

Liahona

**Priesthood Power Firmly
Fixed in Families, p. 28**

**Centers for Young Adults:
A Place to Gather, Learn,
and Make Friends, p. 42**

Do I Know Enough? p. 48

**Melanie Was a True
Friend, p. 60**





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Virtue, by James Christensen

“Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and . . . the Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion” (D&C 121:45–46).

President Thomas S. Monson said of virtue, “Great courage will be required as you remain chaste and virtuous amid the accepted thinking of the times” (“May You Have Courage,” Liahona and Ensign, May 2009, 125).

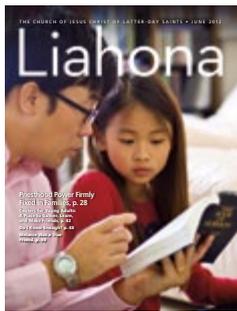


Liahona, June 2012

MESSAGES

- 4 First Presidency Message: Called of God and Sustained by the People**
By President Henry B. Eyring
- 7 Visiting Teaching Message: Visiting Teaching—a Sacred Assignment**

ON THE COVER
 Front: Photo illustration by Craig Dimond.
 Back: *Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood*,
 by Walter Rane © IRI.



FEATURE ARTICLES

- 13 The Joy of Sabbath Day Observance**
By Elder Marcos A. Aidukaitis
Because we never missed attending church while on vacation, something wonderful happened.
- 20 Acting On Promptings**
Do you recognize the Spirit's influence in your life?
- 28 The Honor and Order of the Priesthood**
By President Boyd K. Packer
An Apostle's teachings on and testimony of the holy priesthood.

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 Small and Simple Things**
- 10 What We Believe: Fasting Strengthens Us Spiritually and Temporally**

- 12 Serving in the Church: The Potential of Youth-Led Service**
By Norman C. Hill
- 16 Gospel Classics: Agency and Inspiration**
By Elder Bruce R. McConkie
- 24 Our Homes, Our Families: Counseling Together in Marriage**
By Randy Keyes
- 38 Latter-day Saint Voices**
- 74 News of the Church**
- 79 Family Home Evening Ideas**
- 80 Until We Meet Again: A Voice of Thunder, a Voice of Silence**
By Kristin Boyce



42

42 Gathering in a Unity of the Faith

By Stephanie J. Burns

Centers for young adults have become places of gathering—to socialize, to experience unity, and to learn and share the gospel.



See if you can find the Liahona hidden in this issue. Hint: Finding it will be hard work.



56

34 Your Aaronic Priesthood Duties

By Paul VanDenBerghe

What are the responsibilities of deacons, teachers, and priests?

46 Questions and Answers

Sometimes I feel overwhelmed when I think about all the things I need to do to live the gospel. Where do I start?

48 You Know Enough

By Elder Neil L. Andersen

If you feel that your spiritual knowledge is limited, you might know more than you realize.

50 Time-Out for a Mission

By Elyse Alexandria Holmes

At age 18, William Hopoate was offered a contract to play rugby professionally. He had a decision to make.

53 From the Mission Field: The Miracle of Spiritual Healing

By Elizabeth Stitt

54 Poster: Humbly Kneeling

55 Line upon Line: Doctrine and Covenants 135:3

56 Where Will My Choices Lead?

By Adam C. Olson

Her past choices had led her away. But new choices brought Karina back.

58 A Better Example

By Shaneen Cloward

A painful experience taught me to be more willing to listen to my Church leaders.



63

60 A True Friend

By Sarah Chow

True friends help each other keep the commandments.

62 Our Page

63 The Blessings of Hard Work

By Elder Per G. Malm

Honest physical work is one way to do what is right.

64 Bringing Primary Home: I Choose the Right by Living Gospel Principles

66 A Playground for Carly

By Chad E. Phares

Carly is good at helping others, and some of her friends decided to help her too.

68 The Little League Lesson

By Lindsay Stevens

Lindsay learns to cheer on her little brother.

70 For Young Children

81 Book of Mormon Scripture Figures

International magazine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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For subscriptions and prices outside the United States and Canada, go to store.lds.org or contact your local Church distribution center or ward or branch leader.

Submit manuscripts and queries online at liahona.lds.org; by e-mail to liahona@ldschurch.org; or by mail to *Liahona*, Rm. 2420, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA.

The *Liahona* (a Book of Mormon term meaning "compass" or "director") is published in Albanian, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cambodian, Cebuano, Chinese, Chinese (simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Fijian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kiribati, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Malagasy, Marshallese, Mongolian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Tahitian, Thai, Tongan, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese. (Frequency varies by language.)

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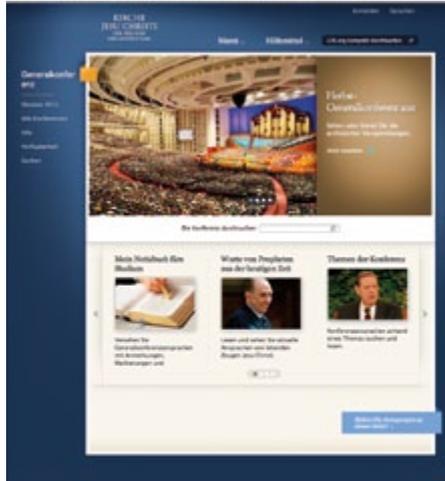
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For Readers in the United States and Canada:

June 2012 Vol. 36 No. 6. LIAHONA (USPS 311-480) English (ISSN 1080-9554) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150. USA subscription price is \$10.00 per year; Canada, \$12.00 plus applicable taxes. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. Sixty days' notice required for change of address. Include address label from a recent issue; old and new address must be included. Send USA and Canadian subscriptions to Salt Lake Distribution Center at address below. Subscription help line: 1-800-537-5971. Credit card orders (American Express, Discover, MasterCard, Visa) may be taken by phone or at store.lds.org. (Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431)

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Salt Lake Distribution Center, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368.

More Online Liahona.lds.org



FOR YOUTH

If you liked Elder Neil L. Andersen's article on page 48, you can hear the whole talk at conference.lds.org. Look up the October 2008 general conference.

FOR CHILDREN

Read about Carly (page 66) and see her play on the new playground at liahona.lds.org.

TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

Numbers represent the first page of the article.

- Agency**, 16, 56
- Blessings**, 70, 72
- Book of Mormon**, 81
- Church leaders**, 4, 28, 58
- Councils**, 24
- Faith**, 48, 70
- Family**, 68
- Fasting**, 10
- Friendship**, 60, 66
- Holy Ghost**, 16, 20, 80
- Inspiration**, 16, 20, 38, 39, 41
- Love**, 66, 68
- Marriage**, 24
- Missionary work**, 40, 50, 53
- Obedience**, 13, 56, 58, 60
- Prayer**, 54
- Priesthood**, 28, 34, 70
- Priorities**, 46, 50, 56
- Repentance**, 56
- Sabbath**, 13
- Service**, 12, 66
- Smith, Joseph**, 54, 55
- Sustaining**, 4
- Testimony**, 48
- Tithing**, 64, 73
- Unity**, 42
- Visiting teaching**, 7
- Word of Wisdom**, 60
- Work**, 63
- Youth**, 12

IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at languages.lds.org.

**By President
Henry B. Eyring**
First Counselor in the
First Presidency



Called of God

AND SUSTAINED BY THE PEOPLE

As members of the Church, we are invited often to sustain people in callings to serve. Years ago an 18-year-old student showed me what it means to sustain the Lord's servants. I am still blessed by his humble example.

He had just begun his first year in college. He was baptized less than a year before he left home to begin his studies at a large university. There I served as his bishop.

As the school year began, I had a brief interview with him in the bishop's office. I remember little of that first conversation except that he spoke of his challenges in a new place, but I will never forget our second conversation.

He asked to see me in my office. I was surprised when he said, "Could we pray together, and may I be voice?" I was about to say that I had already prayed and expected that he had as well. Instead I agreed.

He began his prayer with a testimony that he knew the bishop was called of God. He asked God to tell me what he should do in a matter of great spiritual consequence. The young man told God he was sure the bishop already knew his needs and would be given the counsel he needed to hear.

As he spoke, the specific dangers he would face came to my mind. The counsel was simple but given in great clarity: pray always, obey the commandments, and have no fear.

That young man, one year in the Church, taught by example what God can do with a leader as he is sustained

by the faith and prayers of those he is called to lead. That young man demonstrated for me the power of the law of common consent in the Church (see D&C 26:2). Even though the Lord calls His servants by revelation, they can function only after being sustained by those they are called to serve.

By our sustaining vote, we make solemn promises. We promise to pray for the Lord's servants and that He will lead and strengthen them (see D&C 93:51). We pledge that we will look for and expect to feel inspiration from God in their counsel and whenever they act in their calling (see D&C 1:38).

That promise will need to be renewed in our hearts frequently. Your Sunday School teacher will try to teach by the Spirit, but just as you might do, your teacher may make mistakes in front of the class. You, however, can decide to listen and watch for the moments when you can feel inspiration come. In time you will notice fewer mistakes and more frequent evidence that God is sustaining that teacher.

As we raise a hand to sustain a person, we commit to work for whatever purpose of the Lord that person is called to accomplish. When our children were small, my wife was called to teach the little children in our ward. I not only raised my hand to sustain her, but I also prayed for her and then asked permission to help her. The lessons I received of appreciation for what women do and of the Lord's



love for children still bless my family and my life.

I spoke recently with that young man who sustained his bishop years ago. I learned that the Lord and the people had sustained him in his call as a missionary, as a stake president, and as a father. He said as our conversation ended, “I still pray for you every day.”

We can determine to pray daily for someone called by God to serve us. We can thank someone who has blessed us by his or her service. We can decide to step forward when someone we have sustained asks for volunteers.¹

Those who uphold the Lord’s servants in His kingdom will be sustained by His matchless power. We all need that blessing. ■

NOTE

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 211–12.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

After sharing the message, consider reading the following quote: “The Lord will make you an instrument in His hands if you are humble, faithful, and diligent. . . . You will receive added strength when you are sustained by the congregation and set apart” (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 20). Have the family gather around a heavy object and ask one person to try to lift it. Adding one more person at a time, invite other family members to help lift the object. Discuss what happens when everyone helps. Consider emphasizing President Eyring’s counsel about practical ways we can sustain others in their callings.

YOUTH

Thanks to My Sunday School Teacher

Name withheld

My Sunday School class isn't always reverent. I love listening to the lesson every week, but sometimes it seems as though others in my class do not. Often they talk to each other or play games on electronic devices while our teacher is trying to teach us. Sadly, I sometimes find myself part of the problem.

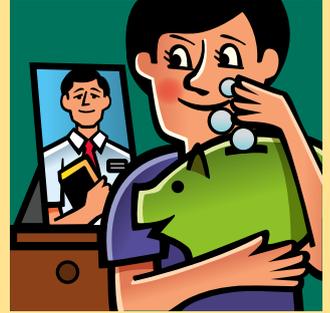
One week we were worse than usual, and by the end of class, our teacher was reduced to tears because nobody would listen to her lesson. As we walked out of the classroom, I felt bad for her.

The next Sunday our teacher explained that she had prayed a lot that week, seeking for guidance, and it occurred to her that she needed to show us a Church film. She began the movie, which was about the life of Jesus Christ and the miracles He performed.

As I thought about the film that evening, I felt something different. Suddenly I realized that I was feeling the Spirit, more so than I ever had before. Immediately I decided that I wanted to make changes in my life to be more like the Savior, and I realized the experience in Sunday School that day had greatly strengthened my testimony. I am so thankful for my Sunday School teacher and everything she does for our class every week. ■



CHILDREN

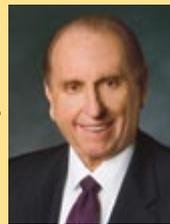


Sustaining Means Helping

President Eyring said that when we raise our hands to sustain people, we promise to help them do what they have been called to do.

Which of the children above are sustaining a leader or teacher?

- • • Here are some of the people we sustain:
- prophet, bishopric or branch presidency, ward
- or branch mission leader, Primary teacher,
- Primary leaders.
- Write down or discuss with your parents
- something you can do to sustain these people.



Prayerfully study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life.

Visiting Teaching— a Sacred Assignment

As visiting teachers, we have an important spiritual mission to fulfill. “The bishop, who is the ordained shepherd of the ward, cannot possibly watch over all of the Lord’s sheep at one time. He is dependent on inspired visiting teachers to help him.”¹ Seeking and receiving revelation as to who should be assigned to watch over each sister is essential.

Inspiration begins as members of the Relief Society presidency prayerfully discuss the needs of individuals and families. Then, with the bishop’s approval, the Relief Society presidency gives the assignment in a way that helps sisters understand that visiting teaching is an important spiritual responsibility.²

Visiting teachers sincerely come to know and love each sister, help her strengthen her faith, and give service when needed. They seek personal inspiration to know how to respond to the spiritual and temporal needs of each sister they visit.³

“Visiting teaching becomes the Lord’s work when our focus is on people rather than percentages. In reality, visiting teaching is never finished. It is more a way of life than a task.”⁴



From the Scriptures

Matthew 22:36–40; John 13:34–35;
Alma 37:6–7

NOTES

1. Julie B. Beck, “Relief Society: A Sacred Work,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 114.
2. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 9.5; 9.5.2.
3. See *Handbook 2*, 9.5.1.
4. Julie B. Beck, *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 114.
5. Eliza R. Snow, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 108.
6. Eliza R. Snow, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 45–46.

What Can I Do?

1. How can I improve in my ability to fulfill my important responsibility as a visiting teacher?
2. As a visiting teacher, how can I help other sisters fulfill their responsibility as visiting teachers?

Faith, Family, Relief



From Our History

Eliza R. Snow, the second Relief Society general president taught, “I consider the office of a teacher a high and holy office.” She counseled visiting teachers “to be filled with the Spirit of God, of wisdom, of humility, of love” before they visited homes so they would be able to ascertain and meet spiritual needs as well as temporal ones. She said, “You may feel to talk words of peace and comfort, and if you find a sister feeling cold, take her to your heart as you would a child to your bosom and warm [her] up.”⁵

As we go forth in faith as the early Relief Society sisters did, we will have the Holy Ghost with us and be inspired to know how to help each sister we visit. “Let [us] seek for wisdom instead of power,” said Sister Snow, “and [we] will have all the power [we] have wisdom to exercise.”⁶

Small & Simple Things

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

Mormon Tabernacle Choir Highlights



Millions of people worldwide are familiar with the music of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, whether through the choir's performances in general conference or through programs like the 83-year-old *Music and the Spoken Word* weekly performance. Less familiar, however, are the day-to-day details regarding this group of singers.

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir is made up of 360 volunteer singers who are 25 to 60 years old. Through the years, the choir has traveled to 28 countries and performed in 37 states and Washington, D.C. They usually fly as a group to the area where they will perform. From there they load onto 11 tour buses, which are followed by 4 buses of luggage and 4 semitrailers carrying equipment. They then travel to various cities, sometimes 6 to 10 hours away.

While traveling, each member of

the choir wears a blue name tag printed with the choir logo and his or her name. All choir and orchestra members have been set apart as “music missionaries”; they represent the Church wherever they go.

When choir members are not traveling, their normal week consists of at least one weekday rehearsal, along with productions of *Music and the Spoken Word*, which is a program broadcast internationally on television and radio each Sunday morning.

Church members accepted into the choir treat it like a calling. When they join the choir, they are told to consider the time commitment equivalent to serving as elders quorum president or Relief Society president in a ward. Once they are accepted into the choir, members may stay for up to 20 years or until they turn 60 years old.

FUN FACTS ABOUT THE CHOIR

- The dresses worn by the women in the choir are designed and sewn by a wardrobe committee.
- There are approximately 20 married couples in the choir and in the Orchestra at Temple Square.
- The choir has earned two platinum and five gold albums.
- The choir has performed at the inaugurations of five U.S. presidents.



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CHOOSING MUSIC FOR CHURCH MEETINGS

- Well in advance of the meeting, make sure that the presiding authority approves the music that has been selected.
- Several days in advance, contact the accompanist so he or she knows which hymns to practice for the meeting.
- For sacrament meetings, consider the spirit that each hymn will bring. Opening hymns in sacrament meeting express praise and gratitude to God and for the Restoration of the gospel. Sacrament hymns reflect on the sacrament or on the Savior's sacrifice. Closing hymns can inspire the congregation to recommit to the covenants they have renewed and can testify of the gospel principles members have learned.
- For Relief Society or priesthood meetings, consult with the instructor. He or she may want to suggest a hymn related to the lesson. If the instructor does not have a preference, leaders could suggest a hymn that will supplement the topic of the lesson.

See Hymns, 380–81; Handbook 2: Administering the Church (2010), 14.4; 14.6.

Do You Know the Women in the Scriptures?

See if you can match the descriptions of the women from the scriptures with their names. Use the scripture references if you need help.



A. Mary, mother of the Lord



B. Sariah



C. Anna



D. Eve



E. Abish



F. Sarah



G. Esther



H. Mary, sister of Martha



I. Emma Smith



J. Ruth

1. My husband comforted me when I mourned because of my sons, who were on a dangerous journey (see 1 Nephi 5:1, 6).
2. I was a servant in the house of King Lamoni and had been converted to the Lord many years before the king was converted (see Alma 19:16).
3. When my husband died, I “clave unto” my mother-in-law and told her I would make her people my people and her God my God (see Ruth 1:14, 16).
4. I am mentioned by name in both the New Testament and the Book of Mormon. I am described as “exceedingly fair and white” and “a precious and chosen vessel” (see 1 Nephi 11:13; Alma 7:10).
5. I “[chose] that good part” by listening to the words of Jesus Christ when He visited my family in Bethany (see Luke 10:42).
6. My people fasted for me when I risked my own life by pleading with the king to spare them (see Esther 4:16).
7. My name means “mother of all living” (see Genesis 3:20).
8. I was called “an elect lady” in the Doctrine and Covenants, and I made “a selection of sacred hymns” (see D&C 25:3, 11).
9. I had been a widow for about 84 years when I greeted the infant Jesus at the temple (see Luke 2:36–38).
10. When the Lord changed my husband’s name, He changed mine to a name meaning “princess” (see Genesis 17:15).

Answers: 1. B; 2. E; 3. J; 4. A; 5. H; 6. G; 7. D; 8. I; 9. C; 10. F

Fasting

STRENGTHENS US SPIRITUALLY AND TEMPORALLY

Fasting has been part of the gospel of Jesus Christ since Old Testament times (see, for example, Daniel 9:3; Joel 2:12). Fasting strengthens people spiritually and increases the effectiveness of their prayers (see Isaiah 58:6–11). Today members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints fast and give the money they would have spent on food to the Church to help the poor and needy.

“The Church designates one Sunday each month, usually the first Sunday, as a day of fasting. Proper observance of fast Sunday includes going without food and drink for two consecutive meals [in a 24-hour period], attending fast and testimony meeting, and giving a fast offering to help care for those in need.

“Your fast offering should be at least the value of the two meals you do not eat. When possible, be generous and give much more than this amount.

“In addition to observing the fast days set aside by Church leaders, you can fast on any other day, according to your needs and the needs of

others. However, you should not fast too frequently or for excessive periods of time.”¹ Those with a medical condition that would be worsened by fasting should exercise wisdom and modify their approach.

Members of the Church fast for various purposes. We can fast and pray for a family member who is sick, for example. We can fast to express gratitude to God, to develop greater

humility, to overcome a weakness or sin, to receive inspiration for our Church responsibilities, and so on. Fasting helps us feel compassion for those who regularly experience hunger. Fasting also helps our spirit triumph over the body. ■

NOTE

1. *True to the Faith* (2004), 67–68.

For more on this topic, see Matthew 6:16–18; Alma 5:46; 6:6.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY TALAT MEHMOOD, JOHN LUKE, AND WEIDEN C. ANDERSEN; DETAIL FROM *FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS*, BY ELSBETH YOUNG

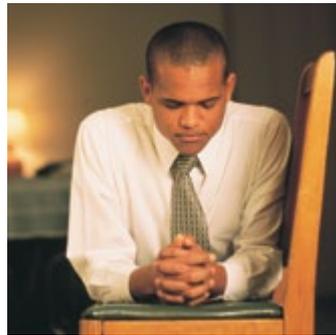
Fasting means voluntarily going without food or drink for the purpose of drawing closer to the Lord and asking for His blessings.



We are encouraged to be generous in our fast offerings: the Church uses the money to help the poor and needy.



Fast Sunday includes the bearing of testimonies in sacrament meeting.



Fasting is more effective when accompanied by prayer.



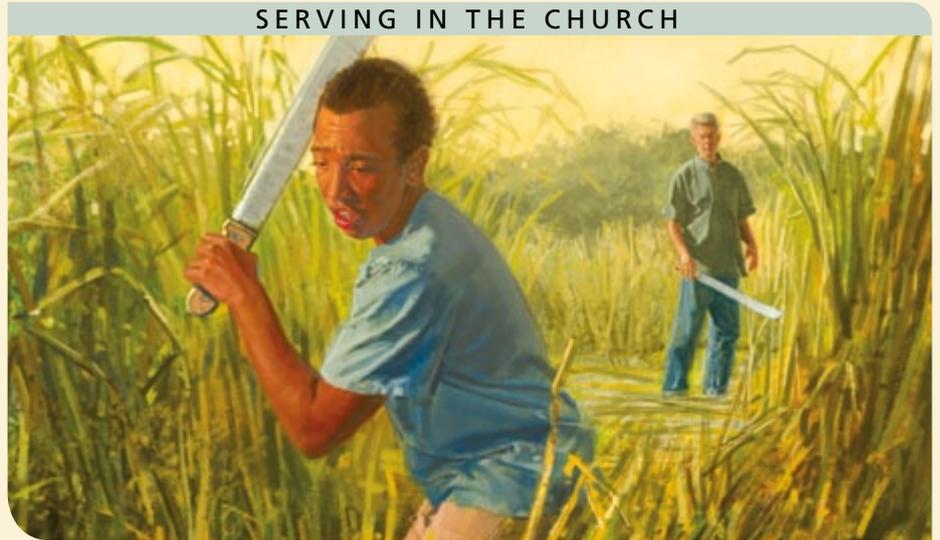
Fasting has always been practiced by true believers. The ancient Jews, for instance, fasted for Esther so she could ask the king for protection for her people (see Esther 4:16).

"[Fasting] is simple and perfect, based on reason and intelligence, and would not only prove a solution to the question of providing for the poor, but it would result in good to those who observe the law. It would . . . place the body in subjection to the spirit, and so promote communion with the Holy Ghost, and insure a spiritual strength and power which the people of the nation so greatly need. As fasting should always be accompanied by prayer, this law would bring the people nearer to God."

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 197–98.

THE POTENTIAL OF YOUTH-LED SERVICE

By Norman C. Hill



Nigerians like to say that they live under “a fierce African sun.” Temperatures near the equator vary only slightly regardless of the season. So when we had our all-Africa service project in August, we began at 7:00 a.m. in order to get as much as possible done in the cooler morning hours.

With shovels, rakes, and machetes, we got to work clearing weeds and hauling trash from the vacant lot near our Yaba Ward building in the Lagos Nigeria Stake. After working for three hours, we had cleared about three acres (1.2 ha) of the four-acre (1.6 ha) lot.

“What do you think of rounding off with this small section and scheduling another day to finish clearing the lot?” the bishop asked.

Overhearing the bishop, Emmanuel, the teachers quorum president, expressed disappointment.

“If we leave this section undone, none of the youth will feel that they have done much today,” he said.

“Please, let’s finish.”

Because the weeds were about six feet (1.8 m) high in most places, they obstructed our view and made it difficult to determine how much remained.

“Brother Hill, let’s see how long it might take you and me to clear a narrow path, maybe only two feet wide,” Emmanuel said. “If we can do it quickly, others may see that it is possible to finish sooner than they might imagine.”

The young men, divided in two groups, had been working on opposite ends of the lot all day. No one had broken through the maze of weeds to the other side. With an aching back, I went to my knees to find some relief while continuing to hack away at the weeds with a machete. Worried, some youth came to see if they could help and then pitched in when they saw Emmanuel and me working toward each other. Within minutes we had broken through to each other, and a small cheer went up. Seeing the breakthrough, others began working in pairs doing the same thing.

In less than an hour, we finished. Beaming with satisfaction, we congratulated each other—especially Emmanuel, who had literally provided a path for others to follow.

The bishop and I thought that we, in our age and wisdom, knew what these young men could accomplish.



GIVING YOUTH A CHANCE TO SERVE

“How many deacons and teachers quorum presidencies consist of merely calling on someone to offer a prayer or pass the sacrament? Brethren, these really are special spirits, and they can do things of significance if given a chance!”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Unto the Rising Generation,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1985, 11.

We saw only hot, tired boys, but Emmanuel saw an opportunity for his friends to build dignity and confidence. He knew that exerting extra effort would bring greater satisfaction to them than finishing the job later. He reminded us of the strength of the youth of the Church and how we all benefit when they contribute and lead.

I realized that we don’t need to wait for our youth to grow up—they can make a difference *now* if we let them. ■

By Elder Marcos A.
Aidukaitis
Of the Seventy



The Joy

OF SABBATH DAY OBSERVANCE

Growing up as a Latter-day Saint in a non-LDS environment was one of the enjoyable experiences of my early life. What I remember most is getting together with family and friends for birthdays, holidays, football games, and an occasional family *churrasco* (barbecue). Another favorite memory is going to church together as a family on Sunday.

Keeping the Sabbath day holy and worshipping our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, were basic and natural for our family. As a youth in the Church, I always anticipated playing football on Tuesday nights, but I also anticipated going to sacrament meeting, Sunday School, and priesthood on Sundays. It felt so good to be with our brothers and sisters in the gospel that we were not quick to return home afterward.

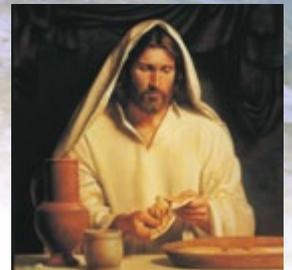
Not until I was married and had a family of my own did I really appreciate the good example my parents had set during my formative years. As the father of a family, I came to better understand how important it is to “go to the house of prayer and offer up [our] sacraments upon [the Lord’s] holy day” (D&C 59:9). I came to better understand the blessings He has promised to those who keep this commandment.

I vividly remember how happy my friends and I were as youth when we could tell each other that we had not missed a single Church meeting for an entire year. We might not have been fully aware of what was happening to us as a result of our faithful attendance, but we were keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. In addition, our hearts were glad, our countenances were cheerful, and our joy was truly full (see D&C 59:9, 13–15).

A Sabbath Day Tradition

For many years my wife and children and I have had the tradition of spending summer vacation on a small beach near our home in southern Brazil. Sometimes we moved because of work, but no matter how far we lived from that small beach, we always made the annual trip with much anticipation and joy. Likewise, extended family members and friends would travel long distances so we could all be together once a year. Everyone came as early as they could and stayed as long as possible.

At that small beach our family had many wonderful opportunities for spiritual growth and gospel teaching. Most of our extended family members were not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and did not share our religious beliefs. To



I testify that joy and blessings come from worshipping God on His holy day—including blessings we cannot now see.



Breaking the Sabbath would have been easy to rationalize during our annual vacation at the beach, but we never missed going to church on Sundays.

them the Lord's day was just another day to play and have fun. Because more of the family would be at the beach on weekends than during the other days of the week, our presence and participation in Sunday activities was not only expected but also insistently requested—including by our children.

Our children were small and only just learning to apply the truths of the gospel. To them the temptation of participating in activities with their cousins and friends on Sundays was great. Spending time with family is an important part of the gospel, and breaking the Sabbath would have been easy to rationalize. After all, the closest unit of the Church at that time was more than 60 miles (96 km) away from the beach. Our friends and neighbors in our home congregation were far away, and none of them would ever know if we stayed at the beach instead of driving to the chapel and attending our meetings on Sunday. We

went to church the entire year, and our extended family could be together only a few weeks a year.

Nevertheless, we never missed going to church on Sundays—not even once! We remembered the Lord's teachings:

“And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

“For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High; . . .

“But remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High. . . .

“And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full” (D&C 59:9–13).



We chose to keep this commandment, and we taught our children that they should keep it as well. Soon they understood that it was more important to worship God on His holy day than to please family and friends or to satisfy their own desires.

Blessed by Obedience

On Sundays at the beach, we would wake up early, dress up for Sunday worship, and travel by car to the nearest chapel. During our trip and throughout the entire day, we would enjoy the peace and joy the Lord has promised to those who keep His commandments. We came to learn that this feeling of peace and joy does not come from the world.

After several years of this routine, something wonderful happened. Our children stopped questioning the importance of worshipping God on His holy day, and several of our children's cousins began to ask if they could go to church with us! Little did we know that the feeling of peace and joy we felt was also being felt by our nieces and nephews upon our return from our meetings. Eventually a great blessing resulted. After some of those children became adolescents, two of them from one family told their parents, "We want to become Latter-day Saints." Soon the entire family was baptized. Recently, one of the children, now a returned missionary, was married in the temple.

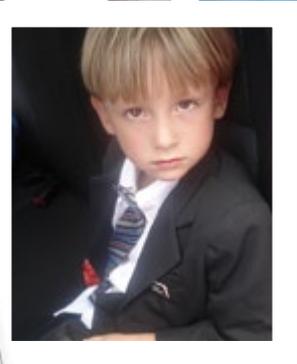
We still go to that beach every year, but

everyone knows that on Sunday our family will not be there to play. Instead, we will go to church and worship God with family members who join us—a group that is becoming larger and larger every year!

When we look back on those years and think about the choice we made, we thank God for helping us have the courage to do what was right and to teach our children to do the same. We don't have the slightest doubt that that decision strengthened our children as well as our extended family. It gave us the Lord's promised peace, played an important role in the conversion of family members, and blessed us with a satisfaction not found in alternative Sunday activities that do not fill the soul.

I testify that joy and blessings come from worshipping God on His holy day—including blessings we cannot now see. And I testify that "happy is that people, whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 144:15). ■

We still go to the beach every year, but everyone knows that on Sunday our family will not be there to play. Instead, we will go to church and worship God with family members who join us.



Agency and Inspiration



Bruce R. McConkie was born on July 29, 1915, in Michigan, USA. He was sustained to the First Council of the Seventy in 1946 and ordained an Apostle in 1972. He died on April 19, 1985. This address was given at Brigham Young University on February 27, 1973.

By Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85)
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

We're expected to do everything in our power that we can and then to seek an answer from the Lord, a confirming seal that we've reached the right conclusion.

When we dwelt in the presence of God our Heavenly Father, we were endowed with agency. This gave us the opportunity, the privilege, to choose what we would do—to make a free, untrammelled choice. . . . We're expected to use the gifts and talents and abilities, the sense and judgment and agency with which we are endowed.

But on the other hand, we're commanded to seek the Lord, to desire His Spirit, to get the spirit of revelation and inspiration in our lives. We come unto the Church and a legal administrator places his hands upon our head and says, "Receive the Holy Ghost." This gives us the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is the right to the constant companionship of that member of the Godhead, based on faithfulness.

And so we're faced with two propositions. One is that we ought to be guided by the spirit of inspiration, the spirit of revelation. The other is that we're here under a direction to use our agency, to determine what we ought to do on our own; and we need to strike a fine balance between these two. . . .

Well, I'd like, if I may, to present three case studies, out of which, perhaps, we can draw some very realistic and sound conclusions as to what ought to be in our lives. I'll take these illustrations out of the revelations that the Lord has given us.

"You Have Not Understood"

Case study number 1: There was a man named Oliver Cowdery. . . . He wrote down the words that the Prophet dictated while the Spirit rested upon him in the translation processes (the Book of Mormon was then being translated). Brother Cowdery was relatively spiritually immature at that time, and he sought and desired to do something beyond his then present spiritual capacity. He himself wanted to translate. And so he [asked] the Prophet, the Prophet took the matter up with the Lord, and they got a revelation. The Lord said, "Oliver Cowdery, verily, verily, I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, who is your God and your Redeemer, even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive." And then one thing he might receive is defined as "a knowledge concerning the engravings of old records, which are ancient, which contain those parts



of my scripture of which has been spoken by the manifestation of my Spirit.”

Having thus dealt with the specific problem, then the Lord revealed a principle that applies to it and all other like situations: “Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart. Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation” (D&C 8:2–3). . . .

. . . And so he asked. And as you know, he failed; he was totally unable to translate. . . . The matter was referred back to the Lord, whose promise they had been attempting to conform to; and the answer came, the reason came, why he couldn’t translate: “You have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me” (D&C 9:7).

Now, seemingly, that’s all he’d been instructed to do, to ask in faith; but implicit in asking in faith is the precedent requirement that we do everything in our power to accomplish the goal that we seek. We use the agency with which we have been endowed. We use every faculty and capacity and ability that we possess to bring about the eventuality that may be involved. Now, this is translating the Book of Mormon, it’s choosing a wife, it’s choosing employment, it’s doing any one of 10,000 important things that arise in our lives. . . .

“Why Are You Asking Me?”

Now, case study number 2: . . . [The Jaredites] got to the waters that they were going to cross, and the Lord said to [the

As we become spiritually mature, we learn to strike a balance between using our agency to decide what we should do and being guided by the spirit of inspiration.

brother of Jared], “Build some barges.” . . .

[The barges] were going to be used under some peculiar and difficult circumstances, and [the brother of Jared] needed something more than was now present in them: he needed some air. And this was a problem that was beyond him. So he took that matter up with the Lord, and because it was totally beyond his capacity to solve, the Lord solved it for him and said, “Do thus and so and you’ll have air.”

But then the brother of Jared—having confidence because he was talking to the Lord, because he was communing and getting answers—asked another question: . . . “What will we do for light in the vessels?”

And the Lord talked to him about it a little, and then He said this: “What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels?” (Ether 2:23). In other words, “. . . I’ve given you your agency; you are endowed with capacity and ability. Get out and solve the problem.”

Well, the brother of Jared got the message. He went up into a mount called Shelem, and the record says he “did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones; and they were white and clear, even as transparent glass” (Ether 3:1). . . .

And the Lord did what the brother of Jared asked, and this is the occasion when he then saw the finger of the Lord; and, while he was in tune, he received revelation that exceeded anything that any prophet had ever gained up to that moment. The Lord revealed more to him about His nature and personality than ever theretofore had come forth, and it all came about because

he’d done everything that he could do and because he counseled with the Lord.

There’s a fine balance between agency and inspiration. We’re expected to do everything in our power that we can and then to seek an answer from the Lord, a confirming seal that we’ve reached the right conclusion; and sometimes, happily, in addition, we get added truths and knowledge that we hadn’t even supposed.

“They Shall Counsel between Themselves and Me”

Now, case study number 3: In the early history of the Church, the Lord commanded the Saints to assemble in a certain place in Missouri. . . . Now notice what happened. The Lord is talking:

“As I spake concerning my servant Edward Partridge, this land is the land of his residence, and those whom he has appointed for his counselors; and also the land of the residence of him whom I have appointed to keep my storehouse;

“Wherefore, let them bring their families to this land, [and here’s the point] as they shall counsel between themselves and me” [D&C 58:24–25; emphasis added]. . . .

You see, the Lord said “assemble” to Zion. The details and the arrangements, however, the *how* and the *when* and the *circumstances*, are to be determined by the agency of those who are called to assemble, but they are to counsel with the Lord. . . .

Now, after the Lord had said this to the Presiding Bishopric of the Church, He gave the principle that governed in that situation, and it governs in all situations. And this is

one of our glorious revealed truths.

He said:

“For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

“Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness” [D&C 58:26, 27; emphasis added]. . . .

Now, those are the three case studies; let us come to the revealed conclusion. . . .

. . . If you learn how to use the agency that God has given you, and if you try to make your own decisions, and if you reach conclusions that are sound and right, and you counsel with the Lord and get His ratifying seal of approval upon the conclusions you’ve reached, then you’ve received revelation, for one thing; and for another thing, you’re going to have the great reward of eternal life, be lifted up at the last day. . . .

God grant us wisdom in these things. God grant us the courage and the ability to stand on our own feet and use our agency and the abilities and capacities we possess; then let’s be sufficiently humble and amenable to the Spirit to bow our will to His will, to get His ratifying, confirming seal of approval, to get in our lives, in that way, the spirit of revelation. And if we so do, there’s no question about the result: it’s peace in this life; it’s glory and honor and dignity in the life to come. ■

Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized.



ACTING ON Promptings

It is the privilege of every Latter-day Saint to receive daily inspiration through the Spirit. By being worthy of and willing to heed spiritual promptings, we can obtain the guidance Heavenly Father wishes to bless us with. Below, three members share how they listened and responded to promptings of the Spirit and, in turn, received abundant blessings.



I Needed to Turn Back

One night, while I was serving as a stake priesthood leader in Loulé, Portugal, I was taking some youth home after a stake activity. It was very late, and as I drove home after dropping off the youth, I turned onto a dark road in a rural area with few cars. Along the way I drove over a small bridge and saw a light flickering on my right side down by the river as though there was a fire.

Because of the humidity of the night, I thought that even if there was a fire, it would quickly be put out by the moisture, so I returned my attention to the road ahead.

I had driven only a few meters, however, when I heard a voice say, “Stop!” I was surprised since I was traveling alone, but I ignored it and continued to drive. A voice of thunder then sounded, “Stop and go back!” I immediately turned the car around and drove back. As I did so, I asked Heavenly Father,

“Lord, what is it?” As soon as I reached the bridge, I got out of the car, and the Lord’s answer was immediate, for I could hear someone below yelling, “Please, help us!”

There was almost no light, and I couldn’t see anything except the small, orange light flickering below. There was a steep ravine below the bridge, and with insufficient light, I didn’t know how to help. I quickly called an emergency phone number, and rescuers were there shortly to help.

That small light was from a car carrying five people that had fallen off the road. Two had lost their lives, but it could have been worse had I not paid attention to the voice of the Holy Ghost.

I testify that the Lord speaks to us through the Spirit, whether by a mild voice or by a voice of thunder. I am grateful to have listened to it that night. I know that the Lord lives, that



He loves us, and that the Holy Ghost communicates with us. We need only be attentive to His voice. ■

Nestor Querales, Portugal

I Decided to Listen

Years ago I began having a persistent nagging feeling that I needed to put together a family cookbook, including recipes from my extended family. I dismissed the idea. I often thought to myself, “I don’t have time to make a silly cookbook! I have six busy children! Making cookbooks is for the bread-making, cinnamon-rolls-from-scratch type of moms. I don’t have time for that!”

The compelling feeling stayed with me for years until one day I finally decided to consider it seriously. But I wondered who in my family would even want to participate. I was the only member of the Church in my family, my parents had passed away, I had no siblings, and most of my extended family lived far away. However, I decided to listen to the prompting anyway.

I contacted my family, explaining that I was compiling a family cookbook and inviting them to send recipes. Over the next year, I received several recipes. Some relatives even sent family stories and photographs. This prompted me to interview my oldest living relatives and gather our family history, which I decided to include in the book also.

In putting the book together, I realized I did not even know many of the family members who had submitted recipes. For this reason I decided to include a family tree. I asked for everyone’s information, wrote out



THE SPIRIT WILL GUIDE YOU

“The gift of the Holy Ghost, if you consent, will guide and protect you and even correct your actions. It is a spiritual voice that comes into the mind as a thought or a feeling put into your heart. . . . It is not expected that you go through life without making mistakes, but you will not make a major mistake without first being warned by the promptings of the Spirit. This promise applies to all members of the Church.”

President Boyd K. Packer,
President of the Quorum
of the Twelve Apostles,
“Counsel to Youth,”
Liahona and Ensign, Nov.
2011, 17–18.

the family tree, and put it in the manuscript.

As I took one last look at the completed book, I turned to the family tree page and became overwhelmed with the Spirit. Tears ran down my cheeks as I became keenly aware of why I was to put this “silly” cookbook together. It had very little to do with recipes. I had gathered names and dates of generations of my ancestors. All these people could now have their temple work done. Additionally, I had preserved wonderful stories for future generations.

Today I am in contact with several of my cousins on a regular basis and enjoy a wonderful relationship with my extended family. When I look at my cookbook, I often think of the scripture, “Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great” (D&C 64:33). I am still amazed when I stop and think of all the joyous and wonderful things that came out of heeding a prompting and putting together a simple cookbook. ■

Nancy Williamson Gibbs, Colorado, USA

It Just Felt Right

The Spirit communicates in a number of ways. I’ve experienced moments of peace, feelings of comfort, and clarity of thought. Some of my strongest impressions come simply as a feeling of truth or correctness. The feeling is hard to describe, but it is there when you simply know that something is true or that you need to act.

One of the most powerful experiences I’ve had with this feeling was in my search to find a house to purchase. I was single and had been contemplating buying a house for several years. I told my realtor what I was looking for, and she did an excellent job of finding houses that fit my description. She would show me houses, but I would turn them down because they didn’t feel right. She started asking me what I disliked about each one so that she could better show me homes that would fit my needs. Unfortunately, I couldn’t articulate very well what was missing.

Finally, one afternoon we walked through a house that wasn’t as nice as some of the others we had seen. It was a little more expensive than others. It fit my description for what I





had said I wanted but not as perfectly as some we had seen. Nevertheless, after walking through it, I told my realtor I wanted to put in an offer. She seemed somewhat surprised at my willingness to act so quickly. Considering my reluctance through previous months, she was right to be surprised. But the feeling that this was where I needed to live was almost overwhelming. I didn't feel a need to stop and think about it.

I put in an offer, and the sellers accepted my bid, despite the fact that it was not the highest offer they had received. I told my family that I knew I was supposed to live

in that house, though I didn't know why.

I found out why I needed to live there fairly quickly. I met a woman in the singles ward within a month of moving in. A little over a year later, we knelt across the altar in the temple, where we were sealed as husband and wife.

The Lord truly moves in mysterious ways. I had no idea that He was leading me toward eternal marriage when He helped me choose a house. All I knew was that I was being guided to take this step, and now I can see that that guidance came from His Spirit. ■
Jeffery Stockett, Utah, USA

EIGHT PURPOSES OF REVELATION

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that the Spirit communicates for eight purposes:

To testify: The Spirit can witness that Jesus is the Christ and that the gospel is true.

To prophesy: Within the limits of one's areas of responsibility, a person may be inspired to predict what will come to pass in the future. The prophet, patriarchs, and even we can receive prophetic revelation.

To comfort: The Spirit can comfort us as He comforted Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail: "Peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment" (D&C 121:7–8). Comfort also comes in connection with priesthood blessings, visions of departed loved ones, and forgiveness of sins.

To uplift: The Spirit can lift us up from depression, feelings of inadequacy, or a plateau of spiritual mediocrity. He comes as we read scriptures or enjoy wholesome music, art, or literature.

To inform: You may be given the words to speak on a particular occasion. The Lord told Joseph Smith and Sidney

Rigdon, "For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say" (D&C 100:6). On some sacred occasions, information has been given face to face from heavenly personages. Other times, needed information is communicated by the quiet whisperings of the Spirit.

To restrain: This form of revelation will deter us from things we should not do. It often comes by surprise, when we have not asked for guidance on a particular subject.

To confirm: You can receive a confirmation through the Spirit after proposing a particular course of action and praying to know if it is the right choice.

To impel: This type of revelation is not sought after but comes to call a person to some action not proposed. This type of communication from the Spirit is rare but, therefore, significant.

From "Revelation," in *Brigham Young University 1981–82 Fireside and Devotional Speeches* (1982), 20–26.

COUNSELING TOGETHER IN Marriage

By Randy Keyes

As a marriage and family therapist in Victoria, Canada, I counseled with a couple, Bob and Mary (names have been changed), who often had disagreements when they tried to make decisions together. During one meeting Bob said to me, “I try to

preside and get things done, but when I come up with ideas of what we need to do, *she won't sustain the priesthood!*”

From his comment I could tell that he did not fully understand what it means to preside. When couples marry, they form an equal partnership in which they strive to make decisions together in a spirit of unity.

I shared with this couple some principles about counseling together that I learned from the model of priesthood councils. Although councils in the home function somewhat differently than councils do in the Church, many of the same principles apply. As we strive to employ these principles in our homes, they can help us strengthen our marriages in a way that is pleasing to the Lord.



PRINCIPLE 1: UNANIMOUS DECISION MAKING

In Priesthood Councils

Presidencies, councils, and bishoprics all work upon principles of unanimous, harmonious agreement. Elder M. Russell Ballard explained that the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles comes to a united decision before they act on any issue: “We discuss a wide variety of issues, from Church administration to world events, and we do so frankly and openly. Sometimes issues are discussed for weeks, months, and occasionally even years before a decision is made.”¹ Unity is so important that they will not move forward with a decision until unity has been achieved.

The Lord taught the same principle of unity in councils to Joseph Smith: “And every decision made by either of these quorums must be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member in each quorum must be agreed to its decisions, in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity one with another” (D&C 107:27).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reinforced this principle when he taught, “We can’t receive inspiration if we’re not united.”² When we are unified in purpose and prayer, we invite guidance and inspiration from the Holy Ghost.

In the Home

The principle of unity is true for priesthood councils, and it is true for marriages. The Brethren have taught that the family council is the basic council of the Church.³ Notice that they have not taught that the husband is the most basic council or that the wife is the most basic council. This council consists of both of them together.



It is not uncommon for couples to struggle in coming to a unanimous decision, especially when the issue at hand is significant. Further, when spouses are more concerned with being right than with gaining consensus, “communication with Heavenly Father breaks down, [and] communication between spouses also breaks down. And Heavenly Father will not interfere. He doesn’t generally intrude where He is not invited.”⁴ The key is to actually invite—rather than exclude—our Heavenly Father into our discussions. If we humbly work together and listen to each other, we gain the essential blessing of the Lord’s guidance.

It is important to make united decisions with the guidance of the Spirit—especially if the decision doesn’t seem logically to be the best choice. President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), First Counselor in the First Presidency, explained that the Lord sustains the counsel of united leaders and that He will improve their less-than-perfect plan and will “supplement it by His wisdom and power and make it effective.”⁵ This promise is offered to all councils, including couples.

However, decision making does not always have to be accomplished through a formal process. Elder Ballard teaches that “when a husband and wife talk to each other, they are holding a family council.”⁶

Additionally, just as the Lord does not

Just as priesthood councils strive for unity in their decisions, unity in marriage is essential.

command us in all things, spouses do not need to hold councils for every decision. Couples should trust each other to make daily decisions that eternally have little consequence. Together, with guidance from the Lord, the scriptures, and the words of the prophet, they determine those decisions that require mutual discussion.

PRINCIPLE 2: FULL PARTICIPATION

In Priesthood Councils

In the worldwide leadership training meeting in November 2010, Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president, shared the following scripture: “Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (D&C 88:122). Elder Walter F. González of the Presidency of the Seventy followed her comments with the observation that participation fosters inspiration.⁷ When everyone has an equal chance to contribute, the combined ideas of individual people become stronger.

In the Home

The principle of participation teaches us the importance of having both spouses contribute to the decision-making process. It is not enough for one spouse to make all the decisions and the other to merely agree. Couples achieve greater success as they both seek inspiration and then listen to each other’s thoughts and feelings.

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) said: “A man who holds the priesthood accepts his wife as a partner in the leadership of the home and family with full knowledge of and full participation in all decisions relating thereto. . . . The Lord intended that the wife be a helpmeet for man (*meet* means equal)—that is, a companion equal and

necessary in full partnership.”⁸ We are made to help each other. When we invite and accept our spouse’s participation, we can enjoy one of the great benefits of marriage.

PRINCIPLE 3: PRESIDING RIGHTEOUSLY

In Priesthood Councils

Understanding the correct meaning of *presiding* is vital in conducting an effective priesthood council. Those who preside “watch over the church” (Alma 6:1) and are responsible for ensuring that unity, equal participation, and other principles of counseling are being practiced. Elder Ballard reminds us that “those who hold the priesthood must never forget that they have no right to wield priesthood authority like a club over the heads of others. . . . Priesthood is for service, not servitude; compassion, not compulsion; caring, not control. Those who think otherwise are operating outside the parameters of priesthood authority.”⁹

In the Home

The husband’s patriarchal duty as one who presides in the home is not to rule over others but to ensure that the marriage and the family prosper. President David O. McKay (1873–1970) explained that one day every man will have a personal priesthood interview with the Savior: “First, He will request an accountability report about your relationship with your wife. Have you been actively engaged in making her happy and ensuring that her needs have been met as an individual?”¹⁰

The husband is accountable for growth and happiness in his marriage, but this accountability does not give him authority over his wife. Both are in charge of the marriage. In righteous marriage councils both spouses share a set of virtues that when applied help them focus on each other.

We can study some of these virtues in Doctrine and Covenants 121:41: “No power or influence can or ought

Elder Ballard reminds us that “those who hold the priesthood must never forget that they have no right to wield priesthood authority like a club over the heads of others.”



to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned.”

We cannot use the priesthood to assert power and influence. Therefore, we can't use unrighteous means to establish dominance in marriage. True power comes only when we work together in righteousness and so qualify for blessings from the Lord.

BUILDING AN ETERNAL MARRIAGE

Couples who struggle with control issues or disagreements over how to handle time, money, children, in-laws, or anything else should consider reassessing the foundational principles they have chosen to follow in their marriage. Can they improve their marriage by establishing a pattern where they counsel together with love unfeigned?

The principles of unity, participation, and presiding in righteousness allow us to reach a proper consensus with our spouse

and invite the Spirit into our lives. Applying the virtues of love and kindness will soften many arguments, lead to deeper satisfaction in marriage, and build a relationship that can last through eternity. ■

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, *Counseling with Our Councils: Learning to Minister Together in the Church and in the Family* (1997), 18–19.
2. David A. Bednar, in “Panel Discussion,” *2010 Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, lds.org/broadcasts/archive/worldwide-leadership-training/2010/11.
3. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 211.
4. M. Russell Ballard, “Family Councils: A Conversation with Elder and Sister Ballard,” *Liahona*, June 2003, 17; *Ensign*, June 2003, 19.
5. *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of George Q. Cannon*, sel. Jerreld L. Newquist (1957), 163.
6. M. Russell Ballard, “Family Councils,” *Liahona*, June 2003, 14; *Ensign*, June 2003, 16.
7. See “Panel Discussion,” *2010 Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*.
8. Howard W. Hunter, “Being a Righteous Husband and Father,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 50–51.
9. M. Russell Ballard, “Strength in Counsel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 78.
10. David O. McKay, quoted by Robert D. Hales, “Understandings of the Heart” (Brigham Young University devotional address, Mar. 15, 1988, 8), speeches.byu.edu.

In righteous marriage councils, both spouses try—through respect, kindness, and full participation—to build the relationship and seek for unity.



THE HONOR AND ORDER OF THE Priesthood

By President Boyd K. Packer

President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



“The authority and power of the priesthood form the foundation of all that we do in the Church,” said President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹ During his more than 40-year ministry as a member of the Twelve, President Packer has elaborated on that statement, speaking extensively on the priesthood—its importance, its proper use, and its keys. The following excerpts highlight some of his significant teachings on the priesthood, including his witness as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Keys of Priesthood

In 1976 an area general conference was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. Following the closing session, President Spencer W. Kimball [1895–1985] desired to visit the Vor Frue Church, where the Thorvaldsen statues of the *Christus* and of the Twelve Apostles stand. . . .

“To the front of the church, behind the altar, stands the familiar statue of the *Christus* with His arms turned forward and somewhat outstretched, the hands showing the imprint of the nails, and the wound in His side very clearly visible. Along each side stand the statues of the Apostles, Peter at the front to the right and the other Apostles in order.

“Most of our group was near the rear of the chapel with the custodian. I stood up front with

President Kimball before the statue of Peter with Elder Rex D. Pinegar and Johan Helge Benthin, president of the Copenhagen stake.

“In Peter’s hand, depicted in marble, is a set of heavy keys. President Kimball pointed to those keys and explained what they symbolized. Then, in an act I shall never forget, he turned to President Benthin and with unaccustomed firmness pointed his finger at him and said, ‘I want you to tell everyone in Denmark that I hold the keys! We hold the *real* keys, and we use them every day.’

“I will never forget that declaration, that testimony from the prophet. The influence was spiritually powerful; the impression was physical in its impact.

“We walked to the back of the chapel where the rest of the group was standing.



The priesthood does not have the strength that it should have and will not have until the power of the priesthood is firmly fixed in the families.

Pointing to the statues, President Kimball said to the kind custodian, ‘These are the dead Apostles.’ Pointing to me, he said, ‘Here we have the *living* Apostles. Elder Packer is an Apostle. Elder Thomas S. Monson and Elder L. Tom Perry are Apostles, and I am an Apostle. We are the living Apostles.

“‘You read about the Seventies in the New Testament, and here are two of the living Seventies, Elder Rex D. Pinegar and Elder Robert D. Hales.’

“The custodian, who up to that time had shown no emotion, suddenly was in tears.

“I felt I had had an experience of a lifetime.”²

The Priesthood Is Not Divisible

“The priesthood is greater than any of its offices. When someone first receives the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood, it is conferred upon him by the laying on of hands. After the priesthood has been conferred upon him, he is ordained to an office in the priesthood. All offices derive their authority from the priesthood.

“The priesthood is not divisible. An elder holds as much priesthood as an Apostle (see D&C 20:38). When a man receives the priesthood, he receives all of it. However, there are offices within the priesthood—divisions of authority and responsibility. One may exercise his priesthood according to the rights of the office to which he is ordained or set apart. . . .

“Whoever holds the Melchizedek Priesthood or higher priesthood holds all of the authority of the Aaronic or lesser priesthood as well.”³

The Preparatory Priesthood

“The fact that it is called the lesser priesthood does not diminish at all the importance of the Aaronic Priesthood. The Lord said it is necessary to the Melchizedek Priesthood. (See D&C 84:29.) Any holder of the higher priesthood should feel greatly honored to perform the ordinances of the Aaronic Priesthood, for they have great spiritual importance.

“I have, as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, passed the sacrament. I assure you I have felt honored and humbled beyond expression to do what some might consider a routine task. . . .

“Anciently they looked forward to the atonement of Christ through the ceremony of the sacrifice. We look back to that same event through the ordinance of the sacrament.

“Both sacrifice before, and the sacrament afterward, are centered in Christ, the shedding of His blood, and the atonement He made for our sins. Both then and now the authority to perform these ordinances belongs to the Aaronic Priesthood.

“This is indeed a sacred responsibility and includes you in a brotherhood with those ancient servants of the Lord. It is no wonder that we feel so humble when we participate

in the ordinances assigned to the Aaronic Priesthood. . . .

“A few of you who now sit there as deacons, teachers, and priests will one day sit here as Apostles and prophets and will preside over the Church. *You must be prepared.*”

“It is indeed correct to call the Aaronic Priesthood the preparatory priesthood.”⁴

An Invitation to Prospective Elders

“The office of an elder is a calling of dignity and honor, spiritual authority and of power. The designation ‘prospective’ implies hope and optimism and possibility. Now I speak to them today, knowing there are perhaps many others to whom this message will apply. . . .

“If you will return to the environment where spiritual truths are spoken, there will flood back into your minds the things that you thought were lost. Things smothered under many years of disuse and inactivity will emerge. Your ability to understand them will be quickened. . . .

“If you will make your pilgrimage back among the Saints, soon you will be understanding once again the language of inspiration. And more quickly than you know, it will seem that you have never been away. Oh, how important it is for you to realize that if you will return, it can be made as though you have never been away. . . .

“Soon you will feel complete and adequate in His church and in His kingdom. Then you will know how much you are needed here and how powerful your voice of experience can be in redeeming others.”⁵

Callings in the Priesthood

“A call is more than an invitation or a request. It is a call from the Lord through His chosen servant. Years ago, President

Spencer W. Kimball, then president of a stake in Arizona, had an experience with extending a calling. There was a vacancy in the presidency of the Young Men organization in the stake. President Kimball left his desk at the bank, walked down the street a few doors into a business, and said, ‘Jack, how would you like to be president of the Young Men in the stake?’

“Jack said, ‘Oh, Spencer, you don’t mean me.’

“He said, ‘Of course I do. You’re a young man, and you get along with young people. You’d make a very good president.’

“Then there occurred what President Kimball thought was a very disagreeable conversation because Jack turned down the call. He went back to the bank and sat at his desk, smoldering over his failure. Then it came to him. He left his desk, went down the street—same door, same man—called him by his full name, and said, ‘Last Sunday the stake presidency met to consider a vacancy in the Young Men’s presidency. We prayed about it, talked about it. Finally, on our knees we inquired about it and received the inspiration from the Lord that you should be called. As a servant of the Lord, I am here to deliver that call.’

“Jack said, ‘Well, Spencer, if you’re going to put it that way.’

“And he said, ‘I’m putting it that way.’”⁶

“Every elder should know that a call is more than an invitation or a request, even more than an assignment. Too frequently we hear such expressions as, ‘I have been asked to serve as a counselor in the elders quorum presidency.’ It would be more proper to say, ‘I have been called to serve as a counselor.’

“We do not call ourselves to offices in the Church. Rather we respond to the call of those who preside over us. It is the responsibility of those who preside to prayerfully consult the

The priesthood is not divisible. An elder holds as much priesthood as an Apostle. When a man receives the priesthood, he receives all of it. However, there are offices within the priesthood—divisions of authority and responsibility.

Power in the priesthood comes through faithful and obedient living in honoring covenants. It is increased by exercising and using the priesthood in righteousness.

Lord as to His will concerning a position in the Church. Then the principle of revelation is at work. The call is then delivered by the presiding officer who is acting for the Lord.”⁷

The Importance of Ordination

“The priesthood is conferred through ordination, not simply through making a covenant or receiving a blessing. It has been so since the beginning. Regardless of what they may assume or imply or infer from anything which has been said or written, past or present, specific ordination to an office in the priesthood is the way, and the only way, it has been or is now conferred.

“And the scriptures make it very clear that the only valid conferring of the priesthood comes from ‘one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church’ [D&C 42:11]. . . .

“Do not miss that one simple, obvious absolute: The priesthood ever and always is conferred by ordination by one who holds proper authority, and it is known to the Church that he has it. And even when the priesthood has been conferred, an individual has no authority beyond that which belongs to the specific office to which one has been ordained. Those limits apply as well to an office to which one is set apart. Unauthorized ordinations or settings apart convey nothing, neither power nor authority of the priesthood.”⁸

The Power of the Priesthood

“We have done very well at distributing the *authority* of the priesthood. We have priesthood authority planted nearly everywhere. We have quorums of elders and high priests worldwide. But distributing the *authority* of the priesthood has raced, I think, ahead of distributing the

power of the priesthood. The priesthood does not have the strength that it should have and will not have until the *power* of the priesthood is firmly fixed in the families as it should be. . . .

“The authority of the priesthood is with us. After all that we have correlated and organized, it is now our responsibility to activate the *power* of the priesthood in the Church. *Authority* in the priesthood comes by way of ordination; *power* in the priesthood comes through faithful and obedient living in honoring covenants. It is increased by exercising and using the priesthood in righteousness.

“Now, fathers, I would remind you of the sacred nature of your calling. You have the power of the priesthood directly from the Lord to protect your home. There will be times when all that stands as a shield between your family and the adversary’s mischief will be that power. You will receive direction from the Lord by way of the gift of the Holy Ghost.”⁹

“The *power* you receive will depend on what you do with this sacred, unseen gift.

“Your authority comes through your ordination; your power comes through obedience and worthiness. . . .

“Power in the priesthood comes from doing your duty in ordinary things: attending meetings, accepting assignments, reading the scriptures, keeping the Word of Wisdom.”¹⁰

True Servants of the Lord

“We do not hear of the priesthood keys being exercised in other Christian churches. It seems odd that we are described by some as being non-Christian when we are the only ones who have the authority and the organization that He established.

“The present Twelve are very ordinary people. They are not, as the original Twelve were

not, spectacular individually, but collectively the Twelve are a power.

“We come from a variety of occupations. We are scientists, lawyers, teachers.

“Elder [Russell M.] Nelson was a pioneer heart surgeon. . . .

“Several in this Quorum were military men—a sailor, marines, pilots.

“They have held various positions in the Church: home teachers, teachers, missionaries, quorum presidents, bishops, stake presidents, mission presidents, and of most importance, husbands and fathers.

“They all are students and teachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. What unites us is our love of the Savior and His Father’s children and our witness that He stands at the head of the Church.

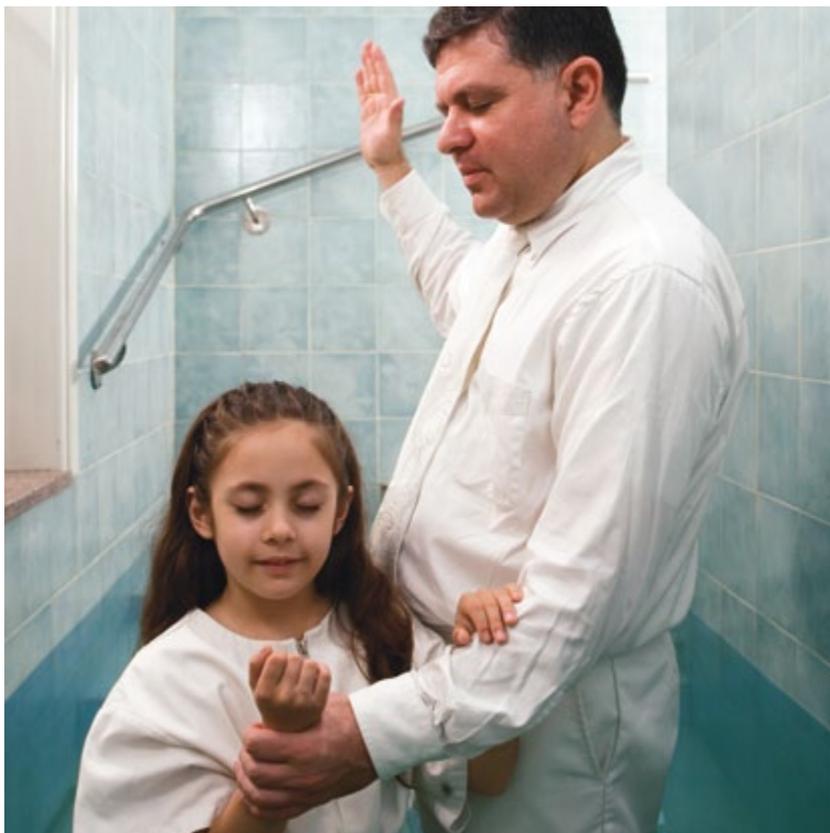
“Almost to a man, the Twelve come from humble beginnings, as it was when He was here. The living Twelve are welded together in the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When the call came, each has put down his nets, so to speak, and followed the Lord.”¹¹

“I certify to you that the 14 men with whom I share the ordination are indeed Apostles. In declaring this, I say no more than the Lord has taught, no more than may be revealed to anyone who seeks with a sincere heart and real intent for an individual witness of the Spirit.

“These men are true servants of the Lord; give heed to their counsel.”¹²

An Apostolic Witness

“There are many qualifications that I lack. There is so much in my effort to serve that is wanting. There is only one single thing, one qualification that can explain it. Like Peter and all of those who have since been ordained, I have *that* witness.



“I know that God is our Father. He introduced His Son, Jesus Christ, to Joseph Smith. I declare to you that I know that Jesus is the Christ. I know that He lives. He was born in the meridian of time. He taught His gospel and was tried. He suffered and was crucified and resurrected on the third day. He, like His Father, has a body of flesh and bone. He made His Atonement. Of Him I bear witness. Of Him I am a witness.”¹³ ■

NOTES

1. “How to Confer the Priesthood: The Doctrine, the Principle, and the Practice,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 1.
2. “The Twelve,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2008, 85.
3. “What Every Elder Should Know—and Every Sister as Well: A Primer on Principles of Priesthood Government,” *Tambuli*, Nov. 1994, 17; see also *Ensign*, Feb. 1993, 8.
4. “The Aaronic Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 30–31.
5. “An Appeal to Prospective Elders,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 104, 105, 106.
6. “How to Confer the Priesthood,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 1–2.
7. “What Every Elder Should Know,” *Tambuli*, Nov. 1994, 21–22; *Ensign*, Feb. 1993, 11.
8. “The Temple, the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 20.
9. “The Power of the Priesthood,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2010, 7, 9.
10. “The Aaronic Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 32, 33.
11. “The Twelve,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2008, 85–86.
12. “The Twelve Apostles,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 8.
13. “The Twelve,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2008, 87.

Fathers, I would remind you of the sacred nature of your calling. You have the power of the priesthood directly from the Lord to protect your home.

Your AARONIC PRIESTHOOD Duties

You have been ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood.

What are you supposed to do now?

By Paul VanDenBerghe

Church Magazines

You may be a brand new deacon, newly ordained last Sunday, or a teacher helping prepare the sacrament each week. Or you may be a well-seasoned priest, wise in the ways of service projects and in guiding the younger teachers and deacons in their new responsibilities. But all priesthood holders have a common call from the Lord: “Let every man learn his duty, and . . . act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence” (D&C 107:99).

But where can you go to learn about this duty? The first place to look should be the scriptures. Specifically, you’ll want to study the sections in the Doctrine and Covenants where the duties of the Aaronic Priesthood are outlined: section 20:46–60, 72–79; and section 84:111.

Another great resource is the booklet *Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders*. This booklet divides your priesthood responsibilities into three sections: (1) “Administer Priesthood Ordinances,” (2) “Serve Others,” and (3) “Invite All to Come unto Christ.”

In the “Priesthood Duties” section for each office—deacon, teacher, and priest—you’ll find additional scriptures to study and suggestions for making your own plan to help you better understand your priesthood duties.

Let’s take a brief look at some of the main duties of Aaronic Priesthood holders.

Deacons

A deacon sets a good example for fellow quorum members and other Church members. He lives a righteous life and remains worthy to exercise the priesthood.

He passes the sacrament. This is one of the most sacred duties of a deacon. As a deacon performs this duty, he is a representative of the Lord. He should be worthy to give the emblems of the sacrament to the members of the Church. He should dress and act in a way that will reflect the sacred nature of the sacrament. If possible, he should wear a white shirt.

A deacon serves as a standing minister, “appointed to watch over the church” (D&C 84:111). He is

Being ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood brings specific rights, responsibilities, and duties. To learn what these are, turn first to the scriptures. Another great resource is the booklet *Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders*.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY CODY BELL



also to “warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59). This responsibility includes fellowshipping quorum members and other young men, notifying members of Church meetings, speaking in meetings, sharing the gospel, and bearing testimony.

He assists the bishop in “administering . . . temporal things” (D&C 107:68). This responsibility may include gathering fast offerings, caring for the poor and needy, caring for the meetinghouse and grounds, and serving as a messenger for the bishop in Church meetings.

He participates in quorum instruction by being an active student of the gospel. Other duties include helping members meet their temporal needs, preparing for and giving missionary service, supporting and helping the quorum president, activating young men of quorum age, and learning the gospel.

Teachers

A teacher has all the responsibilities of a deacon. He also has



RISE TO YOUR NOBLE STATURE

"We call upon you wonderful young brethren to diligently strive to be 'born again.' Pray for this mighty change in your life. Study the scriptures. Desire more than all else to know God and to become like His holy Son. Enjoy your youth but 'put away childish things':

"Shun profane and foolish chatter.

"Flee all evil.

"Avoid contention.

"Repent where needed.

"This will help you rise to the noble stature of your manhood. The qualities of courage, trustworthiness, humility, faith, and goodness will be yours. Friends will admire you, parents will praise you, brethren in the priesthood will depend on you, and the young women will adore you and become even better because of you. God will honor you and endow your priesthood service with *power from on high*."

Bishop Keith B. McMullin, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, "The Power of the Aaronic Priesthood," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 48–49.

the following responsibilities:

He prepares the sacrament. It is the responsibility of the teachers to always have the sacrament ready for sacrament meeting. Preparing the sacrament is a good example of doing service without expecting praise for doing it. Members often do not realize that the teachers prepare the sacrament, but the service is performed nevertheless, and the Lord is pleased because it is true service.

"The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them" (D&C 20:53). One way he does this is by serving as a home teacher.

He is to "see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking" (D&C 20:54). This responsibility includes being a peacemaker by helping the members get along with each other. He should encourage those around him to always see the good in others.

He is to "see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty" (D&C 20:55). Part of this responsibility is inviting others to attend church.

Priests

A priest has all the responsibilities of a deacon and teacher. He also has the following responsibilities:

He officiates at the sacrament table. The honor of administering the sacrament is given to the priests,



who offer the sacramental prayers. A priest should be familiar with the sacramental prayers, dress appropriately, and wash his hands before performing this ordinance. Above all, priests should be worthy to perform this sacred ordinance as the Savior's representatives.

Another duty of priests is to baptize when authorized by the bishop or branch president (see D&C 20:46). Baptism by the proper authority is one of the most important and sacred ordinances in the Church, for it is the ordinance by which we become members of the Church, are forgiven of our sins, and enter the path to the celestial kingdom.

"The priest's duty is to preach,

teach, expound, [and] exhort” (D&C 20:46). This means that a priest is called to teach others the principles of the gospel. And in order to teach the principles of the gospel, of course he must first learn what they are. This responsibility will be a great help as he prepares to serve a full-time mission.

He is to “visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties” (D&C 20:47). A priest does this as he fulfills his responsibility to be a home teacher and visits his assigned families.

He has the authority to confer the Aaronic Priesthood and ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons but only when authorized by the bishop or branch president (see D&C 20:48). The power to confer the Aaronic Priesthood is sacred.

Young Women and the Priesthood

Even though the authority of the priesthood is bestowed only on worthy male members of the Church, the blessings of the priesthood are available to everyone—and these blessings are the same for men and women, girls and boys, rich and poor. All of God’s children have the privilege of receiving the same saving ordinances of the priesthood.

As chosen daughters of God, all young women who have been baptized have also received the gift of the Holy Ghost. They have the right to seek and be blessed by spiritual

gifts, such as “the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth” (Articles of Faith 1:7). As young women live righteous lives and strive to serve others by receiving and developing these gifts of the Spirit, their example for good will be a strong influence on the young men around them.

How can young women help young men be worthy priesthood holders? One young man answered: “I think two of the biggest things they do are to dress modestly and be kind to everyone. The modest dress helps me keep my thoughts in check, and I can actually look at them while talking!”

Heavenly Father Will Help You

As you deacons, teachers, and priests come to understand and fulfill your priesthood duties, you will experience the joy that comes from administering priesthood ordinances, from serving others, and from inviting all to come unto Christ. In their message to Aaronic Priesthood holders, the First Presidency wrote: “Heavenly Father has great trust and confidence in you and has an important mission for you to fulfill. He will help you as you turn to Him in prayer, listen for the promptings of the Spirit, obey the commandments, and keep the covenants that you have made” (*Fulfilling My Duty to God* [2010], 5). ■



Even though the authority of the priesthood is bestowed only on worthy male members of the Church, the blessings of the priesthood are available to everyone, male or female.

MORE ON PRIESTHOOD DUTIES

Visit DutytoGod.lds.org for information, videos, and stories about priesthood duties and Duty to God.

GO TO THE MISSION HOME!

The morning after I returned home to Ghana from my mission in the Ivory Coast, I woke up at 6:00 a.m. My appointment with the stake president to have him release me was not until the afternoon, so I decided to sleep in. While I was falling asleep, an impression flashed through my mind: “Go to the Cape Coast mission home.” I knew the Ghana Cape Coast Mission home, but I had no idea why I needed to go there that morning.

After having these thoughts, I began to feel anxious about the impression, so I headed to the

mission home. On my way I worried about what I would say to the mission president. I knew he would ask me the purpose of my visit, so I tried to prepare a suitable answer.

When I arrived, I still did not know the answer. The mission president, Melvin B. Sabey, invited me into his office, thinking that I came there for him to release me. After asking a few questions, President Sabey told me to go to my stake president to be released.

“I know that, President,” I replied.

He paused for some seconds and

The mission president asked me the very question I had been striving to answer: “Why are you here this morning?”

then asked me the very question I had been striving to answer: “Why are you here this morning, Elder Mobio?”

“President Sabey, I don’t have a suitable answer to that question,” I said. “It’s just that this morning I had a strong impression to come here.”

He paused again for a moment and told me softly, “Elder Mobio, your presence here is the assistance I prayed for yesterday.” He explained that his assistants had just arrived with new missionaries. Among them was an Ivorian, the first French-speaking missionary he had ever received, and he didn’t know how he was going to communicate with him. Then he declared, “I am certain Heavenly Father heard my concern yesterday night.”

I had finally learned the reason for my morning impression. We immediately joined the new missionaries, and I interpreted for the Ivorian elder as he started his mission.

Seven months later I traveled back to the Ivory Coast to renew my passport and to share that wonderful experience with my mission president. He told me, “We are instruments in the Lord’s hands. He knows how and when to use us in His work.”

I know that if we immerse ourselves in the glorious work of Heavenly Father, we don’t need to worry. We just need to give heed to the promptings of the still, small voice and let the Lord guide us. ■

Felicien Dogbo Mobio, Ghana



I LISTENED THE SECOND TIME

I was drifting off to sleep the night before a trip when I received an impression to buy a rim and a tire for our 15-year-old minivan, which came without a spare. The next day I was busy and forgot about the impression. We loaded the vehicle with our three children and gear and headed to my dad's house four hours away.

On the way, a tire on the van blew. We had the van towed to the nearest town to replace the tire. It cost three times what it would have to buy a rim and tire at home, and we lost 90 minutes waiting. I gained an appreciation for the promptings of the Spirit and decided to better follow them in the future.

Four years and two more children later, we were again planning to visit my dad, who now lived 13 hours away. By then we had a different van, one that was 14 years old. About a week before leaving, I felt that I needed to replace the van's spare tire. Remembering my previous experience, I followed the prompting. A couple of days later I felt an impression to buy some ratchet tie-downs to use on some gear we had previously tied with ropes. I needed two but bought a case of four. I put the extra two in our emergency kit.

On the way back from visiting my dad, we stopped to buy dinner. As I was getting some items out of a container on the roof of the van, my three-year-old daughter touched the

sliding door. It fell to the ground! We were grateful the door didn't hit her. We were almost 500 miles (805 km) from home on a Friday evening, so I wrangled the door into place so we could be on our way, but it wasn't on the track and we could hear the highway as we drove. I pulled over again and used one of the extra tie-down straps to secure the door.

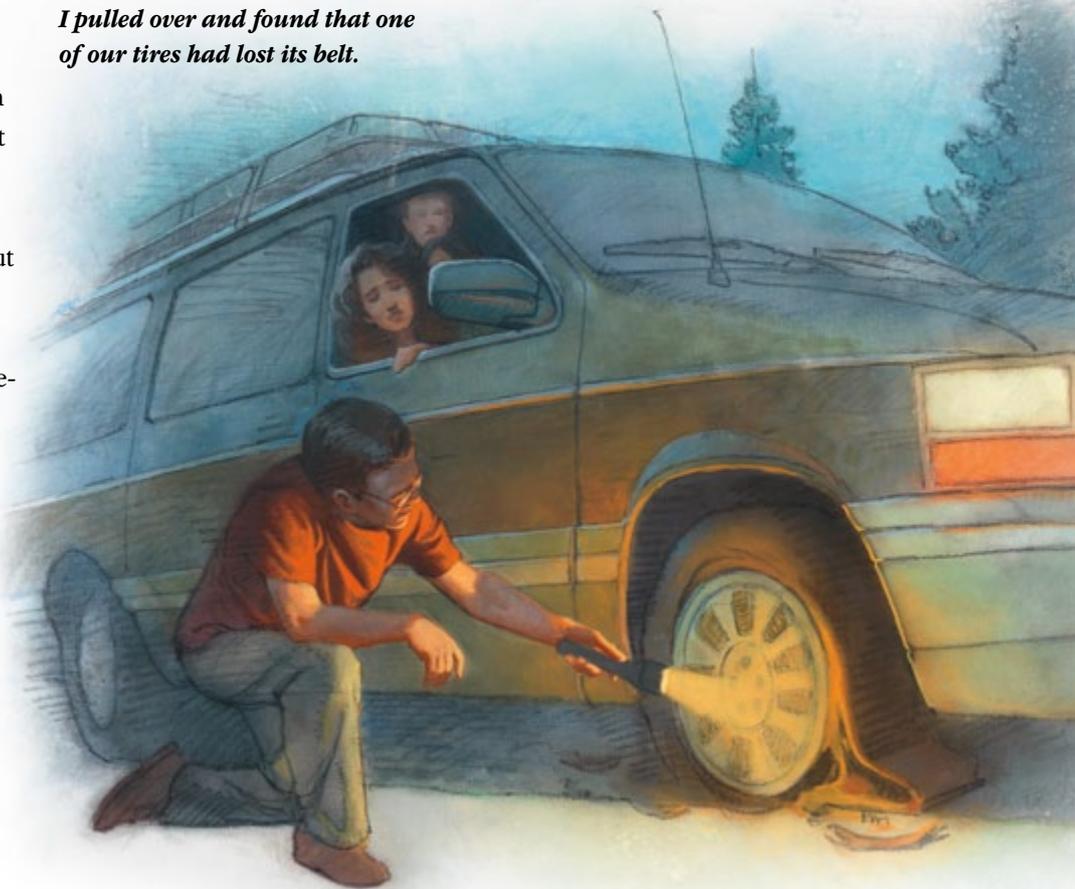
Several hours later the van began to shake violently. A loud banging came from the shaking door, but the strap held it in place. I pulled

over and found that one of our tires had lost its belt. I quickly replaced it with the spare tire I had bought a few weeks before, and we were again on our way.

I am grateful for the promptings of the Holy Ghost, which have kept us safe during our travels. I know Heavenly Father watches over us if we listen to the "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12; see also 1 Nephi 17:45; D&C 85:6), heed His promptings, and ask for help when we need it. ■

Matthew D. Flitton, Church Magazines

The van began shaking violently. I pulled over and found that one of our tires had lost its belt.



I WAS PLANTING SEEDS

In a business ethics class for my master's program at the Schiller International University in Heidelberg, Germany, each student was asked to do a 20-minute oral presentation at the end of the semester. The professor asked me if I would talk about ethics from a Latter-day Saint perspective.

I was baptized at age 18 and was called to serve a mission in Brazil a year later. Since then I continued

to share the gospel with many.

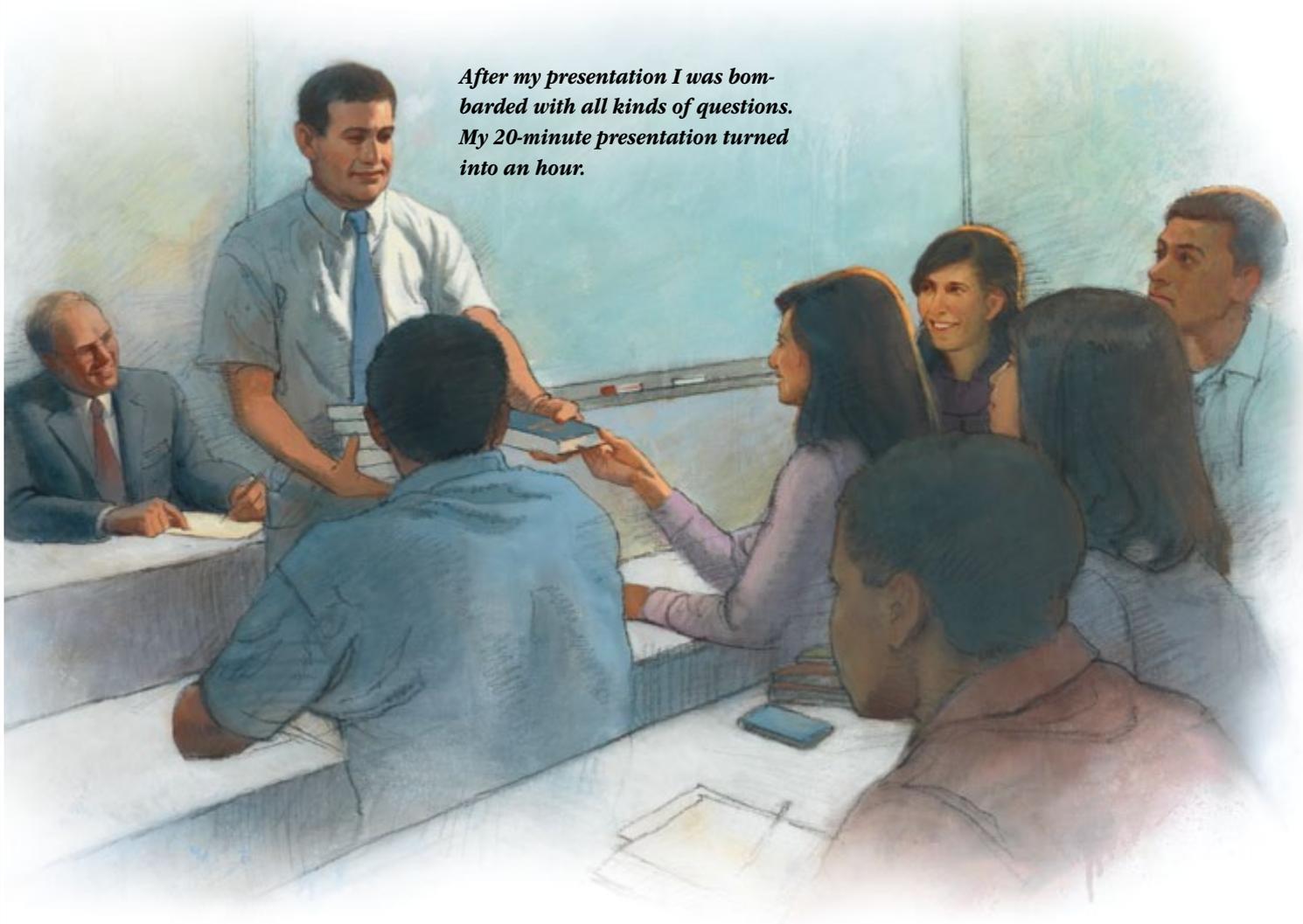
I knew it would be a challenge to discuss religious issues in the university environment, but I accepted the challenge. I decided to prepare a presentation covering information from Mormon.org.

My university has students from all over the world. My ethics class reflected that diversity, with 18 students from various nations.

The ethics presentations began with two students from India followed by a student from Myanmar. I was the last to present. I talked about “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the Articles of Faith, and other gospel topics. For most of the students, it was the first time they had heard about the Church.

I concluded with my testimony of the gospel and the importance of doing what is right despite the

After my presentation I was bombarded with all kinds of questions. My 20-minute presentation turned into an hour.



HOW DID YOU KNOW TO COME?

pressure around us. Finally I gave everyone a Book of Mormon in his or her own language. After my presentation I was bombarded with all kinds of questions. My 20-minute presentation turned into an hour.

The next school day, a friend from India told me he was impressed with my presentation and had read part of the Book of Mormon already. His friend, also from India, asked for a copy as well. Later a friend from Myanmar told me she was happy to hear about the Church, especially the teachings about families and the law of chastity because she believed those principles. She promised to read the Book of Mormon.

My friends from Ghana thanked me for telling them about the Restoration, promising that they would try to see the temple in Accra. My friend from Liberia told me my message was an inspiration to him and gave him hope for the future.

I was pleased that the Spirit of the Lord had confirmed my message. We may not always witness the impact of our words, but I know my class presentation will produce fruit in the future. I hope that some of the people in that classroom will someday accept the gospel and become instruments in the Lord's hands to spread the message of the Restoration to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people (see D&C 133:37). ■

Abel Chaves, Germany

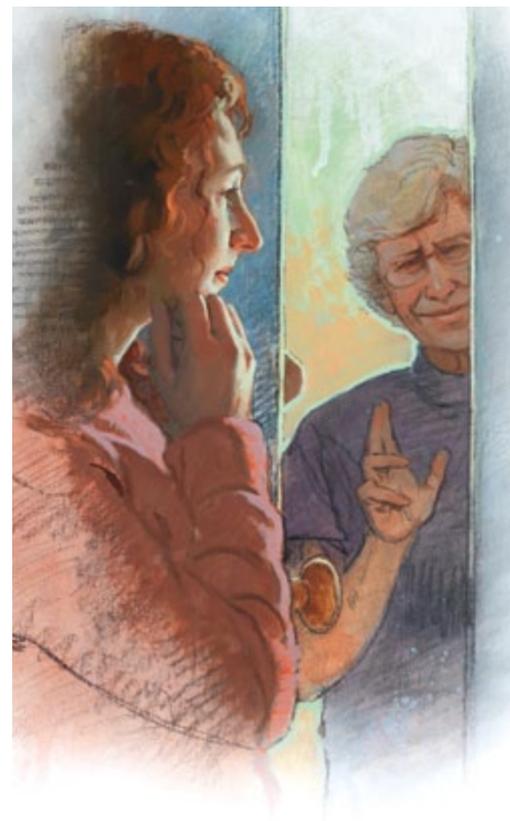
When I was 33 years old, my husband died of a brain tumor. Suddenly I was a single parent raising our three children alone. It was a challenging time in my life, but the Lord's counsel that "all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7) gave me the courage to go on.

Later I remarried and moved to a new ward, where I was called as the Relief Society president. One day while I was cleaning my house, I had the distinct impression to visit a less-active sister who had recently lost her husband. I brushed away the thought, thinking that I needed to do other things that day. I'm embarrassed to say I received the same impression two more times before I finally acted on it.

When I arrived at the sister's house that evening, it was dark. I rang the doorbell and waited. I knocked loudly and waited some more.

As I turned to leave, the porch light came on, and the door slowly opened. The sister hesitantly poked her head through the opening. I will never forget what she asked: "How did you know to come?" She told me she had spent the whole day crying and felt that she couldn't go on without her husband.

We talked for a couple of hours that night. I don't remember much of what we said, but I do remember telling her, "I truly know what you are going through." I assured her that



As I turned to leave, the porch light came on, and the door slowly opened. The sister poked her head through the opening.

time was her friend and that the Lord would watch over her. As we talked, I noticed that the grief-stricken look on her face had been replaced with an expression of peace.

At the end of our conversation, I gave her a heartfelt hug. I felt so thankful that I had been prompted to visit her. I knew that our loving Heavenly Father had allowed me to help Him help this sweet sister in her time of need. ■

Sherrie H. Gillett, Utah, USA

Gathering IN A *Unity* OF THE FAITH



Centers for young adults offer opportunities for gospel learning, social activities, missionary work, and activation efforts.



By Stephanie J. Burns

Barbara Matovu from Uganda. Sam Basnet from Nepal. And Elisabeth Olsen from Norway. Three different people, three different countries. Yet Barbara, Sam, and Elisabeth have all gathered in one place, the center for young adults in Oslo, Norway, under one truth: the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

These three joined the Church in Oslo, receiving the missionary lessons at the center for young adults. Facilities like the one in Oslo are dedicated to providing a place to socialize at activities, learn in institute classes, enjoy computer and Internet access, study for school, and even cook dinner.

Barbara moved from Uganda to Norway in 1998, when she was nine years old. Ten years later, while living in Oslo, two missionaries invited her to learn about the restored gospel, telling her that they could meet in the center for young adults. Barbara was skeptical, at best.

“I thought to myself, ‘Yet another youth center,’” she admits. “I had been to plenty of

places like that before, and I honestly never felt comfortable being in any of them.”

But this center proved to be different. “My mind was blown away when I took the first step into the door,” Barbara remembers. “I stood still for a moment, trying to figure out the feeling I had. I felt warmth and love. I felt assured that I was in the right place, with the right people, for the right cause.”

Gathering to the Centers for Young Adults

The initiative to build centers for young adults started in 2003. Centers expand the reach of institute by offering more than just religious education classes; young single adults also have opportunities to serve on a center activities council, work with full-time missionaries to help teach and activate their peers, and associate with a senior couple who keep the whole operation running. Local priesthood leadership, under the direction of Area Seventies, determines the creation of centers in their respective areas.

The first 4 centers were in Copenhagen, Denmark, and in Berlin, Hamburg, and Leipzig, Germany. Those initial 4 have since blossomed into 141 in 2011, in locations as diverse as Sweden and Cyprus. Many more are in various stages of development in other parts of the world, including the United States and Africa.

Gerald and Nancy Sorensen served at the



Above, from top:
Barbara Matovu,
Sam Basnet,
Elisabeth Olsen.



center for young adults in Trondheim, Norway. There they met young adults from countries all across the globe, including Afghanistan, China, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

“There were many languages, customs, and educational and religious backgrounds,” observes Brother Sorensen, “but all these young adults had a common bond in wanting to know more about their Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. As we got to know them and their personal dreams and challenges, it was easy to look at each one as a child of God. It was plain to see that God answered their prayers and guided their steps, showing His great love for them.”

President Armand Johansen of the Norway Oslo Mission feels that the young adults are being guided to the center for a purpose, including being trained for responsibilities in the future. “The Church in Norway is going to become more and more diverse,” he says. “The centers help the young adults know how to deal with that, to recognize how important the Church is as the common bonding element of all cultures and people,” says President Johansen. “I see the centers as great unifiers, places where you find a lowering of social barriers and biases.”



Young adults have opportunities to serve on a center activities council, work with full-time missionaries to help teach and activate their peers, and associate with a senior couple.

Becoming Unified in Christ

Barbara Matovu remembers the first time the missionaries brought her to the center for an activity to meet other young single adults. She thought she knew what to expect.

“Throughout my life I’ve always had a group that I belonged to,” explains Barbara. “And the groups were always stamped with something—you were the sporty group or the international group or some other group. So when people started coming into the center,





The initial 4 centers for young adults have blossomed into 141, with more planned for other parts of the world.

it was so strange because no one seemed to have the attitude of ‘I’m in the popular group, so I can’t talk to you.’

“At first, I thought, ‘Are they acting? Is this a show?’ But after a while I realized it actually doesn’t matter who we are or where we come from or which language we speak. The love of our Heavenly Father is for everyone. Usually it takes me a bit of time to find my group, but this time I felt like I didn’t need a group. I was just Barbara, and I could be Barbara for everybody.”

Elisabeth Olsen says she feels humbled to see her place in her heavenly family. “When you meet people from a different culture or society, it’s so easy to label them. I’ve learned to open up my eyes more and to see people through the eyes of Christ,” she says. “At the center we all have different cultural backgrounds, but we all have one thing in common: we want to be with Jesus Christ and God again.”

Becoming One but Not the Same

Some might be wary of the idea of unity because they think it must come at the cost of sacrificing individuality. “A lot of people are

scared of religion because they think that it makes us all the same, because we live by the same commandments,” explains Elisabeth. “But that’s not how it is at all. God made us all individuals. We may have the same beliefs, but we have different qualities and gifts, and that’s what makes us individuals. God wants us all to be different because we all have different missions.”

Sam Basnet has also fielded concerns from friends who believe religious rules are restrictive. “One friend told me, ‘If you go to church, you have to follow the rules of others,’” he reports. But Sam follows the standards of the Church because he has prayerfully sought personal revelation to confirm his actions.

And it’s by individually speaking to His children that God is unifying them, explains Sam. “God says that all nations and all tongues will worship Him” (see Mosiah 27:31), he says. “By meeting different people, I learn to appreciate different cultures. But experiencing such diversity also makes me feel that, yes, God has a great plan to unite us in peace.”

Arriving at the Ultimate Gathering Place

As much as these young adults appreciate the power of gathering to a center for young adults, these future leaders of the Church understand that it’s just the beginning. As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, one of the most important gathering places is the temple.¹

Sam has prepared to enter the house of the Lord by surrounding himself with good friends at the center. “By getting to know people from so many different places, it has helped me to feel positive about the world,” he says. “I want to be a good example for my friends, and this has made me more fit for God and more fit to enter His temple.”



STRENGTH IN KNOWING WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD

“There is strength even in our very diversity. But there is greater strength in the God-given mandate to each of us to work for the uplift and blessing of all His sons and daughters, regardless of their ethnic or national origin or other differences.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 664.

One month after her baptism, Barbara first started thinking about attending the temple while she was at a family home evening lesson at the center. After the lesson, she started asking questions.

“Having friends who understood what the temple meant for them helped me understand what the temple might mean for me. As they explained to me about the temple, I felt the Holy Spirit,” Barbara recalls. “I realized that all the places I’d been thinking about getting married—a nice church or the beach—couldn’t even be compared to the temple. From that moment the temple was no longer just a building. It was something I wanted to look forward to and a place to one day enter with my future husband.”

Elisabeth has also included the temple as one of her most important goals. “Whenever I get to travel to a temple, I just smile like I won a million dollars,” she says. “I know that God wants everyone to go there and receive all the blessings and gifts He has in store for us. Going to the temple and being temple worthy are true success. I can enter the temple and be the closest to God—the closest to home—as I can get on this earth.”

The celestial kingdom is, of course, the ultimate gathering place, one where Barbara doesn’t want any empty seats. “Christ says that it is only through Him that we can come to Heavenly Father, but He also says that one of the biggest things we can do in life is to serve one another [see John 21:15–17]. And serving one another is helping somebody come home to Heavenly Father, because you don’t want to go alone.” ■

NOTE

1. See David A. Bednar, “Honorably Hold a Name and Standing,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 97.

GATHERING ACROSS THE GLOBE

The centers for young adults of the Church are organized under the direction of priesthood authority, often at the Area Seventy level. As of 2011, centers were found in 3 countries in Africa, 28 countries in Europe, 7 states in the United States, and the Dominican Republic. For more information, visit with your bishop or branch president.



- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Africa | Denmark | Scotland |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | England | Slovenia |
| South Africa | Finland | Spain |
| Zimbabwe | France | Sweden |
| | Germany | Switzerland |
| | Greece | Wales |
| Central America | Hungary | |
| Dominican Republic | Iceland | United States |
| | Ireland | Arizona |
| Europe | Italy | California |
| Albania | Moldova | Georgia |
| Austria | Netherlands | Indiana |
| Belgium | Norway | Louisiana |
| Cape Verde | Poland | New Mexico |
| Cyprus | Portugal | Wisconsin |
| Czech Republic | Romania | |

“Sometimes I feel overwhelmed when I think about all the things I need to do to live the gospel. Where do I start?”

Life can be overwhelming when you try to do too much at once. For example, if you tried to go to seminary, school, work, the temple, and Mutual all in one day, you would feel overwhelmed. But if you prioritize gospel activities and plan time for them, you will make progress. Gospel activities such as seminary, prayer, and Duty to God or Personal Progress are some of the most important things you can do as a teen. Yes, they take some extra time, but you will be blessed for every sacrifice you make to be obedient.

To learn how to make time for these activities, seek inspiration through prayer and by thinking about how you spend your time. Sunday is a good day to plan gospel and other important activities for the week. It would also be helpful to discuss this question with your parents and Church leaders.

When you think about everything you need to do, remember that Church classes, programs, and activities are inspired—they will help you strengthen your testimony, keep the commandments, and prepare to serve a mission and be married in the temple.

As you try to be faithful in the gospel, the Lord will “prepare a way” (1 Nephi 3:7) to help you keep His commandments, even if you feel overwhelmed. Keeping the commandments will invite the Spirit into your life. And feeling the Spirit will let you know you’re on track spiritually.

Do the Small and Simple Things



The Lord isn’t looking for us to be perfect in all things yet, but He wants us to do as much as we are able. If that means starting with the basics like daily scripture study and prayer, He will be pleased with our efforts. As we are willing to live the gospel and do the small and simple things that are required of us, all the seemingly overwhelming things He asks us to do won’t be so overwhelming anymore.

Hunter D., age 17, Tennessee, USA

Live the Gospel with Your Family



It is very important to live the gospel together with our family. We can start living it with them through family prayer, family scripture study, family home evening, and doing family history. These basic principles are of great help in understanding deeply what the gospel of Jesus Christ can do in our lives.

Cherry O., age 19, Davao, Philippines

Do Your Best



I’ve learned that when you try to do everything, you can become stressed. If you just try to do your best each day, you’ll be fine. If you listen to the Holy Ghost and stay close to the Lord through prayer and scripture study, things will fall into place and soon you will be the person the Lord intends you to be. I tried to be almost perfect and I worried about not being good enough, but that isn’t what the Lord wants. Feeling inadequate and down on yourself is not of the Lord. So just give Him your best, and you will find peace and joy in your life.

Zandi C., age 16, Wyoming, USA

Seek the Lord's Help

Read the scriptures and pray daily. Seek to always be in tune with the Holy Ghost. Heavenly Father will help you live the gospel. Always seek His help. Ask His direction so that you can do what He hopes you will do. With each correct choice you make, you will feel the presence of the Spirit. That will make it so you desire to make more correct choices.

Thais S., age 15, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Trust in the Lord



The gospel is here to help us, not worry us. If we have trust in the Lord, then we can have trust in His gospel.

When you have trust, living the gospel will not seem so overwhelming because you understand why you are living it.

Charlotte R., age 15, Utah, USA

Focus on the Work at Hand



Don't think of all the things you need to get done in your lifetime; think of what needs to be done now. You do your best, and Heavenly Father will make it work. For example, while I was preparing to teach a seminary lesson about President Thomas S. Monson, I was wondering how I could keep seven kids (all of whom

are older than me) listening, learning, and interested. I decided to try and get as much participation as I could. It turned out fine! So just do your best at the work right in front of you.

Bethany F., age 15, Kentucky, USA

Gradually Improve

The Lord has said that He will give us doctrine "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little" (2 Nephi 28:30). We cannot expect to grasp the gospel all at once, but as we start with the basics—charity, faith, and hope—and as we study the scriptures, apply them daily, and pray always, we will gradually improve and find ourselves coming ever closer to Christ.

Riley C., age 16, Utah, USA



START WITH THE BASICS

"Great sculptors and artists spend countless hours perfecting their talents. They don't pick up a chisel or a brush and palette, expecting immediate perfection.

They understand that they will make many errors as they learn, but they start with the basics, the key fundamentals first.

"So it is with us.

"We become masters of our lives in the same way—by focusing on first things first. We all have a pretty good idea of the most important decisions we need to make—decisions that will improve our lives and bring us greater happiness and peace. That is where we should start. That is where we should place our greatest effort."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Three Choices," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 80.

NEXT QUESTION

"My brother has a problem with pornography. He is working with our bishop on it, so I want to support him, but it has affected my trust in him. How do I deal with this?"

Submit your answer by July 15, 2012, at liahona.lds.org, by e-mail to liahona@ldschurch.org, or by mail to:

Liahona, Questions & Answers 7/12
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

The following information and permission must be included: (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.



**By Elder
Neil L. Andersen**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

You Know Enough

Our conversion comes step by step, line upon line. We first build a foundation of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

More than 40 years ago as I contemplated the challenge of a mission, I felt very inadequate and unprepared. I remember praying, “Heavenly Father, how can I serve a mission when I know so little?” I believed in the Church, but I felt my spiritual knowledge was very limited. As I prayed, the feeling came: “You don’t know everything, but you know enough!” That reassurance gave me the courage to take the next step into the mission field.

Our spiritual journey is the process of a lifetime. We do not know everything in the beginning or even along the way. Our conversion comes step by step, line upon line. We first build a foundation of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We treasure the principles and ordinances of repentance, baptism, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. We include a continuing commitment to prayer, a willingness to be obedient, and an ongoing witness of the Book of Mormon.

We then remain steady and patient as we progress through mortality. At times, the Lord’s answer will be, “You don’t know everything, but you know enough”—enough to keep the commandments and to do what is right. Remember Nephi’s words: “I know that he

loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17).

We each have moments of spiritual power, moments of inspiration and revelation. We must sink them deep into the chambers of our souls. As we do, we prepare our spiritual home storage for moments of personal difficulty. Jesus said, “Settle this in your hearts, that ye will do the things which I shall teach, and command you” (Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 14:28 [in Luke 14:27, footnote *b*]).

Several years ago a friend of mine had a young daughter die in a tragic accident. Hopes and dreams were shattered. My friend felt unbearable sorrow. He began to question what he had been taught and what he had taught as a missionary. The mother of my friend wrote me a letter and asked if I would give him a blessing. As I laid my hands upon his head, I felt to tell him something that I had not thought about in exactly the same way before. The impression that came to me was: Faith is not only a feeling; it is a decision. He would need to choose faith.

My friend did not know everything, but he knew enough. He chose the road of faith and obedience. He got on his knees. His spiritual balance returned.

ILLUSTRATION BY ANNIE HENRIE



Some years after the blessing to my friend, I received a letter from his son who was serving a mission. It was full of conviction and testimony. As I read his beautiful letter, I saw how a father's choice of faith in a very difficult time had deeply blessed the next generation.

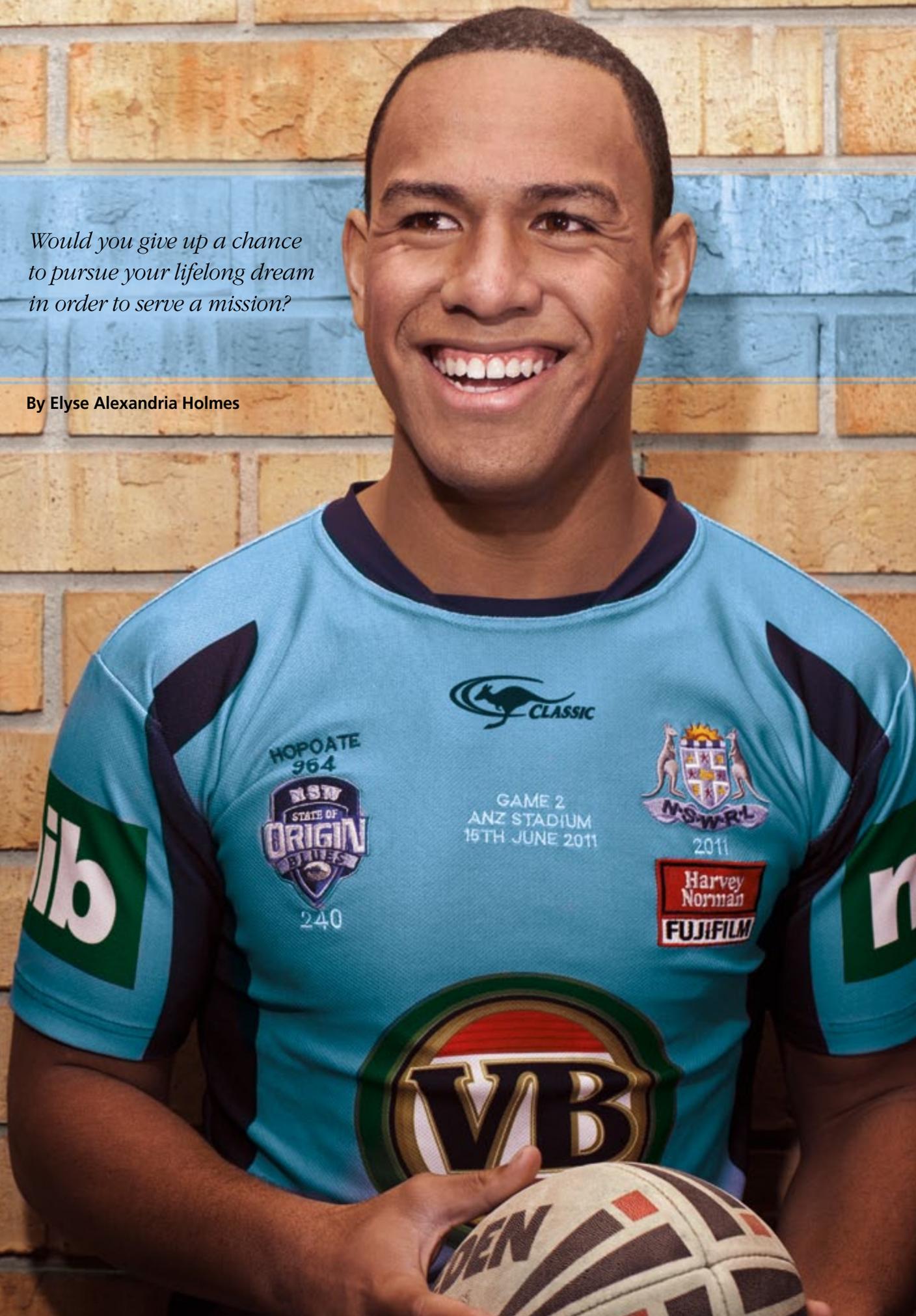
Challenges, difficulties, questions, doubts—these are part of our mortality. But we are not alone. As disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have enormous spiritual reservoirs of light and truth available to us. Fear and faith cannot coexist in our hearts at the same time. In our days of difficulty, we choose the road of faith. Jesus said, “Be not afraid, only believe” (Mark 5:36).

Through the years we take these important spiritual steps over and over again. We begin to see that “he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24). Our questions and doubts are resolved or become less concerning to us. Our faith becomes simple and pure. We come to know what we already knew. ■

From a talk given at the October 2008 general conference.

*Would you give up a chance
to pursue your lifelong dream
in order to serve a mission?*

By Elyse Alexandria Holmes



Time-Out for a MISSION

With sweat pouring down his face, Australian rugby star William Hopoate keeps his eye on the ball. His team, the Blues, representing New South Wales, is facing their rival, the Maroons from Queensland, in the biggest match of the year. After the first 20 minutes, Will's team is behind and has to catch up quickly. Will has a lot to prove because this is his first match with the team. He is also the youngest player on his team and the second-youngest player ever to play in the State of Origin series.

Will watches as the ball is passed to his teammate and then thrown toward him. He jumps up to catch it. Caught! With the ball in hand, Will sprints toward the goal line. With the defense right beside him, he hurtles down the field. Just a few more yards. At the very edge of the field, between landing the goal and going out of bounds, Will is nearly out of time. He pushes himself forward, leaps toward the goal with faith, and slams the ball on the ground. Everyone pauses for a moment. Did he make it? Then he hears the audience erupt into cheers!

Growing Up with Rugby

When Will was 4 years old, his parents enrolled him in the local rugby club. That may seem young, but even then Will loved “footy” (slang for “rugby”). By the time Will was 12, rugby had become more than a game for him and he was chosen to play on a junior league team. By age 16 he was playing for a junior professional league team.

In Australia, when players turn 20, they are old enough

to play professionally in an adult league. Even when Will was 18, offers came in left and right. He was a prime recruit. One team offered him a contract worth 1.5 million Australian dollars—an offer not made often to players his age. But that wasn't what Will saw in his immediate future. Will had decided to serve a mission.

Making the Mission Decision

When Will had to announce whether he was going to serve a mission or accept a rugby league contract, the decision was easy for him. “I set a mission in my mind and heart while I was in my youth, and I promised myself that I wouldn't let the worldly desires take over me,” he said.

The world may ask, What about the money? the contracts? getting to play rugby professionally—his lifelong dream? How would his life have been different had he accepted a professional contract? “It would have helped out my family financially. It would have set my future as well for the next few years,” he admitted.

So why didn't he accept the offer? “A mission is something the Lord requires of me, of young males in the Church,” he said. “It's a way to say thanks to the Lord for everything He has done for me in my 19 years here on earth. And at the end of the day, I don't think I would have been as happy if I had stayed. I made the choice to serve a mission because footy will always be there.”

Will's announcement confused and shocked many. In speaking of his nonmember friends, he said, “They don't understand the real reason I'm going; they just see me

walking away from the game for two years.” Will told them, “I’m teaching people about Jesus Christ and serving others. It’s something that I want to do.” After hearing Will’s explanation, his friends became more supportive.

Preparing to Serve

Will recognized that just wanting to serve a mission wasn’t enough. He knew it was important to prepare. One thing he did was go to teaching appointments with the full-time missionaries. “When the missionaries asked me to respond to questions, words seemed to come that I didn’t know could help the investigator understand a bit more,” he said. “And a few of the investigators they were teaching—whom I helped teach—have recently been baptized. It’s been a blessing for me to see that.”



Will is now serving in the Australia Brisbane Mission, but he didn’t leave rugby behind entirely. Even though he is not able to play, he serves as a missionary with the same fervor he has for rugby. Before his mission he said, “The same passion and motivation is there in playing rugby and serving the Lord. In sports you’ve got to work hard to find success. You can relate that to missionary work because I am working hard trying to find people who want to hear the gospel.”

Returning with Honor

Whenever a sports star leaves the scene for any amount of time, and especially for two years, people wonder, what will happen when he comes back? Will knows that by serving a mission, he could be giving up a lot, but he also knows he’s giving it up for something better. “I think it’s a great sacrifice, but it’s one that I’m willing to make,” he says. “Anything can happen, and two years is a fair break from the sport. Personally, I would like to come back and play footy.”

Even though playing rugby professionally has been his lifelong dream, Will recognizes the eternal blessings that come from serving a mission. “In rugby league, there’s always joy in winning and scoring, but that joy only lasts a few weeks or a few days. You can only cherish it for so long,” he explained. “Whereas a friend or investigator coming into the Church and seeing that the gospel can bless their lives forever can put a smile on your face forever.” ■



FROM THE MISSION FIELD



THE MIRACLE OF SPIRITUAL HEALING

By Elizabeth Stitt

One day when my companion and I went to visit a recent convert in Colombo, Brazil, the house was full of family members. It was crowded, but they still invited us to share a message. We were about to start when the convert's brother came in. He was not a member of our Church and was not happy about our visit. He seemed to find any way he could to contradict us.

He had a notebook of all the members of his congregation and their sicknesses. He asked us if we believed in the gift of healing. "Of course we do," we replied. "Well then," he continued, "I've healed all

the people in this notebook. How many people have you healed?"

We tried to explain the priesthood, faith, and how things happen according to God's will, but after a few moments, we felt like we had been cornered and attacked.

Then "in the very moment" (D&C 100:6) we needed it, the Spirit whispered what to say. I explained that while we do believe in healing, our work as missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was to bring spiritual healing to those we taught, which healing is available only through accepting the Atonement of Jesus Christ through faith, repentance,

baptism by immersion, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.

So while we believe in physical healing, we explained, the most important healing is spiritual healing. And that kind of healing was the kind we saw every day. It really didn't matter if people were healed physically if they didn't repent and change their lives to follow Christ.

As the Spirit guided us to respond in a calm manner, the tension in the room dispersed, the brother stopped trying to fight, and we were able to share our message.

Months later, after finishing my mission, I read this statement in the *Liahona* from John Tanner's missionary journal: "Conversion is the greatest miracle. It is even more wonderful than healing the sick or raising the dead. For while a person who is healed will eventually fall sick again and ultimately die, the miracle of conversion can last forever and affect the eternities for the convert as well as for his or her posterity. Whole generations are healed and redeemed from death through the miracle of conversion."¹

How grateful I am that the Spirit prompted two somewhat trapped missionaries to remember our purpose was the saving of souls. ■

NOTE

1. John Tanner, quoted in Susan W. Tanner, "Helping New Converts Stay Strong," *Liahona*, Feb. 2009, 21; *Ensign*, Feb. 2009, 23.

HUMBLY KNEELING

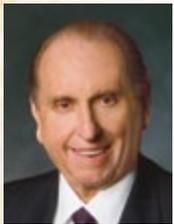
“Humble, trusting prayer brings direction and peace.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
“Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2007, 8.



Doctrine and Covenants 135:3

Before he was martyred, the Prophet Joseph Smith brought about many things to bless all humankind.



Fame and Name That Cannot Be Slain

“Although the events of June 27, 1844 [the Martyrdom of Joseph

and Hyrum Smith], were tragic, we are provided comfort as we realize that Joseph Smith’s Martyrdom was not the last chapter in this account. Although those who sought to take his life felt that the Church would collapse without him, his powerful testimony of truth, the teachings he translated, and his declaration of the Savior’s message go on today in the hearts of [Church] members throughout the world, who proclaim him a prophet of God.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “The Prophet Joseph Smith: Teacher by Example,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 69.

Gift and Power of God

Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon “through the mercy of God, by the power of God” (D&C 1:29) and “by the means which were before prepared” (D&C 20:8), including the Urim and Thummim.

3 Joseph Smith, the ^aProphet and ^bSeer of the Lord, has done more, ^csave Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. In the short space of twenty years, he has brought forth the Book of Mormon, which he translated by the gift and power of God, and has been the means of publishing it on two continents; has sent the ^dfulness of the everlasting gospel, which it contained, to the four quarters of the earth; has brought forth the revelations and commandments which compose this book of Doctrine and Covenants, and many other wise documents and instructions for the benefit of the children of men; gathered many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, founded a great city, and left a fame and name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord’s anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own ^eblood; and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in death they were not ^fseparated!

Seer

A seer:

- Is authorized to see with spiritual eyes “things which were not visible to the natural eye” (see Moses 6:35–38).
- Is a revelator and a prophet (see Mosiah 8:13–16).
- Knows the past, present, and future.

See Guide to the Scriptures, “Seer,” under “Study Helps” at scriptures.lds.org.

Has Done More

“The work in which Joseph Smith was engaged was not confined to this life alone, but it pertains as well to the life to come, and to the life that has been. In other words, it relates to those that have lived upon the earth, to those that are living and to those that shall come after us. It . . . relates . . . to the whole human family from eternity to eternity.”

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 13–14.

Sealed His Mission and His Works with His Own Blood

Read the lyrics to the hymn “Praise to the Man” (*Hymns*, no. 27) and then write in your journal your feelings about the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Editors’ note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verse, only a starting point for your own study.



WHERE WILL MY CHOICES LEAD?

By Adam C. Olson
Church Magazines

Could Karina change her direction by changing her decisions?

Karina's smile faded. She began to sweat—and not because it was unusually hot that week. She looked around for help. But in spite of the crowd at the open house, no one seemed to notice her alone with the reporter and all her questions.

Until that moment, 17-year-old Karina had enjoyed volunteering at the Kyiv Ukraine Temple open house. Now, with the newspaper reporter waiting expectantly, her tongue seemed stuck.

Karina was afraid that because of past mistakes she was trying to overcome, God wouldn't help her.

Where Following the Crowd Leads

Growing up in the Church, Karina had dreamed of a temple marriage. But like many teens, she craved acceptance.

She wanted to be beautiful and popular like her older sister. She dreamed of standing out and being admired, but she was afraid of sticking out and being ridiculed. Wanting to follow in her father's footsteps at the police academy only increased the pressure. Out of 2,000 students, there were only 70 women. She both enjoyed the attention and dreaded it.

In her desire to fit in, she made some poor choices. "The pull of the world was strong," Karina says. "People around me drank and smoked. They pushed and I gave in. I enjoyed being part of a group that felt so carefree."

She knew what she was doing was wrong, but she wasn't thinking about where her choices would lead as she followed the crowd away from God (see Matthew 7:13–14).

Choosing to Change Means Changing Your Choices

One day a young man she liked said he respected her church's beliefs.

Ashamed that she wasn't living those beliefs better, Karina finally stopped to consider the path she was on (see Haggai 1:5–7). She realized that her decisions were leading her away from God, the companionship of the Holy Ghost, and her dream of an eternal family.

The only way to change her direction was to change the decisions she was making each day.¹ But she wondered if she was already too far down the wrong path. Was it too late to change?

Karina decided to begin changing by praying and reading the scriptures daily. She started writing in her journal,



CHOOSE TO REPENT

"If the adversary should take you prisoner due to misconduct, I remind you that you hold the key that will unlock the prison door from the inside. You can be washed clean through the atoning sacrifice of the Savior Jesus Christ.

"You may in time of trouble think that you are not worth saving because you have made mistakes, big or little, and you think you are now lost. That is *never* true! . . . Repentance *can* heal what hurts, no matter what it is."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Counsel to Youth," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 18.

which helped her recognize Heavenly Father's help each day. She changed the topic if conversations turned bad.

Her most difficult decision was to choose no friends for a time rather than choosing friends with a negative influence. She began looking for friends with higher standards.

The Importance of Hope

Over the months that followed, the adversary threw doubt and fear in her face at every decision. Sometimes she wondered if the effort to follow the Savior was worth it. Who she wanted to be seemed out of reach.

But as she watched how her parents and others with strong testimonies lived, she learned that there is something more powerful than doubt and fear—she learned that because of repentance, there is hope.

"I saw it was possible to live the right way," she says. "We aren't condemned by our mistakes. Heavenly Father has given us the chance to repent and change direction."

Turning away from her old choices and trying to follow the Savior each day have taught her that Heavenly Father is patient. "He has given me one chance after another to change and become a better person," she says. "He has helped me through difficult times."

Help Is There If We Choose to Follow

Karina squared her shoulders and turned back to the reporter. Her smile brightened. Heavenly Father had done so much for her already that she knew He would help her now.

After the reporter finished asking questions, Karina smiled and waved. The reporter smiled back and walked away. Karina couldn't remember much of what she said, but she would remember for a long time how she felt, knowing Heavenly Father is always within reach of those who choose to follow Him. ■

NOTE

1. See Thomas S. Monson, "Pathways to Perfection," *Liahona*, July 2002, 111–14; *Ensign*, May 2002, 99–101.

A BETTER Example

By Shaneen Cloward

Our Young Women leaders decided that an overnight trip was just the thing to get us ready for camp. They chose the banks of the San Pedro River in southern Arizona, USA, to set up our practice camp.

After rolling out the sleeping bags, the other girls and I wanted to explore and get into the water. The leaders thought some discussions on safety and first aid should come first. So we all sat in a shady spot near the river for the lesson.

Paying attention wasn't easy when we could see the river shining in the sun. The breeze was playing in the cottonwood trees as Sister Brown (names have been changed) talked. We had all heard the lesson before, and I just couldn't understand why we needed it now. We knew all about putting pressure on a wound to stop

the bleeding, but there she was telling us again.

Before they let us go, the leaders repeatedly told us not to go in the river without shoes. "You never know what's in there, and you've got to protect your feet."

As I got to the edge of the river, some of the other girls were already splashing in the water. The water was brown with mud. It was less than a foot deep all the way across, and I couldn't believe that it was dangerous.

I decided to take off my shoes. I had brought only one pair, and I didn't see the sense in getting them wet and having soggy shoes all day. My two best friends, Martha

I wish we would have listened to our leaders' instructions, but we didn't think they applied to us.

The lesson of 10 minutes before began to sink in. The girls, who had been standing around Elizabeth and watching her bleed, elevated her foot and put pressure on the wound.

Elizabeth was taken to the hospital, where she was told that she had almost cut her foot in half. It required numerous stitches and would take a long time to heal. The next time I saw her she was using crutches.

I never thought I could or would ever convince my best friend to do something that would hurt her that badly. I had never seen myself as a bad influence before.

Now I'm trying to be a better example to my friends, and I'm more willing to listen to my leaders. They know what they're talking about. ■



LISTEN

"Please don't reinvent the moral wheel! Don't feel that you have to learn every tragic lesson in life personally.

"Listen to the words of the Lord. Listen to your leaders. Listen to your parents. Listen to the best that is within you. Above all, listen to the sweet, soft, undeniable whispering of the Spirit which will teach you all things."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "We Want the Best for You," *New Era*, Jan. 2010, 5.

and Elizabeth, both reminded me of what the leaders had said. I took my shoes off anyway and explained my reasons. Martha took hers off too. Elizabeth was more hesitant. I waded out into the water and with a sarcastic tone said, "Keep them on if you want to."

She sat down, took off her shoes, and ran into the water. After about five steps she stopped, turned pale, and calmly said, "Oh, no." When she pulled her foot out of the water.

I could see blood streaming out of a cut. She had stepped on a broken bottle.

The sight of blood made my brain go numb. Even though I had just been listening to a lesson on first aid, I had no idea what to do. I decided to run for help. Two others helped her out of the water.

I found Sister Brown and told her what had happened. She thought I was kidding. But when she saw Elizabeth sitting in the trail with blood gushing from her foot, she ran toward her shouting, "Put pressure on that cut!"

A TRUE Friend



By Sarah Chow

Based on a true story

"Thy friends do stand by thee"
(D&C 121:9).

The note was written on blue paper with zigzags drawn around the corners, so even though Jeremy handed it to her, Melanie knew the note was from Rachel. Melanie glanced around. Reading time was over, and her classmates were putting away their books.

Melanie knew how the note would start: "Dear Best Friend." She smiled to herself. She and Rachel had been friends since second grade. "We're still best friends, even though we're very different,"

Melanie thought as she unfolded the note.

**Dear Best Friend,
Do you smoke?**
—Rachel

Melanie was surprised. "Rachel and I are together all the time," she thought. "Doesn't she know I don't smoke?"

She wrote on the bottom of the paper:

No. I think it's gross. Why do you want to know?
—Melanie

Melanie handed the note back to Jeremy. Soon he passed it back again. Melanie read:

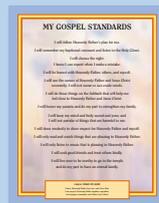
I snuck a pack of cigarettes from my aunt's house. Do you want to try some with me after school?
—Rachel

Melanie stared at the note. Then she wrote:

Rachel! Why do you want to smoke? It's bad for you! I know you like to try new things, but I don't want to see you get hurt.
—Melanie



One day I was at my friend's house, and there was beer in their refrigerator. My friend drank some and then offered me some. I told her that I don't drink beer. She asked me why, and I told her that my Church said we shouldn't drink it because it was bad for our bodies. I'm glad I didn't drink the beer. I'm also glad we have the Word of Wisdom to keep us healthy and safe.
Sarah C., age 8, Nevada, USA



"I will not partake of things that are harmful to me."

My Gospel Standards

Rachel wrote back:
A few cigarettes aren't going to hurt me. I might not even finish the whole pack.
—Rachel

Melanie felt like she was going to cry. She wrote:
You're my friend and I love you. Don't smoke.
—Melanie

Melanie watched Rachel as she read the note. Now Rachel looked like she was going to cry. She held onto the note for a long time. Then

she wrote back. When Melanie got the note, she read:
Thanks. I love you too. I won't smoke the cigarettes.

Melanie was grateful she had chosen to be an example. She felt relieved that Rachel had made the right choice. ■

Our Page



Nefi H., age 11, California, USA



WE WILL BE AN ETERNAL FAMILY

I am thankful that my father holds the priesthood, that he baptized me, and that we were sealed in the temple. I am happy because we will be an eternal family. I know that Heavenly Father lives and that the words of the prophets are true.

Ariana C., age 9, Peru



Thayná C., age 12, Brazil



Vimean M., age 7, Cambodia



I Like to Go to the Temple,
Nathan P., age 7, Italy



Brian C., age 7, Costa Rica



A VERY SPECIAL PLACE

I am nine years old, so when I went to the temple for the first time, I waited outside with my father. We walked around the temple to see how it was built. We visited the beautiful waiting room and enjoyed the peace and quiet there. We talked quietly about the life of Jesus Christ and His Apostles then and now. As I sat with my father, I felt that the temple is a very special place.

Raphael R., age 9, Switzerland



My Eternal Family, Camila T.,
age 7, Guatemala



Esteban A., age 11, Colombia



Rosteek Z., age 4, Ukraine



By Elder Per G. Malm
Of the Seventy

The Blessings of Hard Work

*“Let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power”
(D&C 123:17).*



When I was a young boy in Sweden, my father served as a counselor to several mission presidents. This calling required him to travel many weekends. He was an example to my siblings and me of the importance of serving the Lord, even when it means we must make sacrifices.

I also learned the value of physical work early in my life. During the summers I would ride my bike to a strawberry farm several miles away. I picked strawberries for many hours each day to earn money.

Our family had a summer cottage on a farm. It did not have electricity or plumbing, so we had to chop our own wood and carry water from a well. The farmer who owned the farm trusted me to sometimes take the cows to the barn for milking and to let them back out. We harvested and stacked hay and used horses to haul the hay bales to the barn.

My experiences with physical work and my father's example in devoting himself to the Lord's work helped me on my first mission. When I was only 16 years old, I was

called as a bricklayer for Church buildings in Sweden, Finland, Germany, and the Netherlands. I received many spiritual impressions during my service. I learned that honest physical work is one way to do what is right and, therefore, be in harmony with God.

It is an honor to receive an assignment and to report that you have done your very best to complete it. When we accept assignments and use our time and talents to build the Lord's kingdom, we will experience and see the blessings Heavenly Father has in store for us. ■

You can use this lesson and activity to learn more about this month's Primary theme.

I Choose the Right by Living Gospel Principles

Ramón jingled the coins in his pocket as he finished selling his chickens' eggs at the village market. He thought about the jar at home that held his tithing coins. On Sunday he was going to give the coins to the bishop. Ramón had a warm feeling inside. He was glad to pay tithing.

The market stalls were full of things for sale. Ramón saw a colorful shirt with the logo of his favorite football team. He pictured himself wearing the shirt, running down the field, and scoring the winning goal. Ramón looked at the price tag. He could buy the shirt if he spent all his egg money plus his tithing coins.

Ramón noticed the warm feeling was gone. He really wanted the shirt, but he knew Heavenly Father wouldn't want him to spend his tithing coins. Ramón started walking home. He decided to pay his tithing first. Then he could earn more money selling eggs until he could buy the shirt and pay his tithing like the Lord wanted him to. ■

JUST YOU

When we pay our tithing, we fill out a tithing slip. We put the money and the slip in an envelope and give it to a member of the bishopric or branch presidency. You can learn how to fill out your own tithing slip by looking at the picture below.

Tithing and Other Offerings	
Date	Ward or branch
Name (last, first, middle). Use the same spelling on all your forms.	
Membership record number	
Tithing	\$
Fast offering	\$

Besides entering your tithing, what else can you fill out on the tithing slip? Ask a parent about other ways you can donate to the Church.



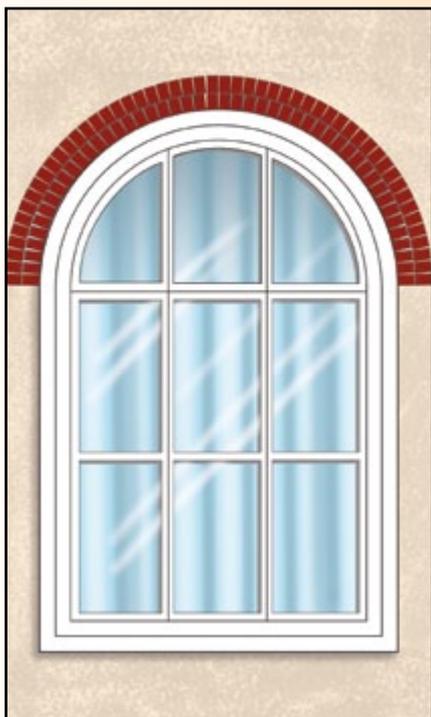
More faith

CTR ACTIVITY: BLESSINGS OF TITHING

Malachi was an Old Testament prophet who taught that when we pay tithing, the windows of heaven will be opened and blessings will pour down upon us (see Malachi 3:10). As a family, talk about what blessings you have received from following the law of tithing. Place a bean, button, or small pebble on the windows that represent the blessings you enjoy.



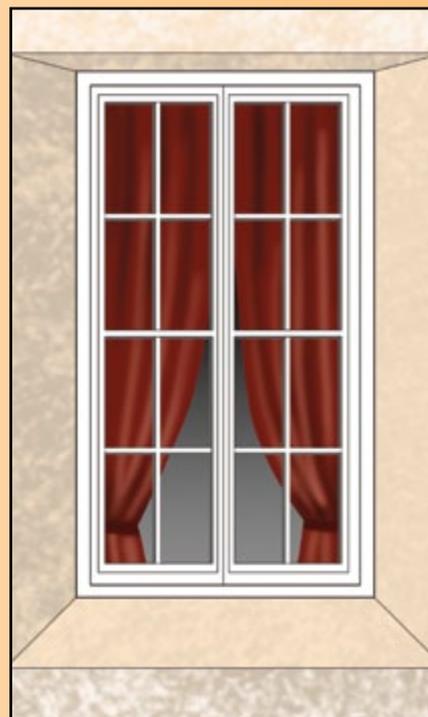
Stronger testimony



Trust in the Lord



Happiness in the gospel



Enough food



One of Carly's favorite things to do on the playground is scavenger hunts with her friends.



A **PLAYGROUND** for CARLY

By Chad E. Phares
Church Magazines

Carly W. from Rexburg, Idaho, USA, is a busy helper. At home Carly helps out by taking care of her family's cats, dogs, and chickens. Because

Carly is one of the best students in her class at school, she helps other children with math and reading. In Primary, Carly's singing helps other children to feel the Spirit.

Because Carly has done such a good job helping others, some of her friends decided to help her too.

Carly was born with a disease called spina bifida. This disease makes it hard for Carly to use all of her muscles. Doing things like walking on uneven ground and climbing up stairs can be hard for her. At school, Carly wasn't able to play on the playground because the playground equipment was hard for her to use. There were other children who also couldn't play on the playground equipment.

"Sometimes I felt bad and frustrated at recess because I couldn't play on the playground," Carly says.



Carly loves music. She is in a singing group and is learning to play the piano.

The rubber flooring of the playground makes it easier for Carly to walk on it.



Carly and Halli Jo (right) like to play with dolls, walk outside, and color together.

One of Carly's friends, Halli Jo, and Halli Jo's mom decided to earn money to build a playground that Carly and all the other students at the school could use.

Halli Jo, her mom, and a lot of other people worked to earn money for the new playground. It took a lot of work, but they were able to earn enough money to build a new playground that all the students could play on.

"It was a lot of hard work," Halli Jo says. "But it never made me sad to do the work—it just made me love Carly more."

Carly is happy to be able to play on the playground with her friends. She says, "I like walking up the ramps and going down the slides. Me and my friends have fun together." ■



MORE ABOUT CARLY

Carly likes to sing "Nephi's Courage" (*Children's Songbook*, 120).

Carly likes to eat chicken strips and sandwiches.

Carly sings everywhere she goes.

Carly makes friends easily.



One thing that helps Carly learn balance is riding horses.

The Little League LESSON

*"I have a fam'ly here on earth.
They are so good to me. I want
to share my life with them
through all eternity"*
(Children's Songbook, 188).



By Lindsay Stevens

Based on a true story

Why do I have to be here?" Lindsay whined. "You need to support your brother," Mom said.

"But it's so boring," Lindsay said. "Most of the time I don't even watch him."

Lindsay's little brother, Michael, had joined a Little League baseball team, and Mom took Lindsay to every practice and every game. Lindsay was bored the whole time. While Michael struggled to hit the baseball, Lindsay listened to music, read books, and drew pictures for her little sister.

Lindsay sighed and watched her brother stand in the outfield with his teammates. She watched him as he ran to catch a ball, missed it, and then threw it to the wrong person.

"Keep going, Michael!" Mom called. "You're doing great!"

"But, Mom," Lindsay said, "he's *not* doing great."

"That's why we're here, Lindsay," Mom said. "To cheer Michael on, especially when he does badly. If we weren't here and Michael felt like he was failing, he might stop trying. I want him to always try. Just like how I want you to always try with your art."

"No one has to cheer me on in art class," Lindsay said. "Michael doesn't come with me and shout, 'Great job!' when I mix the colors right."

"No, but he always compliments your art when you show it to us," Mom said.

Lindsay thought about that. She remembered how Mom had driven her to art classes and how sometimes Michael had to ride in the car, even when he wanted to play with his friends. She watched Michael in the outfield. The other team's batter had just hit the ball. It was going straight toward him!

"Come on, Michael!" Lindsay cheered. "You can catch it!"

Michael ran toward the ball and stretched out his mitt. He caught the ball!

Lindsay and Mom both stood up and cheered. "Great job, Michael! You're my favorite brother!" Lindsay shouted.

"I'm your only brother!" Michael shouted back with a huge grin on his face.

Lindsay sat back down, smiling from ear to ear.

"Maybe I should pay attention and cheer Michael on," she thought. "Watching him catch that ball was the most interesting thing that has happened all day. And he looked like he really cared that I was watching. I'm so proud of him."

"Mom, I think you're right," Lindsay said. "We should support Michael."

Mom smiled. "I'm glad you changed your mind."

"Let's cheer some more!" Lindsay said.

"Go, Michael!" cheered Lindsay and Mom. "You can do it!" ■



Strengthen your relationships with your brothers and sisters. They can become your closest friends. Support them in their interests, and help them with challenges they may be facing."

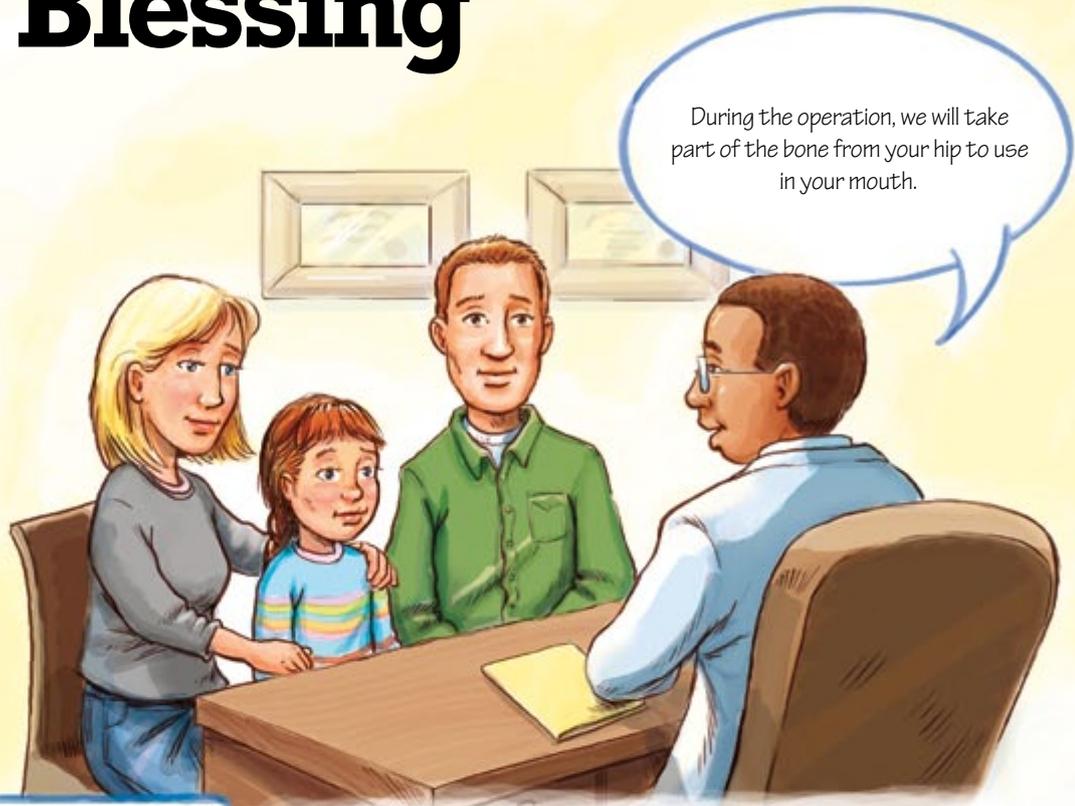
For the Strength of Youth (2011), 15.

Dana's Blessing

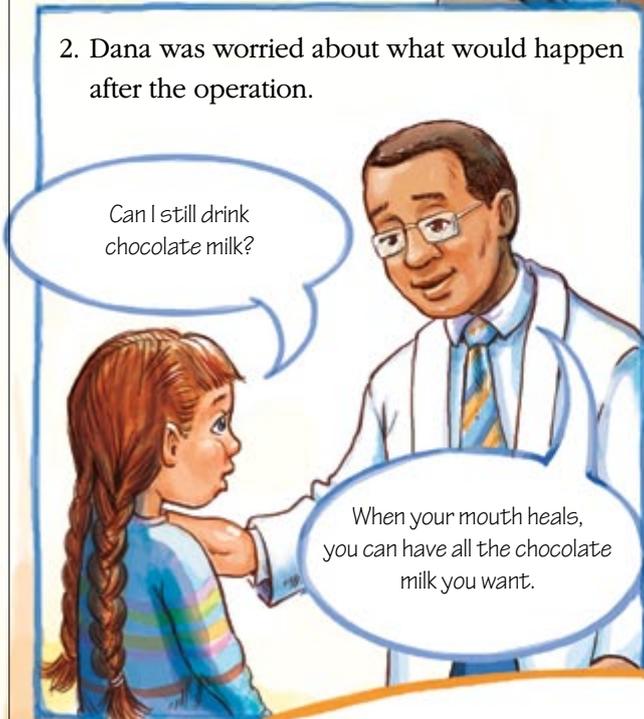
By Jane McBride Choate

Based on a true story

1. Dana was born with a hole in her lips and inside her mouth. She had already had four operations to try to fix it. Today Dana and her parents had an appointment with the doctor to talk about another operation.



2. Dana was worried about what would happen after the operation.



3. The night before the operation, Dana's dad and uncle gave her a priesthood blessing. Uncle Hyrum anointed Dana with consecrated oil. Then Daddy said the blessing.

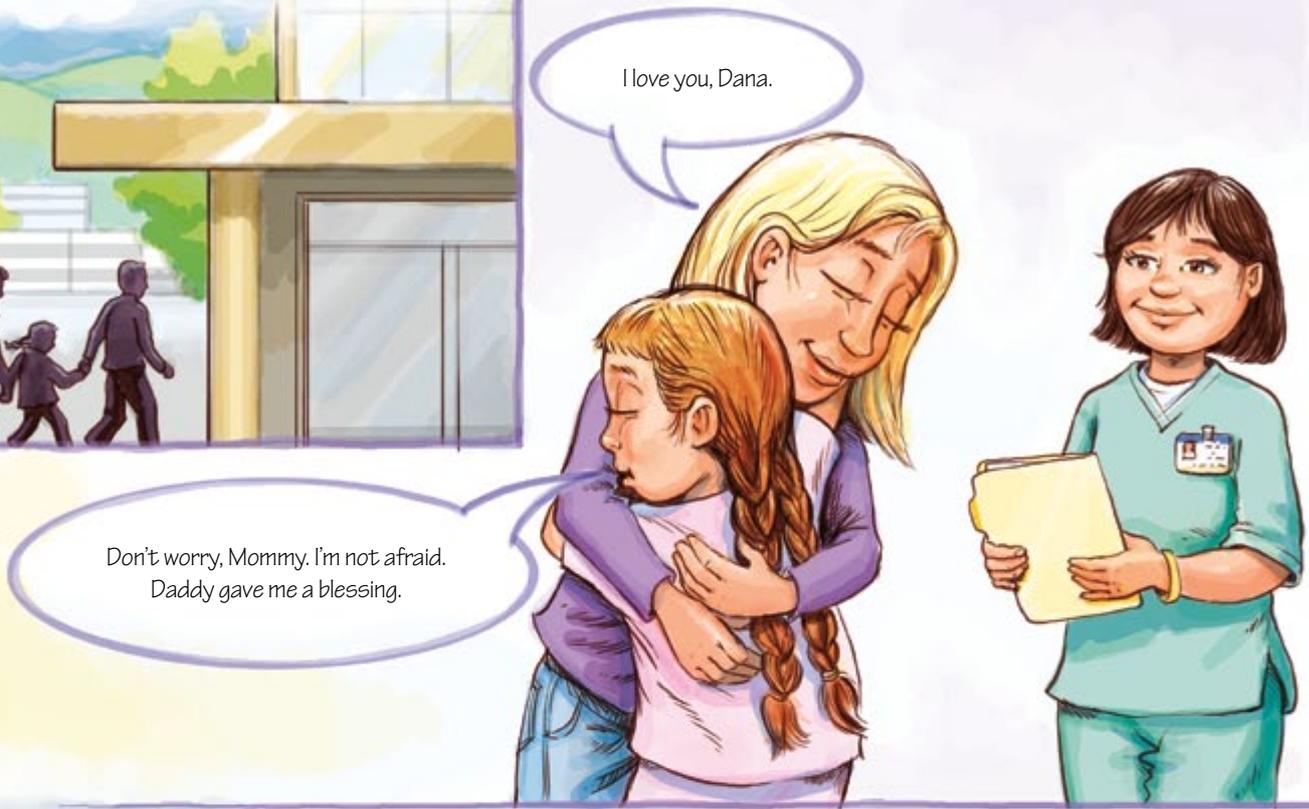


ILLUSTRATIONS BY SCOTT PECK

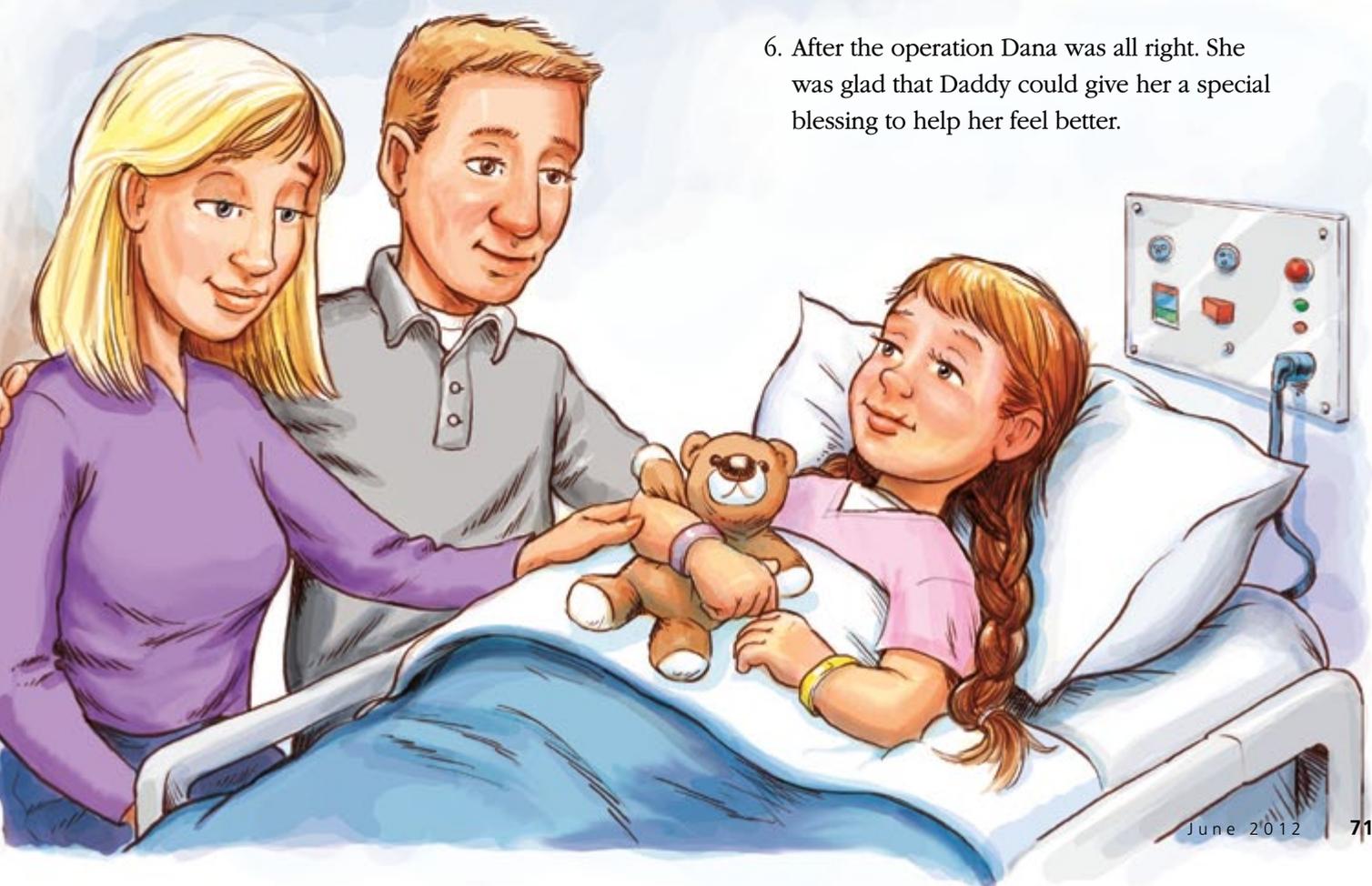
4. The next morning Mommy and Daddy took Dana to the hospital.



5. The nurse came to take Dana to the operating room. Dana gave Mommy a hug.



6. After the operation Dana was all right. She was glad that Daddy could give her a special blessing to help her feel better.





READY FOR BLESSINGS

By Hilary M. Hendricks

During a priesthood blessing we show our faith by being reverent like we are during a prayer. Circle the pictures that show good things to do during a blessing.

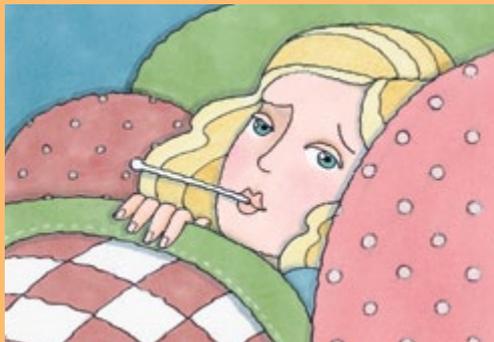
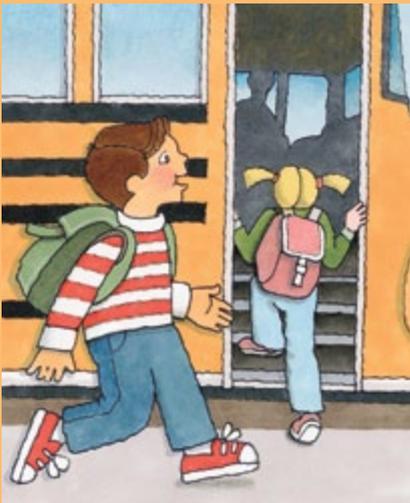


TIME FOR A BLESSING

By Hilary M. Hendricks

There are many kinds of priesthood blessings. You may have received a name and a blessing when you were a baby. You can ask for a blessing when you are sick, hurt, sad, or scared. Many children receive a priesthood blessing before school starts each year.

Look at these pictures. Why do you think these children received priesthood blessings?





I choose the right by living gospel principles.

“I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).

News of the Church

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

Church's Disabilities Website Released in Nine Additional Languages

By **Melissa Merrill**

Church News and Events

When lds.org/disability first launched in 2007 in English, it brought together information that had previously been scattered across handbooks, manuals, and other websites, making helps and ideas more accessible in a central location.

Now, during 2012, those resources (which include information about 10 different categories of disabilities and a variety of other helps) are being made available in nine additional languages: Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

This most recent launch will help families like the Varins of Paris, France. Raymond and Isabelle Varin had one son, Jérôme, when their second son, Jérémy, was born with Down syndrome. Although Jérémy's diagnosis was a shock to his parents—they knew very little about Down syndrome at the time—most of the Varin family's experiences related to Jérémy's disability have been positive. Brother Varin said that many

people have great affection for Jérémy, noting that members of the Church have been particularly kind in surrounding him and showing him love and appreciation.

He believes the website will help foster those kinds of attitudes. "It can help Church leaders and teachers understand disabilities and how to adapt and manage situations," he said.

But the site is equally important for people with disabilities and their families, he said—not so much as a way to inform but

as a source of encouragement.

"This site is important for families who have a member with a disability because of the support it offers," he said. "It gives you the perspective of the experience and testimony of others, which can allow for a more positive view of the future. For all these reasons it is important that this information be available in different languages."

Elder Keith R. Edwards of the Seventy, who advises Disability Services for the Church, agrees.

"Members with disabilities, their families, and caregivers will recognize that we are all working together for one purpose—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man—and that purpose requires that we

The Church's Disabilities Site will be available in 2012 in 10 languages: Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean (shown here), Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.



be of ‘one heart and one mind,’” Elder Edwards said (see Moses 1:39; 7:18). “People will know and understand where they can go for help and will recognize that when the Lord’s Church is working the way it should, no one has to fight his or her battle alone.”

Fatima Alves of Portugal, who has spina bifida, found that the website has helped her realize exactly that: she is not alone.

“It is important to me that the Church has a website to help people with disabilities so that we feel united as Church members. It’s helpful to know that the Church is concerned and has a desire to help and support people in special situations,” she said.

The release of the site is one of several efforts the Church is making to reach all members of the Church, said Elder Edwards.

“Part of our ‘charge’ from the Lord is to provide the gospel to everyone in such a manner that he or she can understand and take full advantage of it,” Elder Edwards said. “We are anxious not to overlook any segment of the Lord’s children in providing meaningful gospel opportunities.

“The website not only will assist the individual but also is designed to help leaders know how to help or where they can go for assistance in helping serve with members who have disabilities,” he continued.

Of course, the website is not intended to replace individual,

personal interaction among Church members.

“Over the years we have had varying degrees of success in dealing with special needs in the Church,” said Elder Edwards. “The success has come in large measure when individuals have determined within themselves to make a difference. The key to helping all—whether they have a disability or not—is to love them and seek direction from the Spirit in reaching out and helping.

“We have all been charged to love our neighbor as ourself (see Matthew 19:19). The Church is simply providing another avenue of assistance in helping us understand and be successful in our desire to assist in the work of the Lord.” ■

In all of the languages in which the site has been published, several features are included:

Disability List: This portion of the site offers disability-specific information in 10 categories and offers ideas for how to help someone with each disability.

Families: This part of the website, which includes information tailored for family members of children with disabilities, offers suggestions for strengthening families.

Questions and Answers: Here, readers can find answers to commonly asked questions in four categories: how-to, doctrines and policies, resources, and statistics.

General Information: This section provides an overview of the site and points out that while sometimes people react negatively to disabilities, learning about a person’s situation can increase understanding and acceptance.

Leaders and Teachers: This section of the site reminds leaders and teachers of things to keep in mind when working with members with disabilities.

Scriptures and Quotes: This collection of scriptures and prophetic statements is meant as a source of encouragement, comfort, and hope for people in difficult situations.



Prophets.LDS.org Features New Biographies of Living Apostles

New biographies of members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles began being published in February on prophets.lds.org, under the section titled “Meet today’s prophets and apostles.” Biographies of the members of the First Presidency have been available on the site since October 2011. The biographies will be translated into multiple languages throughout the year as resources permit. Most of the information was previously published in the *Liahona* in various languages.

“Learning about their childhood, student years, family life, and careers prior to their calls to the apostleship will help us see the hand of the Lord in their lives and will serve as another witness of how He calls and magnifies ordinary men and women to serve in the kingdom,” said Elder Paul B. Pieper of the Seventy. The biographies will include information and stories of each leader’s life, but most of all, they will show how the Lord prepared them to serve. ■

Conference Notebook Gives Readers Look at Conference Highlights

A new, regular section of the *Liahona* and *Ensign* magazines—Conference Notebook—will help readers study and apply teachings from recent conference addresses given by today’s living prophets and apostles.

Begun in January 2012, the section will appear in eight issues throughout the year—with one notebook for every month other than the May, June, November, and December issues. May and November will feature the conference addresses themselves.

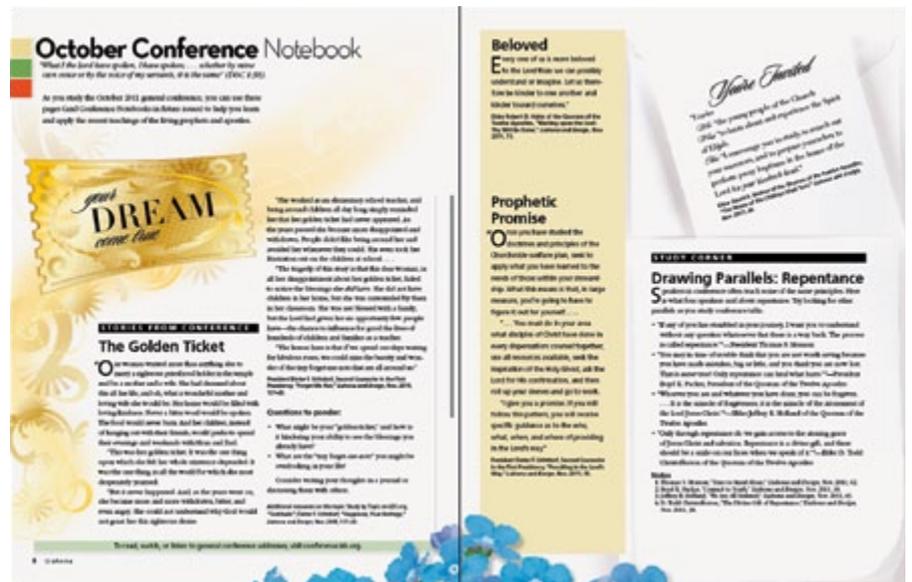
In addition to including short summaries, colorful illustrations,

study tips, and related scriptures, Conference Notebook will feature simple activities. It will also include member stories or gospel questions answered by conference addresses.

While some Conference Notebook features are designed to remind readers of addresses given in recent general conferences, other features will help prepare readers for upcoming conference sessions.

Each Conference Notebook section will be one to four pages long and will take the place of the regular Small and Simple Things section of the *Liahona* and *Ensign* magazines. ■

The new Conference Notebook section of the *Liahona* and *Ensign* helps readers remember conference highlights in the months following general conference.



Elder Nelson Meets with Saints in Central America

By Jose Peña

Liahona Correspondent

In January, while on assignment from the First Presidency, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles traveled to Central America to train priesthood leaders and instruct local members.

El Salvador

On Saturday, January 14, Elder Nelson met with priesthood leaders from around El Salvador in a meetinghouse on the grounds of the San Salvador El Salvador Temple. He was accompanied by Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy; Elder Enrique R. Falabella of the Seventy, President of the Central America Area; Elder Carlos Rivas, Area Seventy; Walter Ray Petersen, temple president; and David L. Glazier, El Salvador San Salvador Mission president.

Elder Nelson instructed leaders on ministering and the importance of being shepherds in Israel. He emphasized studying the scriptures and using the Holy Ghost as a constant guide. He also spoke of the blessing of the new LDS edition of the Bible in Spanish.

The next day, Elder Nelson, accompanied by his wife, Wendy, and Elder Rivas, presided over the San Salvador El Salvador La Libertad Stake conference.

In his remarks, Elder Nelson invoked an apostolic blessing upon the members and leaders of El Salvador who live the gospel and are faithful to their covenants.

Nicaragua

Then, on January 18, 2012, Elder Nelson met with members in Nicaragua, accompanied by Elder Enrique R.

Falabella and Elder James B. Martino, both of the Seventy.

He urged members to increase in holiness and to continue working on their family history records. "I promise you that when you are ready, the Lord will do His part so that you have a temple," he said.

We should cultivate in ourselves attributes of the Savior, Elder Nelson said, beginning with love.

"We can learn to love through service," he said. "Another attribute is to pay attention to the ordinances: baptism and the sacrament. They relate to the Crucifixion of the Savior."

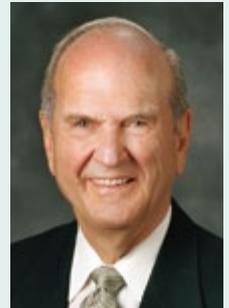
Other habits Elder Nelson said members should cultivate are to pray as the Savior prayed and to acquire knowledge through scripture study. "Read the scriptures to your children, develop love for [the scriptures], and I assure you, you will come to feel joy as you apply [what you learn] in your lives," he said.

Finally Elder Nelson said, "Cultivate perseverance; persevere to the end. Jesus Christ suffered more than anyone else and did not give up. He trusted His Father to the end. Remember this when you have to face the challenges of life."

In closing, Elder Nelson expressed gratitude for the faith, devotion, and tithes and offerings of the members in Nicaragua, and he testified of the Atonement.

"Our Lord's Resurrection assures us and opens the door to eternal life through faith and repentance, if we endure to the end," he said.

To find more about Church leaders, their teachings, and their ministry, visit news.lds.org and prophets.lds.org. ■



While visiting members in El Salvador and Nicaragua, Elder Russell M. Nelson commended those who live the gospel and are faithful to their covenants.

Improved Site Helps Young Men Fulfill Their Duty to God

The Duty to God website (DutytoGod.Lds.org) has been updated and is now an interactive online tool that more effectively helps young men create, track, and save their progress in the Duty to God program.

Deacons, teachers, and priests can now view the entire *Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders* booklet online in 50 languages, and by signing in with their LDS Account, they can create journal entries to chronicle their advancement through the program. The complete online booklet also includes all of the learning activities and links to scriptures and other resources.

Youth Site to Expand Free Music Offerings

The music section of youth.Lds.org is expanding its offerings of free, downloadable music with songs by more contemporary artists from past Especially for Youth (EFY) media. The additions began in February, and a total of 30 songs will be added at the rate of one per week.

The site is available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish, and plans are in the works to provide more songs in Portuguese and Spanish. Currently, one song on the site—Jenny Phillips’s “Strong and Courageous”—is available in Portuguese and Spanish. ■



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHELLE SÁ, MACAPÁ BRAZIL AMAPÁ DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Fifty Mormon Helping Hands volunteers worked on Saturday, January 21, 2012, to clean, weed, and revitalize the state school Maria Ivone de Menezes in Macapá, Brazil.

Mormon Helping Hands Revitalizes State School in Macapá, Brazil

Approximately 50 Mormon Helping Hands volunteers—including members of the Church, their friends, and Latter-day Saint missionaries—mobilized on Saturday, January 21, 2012, to help clean, weed, and otherwise revitalize Maria Ivone de Menezes, a state school in Macapá, Brazil.

The activity, coordinated by the school board and organized by the Macapá Brazil Amapá District’s public affairs director, Kleber Sainz, drew attention and coverage from several local media outlets. The school’s director, Adelia Danin, assisted in the project. “We were delighted with the generous contribution [the Church] gave us,” she said. “We will always keep the memory of it with us.”

New Triple Combination Published in Russian

A new triple combination edition of the scriptures featuring the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price bound together in one volume is now available in Russian.

The new volume is available immediately from local Church distribution centers, from store.Lds.org, online at scriptures.Lds.org, and on the Gospel Library mobile application. This edition brings the number of publication languages for the triple combination to 44.

To read more of these and other stories, visit news.Lds.org. ■

In the Language That Our Mothers Spoke to Us

I appreciated the article “To Every Tongue and People” by Lia McClanahan in the October 2011 *Liahona*. It reminded me what a special blessing it is to be able to study the words of God in the same language that our mothers spoke to us. This article also provided me with an opportunity to share the gospel and my love for the Book of Mormon with a dear friend of mine in Slovenia. Thank you!

Alan Embree, Italy

Strength amid My Trials

Amid my trials, I have found strength in the testimonies, experiences, and the messages that I find in the *Liahona*. Each month when we receive the magazine, my husband and I read the First Presidency Message for family home evening. We share our comments and what we have learned. I know that Heavenly Father loves me. He answers my prayers. I know that He listens to me.

Martita de Hernandez, El Salvador

Please send your feedback or suggestions to liahona@ldschurch.org. Submissions may be edited for length or clarity. ■

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



“Fasting Strengthens Us Spiritually and Temporally,” page 10: Read the article, sharing the points illustrated on the second page. Point out that fasting includes more than going without food—it should be accompanied by prayer, testimony bearing, and fast offerings. You may wish to ask family members how they have been blessed by fasting. Also consider sharing the Old Testament account found in Esther 4.

“Acting On Promptings,” page 20: Read or summarize the sidebar “Eight Purposes of Revelation.” Then read the stories in the article one at a time and discuss the purpose of the revelation in the story. Encourage family members to pay attention this week to when and how they feel the

Spirit. You may want to follow up the next week to discuss what they learned.

“Where Will My Choices Lead?” page 56: Read or summarize the story; then read President Boyd K. Packer’s quote. Remind family members that if they have made mistakes, they can choose to change.

“The Little League Lesson,” page 68: You may want to start by singing “Families Can Be Together Forever” (*Children’s Songbook*, 188). Read the story as a family. Why is it important for us to show support for our family members? How can your family be more supportive of one another? ■



Love and Light at Family Home Evening

When I was a recent convert and living in Colombia, a very special family from my ward invited me to family home evening. It was the first time I had attended home evening, and the spirit of love and faith I found there surprised me.

Once everyone had gathered together, we had a prayer and then shared what we had done during the past week. After we talked, we had an activity.

With the lights turned off, we wrote certain phrases onto colored paper hearts. When we had all finished, we turned on the lights and displayed what we’d written. Some had done not so well, some terribly, and others like me wrote with much difficulty; I think my writing was the worst of all. Of course, the lesson was very clear: when we don’t have the light of the gospel in our lives, everything looks dark, is distorted, and difficult.

This lesson reached me deeply. And in the years since that day, I have tried to ensure my life has taken a course filled with gospel light especially so that I can be an example to my children. ■

Dina del Pilar Maestre, California, USA

A VOICE OF THUNDER, A VOICE OF SILENCE

By Kristin Boyce

I had been on my mission only a few weeks when I was awakened in the middle of the night by a rumbling sound. It started in the distance and grew louder as it approached. Soon our entire house was shaking. Fairly quickly the pounding ceased, and the roaring sound faded. Fortunately my companion had warned me that earthquakes were common. Since everything seemed fine, I rolled over and soon went back to sleep.

Several weeks after my middle-of-the-night wake-up, I heard people talking about an earthquake earlier that morning. I wondered what was wrong with them, since I hadn't heard or felt anything. Confused, I finally asked when the "earthquake" had occurred. Realizing that I was exercising or showering at the time mentioned, I couldn't believe it had really happened. The first earthquake had woken me up, so surely if there had been another when I was awake, I would have noticed.

But this was just the first of many supposed earthquakes. I never felt them, so I wondered if people were confused as to what an earthquake was like.

After eight months of what I thought were pretend earthquakes, my Sunday School teacher paused midsentence to say, "Feel that? There was an earthquake." Everyone nodded in agreement—except me. I didn't understand. There was no rumble or roar. My chair didn't

shake. The walls didn't rattle. How could there have been an earthquake?

Then I tried to remember what I had felt when the teacher mentioned the earthquake. It was an ever-so-slight dizziness—almost as if I had just spun around. Could that subtle feeling be an earthquake?

Because of my teacher, I started to be

aware and to know that the supposed earthquakes were real. I realized that I hadn't felt them when I was exercising or showering or sleeping because they were just a subtle shake. But gradually I became more aware of a dizzy feeling or a slight sway, recognizing it as evidence of an earthquake.

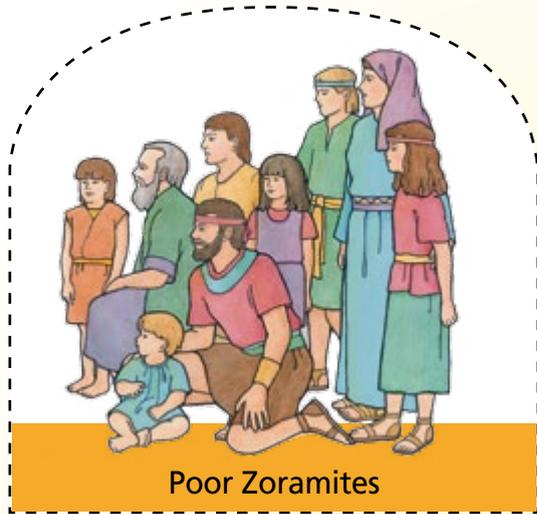
Later in my mission, I had a new missionary as a companion. One day when we were teaching, a woman said, "Oh, an earthquake," and I agreed. My companion looked at us as if we were crazy.

But I pointed out the slight sway of the hanging lamp and assured her that with time she too would feel the subtle shifting of the earth.

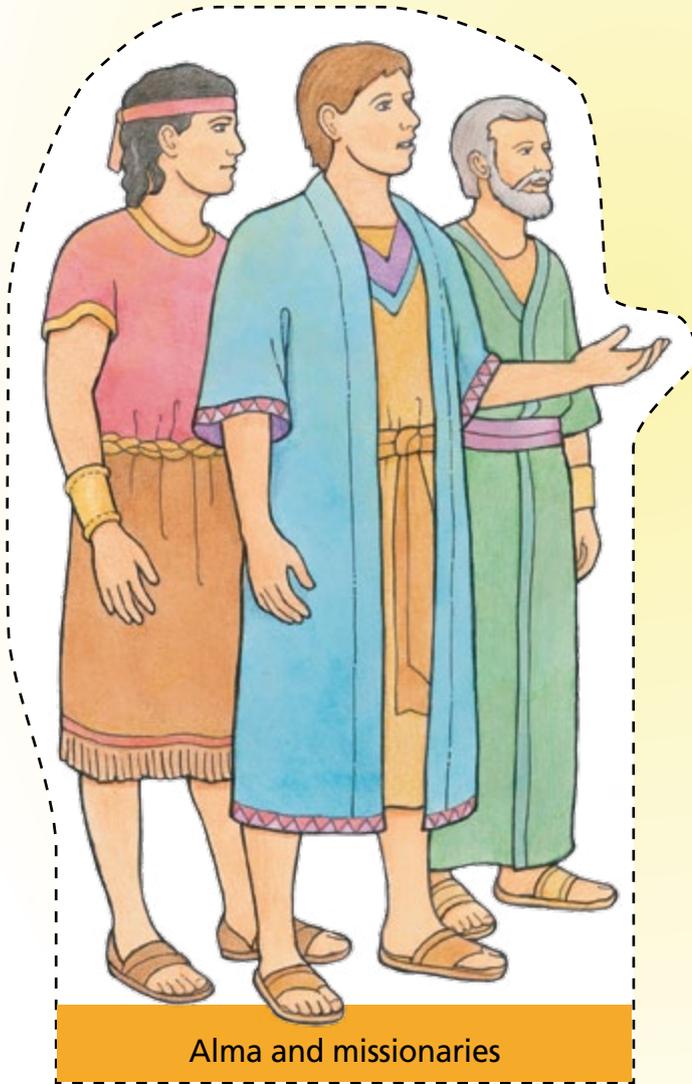
I'm so grateful for what earthquakes taught me about recognizing the Spirit. There are times when the Spirit is undeniable, a voice of thunder piercing our souls. Yet more often, the Spirit is a silent whisper, a new thought, an impression, a subtle feeling of something to do or say (see Helaman 5:30). If we notice only the strong soul shaking, we miss many of the sweet impressions of the Spirit. We may sometimes need others to point out the feelings of the Spirit so we can focus our attention and fine-tune our perceptions. When we do, we find an entirely new world of awareness and wonder. ■



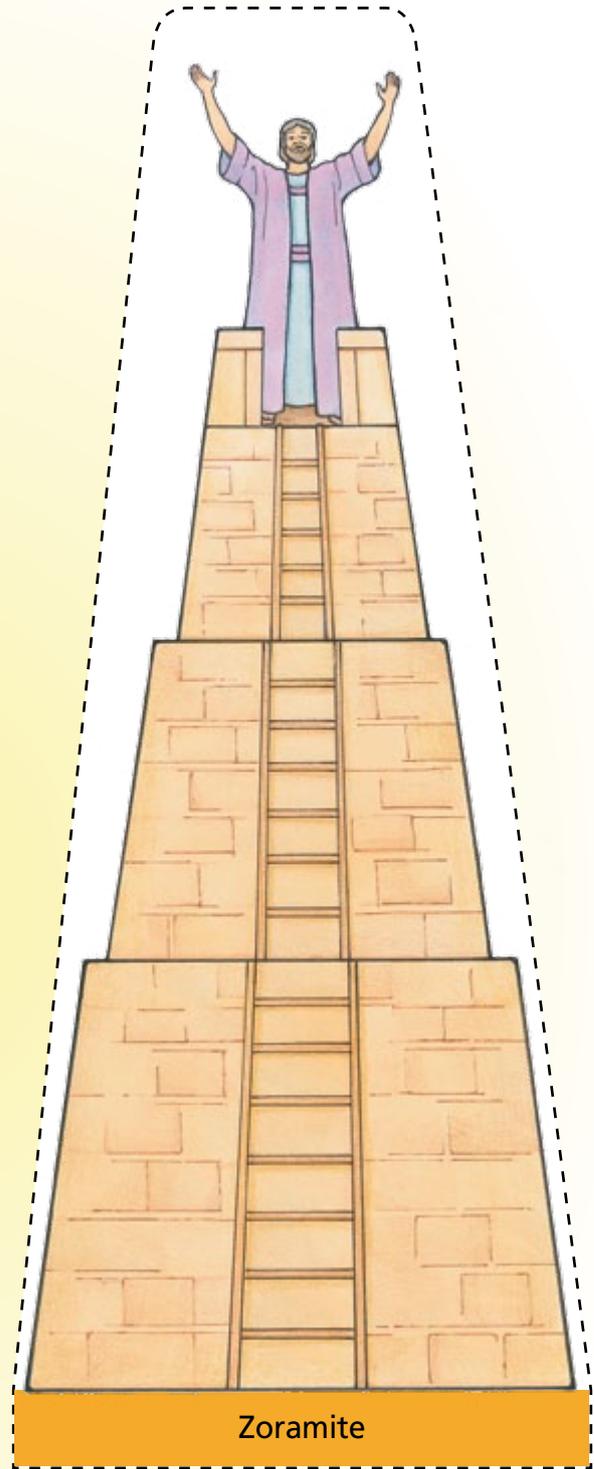
How could others feel earthquakes when I was oblivious to them? The answer taught me about more than just seismology.



Poor Zoramites



Alma and missionaries



Zoramite

The Zoramites and the Rameumptom
Alma 31–32; 35

This year many issues of the *Liahona* will contain a set of Book of Mormon scripture figures. To make them sturdy and easy to use, cut them out and glue or tape them to cardboard, heavy paper, small paper sacks, or craft sticks. Store each set in an envelope or bag, along with the label that tells where to find the scripture story that goes with the figures.



“Authority in the priesthood comes by way of ordination;” writes President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “power in the priesthood comes through faithful and obedient living in honoring covenants. It is increased by exercising and using the priesthood in righteousness.” See “The Honor and Order of the Priesthood,” page 28.