but will you and I go on with it? . . . How can we go along with the Lord’s work? There is but one way, and that is to do the things which He has commanded and leave undone the things which He has forbidden. . . .

O my brothers and sisters of the Church of Christ! Let us be awake and up and doing. . . . Keep on doing something for God, that the spirit of His work may abide in you and guide you along that path “growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect day” [see D&C 50:24]. ■

Punctuation, paragraphing, spelling, and capitalization modernized; subheads added.

Power to Change

Name withheld

Although I was born into the Church and was active through the age of 15, I wandered from the gospel during young adulthood. During that time, in search of something that could make me happy, I turned to drugs.

I struggled with an ever-increasing addiction, and my life felt like some sort of bad movie I could not turn off. Although I wanted to stop, I found I had hardly any control over my thoughts or actions. It wasn't until I was serving a prison sentence for a drug-related crime that I found what I had lost. I had a copy of the Book of Mormon and came across Alma 5:7: "Behold, he changed their hearts; yea, he awakened them out of a deep sleep, and they awoke unto God. Behold, they were in the midst of darkness; nevertheless, their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word."

I knew I was in the midst of darkness, and I wanted to have my heart changed.

It wasn't that I hadn't tried changing before. I had participated in various recovery programs. I had tried quitting for myself and for my family. Those things all worked for a little while, but I always slipped. This verse in Alma offered me hope in Jesus Christ—hope that even if I didn't have the power to change myself (and I knew I didn't), *He* could change me.

I remember turning the burden of my addiction over to the Savior. I prayed and admitted to



Turning the burden of my addiction over to the Savior, I prayed and admitted to Heavenly Father, "I cannot do this on my own."

Heavenly Father, "I cannot do this on my own."

I entered the LDS addiction recovery program, a 12-step class taught by two missionaries, a husband and wife. What they taught in that class saved me. They nurtured the seed of faith that had been planted many years earlier, when as a child I attended church with my mother. The missionaries taught me about repentance and forgiveness. More

important, they showed me love and told me I could find even greater love from my Heavenly Father and Savior. I felt "a mighty change wrought in [my] heart" (Alma 5:12), and I found that the happiness I had so long been searching for had been in the gospel all along.

It has been six years since I decided to turn to my Savior. It has been a lot of hard work, but through the strength of the Lord, I have overcome many obstacles.

I never would have imagined the happiness and joy I now have in my life with my wife and children. I hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and have received temple ordinances. I attribute these positive life transformations to Jesus Christ. He is the power to change.

I testify to others who are struggling as I did—and to those who love them—that change is possible and that it's very real. You need not give up hope. There is a way to return to happiness, and it is through Jesus Christ. ■

For information about the addiction recovery program, please see your priesthood leader or visit www.ldsfamilyservices.org. The program's manual, *Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing* (item no. 36764), is available in many languages.



By Elder
Kenneth Johnson
Of the Seventy

Called AND Set Apart TO SERVE

Formal callings in the Church are not complete until we have been set apart by proper priesthood authority.

In a vision given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon at Hiram, Ohio, on February 16, 1832, we find these words of comfort and encouragement:

“I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear¹ me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

“Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory” (D&C 76:5–6).

During my years as a member of the Church, I have experienced a growing appreciation for what it means to be called of God and for the promised blessings associated with responding to the Lord’s invitation to serve Him.

When leaders pray to know the will of the Lord before extending a call to serve, they receive a feeling of assurance that confirms the correct action to be taken. It is both essential

and gratifying to obtain a personal witness through prayer that we have been called of God. Through His servants, the Lord invites us to participate in His work so that we can come to know and love Him more fully (see Mosiah 5:13).

Upon receiving a call to serve, we might experience feelings of inadequacy comparable to what Enoch felt when he was commissioned by the Lord to lead and teach the people (see Moses 6:31). The words “My Spirit is upon you, wherefore all thy words will I justify” (Moses 6:34) must have brought assurance to Enoch as he gained a vision of how the Lord would empower him to fulfill his sacred assignment. The scriptures further record what a great leader Enoch became as “he walked with God” (Moses 6:39). The experience of Enoch contains valuable lessons for each of us as we serve in the Lord’s Church.

The principle of setting apart those called to serve is expressed in the counsel of the Lord to Moses when He instructed Moses to “lay thine hand upon [Joshua]. . . . And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him” (Numbers 27:18, 20).

Through this divinely established pattern, we can rise above our individual frailties, limitations, and even opposition. Consider the experience of Nephi and Lehi, the sons of Helaman: “The Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire, and they could speak forth marvelous words” (Helaman 5:45; see also verses 17–19).

Teaching by the Spirit

In a revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord posed the following question: “Wherefore, I the Lord ask you this question—unto what were ye ordained?”² (D&C 50:13). The Lord responds, “To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth” (D&C 50:14).

Clearly, there are constraints concerning the manner in which we should teach sacred truths:

“Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:64).

“He that is ordained of me and sent forth to preach the word of truth

by the Comforter, in the Spirit of truth, doth he preach it by the Spirit of truth or some other way?

“And if it be by some other way it is not of God” (D&C 50:17–18).

When we are called to a position in the Church as a leader or a teacher, our commission is to teach the word of God by the Spirit of God, not by “the philosophies of men interlaced with a few scriptures.”³ Like Enoch, Nephi, and Lehi, we too can receive help from on high through the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

We might conclude that having heard or read information concerning a doctrine or principle will suffice. But such an approach reflects a failure to recognize that a deeper comprehension of principles comes through personal revelation (see Job 32:8). Consider this inspired observation by Hyrum Smith, brother of the Prophet: “Preach the first principles of the Gospel—preach them over again: you will find that day after day new ideas and additional light concerning them will be revealed to you. You can enlarge upon them so as to comprehend them clearly.”⁴

Following the Savior’s Example

Our greatest example in all things is the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is written:

“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

“For he taught them as one having



authority, and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7:28–29; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 7:36–37).

Alma, the great Book of Mormon prophet, exemplified this approach: “And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God” (Alma 31:5).

When entrusted with the sacred responsibility to teach the gospel, let us follow the example of the Savior and declare with Him, “My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me” (John 7:16). ■

NOTES

1. In scripture, our “fear” toward Deity relates to the concept of “reverence.” President David O. McKay (1873–1970) provided insight into this divine characteristic, stating, “Reverence is profound respect mingled with love” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1967, 86).
2. In scripture, “ordain” and “set apart” are used interchangeably (see D&C 20:67; 25:7; see also Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 3:106).
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “A Teacher Come from God,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 26; see also Mosiah 18:19–22.
4. Hyrum Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:323.



BEING SET APART

“The setting apart is an established practice in the

Church and men and women are ‘set apart’ to special responsibility, in ecclesiastical, quorum, and auxiliary positions. . . .

“To some folk the setting apart seems a perfunctory act while others anticipate it eagerly, absorb every word of it, and let their lives be lifted thereby.

“The setting apart may be taken literally; it is a setting apart from sin, apart from the carnal; apart from everything which is crude, low, vicious, cheap, or vulgar; *set apart* from the world to a higher [plane] of thought and activity. The blessing is conditional upon faithful performance.”

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 478.

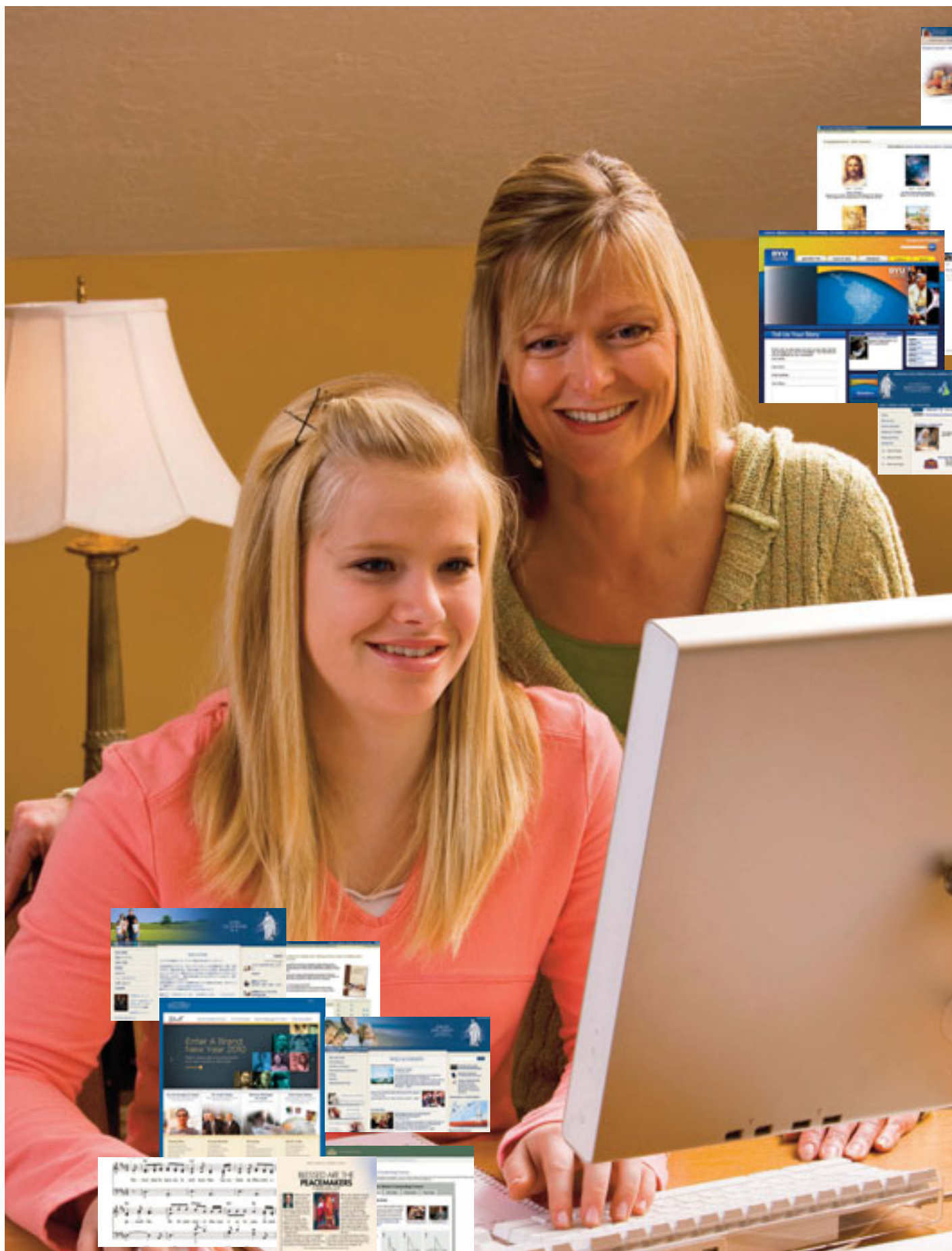


PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN LUKE



POSITIVE USES OF THE INTERNET

The Internet allows instant access to many resources that can strengthen and enrich our lives. Many spiritually uplifting Web sites give direction and inspiration. The following ideas can help you stay connected to reality without completely disconnecting from the good things the Internet has to offer.

Limit Your Time

Rebecca Renfroe, from Idaho, USA, used to blog and read others' blogs almost daily. Her mind was always in "compose" mode—mentally writing a blog about what she did with her children instead of just doing things with them. She realized there had to be a balance.

She says, "The Spirit helped me to recognize that having a blog was not the problem—devoting too much of my time and energy to it was. I had literally been giving portions of my life away: trading away quality time with my children and my husband, trading away time for serious, in-depth study of the

scriptures, and even trading away hours of sleep that affected my ability to serve others, to be sensitive to the Spirit, and to maintain a healthy lifestyle."

Sister Renfroe learned not to let good things get in the way of better things, as Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled: "Just because something is *good* is not a sufficient reason for doing it. . . . Of course it is good to view wholesome entertainment or to obtain interesting information. But not everything of that sort is worth the portion of our life we give to obtain it. Some things are better, and others are best."¹

Choose Uplifting Media

Amy Paulsen of Washington, USA, appreciates Web sites that other mothers have created that provide lesson ideas and activities for teaching children gospel principles. When she needs visual aids, she finds art online to print out. When she needs ideas, she finds links to Church magazine articles, conference talks, and online manuals.



THE BEST CHOICE

Make sure that the choices you make in the use of new media are choices that expand your mind, increase your opportunities, and feed your soul.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet,” *Liahona*, June 2008, N2; *Ensign*, July 2008, 60.

“The Internet has helped my husband and me prepare meaningful family home evenings for our children,” Sister Paulsen says. “It’s also comforting to know that there are so many other mothers out there who also ‘teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord’” (D&C 68:28).

Use the Internet to Share the Gospel

One member, Lin Floyd of Utah, USA, created a family history Web site with ancestors’ photos and histories. His Web site and others like it have helped people learn more about the Church and its doctrine. Some have desired to be baptized or have returned to Church activity. Others have found helps for doing family history, fulfilling callings, and strengthening marriages.

There are many positive things we can do with the Internet. As you establish guidelines for Internet use—making sure that the sites you visit expand your mind, increase your opportunities, and feed your soul—the Internet can be a great resource for enriching your personal life and strengthening your family. ■

NOTE

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 104, 105.

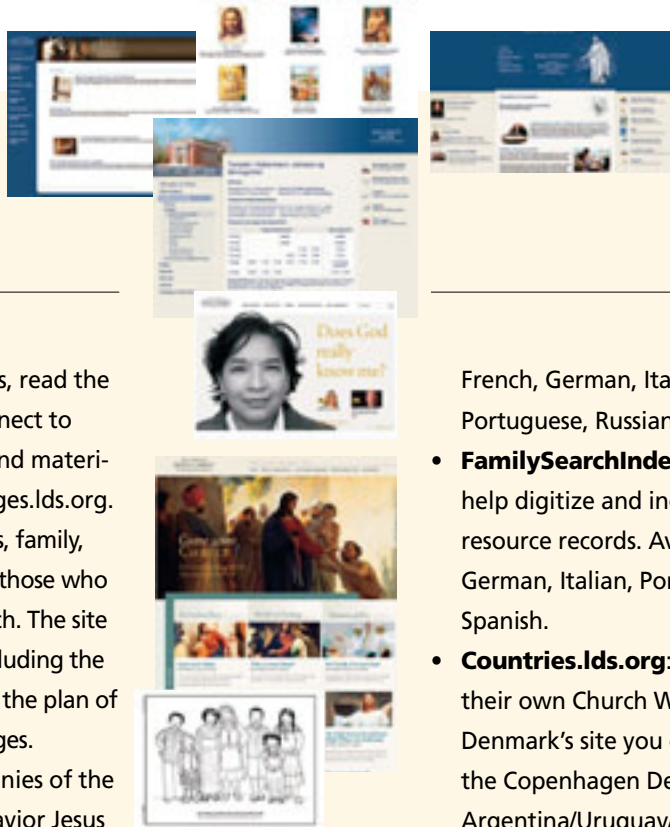
CHURCH WEB SITES

Church Web sites provide excellent resources for learning and teaching the gospel. From conference talks to Church history to help with your calling, the Church sites are designed to help members easily access gospel material. The following is a sampling of official Church Web sites available in different languages:



Using Church Web sites, you can share the gospel, prepare lessons, and engage in family history work.





- **LDS.org:** Research conference talks, read the latest news of the Church, and connect to many other Church resources. To find materials in your language, go to languages.lds.org.
- **Mormon.org:** Refer your neighbors, family, and friends to this site designed for those who want to learn more about the Church. The site explains our basic gospel beliefs, including the nature of God, eternal families, and the plan of salvation. Available in many languages.
- **JesusChrist.Lds.org:** Read testimonies of the apostles and prophets about the Savior Jesus Christ. Available in English and Spanish.
- **Liahona.Lds.org:** Find your favorite articles from the *Liahona* as well as Web extras such as photo galleries and activities for children.
- **ProvidentLiving.org:** Learn about self-reliance topics such as food storage, employment, and Church humanitarian efforts. Available in English, with some material in German, Portuguese, and Spanish.
- **LDSjobs.org:** Search for jobs, find information about schools, connect with job seekers, and learn how to help those in your ward or branch who are looking for employment. Available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish.
- **YouTube.com/MormonMessages:** Watch short audiovisual presentations about gospel principles. Available in English and Spanish.
- **Temples.Lds.org:** View information about and pictures of temples around the world. Available in English, German, Portuguese, and Spanish.
- **New.FamilySearch.org:** Research your family line, and submit information about your ancestors. Prepare names for temple work. Available in Chinese, English,

French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

- **FamilySearchIndexing.org:** Volunteer to help digitize and index Church family history resource records. Available in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.
- **Countries.Lds.org:** Many countries have their own Church Web site. For example, on Denmark's site you can watch videos showing the Copenhagen Denmark Temple. On the Argentina/Uruguay/Paraguay site, members can sign up to receive inspirational quotes from Church leaders through e-mail. On Korea's site you can watch several Church films. Other countries' sites have similar features.
- **Languages.Lds.org:** Each language has a list of the translated material available on LDS.org. Most sites offer general conference talks and manuals online. Some offer additional resources.
- **Images.Lds.org:** Download gospel art images, Church history pictures, photos of temples, and more.
- **LDS.org/braille:** Find Braille texts in English and Spanish; they are downloadable and printable.
- **ByuTvInt.org:** Watch Brigham Young University programming online, or find out how to get it in your area. Available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish.
- **Music.Lds.org:** Listen to and print hymns and other music. Available in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish. (At www.music.lds.org, click on **Music**, then **Hymns**, and then choose a language.)



**By Elder
David A. Bednar**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

*I raise an apostolic voice
of warning about the potentially
stifling, suffocating, suppressing,
and constraining impact of
some kinds of cyberspace
interactions and experiences
upon our souls.*



THINGS AS

As I have looked forward to and prepared for this opportunity to learn with you, I have come to better understand the strong feelings of Jacob, the brother of Nephi. He said, “I this day am weighed down with much . . . desire and anxiety for the welfare of your souls” (Jacob 2:3). The message I want to share with you today has over time distilled upon my “soul as the dew from heaven” (D&C 121:45). I invite your earnest attention to a serious subject that has both immediate and eternal implications. I pray for the Holy Ghost to be with and teach each of us during our time together.

I long have been impressed with the simple and clear definition of truth set forth in the Book of Mormon: “The Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly, for the salvation of our souls” (Jacob 4:13; see also D&C 93:24).

We will focus upon the first major element of truth identified in this verse: “things as they really are.” We first will review several key elements of our Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness as the doctrinal foundation for knowing and understanding things as they really are. We then will consider methods of attack used by the adversary to distract us from or inhibit our capacity to discern

THEY REALLY ARE

things as they really are. And finally, we will discuss the responsibilities that rest upon you as the rising generation. You will need to be obedient, to honor sacred covenants, and to discern things consistently as they really are in today's world that grows ever more confused and wicked.

Our Divine Destiny

In "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles declare that as spirit sons and daughters of God, we "accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize [our] divine destiny as heirs of eternal life."¹ Please note the primary importance of obtaining a physical body in the process of progressing toward our divine destiny.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught with clarity the importance of our physical bodies:

"We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body. The devil has no body, and herein is his punishment. He is pleased when he can obtain the tabernacle of man, and when cast out by the Savior he asked to go into the herd of swine, showing that he would prefer a swine's body to having none. All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not. . . .

"The devil has no power over us only as we permit him; the moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power."²

Our physical bodies make possible a breadth,

a depth, and an intensity of experience that simply could not be obtained in our premortal estate. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught, "Our spirit and our body are combined in such a way that our body becomes an instrument of our mind and the foundation of our character."³ Thus, our relationships with other people, our capacity to recognize and act in accordance with truth, and our ability to obey the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ are amplified through our physical bodies. In the classroom of mortality, we experience tenderness, love, kindness, happiness, sorrow, disappointment, pain, and even the challenges of physical limitations in ways that prepare us for eternity. Simply stated, there are lessons we must learn and experiences we must have, as the scriptures describe, "according to the flesh" (1 Nephi 19:6; Alma 7:12–13).

Apostles and prophets consistently have taught the mortal and eternal importance of our bodies. Paul declared:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

And in this dispensation the Lord revealed that "the spirit and the body are the soul of man" (D&C 88:15). A truth that really is and always will be is that the body and the spirit constitute our reality and identity. When body and spirit are inseparably connected, we can

receive a fulness of joy; when they are separated, we cannot receive a fulness of joy (see D&C 93:33–34).

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 with resurrected, exalted bodies. Lucifer labors to make the sons and daughters of God confused and unhappy and to hinder their eternal progression. The overarching intent of the father of lies is that all of us become "miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:27), and he works to distort the elements of the Father's plan he hates the most.

Satan does not have a body, and his eternal progress has been halted. Just as water flowing in a riverbed is stopped by a dam, so the adversary's eternal progress is thwarted because he does not have a physical body. Because of his rebellion, Lucifer has denied himself all of the mortal blessings and experiences made possible through a tabernacle of flesh and bones. He cannot learn the lessons that only an embodied spirit can learn. He cannot marry or enjoy the blessings of procreation and family life. He cannot abide the reality of a literal and universal resurrection of all mankind. One of the potent scriptural meanings of the word *damned* is illustrated in his inability to continue developing and becoming like our Heavenly Father.

Because a physical body is so central to the Father's plan of happiness and our spiritual development, we should not be surprised that Lucifer seeks to frustrate our progression by tempting us to use our bodies improperly. One of the ultimate ironies of eternity is that the adversary, who is miserable precisely because he has no physical body, invites and entices us to share in his misery through the improper use of our bodies. The very tool he does not have and cannot use is thus the

primary target of his attempts to lure us to physical and spiritual destruction.

The Adversary's Attacks

The adversary attempts to influence us both to misuse our physical bodies and to minimize the importance of our bodies. These two methods of attack are important for us to recognize and to repel.

When any of Heavenly Father's children misuse their physical tabernacles by violating the law of chastity, by using drugs and addictive substances, by disfiguring or defacing themselves,



"Our spirit and our body are combined in such a way that our body becomes an instrument of our mind and the foundation of our character."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

or by worshipping the false idol of body image, whether their own or that of others, Satan is delighted. To those of us who know and understand the plan of salvation, any defiling of the body is rebellion and a denial of our true identity as sons and daughters of God (see Mosiah 2:36–37; D&C 64:34–35).

Now, brothers and sisters, I cannot tell you all the ways whereby you may misuse your bodies, "for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them" (Mosiah 4:29). You know what is right and what is wrong, and you have the individual responsibility to learn for yourself "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118) the things you should and should not do and the doctrinal reasons you should and should

not do those things. I testify that as you desire to so learn, as you “watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives” (Mosiah 4:30), you will be spiritually enlightened and protected. And according to your faithfulness and diligence, you will have the power to discern the deception and repel the attacks of the adversary as he tempts you to misuse your physical body.

Satan also strives to entice the sons and daughters of God to minimize the importance of their physical bodies. This particular type of attack is most subtle and diabolical. I want to provide several examples of how the adversary can pacify and lull us away into a sense of carnal security (see 2 Nephi 28:21) and encourage us to put at risk the earthly learning experiences that caused us to shout for joy in the premortal existence (see Job 38:7).

For example, all of us can find enjoyment in a wide range of wholesome, entertaining, and engaging activities. But we diminish the importance of our bodies and jeopardize our physical well-being by going to unusual and dangerous extremes searching for an ever-greater and more exhilarating adrenaline “rush.” We may rationalize that surely nothing is wrong with such seemingly innocent exploits and adventures. However, putting at risk the very instrument God has given us to receive the learning experiences of mortality—merely to pursue a thrill or some supposed fun, to bolster ego, or to gain acceptance—truly minimizes the importance of our physical bodies.

Sadly, some young men and young women in the Church today ignore “things as they really are” and neglect eternal relationships for digital distractions,

diversions, and detours that have no lasting value. My heart aches when a young couple—sealed together in the house of the Lord for time and for all eternity by the power of the holy priesthood—experiences marital difficulties because of the addicting effect of excessive video gaming or online socializing. A young man or woman may waste countless hours, postpone or forfeit vocational or academic achievement, and ultimately sacrifice cherished human relationships because of mind- and spirit-numbing video and online games. As the Lord declared, “Wherefore, I give unto them a commandment . . . : Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent that it may not be known” (D&C 60:13).

You may now be asking yourself, “But, Brother Bednar, you began today by talking about the importance of a physical body in our eternal progression. Are you suggesting that video gaming and various types of computer-mediated communication can play a role in minimizing the importance of our physical bodies?” That is precisely what I am declaring. Let me explain.

We live at a time when technology can be used to replicate reality, to augment reality, and to create virtual reality. For example, a medical doctor can use software simulation to gain valuable experience performing a complicated surgical operation without ever putting a human patient at risk. A pilot in a flight simulator repeatedly can practice emergency landing procedures that could save many lives. And architects and engineers can use innovative technologies to model sophisticated design and construction methods that decrease the loss of human life and damage to buildings caused by earthquakes and other natural disasters.

In each of these examples, a high degree of fidelity in the simulation or model contributes to the effectiveness of the experience. The term



THIS AND SIMILAR IMAGES are used as part of the planning and design process for each new temple that is constructed. The rendering portrays fabrics, furnishings, fixtures, lighting, scale, and proportion to show how each component will look and feel when finished. In essence, the entire temple and all of its elements are designed in detail before construction ever begins.



This image is a computer-generated rendering of a sealing room in the Newport Beach California Temple.

fidelity denotes the similarity between reality and a representation of reality. Such a simulation can be constructive if the fidelity is high and the purposes are good—for example, providing experience that saves lives or improves the quality of life.

Please notice the fidelity between the representation of reality in the computer rendering (page 26) and the reality of the completed room in the photograph on the next page.

In the example, high fidelity is employed to accomplish a most important purpose—the design and construction of a sacred and beautiful temple. However, a simulation or model can lead to spiritual impairment and danger if the fidelity is high and the purposes are bad—such as experimenting with actions contrary to God’s commandments or enticing us to think or do things we would not otherwise think or do “because it is only a game.”

I raise an apostolic voice of warning about the potentially stifling, suffocating, suppressing, and constraining impact

of some kinds of cyberspace interactions and experiences upon our souls. The concerns I raise are not new; they apply equally to other types of media, such as television, movies, and music. But in a cyber world, these challenges are more pervasive and intense. I plead with you to beware of the sense-dulling and spiritually destructive influence of cyberspace technologies that are used to produce high fidelity and that promote degrading and evil purposes.

If the adversary cannot entice us to misuse

our physical bodies, then one of his most potent tactics is to beguile you and me as embodied spirits to disconnect gradually and physically from things as they really are. In essence, he encourages us to think and act as if we were in our premortal, unembodied state. And, if we let him, he can cunningly employ some aspects of modern technology to accomplish his purposes. Please be careful of becoming so immersed and engrossed in pixels, texting, earbuds, twittering, online social networking, and potentially addictive uses of media and the Internet that you fail to recognize the importance of your physical body and miss the richness of person-to-person communication. Beware of digital displays and data in many forms of computer-mediated interaction that can displace the full range of physical capacity and experience.

Read carefully the following quote describing an intense romantic relationship a woman had with a cyberspace boyfriend. And note how the medium of communication minimized the importance of the physical body: “And so PFSlider [the man’s screen name] became my everyday life. All the tangible stuff fell away. My body did not exist. I had no skin, no hair, no bones. All desire had converted itself into a cerebral current that reached nothing but my frontal lobe. There was no outdoors, no social life, no weather. There was only the computer screen and the phone, my chair, and maybe a glass of water.”⁴

In contrast, we need to heed the admonition of Paul: “That every one of you should know how

to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour” (1 Thessalonians 4:4).

Consider again the example I mentioned earlier of a young couple recently married in the house of the Lord. An immature or misguided spouse may devote an inordinate amount of time to playing video games, chatting online, or in other ways allowing the digital to dominate things as they really are. Initially the investment of time may seem relatively harmless, rationalized as a few minutes of needed relief from the demands



This is a photograph of the actual sealing room in the Newport Beach California Temple.

of a hectic daily schedule. But important opportunities are missed for developing and improving interpersonal skills, for laughing and crying together, and for creating a rich and enduring bond of emotional intimacy. Progressively, seemingly innocent entertainment can become a form of pernicious enslavement.

To feel the warmth of a tender hug from an

eternal companion or to see the sincerity in the eyes of another person as testimony is shared—all of these things experienced as they really are through the instrument of our physical body—could be sacrificed for a high-fidelity fantasy that has no lasting value. If you and I are not vigilant, we can become “past feeling” (1 Nephi 17:45), as did Laman and Lemuel long ago.

Let me provide another example of disconnecting gradually and physically from things as they really are. Today a person can enter into a virtual world, such as Second Life, and assume a new identity. An individual can create an avatar, or a cyberspace persona, that conforms to his or her own appearance and behavior. Or a person can concoct a counterfeit identity that does not correlate in any way to things as they really are. However closely the assumed new identity approximates the individual, such behavior is the essence of things as they really are not. Earlier I defined the fidelity of a simulation or model. I now emphasize the importance of personal fidelity—the correspondence between an actual person and an assumed, cyberspace identity. Please note the lack of personal fidelity in the following episode as reported in the *Wall Street Journal*:

Ric Hoogestraat is “a burly [53-year-old] man with a long gray ponytail, thick sideburns and a salt-and-pepper handlebar mustache. . . . [Ric spends] six hours a night and often 14 hours at a stretch on weekends as Dutch Hoorenbeek, his six-foot-nine, muscular . . . cyber-self. The character looks like a younger, physically enhanced version of [Ric]. . . .

“ . . . [He] sits at his computer with the blinds drawn. . . . While his wife, Sue, watches television in the living room, Mr. Hoogestraat chats online with what appears on the screen to be a tall, slim redhead.

“He’s never met the woman outside of the

computer world of Second Life, a well-chronicled digital fantasyland. . . . He’s never so much as spoken to her on the telephone. But their relationship has taken on curiously real dimensions. They own two dogs, pay a mortgage together and spend hours [in their cyberspace world] shopping at the mall and taking long motorcycle rides. . . . Their bond is so strong that three months ago, Mr. Hoogestraat asked Janet Spielman, the 38-year-old Canadian woman who controls the redhead, to become his virtual wife.

“The woman he’s legally wed to is not amused.

If the adversary cannot entice us to misuse our physical bodies, then one of his most potent tactics is to beguile you and me as embodied spirits to disconnect gradually and physically from things as they really are.

‘It’s really devastating,’ says Sue Hoogestraat, . . . who has been married to Mr. Hoogestraat for seven months.”⁵

Brothers and sisters, please understand. I am not suggesting all technology is inherently bad; it is not. Nor am I saying we should not use its many capabilities in appropriate ways to learn, to communicate, to lift and brighten lives,

and to build and strengthen the Church; of course we should. But I am raising a warning voice that we should not squander and damage authentic relationships by obsessing over contrived ones. “Nearly 40% of men and 53% of women who play online games said their virtual friends were equal to or better than their real-life friends, according to a survey of 30,000 gamers conducted by . . . a recent Ph.D. graduate from Stanford University. More than a quarter of gamers [who responded indicated that] the emotional highlight of the past week occurred in a computer world.”⁶

How important, how enduring, and how timely

is the Lord's definition of truth: "things as they really are." The prophet Alma asked, "O then, is not this real?" (Alma 32:35). He was speaking of light and good so discernible they can be tasted. Indeed, "they who dwell in [the Father's] presence . . . see as they are seen, and know as they are known, having received of his fulness and of his grace" (D&C 76:94).

My beloved brothers and sisters, beware! To the extent personal fidelity decreases in computer-mediated communications and the purposes of such communications are distorted, perverted, and wicked, the potential for spiritual disaster is dangerously high. I implore you to turn away immediately and permanently from such places and activities (see 2 Timothy 3:5).

Now I would like to address an additional characteristic of the adversary's attacks. Satan often offers an alluring illusion of anonymity. Lucifer always has sought to accomplish his work in secret (see Moses 5:30). Remember, however, that apostasy is not anonymous simply because it occurs in a blog or through a fabricated identity in a chat room or virtual world. Immoral thoughts, words, and deeds always are immoral, even in cyberspace. Deceitful acts supposedly veiled in secrecy, such as illegally downloading music from the Internet or copying CDs or DVDs for distribution to friends and families, are nonetheless deceitful. We are all accountable to God, and ultimately we will be judged of Him according to our deeds and the desires of our hearts (see Alma 41:3). "For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

The Lord knows who we really are, what we really think, what we really do, and who we really are becoming. He has warned us that "the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed" (D&C 1:3).

I have raised a voice of warning about only a few of the spiritual hazards in our technologically oriented and rapidly changing world. Let me say again: neither technology nor rapid change in or of itself is good or evil; the real challenge is to understand both within the context of the eternal plan of happiness. Lucifer will encourage you to misuse and to minimize the importance of your physical body. He will attempt to substitute the monotony of virtual repetition for the infinite variety of God's creations and convince us we are merely mortal things to be acted upon instead of eternal souls blessed with moral agency to act for ourselves. Deviously, he entices embodied spirits to forfeit the blessings and learning experiences "according to the flesh" (1 Nephi 19:6; Alma 7:12–13) that are made possible through the Father's plan of happiness and the Atonement of His Only Begotten Son.

For your happiness and protection, I invite you to study more diligently the doctrine of the plan of salvation—and to prayerfully ponder the truths we have reviewed. I offer two questions for consideration in your personal pondering and prayerful studying:

1. Does the use of various technologies and media invite or impede the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost in your life?
2. Does the time you spend using various technologies and media enlarge or restrict your capacity to live, to love, and to serve in meaningful ways?

You will receive answers, inspiration, and instruction from the Holy Ghost suited to your individual circumstances and needs. I repeat and affirm the teaching of the Prophet Joseph: "All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not. The devil has no power over us only as we permit him."

These eternal truths about the importance of our physical bodies will fortify you against the

deception and the attacks of the adversary. One of my deepest desires for you is an ever-increasing testimony of and appreciation for the Resurrection—even your own resurrection with a celestial, exalted body “because of your faith in [the Lord Jesus Christ] according to the promise” (Moroni 7:41).

The Rising Generation

I would like to speak specifically to you as you really are. You really are the rising generation in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In October of 1997, Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited Brigham Young University–Idaho to speak in a devotional. During the day he was on the campus, we talked together about a variety of gospel topics in general and about the youth of the Church in particular. I remember Elder Maxwell making a statement that greatly impressed me. He said, “The youth of this generation have a greater capacity for obedience than any previous generation.”

He then indicated that his statement was based upon a truth taught by President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), First Counselor in the First Presidency: “God has reserved spirits for this dispensation who have the courage and determination to face the world, and all the powers of the evil one, visible and invisible, to proclaim the gospel and maintain the truth and establish and build up the Zion of our God fearless of all consequences. He has sent these spirits in this generation to lay the foundation of Zion never more to be overthrown, and to raise up a seed that will be righteous, and that will honor God, and honor Him supremely, and be obedient to Him under all circumstances.”⁷

Parents and Church leaders frequently emphasize that the young men and young women of this generation have been reserved for this season in the history of the world and are some of the most valiant of Heavenly Father’s children. Indeed, such

statements are true. But I often have wondered if young people hear this description so often that it becomes overused and trite—and that its importance and deep implications may be overlooked. We know that “unto whom much is given much is required” (D&C 82:3). And the teachings of President Cannon and Elder Maxwell help us to understand more fully what is required of us today. You and I are to be valiant and “obedient to Him under all circumstances.” Thus, obedience is the principal weapon upon which the rising generation must rely in the latter-day battle between good and evil.

You and I are to be valiant and “obedient to Him under all circumstances.” Thus, obedience is the principal weapon upon which the rising generation must rely in the latter-day battle between good and evil.

We rejoice that the Lord through His authorized servants has “raised the bar” for the young men and young women of today. Given what we know about who we are and why we are here upon the earth, such inspired direction is welcomed and appreciated. And we should recognize that Lucifer incessantly strives to “lower the

bar” by coaxing us to misuse and minimize the importance of our physical bodies.

The Savior has warned us repeatedly to beware of deception by the adversary:

“Jesus answered, and said unto them: Take heed that no man deceive you; . . .

“For in those days there shall also arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch, that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect, who are the elect according to the covenant. . . .

“And whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived” (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:5, 22, 37).

Obedience opens the door to the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. And the spiritual gifts and abilities activated by the power of the Holy Ghost enable us to avoid deception—and to see, to feel, to know, to understand, and to remember things as they really are. You and I have been endowed with a greater capacity for obedience precisely for these reasons. Moroni declared:

“Hearken unto the words of the Lord, and ask the Father in the name of Jesus for what things soever ye shall stand in need. Doubt not, but be believing,

of the adversary—today and in the days that lie ahead. We can and will fulfill our foreordained responsibilities and contribute to the work of the Lord in all the world.

I testify that God lives and is our Heavenly Father. He is the author of the plan of salvation. Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer, whose body was bruised, broken, and torn for us as He offered the atoning sacrifice. He is resurrected, He lives, and He stands at the head of His Church in these latter days. To be “encircled about eternally in the arms of his love” (2 Nephi 1:15) will be a real and not a virtual experience.

I testify we can and will be blessed with the courage and determination to face the world and all the powers of the evil one. Righteousness will prevail. No unhallowed hand can stop this work from progressing. I bear witness and testify of these things as they really are and as they really will be, in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. ■

From a Church Educational System fireside address delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on May 3, 2009.

NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 211, 214.
3. Boyd K. Packer, “The Instrument of Your Mind and the Foundation of Your Character,” *Brigham Young University 2002–2003 Speeches* (2003), 2.
4. Meghan Daum, “Virtual Love,” *The New Yorker*, Aug. 25 and Sept. 1, 1997, 82; or Meghan Daum, *My Misspent Youth* (2001), 19.
5. Alexandra Alter, “Is This Man Cheating on His Wife?” *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 10, 2007, pp. W8, W1.
6. Alexandra Alter, *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 10, 2007, p. W8.
7. George Q. Cannon, “Remarks,” *Deseret News*, May 31, 1866, 203; see also *Journal of Discourses*, 11:230.

and begin as in times of old, and come unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him.

“Be wise in the days of your probation; strip yourselves of all uncleanness; ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God” (Mormon 9:27–28).

As we heed that inspired counsel, we can and will be blessed to recognize and repel the attacks



Cambodian Latter-day Saints: Moving in a New Direction

By Chad E. Phares

Church Magazines

In the midst of the late spring rainy season in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the Tonle Sap River—which has poured into the Mekong River for months—defies its natural movement and changes course to flow in the opposite direction.

This directional change causes the Tonle Sap Lake at the head of the river to swell to five times its size, bringing much-needed nutrients to the fish and birds that feed there.

Like the river that changes direction, members in Cambodia have felt how the gospel of Jesus Christ has helped change the direction of their own lives. Their hearts now overflow with the joy and peace the gospel brings. This swell of joy provides spiritual food for their souls.

Although the country has faced dark times, the gospel of Jesus Christ has helped many Cambodians see the light of a new day shine through the darkness of the past.

Changing Direction

During the country's political turmoil in the 1970s, many Cambodians were driven from their homes and lost family members.

Loy Bunseak, president of the Siem

Despite facing severe trials in the past, Cambodian Latter-day Saints are discovering that the gospel of Jesus Christ is giving them a reason to hope for the future.

Reap Branch in the Cambodia Phnom Penh Mission, was nine years old in 1975, when he and his family had to leave their home. They—along with millions of others—were required to perform hard manual labor in the country's vast fields.



During this time, President Loy lost both of his parents and five of his eight siblings.

Despite the hardships, President Loy always had at least one thing to



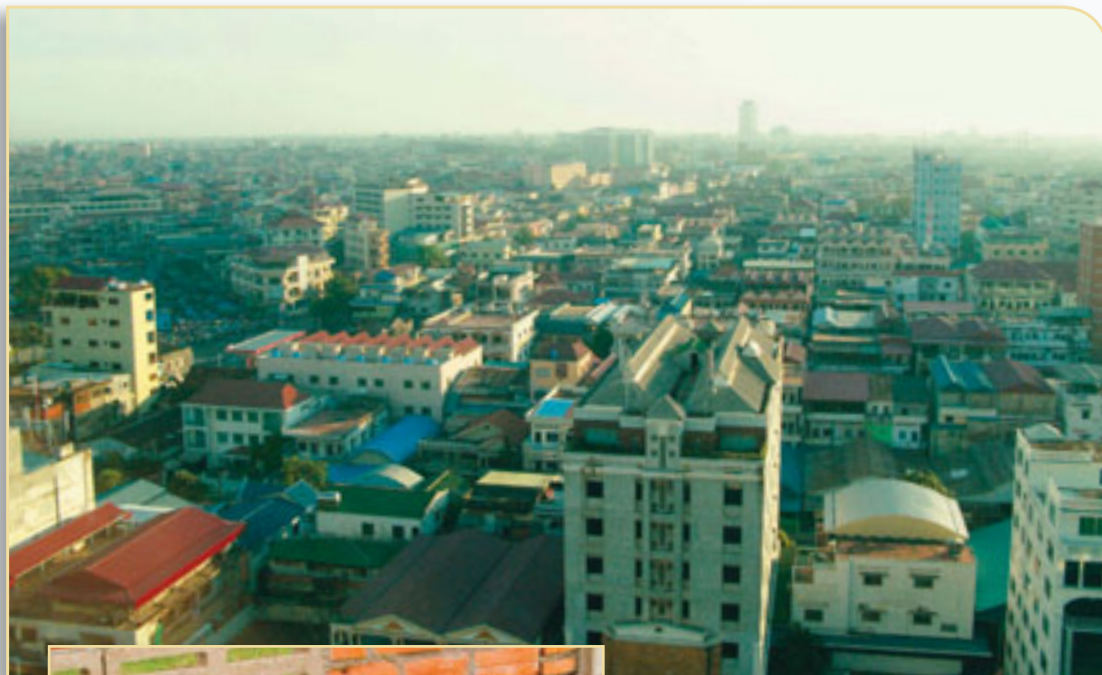
help get him through his pain.

"I always had hope," he says.

The determined hope that helped President Loy get through the trials of his child-

hood is the same hope that later allowed him to recognize the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Because Cambodia is largely a Buddhist country, President Loy grew



Opposite page: Loy Bunseak, a branch president and tour guide in Siem Reap, shows visitors the city's ancient temples. He also finds opportunities to teach about Latter-day Saint temples by displaying a photo of the Hong Kong Temple in his tour van. Left: Despite feeling hopeless at times during his younger years, Sen Sok Branch president Khan Sarin joined the Church after his wife, Suon Sokmo, invited him to study the scriptures with her. Top: Phnom Penh.

received my testimony of its truthfulness from God,” President Loy says. “I could see how living by the teachings of the Book of Mormon made my family happier.”

President Loy’s experience is not unusual. Khan Sarin, president of the Sen Sok Branch in the Phnom Penh Cambodia North District, was separated from his family as a teenager and forced to work in the fields.

up without a knowledge of Jesus Christ. He began to learn about the Savior when Latter-day Saint missionaries came to his home and told him and his family they had an important message to share.

“I had never heard of Jesus Christ until I met the missionaries,” he says. “I wanted to learn more about Him.”

After intense study and discussion, President Loy and his family were baptized in 2001.

“The missionaries helped me learn from the Book of Mormon, but I

“After I became a member of the Church, I . . . received a new light that I never had before.”

Khan Sarin

Below: A recently completed meeting-house accommodates the growing membership in Cambodia's capital city of Phnom Penh. Bottom: When they were young, Pich Sareth and his wife, Seng Tha, were separated from their families for extended periods of time. They feel grateful to have the opportunity to spend time with their children and raise them in the Church.

"I felt hopeless at this time," President Khan says. "I did not know if I would survive."

Looking back, President Khan feels that the Lord protected him from harm several times in his life. As a young man he joined the army and was shot at from as close as 20 feet (6 m) away but was not hit. He also stepped on many active land mines that did not explode. One land mine he stepped on did explode, but he was not seriously injured.

Because of the dangerous circumstances soldiers found themselves in, they did whatever they could to be protected. Several men in the military got tattoos because they believed the tattoos could help keep them safe.

"Before I became a member of the Church, I didn't know anything," President Khan says. "Now I know that it was Jesus Christ—not the tattoos—that saved me."

After President Khan's wife, Suon Sokmo, met the missionaries and was baptized, he was impressed by the changes he could see taking place



within her. He accepted her invitation to study the scriptures together, and he soon decided to be baptized.

"The most important thing that I ever received in my life is the testimony I obtained from studying the scriptures," he says.

Pich Sareth, a member of the Phnom Penh 12th Branch in the Phnom Penh Cambodia North District, also saw trials at a very young age. He was only five years old when he was separated from his family and forced to work in the fields. He would



*"I cannot even explain
the joy I felt in the temple. . . .*

*I know that the temple is
necessary for families to live
together forever."*

Loy Bunseak

sometimes find crabs or frogs he could eat to quell his hunger.

Brother Pich's wife, Seng Tha, and her family were also forced from their home. Because she was only four years old and small, she was not required to work, as other children were. She was separated from her family much of the day and was watched by elderly women who could not work.

After meeting the missionaries in 1995, Brother Pich and his wife began to learn about the love Heavenly Father has for them. "When I had problems, I could see that praying helped me get through them," Brother Pich says. "I knew Heavenly Father cared."

After Brother Pich decided to be baptized, his wife also gained a testimony of the gospel and was baptized.

A Swell of Joy

Since their baptisms, Brother Pich and his family have recognized the joy that stems from gaining a testimony of Jesus Christ. The Pich family takes

time every day to read the scriptures. As they have done this, the joy of the gospel has permeated their souls.

"We feel we are on the right path now, and we want to stay on this narrow path and continue to progress," Sister Seng says. "I am grateful every day that we can have our children on this path with us."

The joy that President Loy feels extends in both directions—to his ancestors as well as his descendants. President Loy and his family visited the Hong Kong China Temple in 2004. Not only were President Loy's wife and children sealed to him, but the saving ordinances of the temple were also completed for his father, mother, and the brothers and sisters he had lost.

"I cannot even explain the joy I



felt in the temple," President Loy said. "I knew my family was being made strong. I know that the temple is necessary for families to live together forever."

President Khan and his family also had the opportunity to be sealed together as an eternal family in the Hong Kong Temple. "The feeling I felt at the temple is something I had never felt before. It is hard to express my feelings in words," President Khan says.



Nutrients for Survival

Thanks to the spreading of the gospel, members in Cambodia are receiving the spiritual nutrients they need to survive. Although the Church is growing in Cambodia, members hope that this growth is just a precursor to a huge blossoming of the gospel in their country.

Just as the fish and animals receive needed nutrients when the Tonle Sap Lake overflows, a growing number of Cambodians are receiving the spiritual nutrition they need thanks to the overflowing desire in members' hearts to share the gospel.



HUMANITARIAN SERVICE

Later-day Saint Charities has played a significant role in meeting the needs of Cambodians who have lacked the basic commodities and services needed to be healthy.

Family Food Production

LDS Charities has focused efforts on helping farmers harvest more rice and produce healthier rice by teaching them how to use organic fertilizers

and decrease the use of chemical fertilizers and insecticides. Farmers are also taught the importance of producing rice for themselves as well as rice that can be sold.

Wheelchairs

In December 2009, LDS Charities delivered more than 1,000 wheelchairs to the National Center for Disabled Persons in Phnom Penh. The wheelchairs were given to Church members as well as to other Cambodians in need.

MIRACLES CAN OCCUR



The Church was officially recognized in Cambodia in 1994. Today there are about 8,000 members in 24 branches. The gospel of Jesus Christ can spread to other areas of the world where the Church currently has little influence. President Thomas S. Monson counseled us to pray for this growth: "I would ask that your faith and prayers continue to be offered in behalf of those areas where our influence is limited and where we are not allowed to share the gospel freely at this time. Miracles can occur as we do so" ("Welcome to Conference," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 6).

Although ancient architecture and temples abound in Cambodia, the gospel has brought a sense of newness to the lives of Church members here.

"When a pot is covered, it boils over," President Khan says. "This is the feeling I have in my heart. I must open my heart to tell everyone what it is feeling."

President Loy hopes the residual effect of the gospel being taught in his home will be that his daughters will continue to embrace the gospel and teach their children.

"After I found out about Jesus

Christ, everything became better in my life and with my family," he says. "Having the priesthood in our home brings us together. If we have a problem, we sit and discuss it as a family."

Since the government of Cambodia granted the Church legal recognition in 1994, thousands of Cambodians have accepted the gospel. The Pich family looks forward to the day when the gospel will



“When I had problems, I could see that praying helped me get through them.”

Pich Sareth



spread across all parts of the country. Brother Pich says, “I hope someday there will be a temple in Cambodia.”

Sister Seng agrees: “Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are alive. My hope for the future is that the Church will continue to grow so a temple can be built.”

President Khan recognizes the ways his life has changed since

learning of the Savior. He believes the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only thing that can heal Cambodians from their past trials.

“After I became a member of the

Church, I lost a lot of the pain I felt from things that had happened in the past. I’ve received a new light that I never had before,” he says. “Everything feels new.” ■

Water

LDS Charities has provided Cambodian villages with soap, water filters, toilet facilities, rain-harvesting systems, and resources to perform water-quality analysis. LDS Charities has also overseen the drilling of several wells, which are helping thousands of people.



HELP ME!

On my second night of study abroad in St. Petersburg, Russia, I met with my friends downtown to play American football. After the game I decided to experiment with taking the bus home. I had never taken the bus in Russia, but my host mother had told me that bus 7 or bus 1 would take me home. So when bus 7 arrived, I climbed aboard.

As we drove along, I looked at the shops and watched the people mingling on the sidewalk. Slowly, the area began to grow unfamiliar. I checked my watch and realized that I had been riding for 30 minutes.

Suddenly the bus stopped, the lights went out, and everyone got off. Trying not to panic, I looked around for assistance. I knew that if I could

locate the metro, I could arrive home safely. I spotted a young couple down the street and walked toward them.

"I am lost," I said. "Do you know where the metro is?"

"The metro is very far from here," the man said. "But there is a bus stop over there. Get on bus 5, and it will take you to the metro."

I thanked him and walked quickly down the street. When a bus approached the stop, however, it was not a number 5 but a number 1. I thought back to my host mother's words: "Get on bus 7 or bus 1, and it will take you home."

I reluctantly got on, but once again we drove and drove. The passengers exited one by one until I was the only one left.

I t was getting late, and if I couldn't find the metro before it closed, I would have to spend the night on the streets of St. Petersburg.

Finally, the bus pulled to the side of the road.

"You must get off," the driver said. "This is the last stop."

My whole body shook as I struggled to breathe and hold back tears. It was getting late, and if I couldn't find the metro before it closed, I would have to spend the night on the streets of St. Petersburg.

"Help me, Father in Heaven," I prayed quietly and began walking. Then, breaking into a run, I started waving at passing taxis. None stopped.

I soon came to another bus stop, which was crowded with people. The lights of an approaching bus—a number 7—shone down on us. I hesitated. Buses had only gotten me lost, but a strong force from behind pushed me up the steps and into the bus. I sat down heavily in a seat, glancing at my watch. It was 11:50 p.m. The metro would close in 10 minutes.

I closed my eyes, whispering again, "Help me." When I opened my eyes, I saw the bright lights of a metro station as the bus came to a stop. I ran off the bus and into the metro to catch the last train of the night.

As I sat down, I thought of how our Father in Heaven numbers His sparrows (see Matthew 10:29–31), and I silently thanked Him. I knew on that dark night in that vast city, He had led me home. ■

Tiffany Lewis, Texas, USA





I was about to accept their invitation, but then I remembered what I had been taught in seminary about not going to places where the Holy Ghost would not go.

INVITATION TO DISASTER

Shortly after I began my mandatory service in the Brazilian army, I was selected as corporal over a dozen men. Unfortunately, my 12 young soldiers seemed to have the lowest standards in the barracks. I came to discover that they were or had been involved in drugs, theft, sexual immorality, and other serious sins.

Rather than allow myself to be influenced by their low standards, I took advantage of every opportunity I had to share the gospel with them. For example, during breaks or when we were cleaning rifles together, I talked to them about the gospel. I thought they would make fun of my standards and ridicule me, but they listened and came to treat me with respect. However, despite my efforts to teach them gospel doctrines, they didn't change their attitudes or behavior.

Our time in the army finally ended, and on our last day as soldiers, the men invited me to celebrate with them at a small ranch. "Corporal, you have to come to our party," one of them said to me. "You aren't going to insult us by not showing up, are you?"

I was about to accept the invitation so as not to insult them. But the thought came to me that their party standards would be contrary to my Latter-day Saint standards. I remembered what I had been taught in seminary about not going to places where the Holy Ghost would not go. Despite their resentment, I told the group that I wouldn't be attending. I said goodbye and headed home.

Months passed before I again saw one of the soldiers from that group. What he told me made me grateful that I had skipped their farewell

celebration, which featured lots of alcohol. While under the influence, the men had begun throwing alcohol on each other. Then, as a joke, one of them threw a match on his buddy, who was so badly burned that he died a few days later. As a result, all of the participants at that party faced criminal charges related to his death.

Had I attended the party—even without drinking—I would have been in the same predicament. That incident would have followed me and could have hindered my future. I mourned for the young man who had died, but I was grateful that I had followed the promptings of the Spirit and the counsel of Church leaders. ■
Cesar A. Minutti, Brazil



God's commandments are gifts to us, and if we keep them, they will lead us back to Him.

I CHOSE NOT TO DRINK

While traveling to a youth conference in Stuttgart, Germany, I had the opportunity to speak with an elderly woman about the temple and about my faith in the restored gospel. She was acquainted with the Church and had a fairly good idea of some gospel doctrines.

During our conversation, however, the woman said something that made me sad. When she was introduced to the Church approximately 40 years before by a Latter-day Saint friend, something her friend had said still stood out to her. “I’m *not allowed*

to drink,” her friend had said. The woman then added that she knew of a few Latter-day Saints who did drink “now and then.”

Contrary to what this woman thought, the gospel is not forced upon anyone. We all have the right to make our own decisions. Heavenly Father gave us the Word of Wisdom to help us keep our bodies holy, but each of us must choose whether to live His law of health because He also gave us our moral agency.

I decided several years ago when I was baptized that I would follow

Jesus Christ.

For that reason, I don’t drink alcohol. God’s commandments are gifts to us, and if we keep them, they will lead us back to Him.

From this simple encounter, I was reminded that as members of the Lord’s Church, we are always examples to others. We choose, however, what that example will be. ■

Torsten König, Germany

TURN OFF THE TV!

The Saturday night following the Thanksgiving holiday, I found myself alone in my off-campus apartment. I didn't have much to do, so I flipped through the channels on the TV until I came across a movie that had just started.

It didn't take more than a few minutes for me to realize that the movie was inappropriate. For a minute I thought, "What's the big deal? No one is around. After all, it's on TV, so all of the worst parts must be edited out."

The Spirit, however, prompted me to turn off the TV. I decided to read a book instead.

About half an hour later I heard a knock at the door. It was a member of my elders quorum, who told me that one of the young women he home taught was sick and needed a blessing. He had spent the past 30 minutes calling around and knocking on doors, trying to find someone who was home and able to help him. Finally, he had come to my door. I agreed to help and quickly changed into Sunday dress.

While we were walking to her apartment, I asked him how ill she was. All he knew was that he had received an urgent call from the young woman's roommate, requesting that he come right away.

When we arrived at the apartment, it was apparent that she was not well.

She had a high fever and looked pale. Her roommate said she had been sick for several hours, was weak, and was unable to eat because of an upset stomach.

I had assumed that I would anoint her with oil, but the brother from my elders quorum asked me to give the blessing instead. I felt inadequate and was not sure what I would say. I had not had time to mentally prepare to give a blessing, but I silently prayed that God would direct my words.

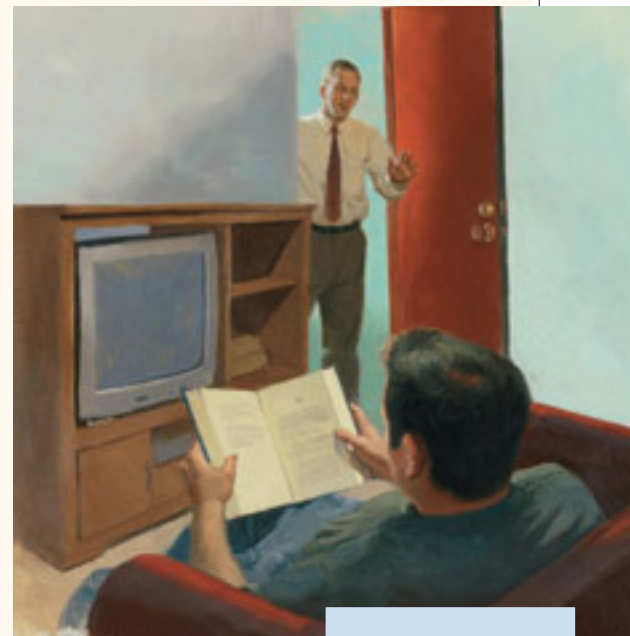
After the anointing, I addressed the young woman by name and pronounced the blessing. I found myself making promises of restored health and providing words of comfort that were not my own. I then closed the blessing. As we opened our eyes, I saw a huge smile on the young woman's face, and she thanked us for the blessing. She soon recovered and was able to return to her studies and finish the semester.

As I reflect on that experience, I feel great gratitude for the opportunity to hold the priesthood. The experience lasted only about 10 minutes, and I am sure the ill young woman has since forgotten about it. But it has had a lasting impact on me.

I am grateful for the whisperings

of the Spirit, which prompted me to avoid temptation and to remain spiritually ready. Additionally, I am grateful the Spirit directed the brother from my elders quorum to my apartment.

Most of all, I am grateful for a kind and merciful Heavenly Father, who strengthened me in my inadequacies, guiding my words in the blessing and



The Spirit prompted me to turn off the TV. About half an hour later I heard a knock at the door.

then fulfilling the words He had me speak. I know that as we remain worthy, we will have the Spirit to guide our path so that we can be ready to serve those around us. ■

Jonathan H.

Westover, Utah, USA

YOUR MISSION IN LIFE IS NOW

By Jan Pinborough
Church Magazines

Three principles can help us step into the future with greater confidence, energy, and faith.

In my young adult years, I spent a lot of time wondering about my future. Mission, marriage, education, career—all of these were open questions, and I didn't have many answers. I was willing to fulfill whatever mission the Lord had in mind for me, if I could only find out what it was.

My patriarchal blessing gave me the big picture of my life's purpose. But in some ways I felt like I was trying to find my way to the grocery store using a map of the solar system. What if I made a wrong turn somewhere? Would I still be able to find and fulfill the mission the Lord had for me?

Since then, I have discovered three principles that have helped me step into the unknown with greater confidence, energy, and faith.

1. For a Little Season

The first principle has to do with the preciousness of the present.

Starting in 1831, many of the early Saints spent about seven years in Kirtland, Ohio. They had left behind

homes, businesses, and farms in New York and Pennsylvania to venture to an unfamiliar place. And the Lord told them that this place would be only temporary:

“And I consecrate unto them this land for a little season, until I, the Lord, shall provide for them otherwise, and command them to go hence;

“And the hour and the day is not given unto them, wherefore let them act upon this land as for years, and this shall turn unto them for their good” (D&C 51:16–17).

I like to picture those early Saints hearing the Lord's instructions and getting right to work. They plowed fields they didn't know they would harvest, planted trees whose fruit they might never eat, and built a beautiful temple they would ultimately have to leave. I picture them living busy, productive lives, not peering endlessly into the unknown, wondering where they would go next and when. They acted “as for years,” trusting that their work would not be in vain.

By the time they left Ohio in 1838,



The early Saints in Kirtland acted “as for years,” trusting that their work would not be in vain. As you too trust in the Lord and act “as for years,” you can make the most of every stage of your life.

the Saints had helped lay a strong foundation for the Church’s future growth. Consider what transpired during that precious and productive period:

- The Prophet Joseph Smith organized the School of the Prophets, finished his inspired translation of the Bible, and received many important revelations.
- The First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Seventy were organized.
- The Kirtland Temple was built and dedicated. There Joseph Smith and

Oliver Cowdery saw Jesus Christ and received priesthood keys from Moses, Elias, and Elijah.

- The first missionaries were sent to England.

My young adult years were an extremely valuable “little season” given to me by the Lord. During our young adult years, physical and mental energy are at their peak. We can make the most of them by determining to trust in the Lord and act “as for years.” Then these years can become a consecrated period of extraordinary productivity, growth, learning, and service.

2. A Mission Every Day

A second useful principle came from a simple realization. My mission in life was not waiting for me in the vague and distant future. It was daily and ongoing.

President Brigham Young (1801–77) explained: “There is neither man nor woman in this Church who is not on a mission. That mission will last as long as they live.”¹ In other words, my mission in life had already started. I didn’t so much need to find it as to recognize it.

I found one way to recognize it by understanding three elements that were already part of my life:

- A unique set of personal gifts.
- A unique set of personal challenges.
- Specific needs in the world that the Lord wants me to respond to.

Simply put, we fulfill our mission whenever these three elements intersect and we choose to act. Consider how this worked in the life of Joseph in the Old Testament (see Genesis 37–47).

Joseph had many gifts. He was raised in a family that had a knowledge of God, and he was an heir to the Abrahamic covenant. He had the spiritual gift of interpreting dreams.

He also had many challenges. It seems to me that some of Joseph’s challenges included a father who showed favoritism, jealous brothers, and his own lack of tact in dealing with them. In his young life he was sold into slavery in a foreign land, falsely accused of immoral behavior, and cast into prison.

But Joseph was also willing to act, using both his gifts and his challenges to respond to specific needs in his world. On several occasions, including in prison, he chose to use his spiritual gift to interpret people's dreams. This choice, in turn, opened up an opportunity to work for the pharaoh, storing food for the Egyptian people. Because he was faithful and diligent in this assignment, Joseph was able to perform a life-saving mission, rescuing many, including his own family, from starvation.

Joseph's gifts and his challenges combined to put him in a unique position to respond when famine came to the land. Because Joseph was who he was and where he was and because he chose to act faithfully and obediently, he fulfilled a unique mission in serving the Lord, the people of Egypt, and his own family.

But these three elements don't intersect just in the lives of people we read about in the pages of scripture. They intersect every day in each of our lives.

A young adult woman had a gift for writing and some personal experience with depression. When her teenage sister was dealing with a difficult situation at school, she was able to recognize that her sister was slipping into despondency. Heeding the Spirit's promptings, she wrote her sister a series of beautiful notes, expressing her love and confidence, one for each day of an especially trying two-week period. In that small

choice to meet her sister's need, this young woman was living her mission.

When this choice to heed the Spirit and to act continues day after day, week after week, and year after year, it creates a larger pattern that we will later come to recognize as the mission the Lord had for us to fulfill.

3. Be Still and Know

Years beyond my 20s now, I can finally recognize that my life has unfolded in the very way described in my patriarchal blessing many years ago. That certainly wasn't because I knew exactly what I was doing and where the future would take me. I most definitely didn't.

My life had some twists and turns and disappointments that made me wonder if it was going off track. But

as it turns out, I didn't need to worry. The Lord always knew where I was and where He wanted me to go. I kept trying my best to follow His commandments, serve Him, and listen to the Spirit. Even though I often couldn't discern it at the time, I now recognize that His hand was always guiding my life.

The young adult years are filled with crucial decisions and some inherent uncertainty and stress. But greater confidence comes when we learn to rely on the Lord's ability to bring about His purposes for our life—day by day. Then we are better able to “be still, and know that [He is] God” (Psalm 46:10). And in so doing, we experience peace. ■

NOTE

1. Brigham Young, “Remarks,” *Deseret News*, July 3, 1867, 201.



Because of his gifts, his challenges, and his faithfulness, Joseph of Egypt could fulfill a unique mission in serving the Lord and others. These same three elements intersect every day in each of our lives.

Update Your Spiritual Status

Young adults throughout the Church responded to Elder David A. Bednar's fireside address "Things as They Really Are," which he gave in May 2009 (see page 22 in this issue), by evaluating their use of computers, cell phones, and other technologies. Here, a few of them talk about the changes they made in response to the message and the blessings they received as a result.

The Need for Focus

Some technologies, like portable music players, can keep you from focusing on



what's going on around you. Elder Bednar's talk helped me

realize that as I prepare to serve a mission, I need to become more accustomed to interacting with other people. I know that I need to be less dependent on technology, even though it's fun. As a missionary I will need to focus on other people and the work I'll be doing for the Lord.

Andrew Hovey, Massachusetts, USA

Relationships Strengthened

Elder Bednar's message is one that is sometimes treated lightly or even ignored because the negative effects of technology misuse might seem trivial. Now I realize that I should

avoid anything that distracts me from being in tune with the Spirit. For example, some of the functions that my cell phone offers, such as mobile banking services, are handy and convenient. However, other functions are mostly time-consuming and can take my attention and focus from things that matter more.



I am now making more efforts to pay personal visits to my

friends and family rather than using other electronic communication. Because of this, my relationships have been strengthened. Now I have an even greater appreciation for the things that are truly important in my life.

Jayoung Lee, Seoul, Korea

A Commitment to Myself

I evaluated my use of technology and realized that perhaps some technology has become too much a part of my daily



life. I made a commitment to myself to value the time I have and to use it wisely. Instead of sitting at the computer and engaging in social networks, I'd rather spend my time reading a good book or learning a new skill that will provide learning experiences and promote growth. I try to spend more time with people to build friendships and share good laughs.

Ruth Barilea, Manila, Philippines

Technology Traps

I own a cell phone business and am an electronic engineer, so technology has always been part of my daily life. The Internet, video games, electronic media and devices—all are supposed to provide healthy entertainment. However, most of them can easily be used in unrighteous ways.

I can't imagine how our Heavenly Father feels when we fall into technology traps



and waste our time with things that do not edify. Because of

Elder Bednar's inspired words, I have made a goal to always use technology appropriately and spend my time wisely. ■

Christian Alejandro Zerlin, Managua, Nicaragua



BOUND TOGETHER THROUGH God's Word

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

What do the scriptures mean to us? How do we gain a testimony of them? How can we better understand them?

Like many other Latter-day Saint teens throughout the world, the young women in the Dahlem Ward, Berlin Germany Stake, are finding answers to these questions by meeting each morning before school to study the scriptures in seminary. Their experiences with the scriptures have deeply affected their lives, and they are ready and willing to share their feelings.

Answers from the Scriptures

One of the important experiences these young women have had with the scriptures has been to find answers to their questions through scripture study.

Sometimes when Sariah Gruse, 16, is studying the scriptures, an answer will leap out from the page, she says. "But I usually don't find that scripture again the way it stood out to me before, because it was the thoughts

and the Spirit I received along with it that really helped me."

Denise Reiner, 16, has had similar experiences. She remembers having a question, opening her scriptures, and then seeing the answer on the page she opened to. This experience impressed her, but most often, she says, "you notice that you're guided a little more, that you really do find an answer to all your questions when you read in the scriptures regularly."

Unity through the Scriptures

These young women believe that the scriptures help us to be unified as Saints in Christ's Church. "The gospel is in the scriptures," says Elizabeth Clark, 16. "We shouldn't really debate and contend about it. The principles are in there. That can help us be unified."

Sariah agrees: "The gospel is the same throughout the whole world because of the scriptures. It doesn't matter where you go in the world. You can always feel at home at church because you'll find the same

A seminary group in Berlin, Germany, shares some thoughts on the scriptures.



Lesley's Favorite Scripture

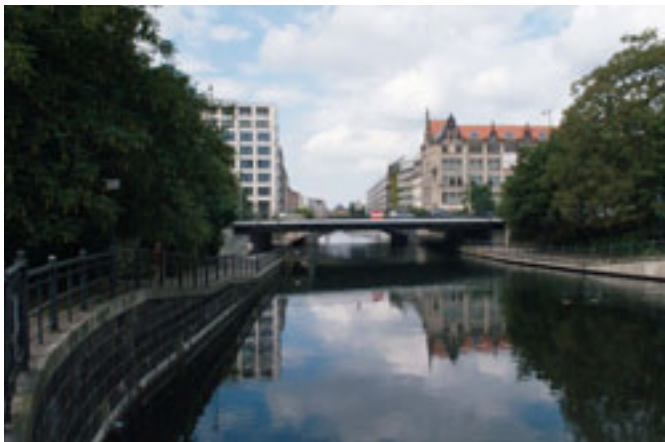
1 Corinthians 13:3–8. "I like this scripture because it describes many important attributes."



Denise's Favorite Scripture

2 Timothy 2. "It's just beautiful how Paul wrote the letter to Timothy with all of those words of comfort and shared with him all of his experiences. I think that's one of the most beautiful chapters in the scriptures."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID A. EDWARDS, EXCEPT AS NOTED;
PHOTOGRAPH OF BRANDENBURG GATE © GETTY IMAGES



Amid the bustle of Germany's capital city of Berlin, a group of seminary students has learned the power of the scriptures.



teachings and the same beliefs.”

Sarah Clark, 17, believes that the Book of Mormon is especially important “because the gospel is expressed clearly there. If we follow it and the other scriptures, it helps us to become unified and stay unified.”

This unity fosters the Spirit, says Elizabeth. “When we’re all in agreement with the gospel, then you can feel the Spirit when it’s taught. When there’s contention, you can’t feel the Spirit at all.”

Better Understanding through Seminary

When it comes to developing a better understanding of the scriptures, these young women all agree that seminary has been indispensable. “In seminary you learn a lot about the people in the scriptures and the whole history behind them,” says Denise.

“Seminary is part of my life,” says Lesley Reiner, 17. “I know that it’s important. You should study personally, and then seminary is there for you to study together.”

Sarah adds, “I always look forward to studying the scriptures every morning in seminary. My testimony has been strengthened. I think it’s a special time.”

For Sariah, seminary has become a place to share her feelings. “At first it was hard for me because my mother is the seminary teacher and I had the feeling that I couldn’t really express my thoughts,” she says. But she overcame

her worries and has found seminary to be a place of safety and support in expressing her questions, thoughts, and feelings about the gospel.

The Effect of the Scriptures

The scriptures have had a very real effect on the lives of these young women, and they have been able to apply the scriptures in various ways.

For instance, scripture study has helped them answer others’ questions as well as their own. “If you understand the scriptures and the principles in them,” says Elizabeth, “then, if someone asks you something about the gospel, you can actually explain it better because you understand it yourself. That makes it a lot easier.”

In addition, Denise has found strength and encouragement through the scriptures. “If you simply read what kind of temptations the people had back then and how they were able to overcome them, that strengthens you today,” she says. “And when you read in the scriptures about all of the blessings of the gospel, then you know what you get in return for faithfulness, and that’s also good to know.”

Because of the effect the scriptures have had in their lives, these young women now see themselves on a path leading to even greater understanding and testimony. And they feel bound together in unity to Latter-day Saints everywhere through the word of God. ■



Sariah’s Favorite Scripture

D&C 14:7. “I like this scripture because it emphasizes that the greatest gift we can receive from Heavenly Father is eternal life.”



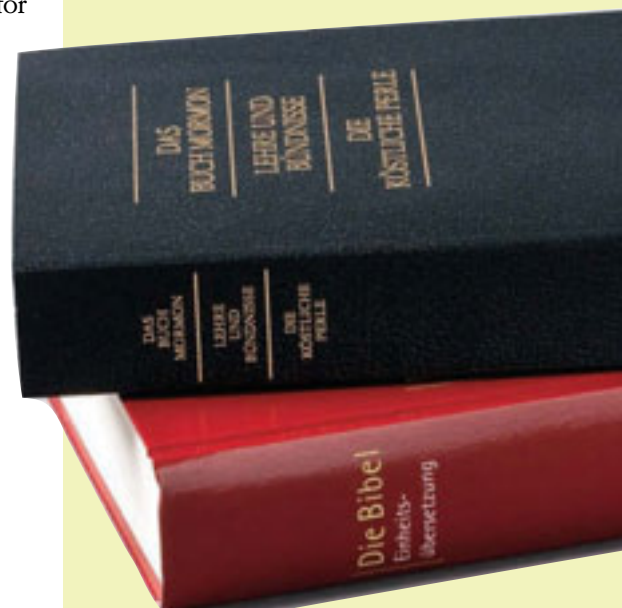
Sarah’s Favorite Scripture

1 Corinthians 10:13. “That is really a beautiful promise, because then I always know that I can withstand any temptations.”



Elizabeth’s Favorite Scripture

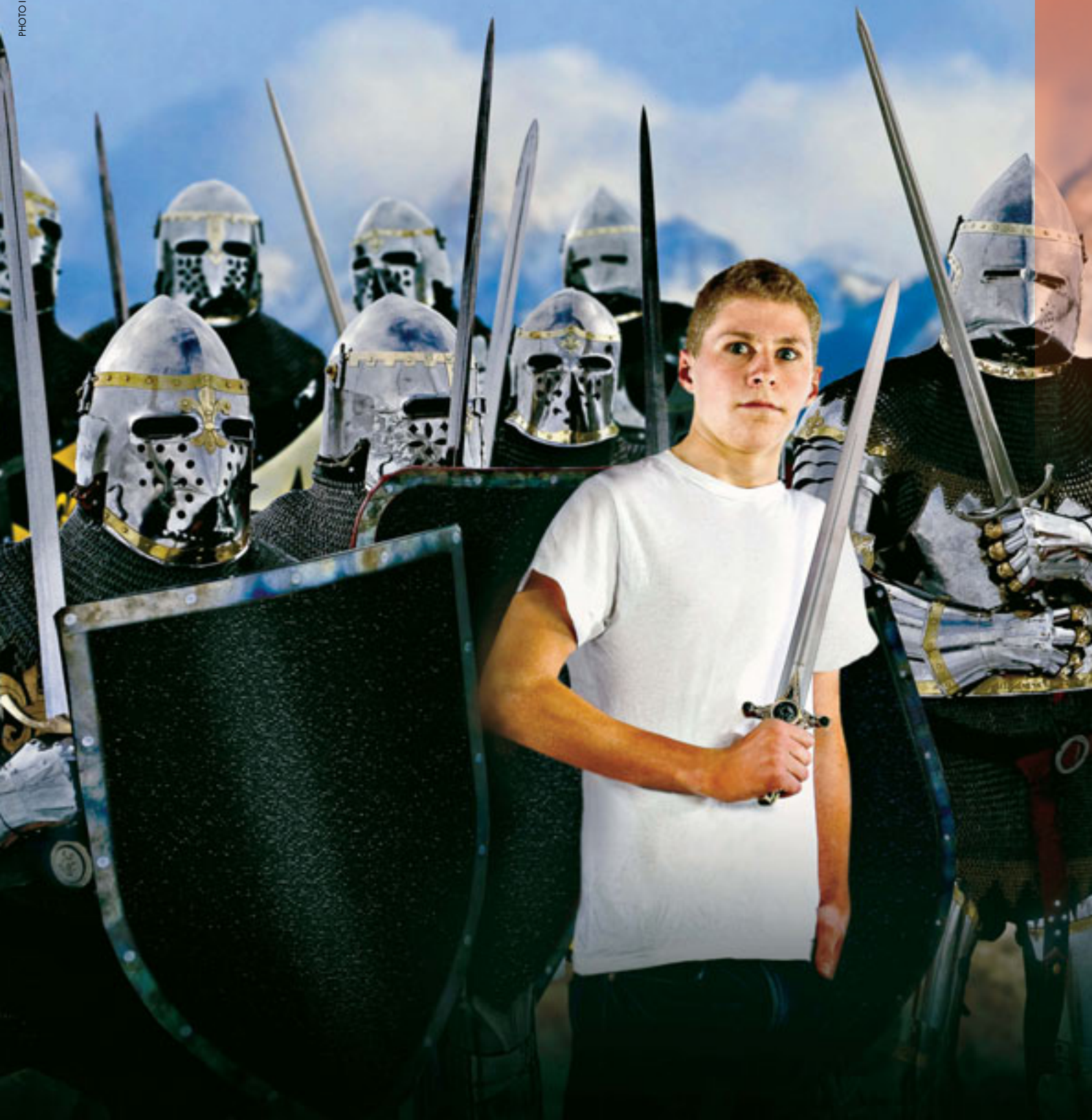
D&C 84:88. “It says that the Lord is always there for us and that we are protected. It’s comforting, and that’s why I like this scripture so much.”



READY OR NOT

The battle is on. The enemy won't wait. Now is the time to put on the whole armor of God. (See Ephesians 6:11–18.)

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT CASEY





To CHEAT or

NOT to CHEAT

By Shery Ann de la Cruz

As a 17-year-old nursing student, I found my second year of college a challenging one. (In the Philippines we finish high school at age 16.) I found the endless quizzes, research projects, and reading assignments to be exhausting. I felt as though I always had dark circles under my eyes, since I normally got little sleep. Despite the heavy workload, I always tried to remember that “sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven.”¹

I knew that if I worked hard, I would have a better future. Whenever I wanted to give up and go to bed without studying, I imagined how sad and defeated I would feel the next day if I did poorly on a quiz or assignment. This was enough motivation to keep me awake so I could study.

Many of my classmates were upset when they got a low score on a quiz. However, they did not want to work and study hard. As a result, students would often “help” one another by sharing answers during quizzes or tests, allowing others to look at their papers when the professor wasn’t watching. I was often tempted to do the same, but I never dared. I have read countless times in Church magazines that members of the Church should have high standards, which means no cheating. So I studied hard and resisted the temptation, even though this sometimes meant getting lower grades than my classmates, since they had each other’s help.

On one particular day I had classes from 7:00 in the morning until 7:00 in the evening, and I had a quiz scheduled in each class. I studied 10 pages for my first quiz alone. “How will I get through all this?” I wondered. Thankfully, I did well on my first quiz. During lunch I studied for my next one. When I went to class and started

the quiz, I realized that I knew the answers to every question but one. “How can this be?” I thought. “I’ve studied hard for this quiz. I should know this answer!”

As I tapped my pen furiously on my chair, it occurred to me that it would take just a moment to turn my head, give my hair a flip, and dart my eyes toward my classmate’s answer. “I could do this just once,” I thought,

I couldn’t remember the answer to one question on the quiz. It would be so easy to dart my eyes toward my classmate’s answer.

“and I’ll ace the quiz. Just once won’t hurt. Besides, it’s so unfair for me. I study hard, yet I get lower grades than my classmates because I don’t cheat!” Still, I felt uncomfortable. I fidgeted in my chair, trying to make a choice: to cheat or not to cheat.

Then a voice inside me said, “No, Shery! Cheating is wrong, and you know it!” Suddenly I realized that even if I got a perfect score on the quiz, I wouldn’t feel good about my score if I cheated. My Heavenly Father was counting on me to make the right choice—this choice was the real test.

Just then a scripture I’d learned in Sunday School came to my mind:

“How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). I knew that Heavenly Father had helped me through countless challenges, including many quizzes and school assignments. How could I forget all He had done for me and choose to sin?

To this day I can’t remember the result of that particular quiz. Whether I came up with the answer or not, I can’t recall. But I have always remembered that I felt good for making the right choice.

Now as a junior I still face the same mountain of schoolwork and the same temptations; however, choosing not to cheat isn’t difficult because I’ve made that choice already, at a time when the temptation was hard to resist. I’ve learned that the joy and satisfaction of getting high grades is greater when I work hard and earn it. Wickedness, indeed, never was happiness (see Alma 41:10). True happiness is found in keeping the commandments and following the counsel of our prophet and other Church leaders. I truly believe the words “Keep the commandments. In this there is safety and peace.”² ■

NOTES

1. “Praise to the Man,” *Hymns*, no. 27.
2. “Keep the Commandments,” *Hymns*, no. 303.

MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

1 Nephi 3:7

This is my favorite scripture because it helps me remember that the Lord helps us gain confidence, and if we follow His path, He will bless us and be at our side. ■

Livio de Rosa, Italy



MY TESTIMONY ON SHARING THE GOSPEL

Sharing the gospel with others is a great and marvelous work. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ will guide us if we are faithful and sincere in sharing the gospel. Don't hesitate to share what we know is true; don't feel that our friends or parents will get angry if we share the gospel with them. Remember, we as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are responsible to share the truth with those souls who are now lost and trying to find the iron rod. ■

Rose Ann Polintan,
Philippines



ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL MANN

LEARNING ABOUT THE GOSPEL

As a young girl I was brought up by good and wonderful parents in a humble home with my four siblings. Our parents loved us, and we loved them too. They wanted the best for all of us, even though they couldn't afford everything we wanted. They worked hard so we could be happy.

When I was older, I moved away to attend a Church school in my country, Kiribati. My dad advised me to get a good

education so I could have a good job and help support my family. After attending the Church school for a little while, I was baptized.

One of the first things I did as a member of the Church was read the Book of Mormon. Reading it helped strengthen my testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I learned that if the Book of Mormon is the word of God, then Joseph Smith is a true prophet of God and The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true Church upon the earth. I shared my beliefs with my family, and a few years later my mother, brother, and sister were baptized.

The gospel of Jesus Christ has changed my life and given me the desire to serve God and help those who are not of our faith. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to serve a mission and work to bring souls unto God. ■

Neeteti T. Raabaua, Kiribati

I WASN'T NERVOUS ANYMORE

We were going to hand out pamphlets to find missionary referrals for our stake youth conference activity. I had been reading *For the Strength of Youth*. When the activity began, I tossed it back on the table where I had found it. But the thought occurred to me that I should take it with me. So I picked it up and put it in my scriptures.

We were all nervous about talking to strangers about the gospel, but when we stopped to talk to a woman hanging laundry in her yard, she was very friendly and took one of our pamphlets. During the conversation she told us about her concerns for her family. One son in particular was

struggling with drugs and other problems. We did our best to console her, then moved on.

A few minutes later I opened my scriptures. When I saw my *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet, I remembered what the woman had said about her son and felt like I should go back. I wasn't nervous anymore.

We found the woman still outside. I told her I had something she might like. I explained about the standards



our youth follow and gave her the pamphlet to read with her son. I could tell it made her happy. She called her son outside, and we were able to set up an appointment for both of them with the missionaries.

I felt like a missionary! It was great to have the opportunity to teach and maybe help this young man. I know it was the Holy Ghost who told me to take that pamphlet with me. ■

Boris Antúnez, Chile



Long-Distance Family Home Evening

By Luis Felipe Viera-Mesones

As a family we consistently hold family home evening; however, my father often travels for extended periods of time for his employment. Sometimes that means he is out of town when it's time for family home evening.

Then two years ago, when my father got his own laptop, one of my siblings wondered, "Why not have our family home evenings with Dad via the Internet?"

Since that time, when our father is away during family home evening, we simply agree on a time, and we connect. We can see and hear him, and he can see and hear us. The

Internet and the computer have allowed our father to participate in our home evenings.

We do not have to depart from our established schedule: if it is Dad's turn to give the lesson, for example, he gives it. One of our family's traditions is to evaluate our personal goals each week; this is never interrupted anymore. And another important thing: our reading of the Book of Mormon as a family is now continual, since we no longer have excuses not to read.

One of my siblings asked, "Why not have our family home evenings with Dad via the Internet?"

My father also uses the Internet to keep in touch with us in other ways. When he is away from our home in Peru, he connects and finds out what we're doing and where we are. And when it is time for interviews or family councils, these are carried out at the appointed time, even when he's traveling.

There are many good and useful technological advances that we often don't put to good use because we fear their misuse and the harm they can cause us. However, if we use such technology wisely and humbly, it can be of great help.

We feel very thankful in our family for the Internet because it has become a great tool for removing the obstacles that might otherwise keep our family apart. ■

You Already Know

*I believed the Church was true,
but when did I receive that witness?*

By Elizabeth Stitt

One day at school, a classmate and I somehow entered into the topic of religion. My classmate became a little antagonistic and started to criticize what I believed.

She looked me in the face and said, “You believe in your Church only because your parents raised you in it. Otherwise, you wouldn’t believe.”

I don’t remember what I said to her, but I kept thinking about her comment and wondering why she would say that. I had been raised in the Church, and, really, I had never questioned the Church’s teachings or doctrines. Ever since I was little, I felt the Church was true. Before I was even baptized, our family read the Book of Mormon together, and I knew it was true. I didn’t just believe; I knew it and had no doubts. But I couldn’t define a particular moment when I had received

that witness. For some time that bothered me. I wanted to have a particular experience when I would pray and immediately the answer would come rushing to me. It never happened.

But what I could define was a moment when my testimony was confirmed. After my first year of high school, I went with some other youth on a tour to Church history sites. When we arrived at the Sacred Grove, our tour guide invited us to seek a personal confirmation that what had happened there was true: that God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith and initiated the Restoration. I found a quiet place in the grove and read the account of the First Vision. Then I knelt down and prayed. I already knew the First Vision had happened and that Joseph

Smith was a prophet. But I asked anyway. I finished my prayer, and nothing happened. No grand feeling, no vision, no angels. Nothing.

I found a rock and sat down and opened my patriarchal blessing and started to read. My blessing mentioned the Restoration of the gospel, and in my head the words repeated: “You already know. You already know.”

If I could go back to that moment when my friend challenged what I believed, I don’t know how I would describe how I know the Church is true. But I wish I had told her that while my parents had taught me what they knew to be true, I had to find that answer for myself. And I did.

I didn’t need to go to the Sacred Grove to know the Church was true. I didn’t need any great experience to know the Church was true. I just needed to be reminded, “You already know.” ■

For more on this topic, see Elder Neil L. Andersen’s October 2008 general conference talk, “You Know Enough,” at conference.lds.org.

Questions & Answers

“I’ve prayed and studied the scriptures for a long time, but I never seem to get an answer to my questions. Why isn’t the Lord blessing me with a testimony?”

Some people describe dramatic, even miraculous, experiences through which they gained their testimonies. But more often a testimony comes gradually in a quiet way. If you haven’t received a powerful spiritual witness, don’t be discouraged. You’ve already taken the first step toward gaining a testimony by desiring to believe (see Alma 32:27). Your Heavenly Father loves you and wants to bless you with a testimony—but in His own time and in His own way (see D&C 88:68).

Not everyone receives a testimony in the same way. Some feel “a burning in the bosom” (see D&C 9:8). Others feel the Holy Ghost speak truths in their minds and hearts (see D&C 8:2). Your witness will also come through the still, small voice of the Spirit. Ask Heavenly Father to help you recognize these gentle promptings.

A powerful way to gain a testimony is to take opportunities to share the gospel with others. As you teach the truths of the gospel, the Spirit can bear witness to you, as well as to others, that what you say is true.

Continue to pray with faith and sincerity, waiting patiently for the Lord’s answer. As you keep the commandments, you will be worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost, the source of testimony.

Pray Always



I understand what you are going through. I have struggled through difficult times in which my testimony has been shaken. The way I was able to get through it—and gain the strengthened testimony that I have today—was with constant scripture study and prayer. I read my scriptures every opportunity I got. I prayed morning and night, straining to feel the Spirit. Yet it all seemed to be in vain. But one day, when I got home from school, I knelt by my bed. I don’t know how long I prayed, but I did receive an answer. Just pray always. Study the scriptures. You will find the answer you’ve been looking for.

Christopher W., 15, Nevada, USA

Be Sincere



Heavenly Father knows your heart even before you ask; He is simply waiting for you to bring your questions before Him in sincere prayer. I have a personal testimony that He answers prayers. You might receive an immediate answer, or it might take a little longer, but I truly know He will answer. Be patient and continue in your faithfulness.

Sharon F., 20, Lagos, Nigeria

Listen to the Holy Ghost



Pray for guidance in seeking personal wisdom. Heavenly Father hears and answers all our prayers. Answers come through the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Ask in faith, be humble, keep the commandments, partake of the sacrament worthily, take time to ponder the scriptures, and patiently seek God’s will.

Ana Mae R., 20, Davao Oriental, Philippines

Bear Your Testimony

Church leaders have taught that in addition to asking, we ought to share our testimonies of what we want to know, even though we have not yet received a firm answer. I prayed for a testimony many times and did not receive the witness I was seeking until I shared my testimony of the gospel and the Restoration. Even though I had not yet obtained a firm testimony, I received that clear, soft,

powerful confirmation of the Holy Ghost. I know that if you share your testimony, the Lord will strengthen it.

Aura O., 18, Huila, Colombia

Fast and Pray



Prayer and fasting will prepare the spiritual soil in which your testimony will grow, and your testimony will be a strength and

anchor to help you resist every trial and temptation. A testimony is achieved through consistency; our diligence helps us feel the truth. Many times we must fast as Alma did (see Alma 5:45–46). Your testimony may be small at first, but as you continue praying and searching the scriptures, you will begin to see the fruits of your faith.

Elder Zubieta, 20, Colombia Cali Mission

Seek Divine Revelation

As a new convert I had the opportunity to perform some baptisms for my ancestors. As I stood in the water to perform this sacred ordinance, I had a strong feeling that baptism for the dead is divine. Since then I have been able to build my testimony of baptisms for the dead. In my understanding, *testimony* is defined as divine revelation to the person of faith. To gain a testimony, we must pray, study our scriptures, and obey the teachings of Jesus Christ. At the root of every testimony must be a righteous life; otherwise, the Spirit cannot bear witness of the work of the Lord in our day.

Mariam N., 19, Accra, Ghana

Never Give Up

Gaining a testimony may take time. There are many things you can do to gain an immovable testimony. Just never give up on asking Heavenly Father for answers to your prayers.

Wilben G., 18, Benguet, Philippines

Have Patience

Sometimes our prayers are not answered immediately. Answers may take time and will come according to the desires of one's heart. One of the qualities of a Saint is patience. Continue to pray, study the scriptures, keep the commandments, and listen to the testimonies of others. Also pay strict attention to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The answer may come when you least expect it.

Chioma O., 15, Abia, Nigeria

Be Still

Heavenly Father is always willing to answer us; however, something within us can sometimes keep us from receiving

the answers we seek. I think the best way to gain a testimony is to be still, spiritually as well as physically. That way, when we pray and read the scriptures, we will be ready to receive.

Monica N., 19, Lima, Peru



A FERVENT TESTIMONY

"We cannot merely ask in prayer for a testimony and expect it to be given immediately to us. . . .

"Search and ponder upon the truths you are learning about gospel principles. Think about them. Test them with further prayer. Relate them to what you know and feel. All the truths you will learn can eventually fit together into a fervent, undoubting testimony."

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Importance of Receiving a Personal Testimony," *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 20.

NEXT QUESTION

"How can I tell if my trials are meant to help me become better or if they are Heavenly Father's way of warning me that I am headed down the wrong path?"

Send your answer by July 15, 2010, to:

Liahona, Questions & Answers 7/10
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA
Or e-mail: liahona@ldschurch.org

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter: (1) full name, (2) birth date, (3) ward or branch, (4) stake or district, (5) your written permission, and, if you are under age 18, your parent's written permission (e-mail is acceptable) to publish your response and photograph.

How Are

Cell phones, e-mails, text messages—there are so many great ways to talk to your friends and your family. Do you know when it's appropriate to use them?

1 You just received a birthday gift from your grandma. Your mom reminds you to send her a thank-you note, but you want to send her an e-mail instead. What do you do?

- a. Send Grandma an e-mail.
- b. Send her a handwritten note.

2 Mary e-mails you to invite you to her birthday party. You want to send the e-mail message to your best friend, Sarah. What should you do?

- a. Send the e-mail to Sarah so she knows about the party too.
- b. Keep the e-mail to yourself.

3 It is time for family home evening. You want to keep playing your computer game until the lesson starts. What do you do?

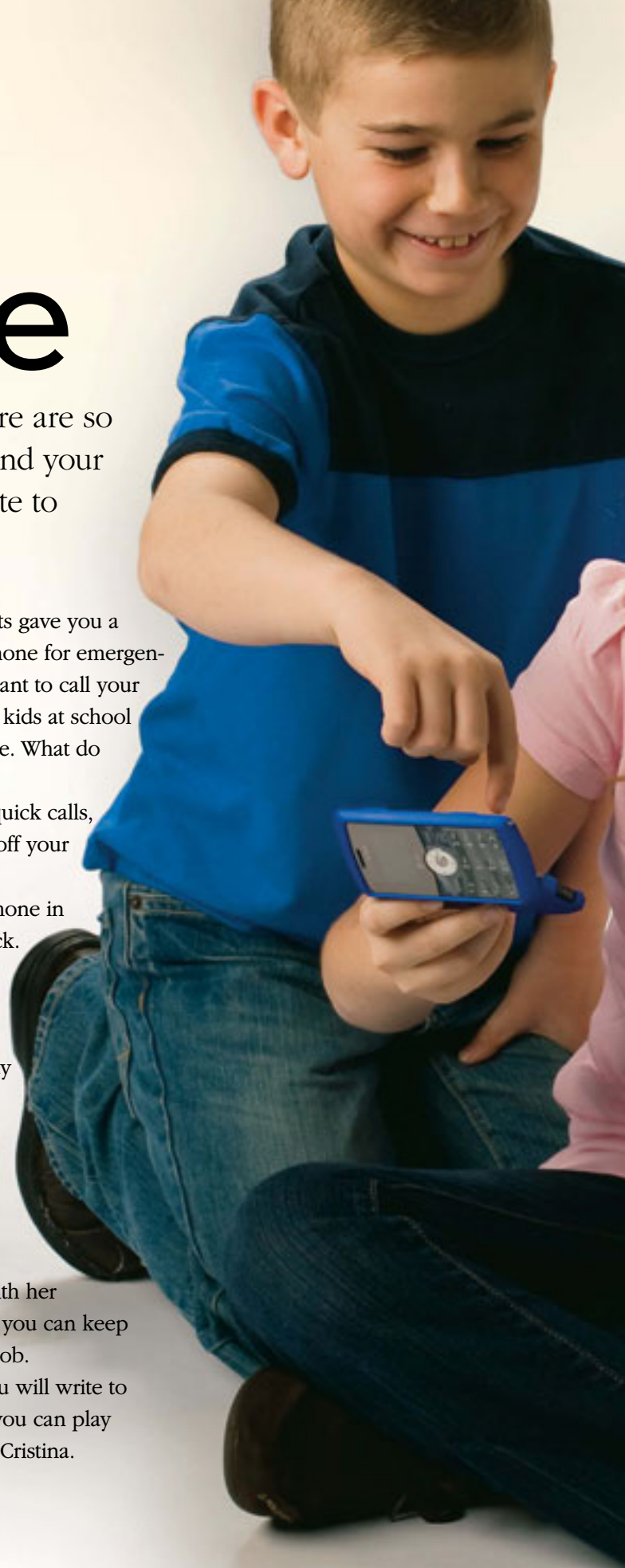
- a. Finish your game while your family sings the opening song.
- b. Turn off the computer, and sing with your family.

4 Your parents gave you a new cell phone for emergencies. You want to call your friend so the other kids at school can see your phone. What do you do?

- a. Make some quick calls, just to show off your new phone.
- b. Keep your phone in your backpack.

5 Your friend Cristina wants to play football with you, but you are instant messaging your friend Jacob. What do you do?

- a. Tell Cristina you'll play with her tomorrow so you can keep writing to Jacob.
- b. Tell Jacob you will write to him later so you can play football with Cristina.



Your E-Manners?

1 E-mail is a fast way to communicate, but taking the time to send a thank-you note will show your grandma how much you love her and appreciate her gift. You could also call her to tell her thank you.

2 Sending one friend's e-mail to another friend is like telling a secret. If your friend sends you a message that is meant just for you, keep that message

to yourself. Then Sarah's feelings won't be hurt if she wasn't invited to the party too.

3 Computer games are fun, but family home evening is important. Join in the opening song, and save the computer game for later.

4 If your parents bought you a cell phone for emergencies, you shouldn't use it to call friends. Also, other kids might feel bad if you show it off.

5 It's great to talk to friends who aren't with you, but it's better to spend time with friends in person. Try limiting your computer time so you can spend time with friends face-to-face. ■

Did you answer *a* to any of the questions? If so, check out these ideas for improving your e-manners.



Skipping to a

By Megan Withers

On a warm evening in Kingston, Jamaica, you might find Samuel (age 10) and Giordayne (age 7) outside skipping with their two brothers. As they skip, they sing to the beat:

*1, 2, 3, Aunty Lulu,
4, 5, 6, Aunty Lulu,
7, 8, 9, Aunty Lulu,
10, Aunty Lulu,
10, Aunty Lulu.*



Samuel and Giordayne are two happy children who are good at many things. They enjoy playing sports, studying hard at school, helping around the house, and being an example to those around them with their big smiles and cheerful attitudes.

School Days

In Jamaica, schools have Boy Day and Girl Day every year. On Girl Day, boys don't go to school. Instead, mothers may go to school with their daughters. They have a talent show, a spelling contest, and other fun activities.

Giordayne was chosen from her class to compete in the spelling contest, and she won. "My favorite word to spell is *environment*," Giordayne says.

On Boy Day, fathers may attend school with their sons. Samuel entered the writing contest. He wrote an essay explaining how he shows respect to himself and others. He also won first place.

Jamaican Beat

A Visit to the Temple

Samuel looks forward to the day when he can attend the temple. For many families in Jamaica, it's a big sacrifice to visit the temple because there isn't a temple there. It is expensive to go to the United States to attend the temple.

Fortunately, Samuel and Giordayne's family was able to go. Samuel says, "My favorite family vacation was when we went to New York City to visit my aunt. We saw the Manhattan Temple. It is the only temple I have ever seen."

The whole family was very excited when the Panama City Panama Temple opened in 2008 because it's not as hard to go there. Once or twice a year, the members in Jamaica travel to the Panama City Temple. "I am excited to go to the temple when I turn 12," Samuel says.



An Answer to Prayer

One time their father's company was going to be shut down. Giordayne encouraged her family to ask Heavenly Father for help. "Giordayne is so diligent in her prayers. She always reminds our family of the things we need to pray for," her mother says. The family's prayers were answered when their dad got a new job. "I knew that if we prayed, everything would be OK," Giordayne says confidently.

Two Great Teachers

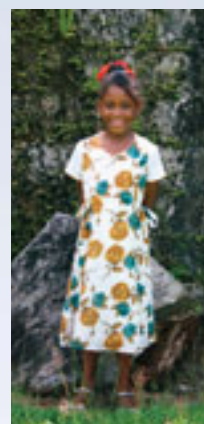
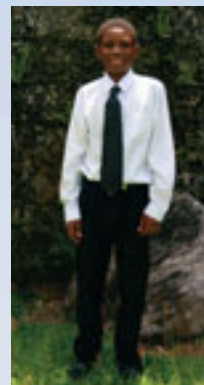
Samuel dreams of becoming a teacher when he grows up. He wants to teach his favorite subjects: mathematics and science. Giordayne, who looks up to her older brother, wants to be a teacher too.

Samuel and Giordayne are already teachers now by being great examples to their friends. There are only a few children at their school who are members of the Church.

"When someone is doing something bad, such as fighting, I tell them to do what's right," Samuel says.

Samuel and Giordayne enjoy sharing their testimonies, and their Primary president knows she can rely on them to give a talk if the speaker is unable to attend. On Sunday mornings they wake up extra early to prepare a talk just in case they are needed to speak.

Samuel and Giordayne try to faithfully serve the Lord in everything they do. Giordayne says, "I know that if I have faith, I shall not perish, but I will live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ again." ■



BE ON THE LORD'S SIDE

By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in
the First Presidency



When I was little, I lived in Zwickau, Germany. My grandmother had a friend with white, flowing hair. Her name was Sister Ewig, and she invited my grandmother to church. When our family went there, we saw many children. All of us were very impressed by the music, especially the singing. One song, “Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam,” really impressed me.¹ I felt very close to Jesus when I sang it. I knew that He wanted me to be a sunbeam for Him. I still love that song—and the testimony that it gave me of the Savior.

My whole family—except me, because I was only six years old—were baptized members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints. When I was eight, I was baptized in a public swimming pool by my father.

When I was 11, my family had to leave East Germany. We moved to Frankfurt, West Germany. I attended the Frankfurt Branch, which was not as big as the one in Zwickau. The Frankfurt meetinghouse was small, and we had classes in the basement. The missionaries taught us important gospel principles.

One missionary, Elder Stringham, impressed me very much with his lessons on the Pearl of Great Price, especially where Moses is being taught that he is a son of God (see Moses 1:3–4). Elder Stringham also taught me the scripture that

says, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31). This gave me comfort and courage, because at that time the future looked bleak in Germany. The city of Frankfurt was in ruins with bombed-out buildings. That teaching has stayed with me throughout my life. It taught me that I need to be on the Lord’s side. I cannot afford not to be on the Lord’s side.

I challenge you children to follow the words of the prophets. When you do, you will find the answers to your questions, whether you are 6, 9, 11, 19, or, like me, 69 years old! ■

From “Friend to Friend,” *Liahona*, Apr. 1999, F2–F4; *Friend*, June 1998, 6–7.

NOTE

1. “Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam,” *Children’s Songbook*, 60.

SPECIAL MISSIONARIES

Like President Uchtdorf, you are a member of the Church today because someone special taught someone in your family about the gospel. Ask your mother or father to tell you who was the first member of the Church in your family, and see if you can find out who taught the earliest members of the Church in your family. Fill in as many of the answers below as you can:

The first member of the Church in my family:

When he or she joined the Church:

Where he or she joined the Church:

How he or she found out about the Church and gained a testimony:

Who taught him or her about the gospel:



BE A SUNBEAM FOR JESUS

When President Uchtdorf first went to church, he heard the song "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam." You can be a sunbeam in your family by doing kind deeds and leaving cheery thank-you notes:

1. Trace the sun shape onto a piece of thin paper, and cut it out.
2. Write the name of a family member on one side of the sun, and then color it in your favorite sunny colors.
3. On the other side, write a note thanking a family member for something he or she does for you.
4. Do a secret kind deed for that person, such as making a bed or folding clothes, and leave a sunshine note.

The **Holy Ghost** Testifies of the **Truth** of All Things

By Sandra Tanner and Cristina Franco

In the Book of Mormon we read about Lehi and his family. Heavenly Father led them to a new home in a choice land. Lehi received a marvelous gift from God: a round ball with two spindles that “pointed the way whither [they] should go” (1 Nephi 16:10). This gift was called the Liahona. Nephi said the Liahona “did work according to [our] faith and diligence and heed”

(1 Nephi 16:28). Lehi’s family learned to follow the directions of the Liahona.

We receive a marvelous gift when we are baptized and confirmed. This is the gift of the Holy Ghost. The gift of the Holy Ghost is like the Liahona. We can learn to follow the Holy Ghost. If we follow His promptings, we can return to live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ again.

JUNE 2010 SCRIPTURE JOURNAL

Read Moroni 10:5.

Pray to Heavenly Father to know that the Holy Ghost will help you.

Memorize Moroni 10:5.

Choose one of these activities, or create your own:

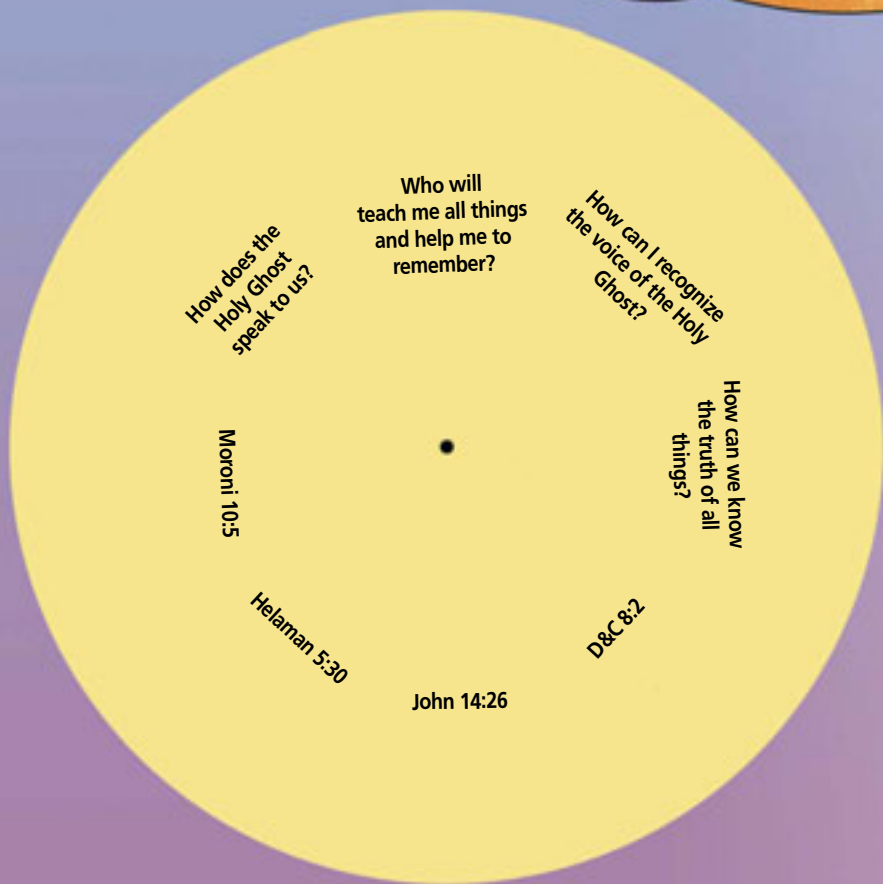
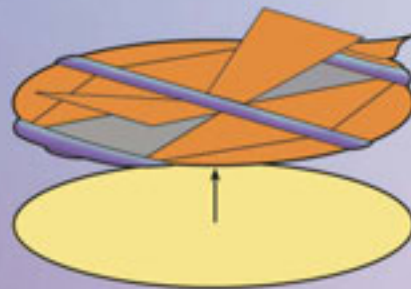
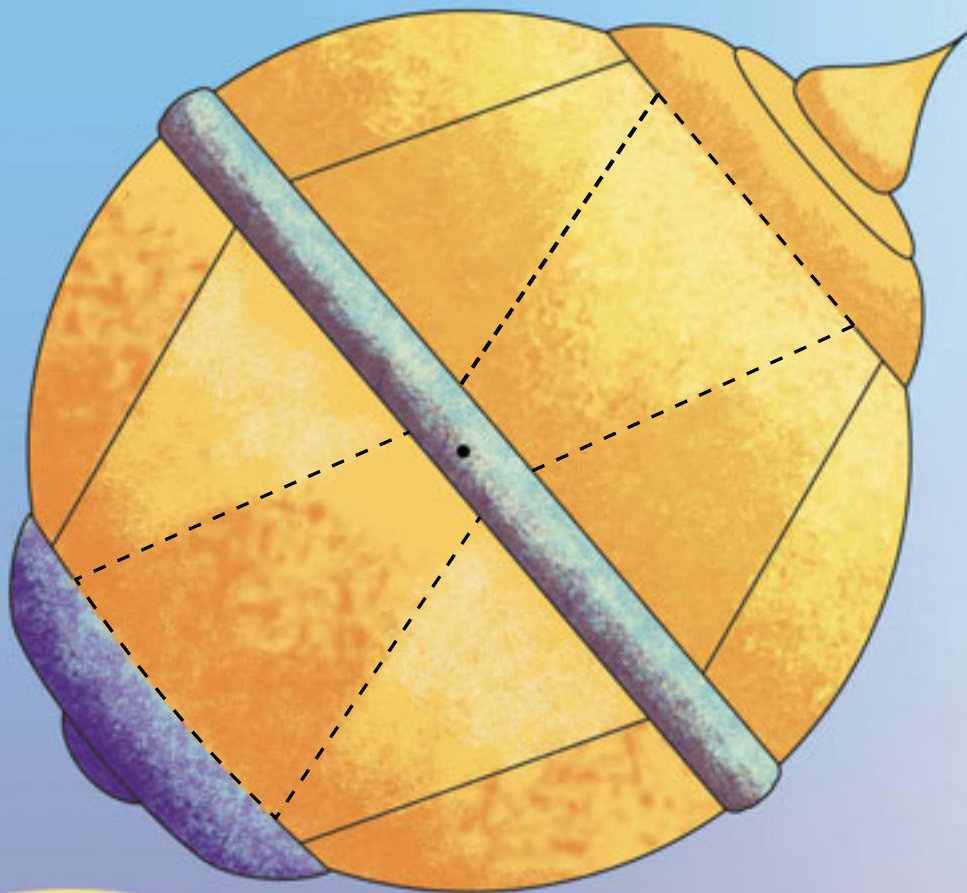
- Help someone else memorize Moroni 10:5.
- Remove the Liahona activity on page 65, and mount it on heavy paper. Cut out the circles and the two sections within the broken lines. Attach the circles with a metal fastener. Read the question in the cutout area,

and find its answer in the scripture reference in the opposite window. You can write your answers in your scripture journal.

- Write in your journal about some times you have felt the Holy Ghost. Recognizing His help in the past will help you listen to and follow His promptings in the future.
- Talk to your parents, teachers, or friends about times they have been led by the Holy Ghost.

Write in your journal or draw a picture about what you have done. How does what you have done help you understand Moroni 10:5? ■





Our Page



Génesis M., age 7, Costa Rica

One afternoon my younger sister Camilia and I were playing while my dad was mowing the lawn. We decided to help him. Even though it was very hot, we had fun working together. When we finished, we went with my dad to return the lawnmower to our elderly neighbor. When we got to her door, my dad offered to mow her lawn too. My sister and I decided to help too. While he mowed, we picked up the grass and put it in a bag. When we finished, the neighbor said, "Thank you so much, Sofia and Camilia, for cleaning my yard. You are very sweet and caring girls." Then she gave us some candy. We went home very happy, not just because we had candy but because we had served our neighbor.

Sofia Carolina P., age 9, Argentina



The Primary children in the Chennai Second Branch, Bangalore India District, and their leaders prepare for their sacrament meeting presentation.



Ngoc Huyen D., age 7, from Cambodia, likes the story of Captain Moroni and the title of liberty (see Alma 46). She has six brothers and sisters, and she likes to play with balloons.

When I was younger, we would go out to play at recess. When it was time to come in, we had to line up. Each time we did, I sang "I Love to See the Temple" (*Children's Songbook*, 95). One day a girl next to me said, "That song you're singing is very pretty. Where is it from?"

I answered, "It comes from Primary. I belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I have faith." After that she became my best friend!

Noémi D., age 12, France



BOTTOM LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD M. ROWNEY. CENTER: ILLUSTRATION BY ANA LONE; RIGHT: ILLUSTRATION OF TEMPLE BY PHYLLIS LUCH, © 1988 IRI



Tuan Anh P., age 11, Cambodia

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

Liahona, Our Page
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

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

Shadows on the Wall

“Fear not, little children, for you are mine, and I have overcome the world” (D&C 50:41).

By Patricia R. Jones

Based on a true story

Mom!” Desiree cried. “I’m scared!” Mom appeared in Desiree’s doorway and turned on the bedroom light. Desiree squinted into the corner where the scary shadows had been. Nothing was there.

“I thought I saw a wolf in that corner,” Desiree said.

Mom wrapped her arms around Desiree, making her feel snug and safe. “When the light is on, we can see that there’s really nothing there,” Mom said.

When Desiree felt better, Mom turned out the light and went back to bed. Desiree

closed her eyes and tried to sleep. Then she opened one eye and looked at the wall. The shadows were still there.

“Mom!” she cried again.

This time Mom didn’t smile when she turned on the light. She looked tired. She asked, “Desiree, do you remember what you were watching on television earlier?”

Desiree nodded. She had watched a program about wolves.

Mom sat on Desiree’s bed. “What we watch can really influence us—our thoughts, our actions, and even our feelings.”





“But the show I watched about wolves wasn’t bad,” Desiree said.

“What we watch on

television can affect our thoughts, even if it isn’t a bad program. I think that what you watched tonight played a part in how you are feeling,” Mom explained.

Desiree thought about what Mom said. She had never noticed being affected by what she watched before.

“Wow,” Desiree said. “I’ll have to be more careful in deciding what to watch.”

Mom smiled. “That’s a good idea, Desiree.”

“But what about tonight? I still feel scared.”

“I have an idea,” Mom said. She took a picture of Jesus Christ off Desiree’s desk and pulled it out of its wooden frame. Then she neatly taped it to the wall where Desiree had seen the scary shadows. “He will always be there for you, Desiree. Remember that when you are afraid.”

As Mom turned off the light, a warm feeling filled Desiree’s heart. She knew what Mom had said was true. Jesus would always watch over her, help her, and quiet her fears. ■



Fear not; only believe. Believe in God, the Father of us all. . . . Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

President Gordon B.

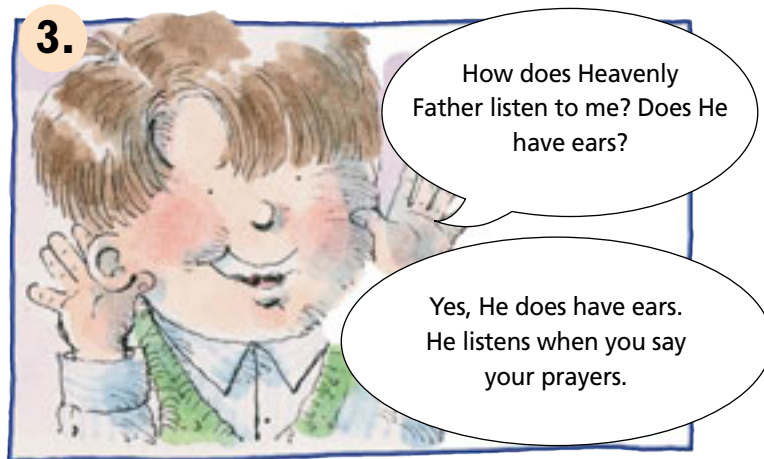
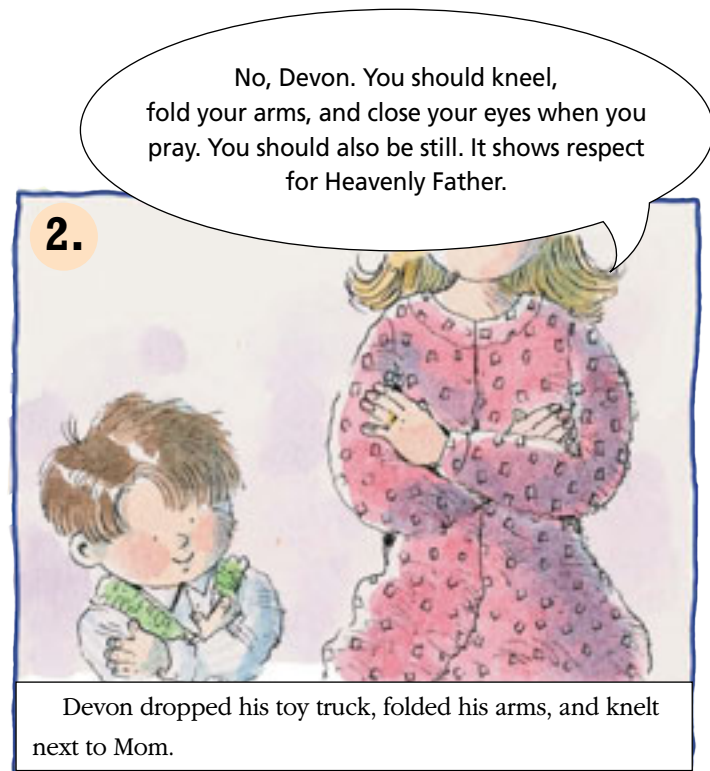
Hinckley (1910–2008), “Fear Not; Only Believe,” *New Era*, Jan. 2000, 6.

He Is **Listening**

"The Lord hath heard the prayers of his people" (Mosiah 27:14).

By Allison Graham England

Based on a true story



5.

Devon, how do you feel when you share?

Happy.

And how do you feel when you do something wrong—like throw your toys?

I feel bad.

The Holy Ghost helps us have these feelings to let us know right and wrong. He also helps us have ideas about what things we can do to be happier.

7.

Just because you do not hear Heavenly Father talking to you, that does not mean that He isn't listening. He sends you warm, good feelings to let you know He is there.

There are other ways we can know Heavenly Father is listening. Remember how He helped Grandma feel better after she got a priesthood blessing?

6.

Yes, I'm glad Grandma felt better.

Devon felt happy.

Now I know, Mom. Heavenly Father does listen to me.

8.



HELPS FOR PARENTS

- Find a quiet time and place to read "He Is Listening" with your child. Share an experience about when Heavenly Father answered one of your prayers. Share how you felt.
- Like Devon's mom in "He Is Listening," ask your child questions that will help him or her learn to recognize how the Holy Ghost feels. If possible, use recent experiences your child has been a part of.
- After your child completes this activity, use it to help your child practice good prayer manners the next time he or she prays.

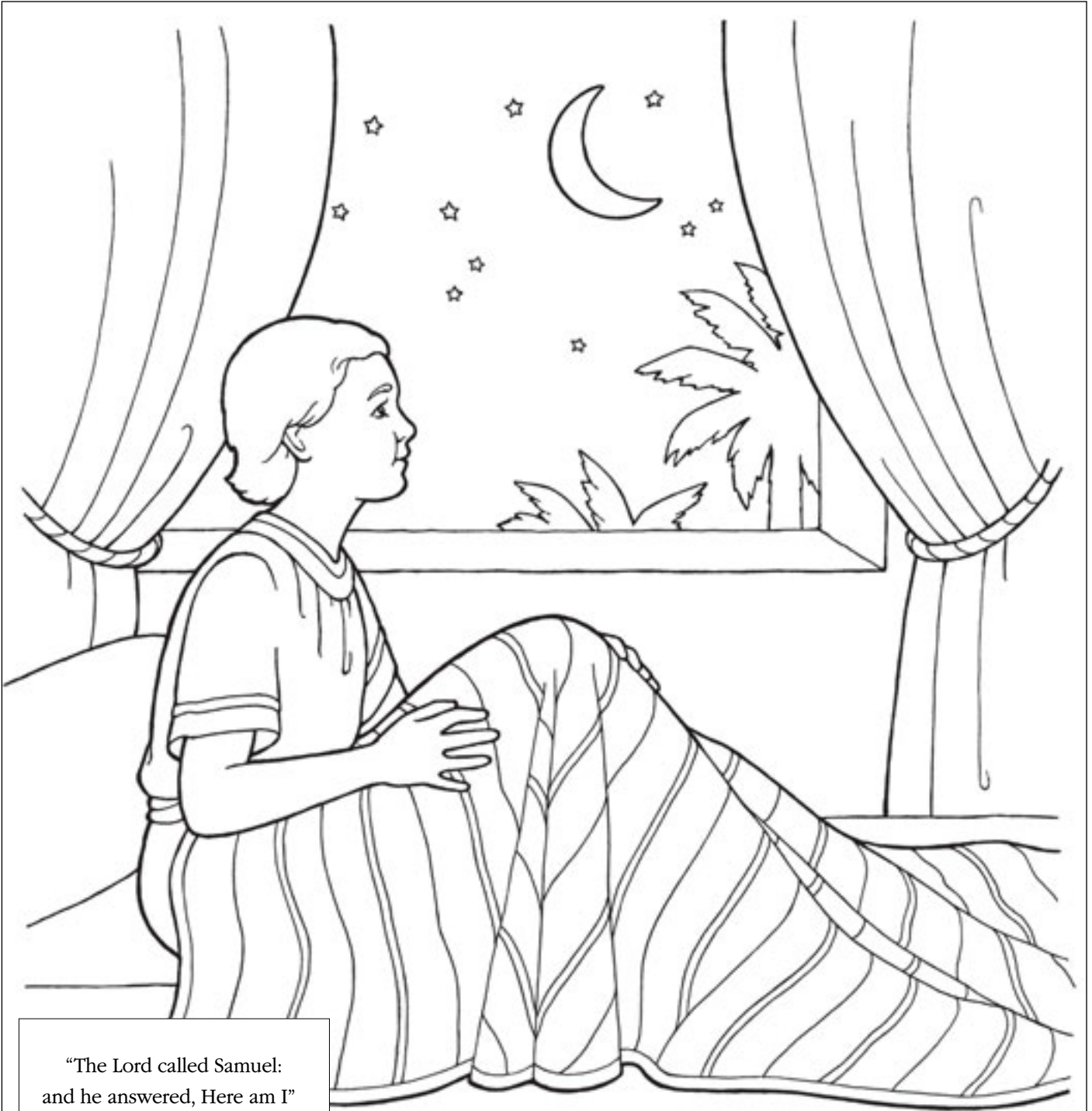


PREPARING TO PRAY

Devon needs to get ready to pray. Look at the pictures. If he is getting ready to pray, circle the picture. If he is doing something that does not help him get ready to pray, draw an X on the picture.



The **Lord** Calls to **Samuel**



“The Lord called Samuel:
and he answered, Here am I”
(1 Samuel 3:4).

Spirit Unites Team, Quorum Members

By Richard M. Romney

Church Magazines

One of the great stories coming out of Africa this summer is about football. But it's not about the World Cup.

Top football teams from all over the world are playing in South Africa this month, hoping to win the World Cup. Teammates will depend on each other, their coaches, and their fans to get them through to the finals. Among players and fans from each country, team spirit is so palpable you can feel it in the air.

But no team's members will be more loyal to each other, their coaches, and their fans than the priests quorum of the Kagiso Ward, Soweto South Africa Stake, even though they won't be playing for the World Cup. A little over a year ago, five of these young men were introduced to the Church by their

football coach, who is himself a recent convert. Now they are at the heart of another "team"—their priests quorum—and working with another "coach"—their bishop—as they live the gospel day by day and prepare to serve as full-time missionaries.

Coach Solomon Was Wise

Like many people in South Africa, 29-year-old Solomon Eliya Tumane loves football. He spends tireless hours each week coaching the Hurricanes Football Club. He loves his players and rejoices in their successes. They love and respect him in return. So when Coach Solomon joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, his players were curious.

"He would come to practice straight from his institute class," says Siyabulela Manyakanyaka, 17, who goes by "McDonald." "We could see the scriptures and Church magazines in his bag, so we started asking questions, and to answer, he would read to us," says Thapelo Benjamin Sesinyi, 17.

"I was eager to teach these young ones because I love them so much," Coach Solomon says. "I want them to go in the right path. I told one of them, 'You would do well if you read the scriptures,' so they all started reading the scriptures. They enjoyed it, so then I taught them about prayer. Then one day they surprised me. I got to practice early, and I was taking a nap when they woke me and said, 'Coach, we need to visit your church.' That was a day I will never forget, because I knew then that they were on the right path."

With Approval

But the coach wouldn't go further without parental approval. He went to each player's home, one at a time, to ask if it was all right to invite the players to church. The parents agreed. "We came to church three weeks in a row," Thapelo



Teammates Siyabulela "McDonald" Manyakanyaka, Thapelo Sesinyi, Emmanuel Pebe, and Lawrence Tsetse joined the Church in part because of the example of their coach, Solomon Tumane (center).

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY

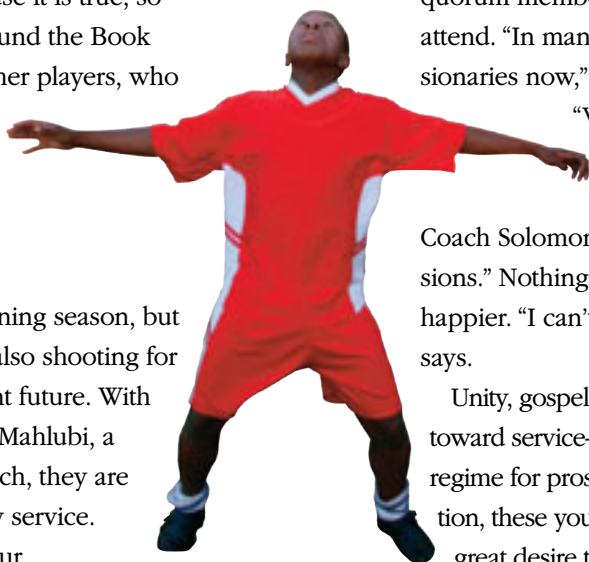
remembers. “We wanted to learn more and more.” So the coach again asked parents for permission, this time for the players to study with the full-time missionaries. Again the parents agreed.

“The missionaries gave us each a copy of the Book of Mormon,” McDonald says. “They told us to read it and pray about it because it is true, so we did. I prayed and read and found the Book of Mormon to be true.” So did other players, who were then baptized and confirmed. Five of the team members are now Latter-day Saints.

Gospel Goals

Most teams set goals for a winning season, but these five young Hurricanes are also shooting for another goal in the not-too-distant future. With the guidance of Bishop Bongani Mahlubi, a man they consider a spiritual coach, they are preparing for full-time missionary service.

“They are a great strength in our ward,” the bishop says. “And they are part of that great priesthood team of Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood holders all over the world. These young men do everything together—they walk to school together, play



football together, go to seminary together, and serve in the priesthood together. If I call one young man to ask if he can help, I get all five.” McDonald says the priests quorum also studies regularly from *Preach My Gospel*, and Thapelo says that in addition to inviting friends to church, quorum members seek out those who no longer attend. “In many ways, we are learning to be missionaries now,” he says.

“We often hear from these young men in testimony meeting,” the bishop says. “They often promise Coach Solomon that they will go on full-time missions.” Nothing would make their football coach happier. “I can’t wait for them to serve,” Solomon says.

Unity, gospel knowledge, and an orientation toward service—those are all part of a solid training regime for prospective missionaries. And in addition, these young men have already developed a great desire to work together to do good. Just like the football teams competing for the World Cup, they depend on each other, on their coaches, and on their fans (including ward members, families, and friends) to get them through to their “championship.” With that kind of team spirit, their goals will be achieved. ■

A Coach’s Conversion

Like many other young adults, football coach Solomon Eliya Tumane had questions about religion. “I wanted to know about God and why He asks us to pray, and about Jesus Christ and why He died for us. I was confused, but I was studying the scriptures, particularly the Old Testament.

“Then one day I was coming from work, and I saw two missionaries. I asked them the question about Jesus Christ. As they talked about Him, I could tell they loved Him. They

invited me to come to church, and when I did, I felt something inside telling me that this was what I had been looking for all those years.

“The missionaries taught me to pray and that it is important because it is our way to talk to Heavenly Father and to find the truth. I accepted what the missionaries taught me. I knew it was the true gospel, especially when we would read the scriptures together and pray about them.” ■

Survivors Helping Survivors

By Ryan Kunz

Church Magazines

Even after Tropical Storm Ketsana flooded the Philippines' capital, Manila, and the surrounding areas in late September 2009, the devastation wasn't over. It also wasn't over after Typhoon Parma streaked through the northern regions of the Philippines just eight days later. The destruction wasn't over even after Parma reversed course and made landfall again just days later as a tropical storm, wreaking further damage.

However, Saints around the Philippines, even those struggling to recover from earlier storms, didn't wait for Parma's third and final destructive pass to begin helping those in need.

Donating What Was Saved

Parañaque City, near Manila, was hit by Tropical Storm Ketsana in late September. At the height of the storm, the bishop of one of the four local wards floated across neck-deep floodwaters on a Styrofoam cooler lid to help evacuate three families. The next day sacrament meeting was canceled; however, many members of the affected ward, though dealing with the effects of the storm themselves, met at the meetinghouse in pajamas, shorts, and jackets, carrying food and clothes to be given to those in need. In about two hours, all the families in the ward were visited, checked on, and helped.

Then, only two nights after many of them had been wading through the wreckage of their own villages, members from the Parañaque area gathered at their local meetinghouse and assembled 26 bags of clothing, which they donated to others, all sorted and individually packaged.



PHOTOGRAPH BY NATE LEISHMAN

Vehicles lie toppled or half-buried where typhoon-caused flooding left them in Pangasinan, Philippines. Members of the Church reached out to help those in need, even when they themselves had been affected.

"It was one of the most memorable home evenings for many families in our ward," said Bishop Franco Advincula.

A sister from a family in need called the bishop to ask when they could give their contributions. "I was stunned, and I couldn't find the right words," said Bishop Advincula. "However, I was inspired that I should not deny this good sister the opportunity to help."

Helping Again and Again

When Ketsana hit Metro Manila, the Alaminos Philippines District president, Porferio Balute Jr., said he was impressed to ask the members in his district to help their neighbors to the south. However, many members in the Alaminos district were still recovering from Typhoon Emong, which hit four months earlier in May 2009. It was the costliest typhoon to ever hit that western Philippines city. Many of the members made their living fishing or farming, and their livelihoods had been destroyed by the ensuing floods.

Though he was afraid to ask too much of those who were still struggling to get back on their feet, President Balute asked anyway.

That afternoon the members arrived at the meetinghouse with 21 sacks of clothing, a bag of food, and Philippines \$1,500.

When Parma struck a week later, this time to the north, the members from the Alaminos district responded again and gathered more clothing, food, and money. Some of them even volunteered their time to go and distribute the goods directly.

“We just wanted to help,” said President Balute. “We never realized that we would gain so much. Our faith increased, our love for our fellowmen increased, our testimonies were strengthened, and our understanding of the Savior’s love and His Atonement was deepened.”

Selflessness and Optimism

Elder Kendall Ayres, who serves with his wife in the Perpetual Education Fund program, was called to oversee and organize the distribution of supplies. He described the unity of the Filipino Saints in the relief effort.

“It has been a wonder to watch as those who have lost the most are finding much of their relief in turning out and providing help to others who have been equally hard hit,” said Elder Ayres. “I comprehend the mechanics of ‘losing your life to find it’ in a way that I never have before. For me it is no longer theology—it is actuality. There are far more requests to participate than we have needs to fill. The outpouring of goods and efforts is almost beyond comprehension; it has been a revelation.”

“Filipinos generally are very resilient,” said Elder Benson Misalucha, an Area Seventy in the Philippines Area. Rather than looking at the glass as being half full or half empty, “we have been looking at the glass and saying, ‘Well, it’s a great glass, even if there’s no water.’” ■

Missionaries Support **Family History**

Since the Church released the new FamilySearch program last year, many Church members have tried the new system for the first time.

To support those new to the program or with questions about family history work in general, the Church has provided various resources, including Worldwide FamilySearch Support.

The FamilySearch Support program began in 2005 with a few volunteers offering help with family history work. The program has grown to include nearly 1,200 volunteer support missionaries positioned throughout the world.

Support missionaries are located in 34 different countries, offering assistance on a wide variety of family history questions in dozens of languages and multiple time zones.

Sister Cecilia Dimalaluan has served as a support missionary in the Philippines since August 2008 and says she loves the opportunity to share her knowledge of family history with others. One of the first Filipinos trained as a support missionary in the Philippines, she speaks Cebuano, English, and Tagalog. She helps members and non-members from surrounding areas, including India, Malaysia,

Micronesia, Mongolia, and Singapore, learn basic family history principles.

Support missionaries are traditionally called to serve for 30 months. All support missionaries serve from their homes or family history centers in their areas, where they receive program training and day-to-day support. They respond to questions by phone or e-mail, and because they are spread out around the world, someone is available 24 hours a day, every day, with the exception of Sunday mornings.

“I love being able to serve English-speaking patrons from all around the world, helping them to do their family history,” said Sister Connie Cheney of Pleasant Grove, Utah, USA, who is currently serving her second mission with Worldwide Support.

The easiest way to contact support missionaries is through the Internet, by visiting contact.familysearch.org or via e-mail at support@familysearch.org.

The FamilySearch Web site provides toll-free telephone numbers for contacting support missionaries in different regions of the world.

In areas where the Internet is not accessible, it is best to contact family history missionaries in the area, talk to a ward or

branch family history consultant, or visit a local family history center.

*Article by Lauren Allen,
Church Magazines ■*

Interested in Serving?

Anyone interested in serving as a family history support missionary can find more information online at contact.familysearch.org, by e-mail at support@familysearch.org, or by

asking local priesthood leaders.

Missionaries should have access to a personal computer and high-speed Internet and have some experience in family history work. ■

Chinese and Korean Scriptures Available Online

The Church has launched two new online versions of the LDS scriptures: the Korean version in October 2009 and the Chinese (traditional characters) version in December. The Korean version can be found at scriptures.lds.org/ko,

and the Chinese version can be found at scriptures.lds.org/ch.

The Korean and Chinese scripture sites contain the text of the triple combination (the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of

Great Price) and Guide to the Scriptures, which includes a number of helpful study aids and an alphabetical listing of gospel topics. Japanese, Cebuano, and Tagalog versions of the scriptures are scheduled to be published online in 2010. ■

TEMPLE NEWS

New Temple Announced in Utah

President Thomas S. Monson announced in January a new temple to be built in Payson, Utah, USA. The temple will help meet membership growth in the area and ease usage of the Provo Utah Temple, one of the busiest in the Church. The Payson Temple will be the 15th in Utah. It brings the total number of temples already in operation or in the planning and construction phases to 152.

Temple Dedicated in Arizona

An open house for The Gila Valley Arizona Temple took place from April 23, 2010, through May 15, 2010. A cultural celebration was held on May 22, 2010. Dedication of the temple followed on May 23, 2010, with three dedicatory sessions. The temple was first announced in April 2008. It is the third temple in the state of Arizona in the United States.

Cebu Temple to Be Dedicated

The Cebu City Philippines Temple will be open to the public from May 21, 2010, through June 5, 2010. A cultural celebration will follow on June 12. The dedication will be held on June 13, with three sessions broadcast throughout the Philippines. The temple will open the next day. The temple, announced on April 18, 2006, is the second in the Philippines and the 133rd operating temple in the world. ■



COMMENT

A Great Year to Come

I love the new look of the *Liahona*. I like the way the articles are arranged by age, especially the youth section, which helps me greatly. I like the new sections, especially the More Online section. I am looking forward to a great year!

Roland T., age 17, Pangasinan, Philippines

I Felt the Spirit

Today I felt the Spirit strongly as I read the new *Liahona*. I am the Young Women president, and as I saw the new format, I saw the great concern Heavenly Father has for the youth, as they now have a section dedicated just to them. I know these changes will benefit my home, my young women, and members throughout the world.

Shanin Palma Sanhueza, Chile

The Best of All

Years ago I switched all of my Church magazine subscriptions to the *Liahona*. It gave me the best of all the magazines and a broader worldwide perspective. However, its layout was sometimes confusing.

Now with the new *Liahona*, all my concerns with the layout are resolved, and the content is better focused and more substantive. Now, more than ever, the *Liahona* will continue to be part of my personal gospel study.

Larry D. Kump, West Virginia, USA ■

FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

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

“Built upon the Rock,” p. 12: After sharing the article, consider discussing what it means that “this Church is built upon the rock of Christ, upon the principle of immediate and continuous revelation.” Find examples from general conference of continuing revelation.

“Things as They Really Are,” p. 22: Consider reading the article in advance and prayerfully selecting parts that apply to the needs of your family. You may want to use this article for two family home evening lessons.

“Your Mission in Life Is Now,” p. 42: Ask a family member to define *intersection*. Consider reading the section in the article “A Mission Every Day.” Then ask family members to share an experience where they or others have seen a need and were able to help fill it.

“To Cheat or Not to Cheat,” p. 50: After sharing this story with your family, emphasize the statement, “Choosing not to cheat isn’t difficult because I’ve made that choice already.” Consider discussing the question, How can deciding in advance make it easier to do what is right?

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Building a Ship

With deep admiration I have studied the experiences of the prophet Nephi, especially admiring the perseverance and discipline with which he built a ship. I



have come to appreciate that there was a wise purpose for the Lord to command him to do so.

When President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) visited Guatemala in 1997, his counsel that especially penetrated my heart was the simple encouragement to hold family home evening. Moved by our prophet’s words, my wife, four children, and I met and set a goal that we would “build a ship called family home evening.” We knew the effort it would require but also realized that the Lord had a wise purpose for asking us to do so.

Years and hundreds of home evenings later, our family home evening ship has grown with our family. And we have experienced just what President Hinckley promised. From these small gatherings—held regularly and with perseverance—something wonderful has come. Love for parents has grown. Love between brothers and sisters has increased. And our love for Heavenly Father and the Savior has been magnified. Appreciation has come into our hearts for what is simple and good. (See Gordon B. Hinckley, “Some Lessons I Learned as a Boy,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 54.)

Rony Saúl García Méndez, Guatemala ■

TRANSPARENT ADVERSITY

By Felipe Urbina

A bee and a bus ride helped me see that there is a way out of trouble—but often we must trust someone who has the vision to see.

On the bus to work one morning, I took a window seat. Before long I became aware of a little bee trying to get itself out of a fix. It was trapped between the two glass panels of the window, and no matter how hard it tried, it couldn't find its way out. Encased in a transparent prison, it could see freedom but couldn't find an escape route. Perhaps frightened, it beat its wings furiously and desperately threw itself against the glass.

I've always been a person who didn't like to see anyone or anything hurt. So after observing the bee for some time, I began to try to get it out of its difficulty. But lacking trust and understanding of my desire to help, it didn't take advantage of the assistance I offered. In fact, all it did was continue to throw itself against the window. Finally I began to get a bit irritated.

But then I started to think about how sometimes people find themselves in similar situations. We get into predicaments—some not of our own making. We also make mistakes, even serious ones. Like the bee, we may feel imprisoned by these adversities. Unfortunately, even though the Lord knows what we need in order to escape our trials,



ILLUSTRATION BY JORGE COCCO

we often don't turn to Him—or to those He has called to lead us—for help in our times of need. We give no heed to the whisperings of the Spirit and try to face our challenges on our own, rather than relying on those who have greater vision.

As Latter-day Saints, we actually do know how to overcome adversity: we have the scriptures, prayer, and the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Our leaders have been called by the Lord and are ready and willing to help.

Before I got to my stop and after the poor little bee had suffered much, it managed to get out of its predicament. From it I learned that we also can overcome trials—suffering less if we turn to and trust in Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, to whom all adversity is transparent. ■



WORDS OF CHRIST

Christ and the Palsied Man,
by J. Kirk Richards

When the people of Capernaum gathered to see the Savior, it was so crowded that a man who was paralyzed had to be lowered through the roof.

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

Then Jesus said to the doubting scribes, "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven

thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

"I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

"And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God" (Mark 2:5, 9–12).



While the Internet can disconnect us from reality (see “Things as They Really Are,” page 22), used appropriately, it can connect us to helpful and uplifting sites. On official Church Web sites we can study the gospel, listen to hymns, learn about self-reliance, and research our family history.

See “Positive Uses of the Internet,” page 18.

