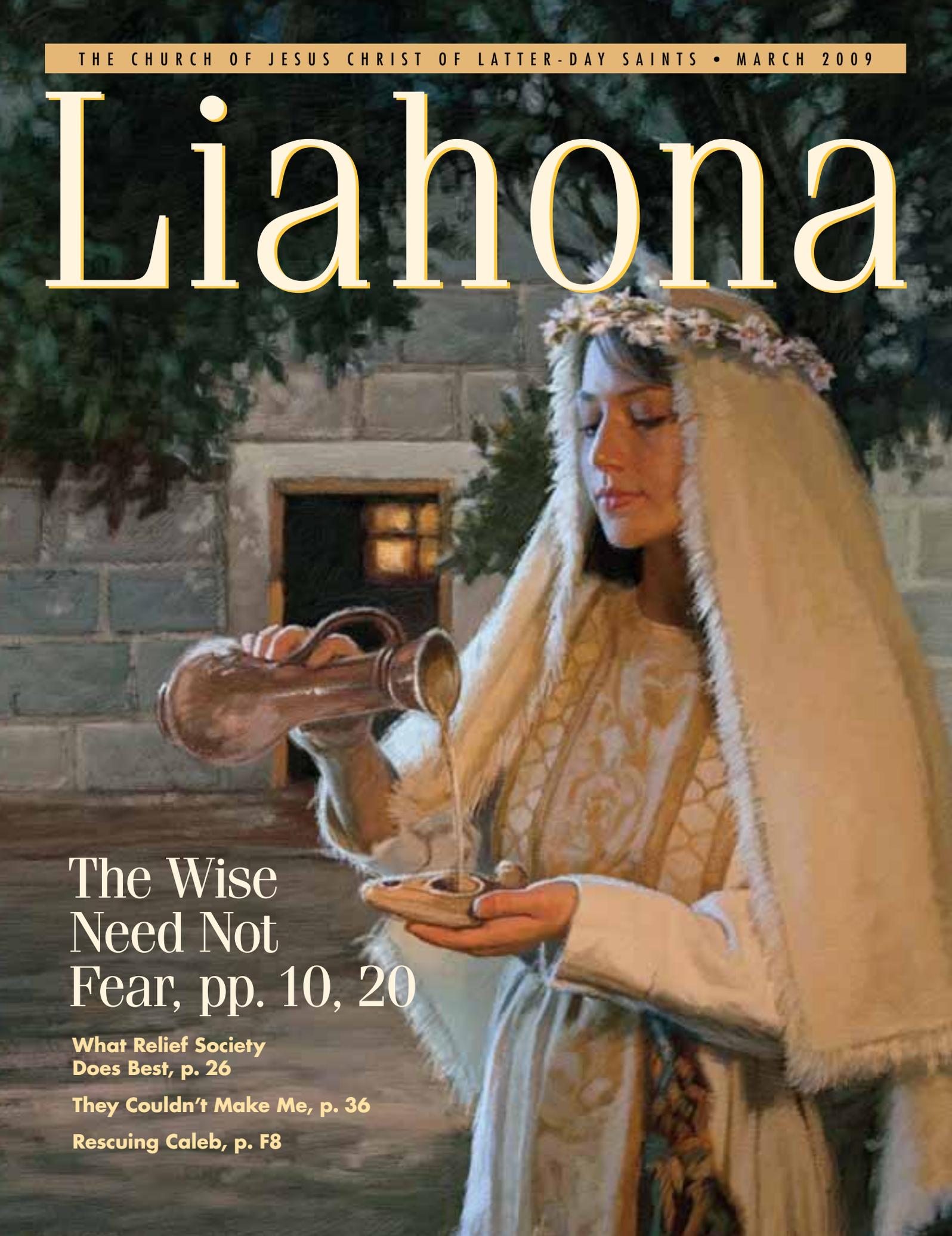


# Liahona



The Wise  
Need Not  
Fear, pp. 10, 20

**What Relief Society  
Does Best, p. 26**

**They Couldn't Make Me, p. 36**

**Rescuing Caleb, p. F8**

# adults

## FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

- 2 **Come unto Him in Prayer and Faith**  
By President Thomas S. Monson

## VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

- 25 **Uphold, Nourish, and Protect the Family**

## FEATURE ARTICLES

- 8 **To Perfection** By Amanda Dierenfeldt  
*What I learned about perfection while scooping ice cream.*
- 10 **Family Home Storage: A New Message**  
*An approach to building food storage and a financial reserve that anyone can take.*
- 15 **Gospel Classics: The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance**  
By President Marion G. Romney  
*Independence and self-reliance are key to our spiritual growth.*
- 22 **Walking by Faith, Not by Sight** By Adam C. Olson  
*Sister Daggi lost the use of her eyes but not her sight.*
- 26 **Focusing on the Lord's Work of Salvation: An Interview with Julie B. Beck**  
*In Relief Society we can help each other come unto Christ by doing the work that we were organized to do.*

## DEPARTMENTS

- 43 **Latter-day Saint Voices**  
*Life challenges; a visit from a friend; a prayer that brought about a miracle; missionary service.*
- 48 **Using This Issue**  
*Family home evening ideas; topics in this issue; and a successful family home evening.*

## ON THE COVER

Front: Painting by Dan Burr.  
Back: Photographs by John Luke and Welden C. Andersen.

# youth

## FEATURE ARTICLES

- 20 **The Parable of the Ten Virgins**  
*How you can use this parable to prepare for the future.*
- 31 **Prayerful Personal Progress** By Yésica Anabelle Benavidez  
*Personal Progress and my prayer for a friend.*
- 32 **Why Do We Baptize for the Dead?**  
By Elder D. Todd Christofferson  
*Here's why your service in the temple matters.*
- 36 **My First Battle** By Colin Slingsby  
*The choice I made that night changed the direction of my life.*
- 38 **Search and Rescue** By Richard M. Romney  
*In a fire, earthquake, hurricane, or other disaster, these youth are prepared to help.*

## DEPARTMENT

- 42 **Poster: Instant Message**



March 2009 Vol. 33 No. 3  
LIAHONA 04283

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# children

## COME LISTEN TO A PROPHET'S VOICE

**F2 The True Church** By President Henry B. Eyring

## FEATURE ARTICLE

**F8 Standing Up for Caleb** By Amy S. Tate

## DEPARTMENTS

**F4 Sharing Time: "Mine House Is a House  
of Order"** By Cheryl Esplin

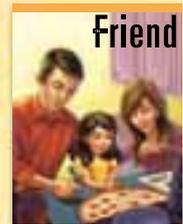
**F6 From the Life of the Prophet Joseph Smith:  
A Life of Kindness**

**F10 Making Friends: Lifted by Prayer**

**F13 Trying to Be Like Jesus:  
Praying for Dad**  
By Rebecca C.

**F14 Friend to Friend:  
Courage to Live the Gospel**  
By Elder Erich W. Kopischke

**F16 Coloring Page**



THE FRIEND COVER  
Illustration by Jennifer  
Tolman.



See if you can find  
the Danish CTR ring  
hidden in this issue.  
Choose the right  
page!



## comment

### Come to the Temple

Thank you for the excellent theme  
in the October 2007 *Liahona* on family  
history and temple attendance. One  
week after the members received  
the *Liahona*, the activity at the fam-  
ily history center here tripled. I know  
that this was because of the *Liahona*  
articles that month. Sometimes the  
members just need to be reminded to  
perform the ordinances of the temple  
for their ancestors. Many thanks, for  
the *Liahona* has helped me and others  
serve the Lord with more vigor.  
*Anderson Nascimento, Brazil*

### Out of Small Things

We are following the counsel  
Bishop Keith B. McMullin gave in his  
April 2007 conference talk, "Lay Up in  
Store," by putting aside some money,  
even though it is only a few coins each  
week. We know the Lord's promise,  
as told to us by our leaders, will be  
fulfilled—that "out of small things  
proceedeth that which is great" (D&C  
64:33).  
*Ricardo and Mireya Merchan, Colombia*



# Come unto Him in Prayer and Faith

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

**T**rust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.<sup>1</sup> So spoke the wise Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel.

Jacob, the brother of Nephi, declared, “Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith.”<sup>2</sup>

In this dispensation, in a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord said, “Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.”<sup>3</sup>

This divinely inspired counsel comes to us today as crystal clear water to a parched earth.

We live in troubled times. Doctors’ offices are filled with individuals who are beset with emotional problems as well as physical distress. Divorce courts are overflowing because people have unsolved problems. Human resource administrators in government and industry work long hours in an effort to assist people with their problems.

One human resource officer assigned to handle petty grievances concluded an unusually hectic day by placing facetiously a little sign on his desk for those with unsolved problems. It read, “Have you tried prayer?”

What he may not have realized was that this simple counsel would solve more problems, alleviate more suffering, prevent more transgression, and bring about greater peace and contentment in the human soul than could be obtained in any other way.

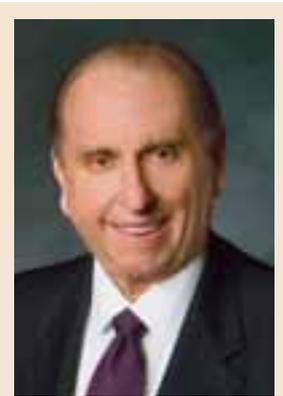
A prominent American judge was asked what we as citizens of the countries of the world could do to reduce crime and disobedience to law and to bring peace and contentment into our lives and into our nations. He carefully replied, “I would suggest a return to the old-fashioned practice of family prayer.”

## Strength in Prayer

As a people, aren’t we grateful that family prayer is not an out-of-date practice with us? There is no more beautiful sight in all this world than to see a family praying together. There is real meaning behind the oft-quoted “The family that prays together stays together.”

The Lord directed that we have family prayer when He said, “Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed.”<sup>4</sup>

Will you join me as we look in on a typical Latter-day Saint family offering prayers unto the Lord? Father, mother, and each of the



*There is no more beautiful sight in all this world than to see a family praying together. There is real meaning behind the oft-quoted “The family that prays together stays together.”*



**T**hose who feel that prayer might denote a physical or intellectual weakness should remember that a man never stands taller than when he is upon his knees.

children kneel, bow their heads, and close their eyes. A sweet spirit of love, unity, and peace fills the home. As father hears his tiny son pray unto God that his dad will do the right things and be obedient to the Lord's bidding, do you think that such a father would find it difficult to honor the prayer of his precious son? As a teenage daughter hears her sweet mother plead unto the Lord that her daughter will be inspired in the selection of her companions, that she will prepare herself for a temple marriage, don't you believe that such a daughter will seek to honor this humble, pleading petition of her mother, whom she so dearly loves? When father, mother, and each of the children earnestly pray that the fine sons in the family will live worthily that they may, in due time, receive a call to serve as ambassadors of the Lord in the mission fields of the Church, don't we begin to see how such sons grow to young manhood with an overwhelming desire to serve as missionaries?

I am sure that family prayer motivated a letter written some years ago by a young Latter-day Saint girl attending a Colorado high school. The students had been asked to prepare a letter to be written to a great man of their choice. Many addressed their letters to well-known athletes, to a noted astronaut, to the president of the United States, and to

other celebrities. This young lady, however, addressed her letter to her father, and in the letter she stated: "I have decided to write this letter to you, Dad, because you are the greatest man that I have ever known. The overwhelming desire of my heart is that I might so live that I might have the privilege of being beside you and Mother and other members of the family in the celestial kingdom." That father never received a more cherished letter.

As we offer unto the Lord our family prayers and our personal prayers, let us do so with faith and trust in Him. Let us remember the injunction of Paul to the Hebrews: "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."<sup>5</sup> If any of us has been slow to hearken to the counsel to pray always, there is no finer hour to begin than now. William Cowper declared, "Satan trembles, when he sees the weakest Saint upon his knees."<sup>6</sup> Those who feel that prayer might denote a physical or intellectual weakness should remember that a man never stands taller than when he is upon his knees.

We cannot know what faith is if we have never had it, and we cannot obtain it as long as we deny it. Faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time, for one will dispel the other.

### **Accepting His Invitation**

If our desire is to discard all doubt and to substitute therefor an abiding faith, we have but to accept the invitation extended to you and to me in the Epistle of James:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.

For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”<sup>7</sup>

This promise motivated the young man Joseph Smith to seek God in prayer. He declared to us in his own words:

“At length I came to the conclusion that I . . . must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to ‘ask of God,’ concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture.

“So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. . . . It was

**I** *t was by faith, nothing wavering, that the brother of Jared saw the finger of God touch the stones in response to his plea.*



the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.”<sup>8</sup>

Now, if we have hesitated in supplicating God our Eternal Father simply because we have not as yet made the attempt to pray, we certainly can take courage from the example of the Prophet Joseph. But let us remember, as did the Prophet, our prayer must be offered in faith, nothing wavering.

It was by faith, nothing wavering, that the brother of Jared saw the finger of God touch the stones in response to his plea.<sup>9</sup>

It was by faith, nothing wavering, that Noah erected an ark in obedience to the command from God.<sup>10</sup>

It was by faith, nothing wavering, that Abraham was willing to offer up his beloved Isaac as a sacrifice.<sup>11</sup>

It was by faith, nothing wavering, that Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea.<sup>12</sup>

It was by faith, nothing wavering, that Joshua and his followers brought the walls of Jericho tumbling down.<sup>13</sup>

It was by faith, nothing wavering, that Joseph saw God our Eternal Father and Jesus Christ, His Son.<sup>14</sup>

Now, the skeptic may say that these mighty accounts of faith occurred long ago, that times have changed.

Have times really changed? Don't we today, as always, love our children and want them to live righteously? Don't we today, as always, need God's divine, protecting care? Don't we today, as always, continue to be at His mercy and in His debt for the very life He has given us?

Times have not really changed. Prayer continues to provide power—spiritual power. Prayer continues to provide peace—spiritual peace.

#### **Faith in Action**

Wherever we may be, our Heavenly Father can hear and answer the prayer offered in faith. This is especially true in the mission fields throughout the world. While presiding over the Canadian Mission, under the direction of President David O. McKay (1873–1970), Sister Monson and I had the opportunity of serving with some of the finest

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young men and women in all this world. The very lives of these young missionaries exemplified faith and prayer.

There sat in my office one day a newly arrived missionary. He was bright, strong, happy, and grateful to be a missionary. He was filled with enthusiasm and a desire to serve. As I spoke with him, I said, “Elder, I imagine that your father and mother wholeheartedly support you in your mission call.” He lowered his head and replied, “Well, not quite. You see, President, my father is not a member of the Church. He doesn’t believe as we believe, so he cannot fully appreciate the importance of my assignment.”

Without hesitating and prompted by a Source not my own, I said to him, “Elder, if you will honestly and diligently serve God in proclaiming His message, your father will join the Church before your mission is concluded.” He clasped my hand in a vise-like grip, the tears welled up in his eyes and began to roll forth down his cheeks, and he declared, “To see my father accept the truth would be the greatest blessing that could come into my life.”

This young man did not sit idly by hoping and wishing that the promise would be fulfilled, but rather he followed the sage advice that has been given of old: “Pray as though everything depended upon God. Work as though everything depended upon you.” Such was the missionary service of this young man.

At every missionary conference I would seek him out before the meetings and ask, “Elder, how’s Dad progressing?”

His reply would invariably be, “No progress, President, but I know the Lord will fulfill the promise given to me through you as my mission president.” The days turned to weeks and the weeks to months, and finally, just two weeks before we ourselves left the mission field to return home, I received a letter from the father of this missionary. That father wrote:

“Dear Brother Monson:

“I wish to thank you so much for taking such good care of my son who recently completed a mission in Canada. He has been an inspiration to us.

## IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. Read the account of the missionary from the section “Faith in Action.” Discuss how faith, prayer, and hard work helped fulfill the promise made to the missionary. Ask the family to think of things they are seeking the Lord’s help in. Invite them to list what they can do to gain the answer or help they need. Also invite

them to exercise faith in the Lord as they pray for help and seek to do their part to find a solution.

2. Read excerpts from the section “Accepting His Invitation.” Take turns having family members finish the following sentence using their own experiences: “It was by faith, nothing wavering, that . . .” Discuss what it means to pray with greater faith. Leave a card with the family that reads, “Have you tried prayer?”

“My son was promised when he left on his mission that I would become a member of the Church before his return. This promise was, I believe, made to him by you, unknown to me.

“I am happy to report that I was baptized into the Church one week before he completed his mission and am at present time athletic director of the MIA and have a teaching assignment.

“My son is now attending BYU, and his younger brother was also recently baptized and confirmed a member of the Church.

“May I again thank you for all the kindness and love bestowed upon my son by his brothers in the mission field during the past two years.

“Yours very truly, a grateful father.”

The humble prayer of faith had once again been answered.

There is a golden thread that runs through every account of faith from the beginning of the world to the present time. Abraham, Noah, the brother of Jared, the Prophet Joseph Smith, and countless others wanted to be obedient to the will of God. They had ears that could hear, eyes that could see, and hearts that could know and feel.

They never doubted. They trusted.

Through personal prayer, through family prayer, by trusting in God with faith, nothing wavering, we can call down to our rescue His mighty power. His call to us is as it has ever been: “Come unto me.”<sup>15</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. Proverbs 3:5–6.
2. Jacob 3:1.
3. D&C 6:36.
4. 3 Nephi 18:21.
5. Hebrews 11:6.
6. William Cowper, *Olney Hymns*, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 2nd ed. rev. (1966), 161.
7. James 1:5–6.
8. Joseph Smith—History 1:13–14.
9. See Ether 3:1–16.
10. See Genesis 6:13–22.
11. See Genesis 22:1–14.
12. See Exodus 14:15–22.
13. See Joshua 6:2–20.
14. See Joseph Smith—History 1:14–19.
15. Matthew 11:28.



# TO

BY AMANDA DIERENFELDT

**G**rowing up, I was always inclined to perfectionism. So when I received my patriarchal blessing, one admonition in particular seemed natural: to complete the tasks I was given “to the best of [my] ability, to perfection.” Only later would I start to realize how little I understood perfection—or the role of grace.

In 1998 I returned home early from a mission due to health problems. I felt a tremendous amount of guilt because I felt I had not completed my mission “to perfection.” Added to this sense of failure was uncertainty about my illness. So far, doctors had been unable to diagnose it.

In spite of my health challenges, I knew I needed to move forward, so I enrolled in a university to continue my education. After only two quarters, however, I returned home again, in pain, for urgent surgery. It was at this point that doctors discovered I had an autoimmune disease.

While I was recovering from surgery, I began working part-time at the chocolate store where I had been employed as a teenager. Even though I was doing what I could, I didn’t feel that I was pursuing anything worthwhile, much less completing it “to perfection.” I began to compare myself to others, especially to my friends who were completing their college degrees, serving missions, or starting families. I felt left behind.

Then I met Stephanie. She came into the candy store one day wearing a black scarf around her head. As I pointed out to her my favorite chocolate, I felt impressed to inquire about her situation. She smiled, removed her scarf, and, pointing to her bald head, told me she was going through chemotherapy. That exchange was the start of a special and candid friendship.

Stephanie came by the store regularly to enjoy a treat and talk about life. I learned that she was a member of the Church and that she had struggled spiritually as well as physically. She told me about some rebellious choices she had made and about her efforts to repent. She was working toward being sealed to her husband in the temple.

One day I shared some of my own challenges. I confided in her how discouraged I was by my circumstances. “I am scooping the same ice cream I scooped in high school,” I explained. “I didn’t complete my mission or college, and I don’t know what to do now.”

Stephanie responded, “Why do you have to finish the race of life in a set time? Why not just run the race?”

For the first time, I realized that the efforts I was making were my best, and my best was enough. The Savior loved me, and His grace, through His Atonement, was sufficient for me, for my deficiencies. Although I felt I had been looking to Him all along, until Stephanie shared her insight with me, I had somehow missed an important lesson about His role in my life.

Ether 12:27 says, “My grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.” As I have been able to humble myself and have faith in the Lord, I have seen over and over again that He does indeed make weak things become strong. My increased testimony of this truth has helped me face my challenges with greater faith and hope.

A few months after that conversation, I left my hometown to start a new job and lost contact with my friend. One day my mom called to tell me that she had seen Stephanie’s obituary in the newspaper. I came home to attend her funeral and learned she had been sealed to her husband just three weeks before her death.

My heart sighed with gratitude for having had Stephanie in my life and for what she taught me about running a perfect race. I don’t always need to sprint. Occasionally, it will be all I can do to simply face the finish line. Doing our best to move forward—no matter what speed “our best” is—is OK. Our efforts can be made perfect because the Lord’s grace is sufficient for us all (see Moroni 10:32). ■

# PERFECTION

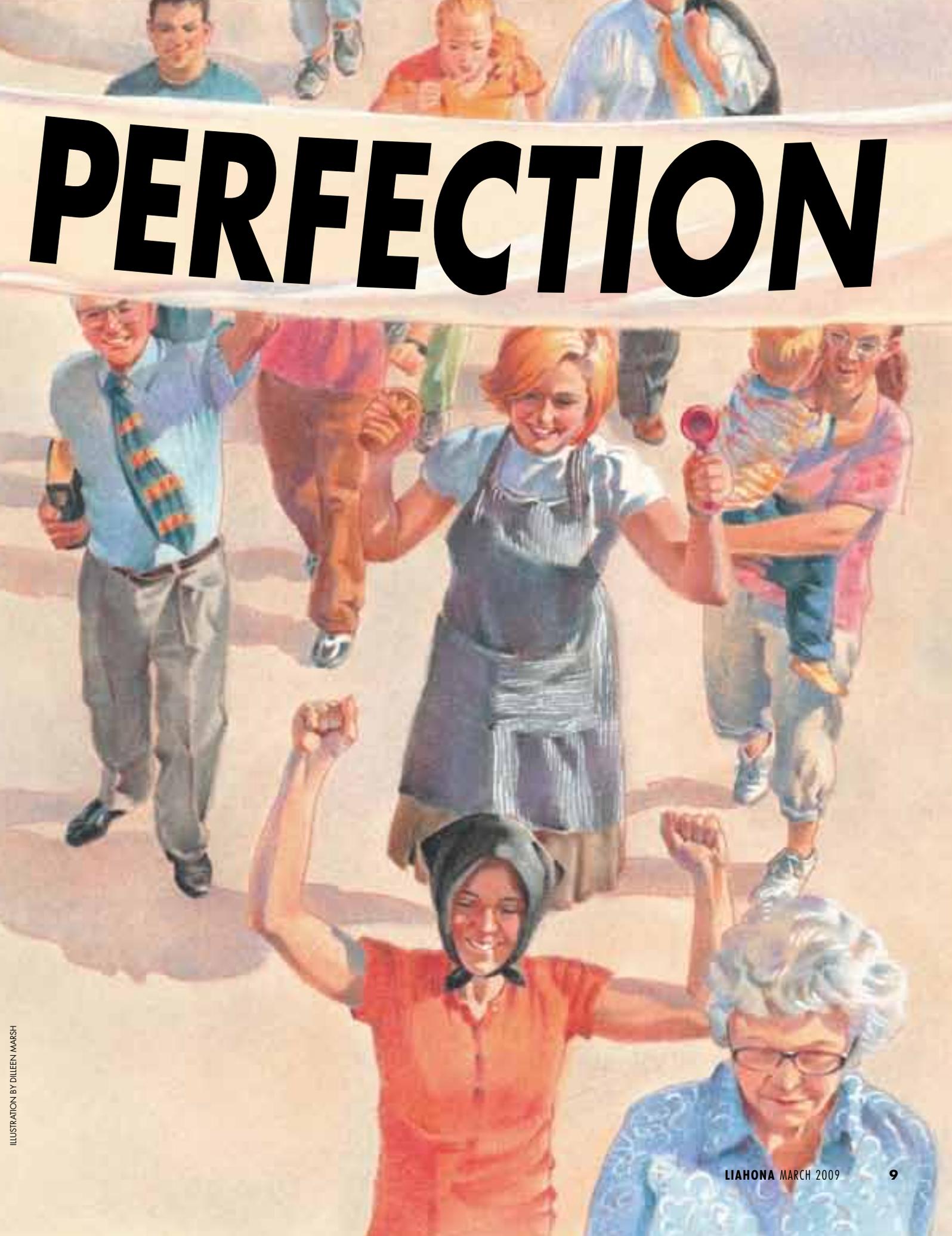


ILLUSTRATION BY DILLEN MARSH

# Family Home Storage: A New Message

*Check the expiration date on your ideas about home storage. You may need to throw some of them out.*

As a single mother working for a law firm in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, Evelyn Jeffries struggled to find the time and the space necessary for home storage. Although she attended activities and meetings about food storage and tried to be obedient to prophetic counsel, like many Church members, she found it difficult to imagine what she could ever do with the hundreds of pounds of wheat she was told she needed to have for her and her daughter.

When a sister in her ward suggested a different approach, Sister Jeffries discovered the key to successful home storage: consistently and gradually increasing her food supply.

Setting aside a particular amount in her budget for home storage, she purchased a few extra items from the grocery store each week. She also purchased one basic food item like grains and beans from the Church home storage center each month.

Many years later, in October 2002, Sister Jeffries was impressed when President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) suggested that Church members adopt a simpler approach to home storage.

“We can begin ever so modestly,” President Hinckley



explained. “We can begin with a one week’s food supply and gradually build it to a month, and then to three months.”<sup>1</sup>

Sister Jeffries notes that “the beauty of this system is its appropriateness for families just starting their storage programs, as well as for those living in small homes and apartments, where space is at a premium. President Hinckley clearly recognized that change and adaptation are needed so that all of us might benefit from the Lord’s inspired program.”

## **A New Approach**

In the spirit of President Hinckley’s remarks, Church leaders decided to closely reexamine their approach to self-reliance, looking for ways to reinforce the concepts of home storage and financial preparedness. As a result, the Church published the pamphlet *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage*, outlining new guidelines for home preparedness that give Church members a simplified, four-step approach to building their home storage.

They are as follows:

1. Gradually build a small supply of food that is part of your normal, daily diet until it is sufficient for three months.
2. Store drinking water.



3. Establish a financial reserve by setting aside a little money each week, and gradually increase it to a reasonable amount.

4. Once families have achieved the first three objectives, they are counseled to expand their efforts, as circumstances allow, into a supply of long-term basic foods such as grains, legumes, and other staples.

Of the new guidelines, Presiding Bishop H. David Burton says, “Our objective was to establish a simple, inexpensive, and achievable program that would help people become self-reliant. We are confident that by introducing these few, simple steps we can, over time, have more success.”

**Guideline 1: Build your three-month supply gradually.**

Start small and do the best you can. Begin by purchasing a few extra items to add to your storage each week. Strive to build a one-week supply; then expand it to a one-month supply, then a three-month supply. By building your supply slowly, you can avoid financial strain and start down the path toward self-reliance.

The Lugo family of Valencia, Venezuela, learned that this new approach of starting small and being consistent can pay big dividends. After listening to general



conference, Brother Omar Lugo, a Church member in the Falcón Venezuela District, felt inspired to begin his own home storage. He discussed the matter with his family, and they agreed to follow the prophet’s counsel.

They began setting aside food, water, and money, a little at a time. At first the difference was hardly noticeable. But after a while the Lugos found that they had accumulated a substantial reserve. Several months after they began building their home storage, a worker’s strike in Venezuela put many local workers’ jobs in jeopardy. Brother Lugo was among those who eventually lost their jobs.

## PROPHETIC COUNSEL ABOUT HOME STORAGE



*“Many more people could ride out the storm-tossed waves in their economic lives if they had their . . . supply of food . . . and were debt-free. Today we find that many have followed this counsel in reverse: they have at least a year’s supply of debt and are food-free.”*

**President Thomas S. Monson, “That Noble Gift—Love at Home,” Church News, May 12, 2001, 7.**



*“Everyone who owns a home recognizes the need for fire insurance. We hope and pray that there will never be a fire. Nevertheless, we pay for insurance to cover such a catastrophe, should it occur. We ought to do the same with reference to family welfare.”*

**President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “To Men of the Priesthood,” Liahona and Ensign, Nov. 2002, 58.**



For a time his family lived on savings. Seven months later the Lugo family was relying exclusively on the food they had stored. It took nearly two years for Brother Lugo to find work again, but his family was able to survive the difficult challenges of unemployment. They had built their reserve gradually, and when adversity struck, they were prepared and the Lord blessed them.

Like the Lugo family, Church members will be blessed for their obedience to the First Presidency’s counsel as they gradually build home storage. “We ask that you be wise as you store food and water and build your savings,” the First Presidency explains. “Do not go to extremes; it is not prudent, for example, to go into debt to establish your food storage all at once.” Rather, they suggest a modest, consistent approach. “With careful planning, you can, over time, establish a home storage supply and a financial reserve.”<sup>2</sup>



**In 1936 the Church welfare program began under the direction of the First Presidency. From left: David O. McKay (Second Counselor), Heber J. Grant (President), and J. Reuben Clark Jr. (First Counselor).**

*“In the day of plenty, prepare for the day of scarcity.”*  
**First Presidency, “Message of the First Presidency,” in Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 89.**



**Guideline 2: Store drinking water.**

In times of need, having water to drink can be the difference between life and death—or at least between peace and anxiety. Just ask the Kawai family, members of the São Paulo Brazil Stake. They have been storing food and water for 20 years. Although their small apartment doesn’t have much room to spare, the Kawais decided to make home storage a priority.

Sister Kawai tells of one experience when that decision paid off. “I was in the hospital having just given birth when I learned that there was a problem with the city’s water pipes,” Sister Kawai explains. “Hundreds of thousands of people were without water. But I wasn’t concerned about going home. I had peace of mind knowing that my family would have water to drink.”

**Guideline 3: Set aside a little money.**

From the First Presidency comes this counsel: “We encourage you wherever you may live in the world to prepare for adversity by looking to the condition of your finances. We urge you to be modest in your expenditures. . . . Save a little



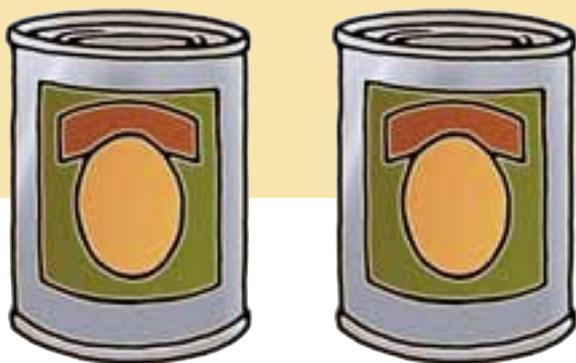
*“Learn to sustain yourselves; lay up grain and flour, and save it against a day of scarcity.”*

**President Brigham Young (1801–77), Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 293.**

BOTTOM LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID NEWMAN; BOTTOM RIGHT: BRIGHAM YOUNG, BY JOHN WILLARD CLAWSON

## SHELF LIFE OF LONG-TERM STORAGE ITEMS

Research shows that these common longer-term food storage items, if they are properly packaged and stored at or below room temperature (75 degrees F; 24 degrees C), remain nutritious and edible much longer than previously thought. Even after long-term storage, these foods can help sustain life in an emergency.



FOOD	SHELF-LIFE ESTIMATE IN YEARS
WHEAT	30+
WHITE RICE	30+
CORN	30+
PINTO BEANS	30
DRIED APPLE SLICES	30
MACARONI	30
ROLLED OATS	30
POTATO FLAKES	30
POWDERED MILK	20

money regularly to gradually build a financial reserve.”<sup>3</sup>

In the April 2007 general conference Bishop Keith B. McMullin, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, reinforced this principle, exhorting Church members to “save some money, if only a few coins each week. This modest approach will soon enable them to have several months’ reserve.”<sup>4</sup>

By gradually building a financial reserve, we will be prepared for unforeseen trials and have an added measure of security and peace in our hearts.

**Guideline 4: Where possible, gradually establish a longer-term supply.**

“For longer-term needs,” explains the *All Is Safely Gathered In* pamphlet, “gradually build a supply of food that will last a long time and that you can use to stay alive, such as wheat, white rice, and beans.”<sup>5</sup>

Establishing long-term storage is easier than some might think. Dr. Oscar Pike and his colleagues in the Brigham Young University Department of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Science have done several in-depth studies on long-term food storage. They discovered something surprising: properly packaged and stored low-moisture food retains much of its sensory (taste) quality and nutritional value for 20 to 30 or more years after being placed in

storage—much longer than previously supposed.

This means Church members can store certain foods long-term without the worry of regularly rotating the food. They can be confident that their supply will be there to keep them alive if they have nothing else to eat.

### The Time to Begin Is Now

“Perhaps in the past accumulating a year’s supply of food may have been a little intimidating and even illegal in some places,” says Dennis Lifferth, managing director of Church Welfare Services. “But this new approach asks us to do the best we can, even if all we can do is to set aside a can or two each week. If the prophet asks us to do something, we can find a way to fulfill the commandment and receive the blessings.”

“This new program is within everyone’s grasp,” explains Bishop Burton. “The first step is to begin. The second is to continue. It doesn’t matter how fast we get there so much as that we begin and continue according to our abilities.” ■

### NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “To Men of the Priesthood,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 58.
2. *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage* (2007), 1.
3. *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Finances* (2007), 1.
4. Keith B. McMullin, “Lay Up in Store,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2007, 53.
5. *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage*, 2.

# THE CELESTIAL NATURE OF SELF-RELIANCE

BY PRESIDENT MARION G. ROMNEY (1897–1988)

*Marion G. Romney was ordained an Apostle on October 11, 1951. He served as Second Counselor to Presidents Harold B. Lee and Spencer W. Kimball and later as First Counselor to President Kimball. After President Kimball's death, President Romney resumed his position in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and became President of the Quorum on November 10, 1985. He died on May 20, 1988, at the age of 90. President Romney was serving as Second Counselor in the First Presidency when he gave this talk during general conference in October 1982. This edited version of the talk was first published in 1984.*

I love the simple gospel truths as taught by the holy prophets, and I never tire of speaking about them. Since the beginning of time man has been counseled to earn his own way, thereby becoming self-reliant. It is easy to understand the reason the Lord places so much emphasis on this principle when we come to understand that it is tied very closely to freedom itself.

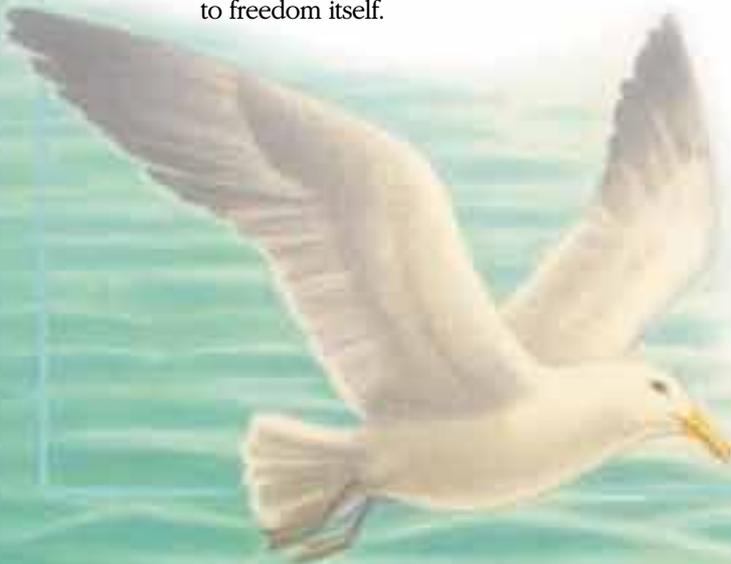
On this subject, Elder Albert E. Bowen said, “The . . . Church is not satisfied with any system which leaves able people permanently dependent, and insists, on the contrary, that the true function and office of giving, is to help people [get] into a position where they can help themselves and thus be free.”<sup>1</sup>

Many programs have been set up by well-meaning individuals to aid those who are in need.

However, many of these programs are designed with the shortsighted objective of “helping people,” as opposed to “helping people help themselves.” Our efforts must always be directed toward making able-bodied people self-reliant.



***Man cannot be an agent unto himself if he is not self-reliant. Herein we see that independence and self-reliance are critical keys to our spiritual growth.***



## Gullible Gulls

I clipped the following article from the *Reader's Digest* some time ago. It reads:

"In our friendly neighbor city of St. Augustine great flocks of sea gulls are starving amid plenty. Fishing is still good, but the gulls don't know how to fish. For generations they have depended on the shrimp fleet to toss them scraps from the nets. Now the fleet has moved. . . .

"The shrimpers had created a Welfare State for the . . . sea gulls. The big birds never bothered to learn how to fish for themselves and they never taught their children to fish. Instead they led their little ones to the shrimp nets.

"Now the sea gulls, the fine free birds that almost symbolize liberty itself, are starving to death because they gave in to the 'something for nothing' lure! They sacrificed their independence for a handout.

"A lot of people are like that, too. They see nothing wrong in picking delectable scraps from the tax nets of the U.S. Government's 'shrimp fleet.' But what will happen when the Government runs out of goods? What about our children of generations to come?

"Let's not be gullible gulls. We . . . must preserve our talents of self-sufficiency, our genius for creating things for ourselves, our sense of thrift and our true love of independence."<sup>2</sup>

The practice of coveting and receiving unearned benefits has now become so fixed in our society that even men of wealth, possessing the means to produce more wealth, are expecting the government to guarantee them a profit. Elections often turn on what the candidates promise to do for voters from government funds. This practice, if universally accepted and implemented in any society, will make slaves of its citizens.



We cannot afford to become wards of the government, even if we have a legal right to do so. It requires too great a sacrifice of self-respect and political, temporal, and spiritual independence.

In some countries it is extremely difficult to separate earned from unearned benefits. However, the principle is the same in all countries: We should strive to become self-reliant and not depend on others for our existence.

Governments are not the only guilty parties. We fear many parents are making "gullible gulls" out of their children with their permissiveness and their doling out of family resources. In fact, the actions of parents in this area can be more devastating than any government program.

Bishops and other priesthood leaders can be guilty of making "gullible gulls" out of their ward members. Some members become financially or emotionally dependent on their bishops. A dole is a dole whatever its source. All of our Church and family actions should be directed toward making our children and members self-reliant. We can't always control government programs, but we can control our own homes and congregations. If we will teach these principles and live them, we can do much to counter the negative effects which may exist in government programs in any country.

We know there are some who, for reasons beyond their

control, cannot become self-reliant. President Henry D. Moyle had these people in mind when he said:

“This great principle does not deny to the needy nor to the poor the assistance they should have. The wholly incapacitated, the aged, the sickly are cared for with all tenderness, but every able-bodied person is enjoined to do his utmost for himself to avoid dependence, if his own efforts can make such a course possible; to look upon adversity as temporary; to combine his faith in his own ability with honest toil. . . .

“We believe [that] seldom [do circumstances arise in which] men of rigorous faith, genuine courage, and unfaltering determination, with the love of independence burning in their hearts, and pride in their own accomplishments, cannot surmount the obstacles that lie in their paths.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Spiritual Self-Reliance**

Now, I wish to speak of a very important truth: self-reliance is not the end, but a means

to an end. It is very possible for a person to be completely independent and lack every other desirable attribute. One may become wealthy and never have to ask anyone for anything, but unless there is some spiritual goal attached to this independence, it can canker his soul.

The Church’s welfare program is spiritual. In 1936, when the program was introduced, President David O. McKay made this astute observation:

“The development of our spiritual nature should concern us most. Spirituality is the highest acquisition of the soul, the divine in man; ‘the supreme, crowning gift that makes him king of all created things.’ It is the consciousness of victory over self and of communion with the infinite. It is spirituality alone which really gives one the best in life.

“It is something to supply clothing to the [poorly] clad, to furnish ample food to those whose table is thinly spread, to give activity to those who are fighting desperately the despair that comes

**A**ll of our Church  
and family  
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**W**e are  
all self-  
reliant  
in some areas and  
dependent in others.  
Therefore, each of  
us should strive to  
help others in areas  
where we have  
strengths.

from enforced idleness, but after all is said and done, the greatest blessings that will accrue from the Church [welfare program] are spiritual. Outwardly, every act seems to be directed toward the physical: re-making of dresses and suits of clothes, canning fruits and vegetables, storing foodstuffs, choosing of fertile fields for settlement—all seem strictly temporal, but permeating all these acts, inspiring and sanctifying them, is the element of spirituality.”<sup>4</sup>

Doctrine and Covenants 29:34–35 tells us there is no such thing as a temporal commandment, that all commandments are spiritual. It also tells us that man is to be “an agent unto himself.” Man cannot be an agent unto himself if he is not self-reliant. Herein we see that independence and self-reliance are critical keys to our spiritual growth. Whenever we get into a situation which threatens our self-reliance, we will find our freedom threatened as well. If we increase our dependence, we will find an immediate decrease in our freedom to act.

Thus far, we should have learned that self-reliance is a prerequisite to the complete freedom to act. We have also learned, however, that there is nothing spiritual in self-reliance

unless we make the right choices with that freedom. What, then, should we do once we have become self-reliant in order to grow spiritually?

The key to making self-reliance spiritual is in using the freedom to comply with God’s commandments. The scriptures are very clear in their command that it is the duty of those who *have*, to *give* to those who are in need.

### **Lifting Others**

Jacob, speaking to the people of Nephi, said:

“Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.

“But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

“And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted” (Jacob 2:17–19).

In our own dispensation, when the Church was only 10 months old, the Lord said:

“If thou lovest me thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments.

“And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support” (D&C 42:29–30).

The same month, the Lord referred to this subject again. Evidently the members had been a little remiss. They had not moved fast enough.

“Behold, I say unto you, that ye must visit

the poor and the needy and administer to their relief" (D&C 44:6).

It has always seemed somewhat paradoxical to me that we must constantly have the Lord *command* us to do those things which are for our own good. The Lord has said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39). We lose our life by serving and lifting others. By so doing we experience the only true and lasting happiness. Service is not something we endure on this earth so we can earn the right to live in the celestial kingdom.

Service is the very fiber of which an exalted life in the celestial kingdom is made.

Oh, for the glorious day when these things all come naturally because of the purity of our hearts. In that day there will be no need for a commandment, because we will have experienced for ourselves that we are truly happy only when we are engaged in unselfish service.

Can we see how critical self-reliance becomes when looked upon as the prerequisite to service, when we also know service is what godhood is all about? Without self-reliance one cannot exercise these innate desires to serve. How can we give if there is nothing there? Food for the hungry cannot come from empty shelves. Money to assist the needy cannot come from an empty purse. Support and understanding cannot come from the emotionally starved. Teaching cannot come from the unlearned. And most important of all, spiritual guidance cannot come from the spiritually weak.

There is an interdependence between those who have and those who have not. The process of giving exalts the poor and humbles the rich. In the process, both are sanctified. The poor, released from the bondage and limitations of poverty, are enabled as free men to rise to their



full potential, both temporally and spiritually. The rich, by imparting of their surplus, participate in the eternal principle of giving. Once a person has been made whole, or self-reliant, he reaches out to aid others, and the cycle repeats itself.

We are all self-reliant in some areas and dependent in others. Therefore, each of us should strive to help others in areas where we have strengths. At the same time, pride should not prevent us from graciously accepting the helping hand of another when we have a real need. To do so denies another person the opportunity to participate in a sanctifying experience.

One of the three areas emphasized in the mission of the Church is to perfect the Saints, and this is the purpose of the welfare program. This is not a doomsday program, but a program for our lives here and now, because now is the time for us to perfect our lives. May we continue to hold fast to these truths. ■

*Subheads added; style and source citations standardized.*

#### NOTES

1. Albert E. Bowen, *The Church Welfare Plan* (Gospel Doctrine course of study, 1946), 77.
2. "Fable of the Gullible Gull," *Reader's Digest*, Oct. 1950, 32.
3. Henry D. Moyle, in Conference Report, Apr. 1948, 5.
4. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 103.

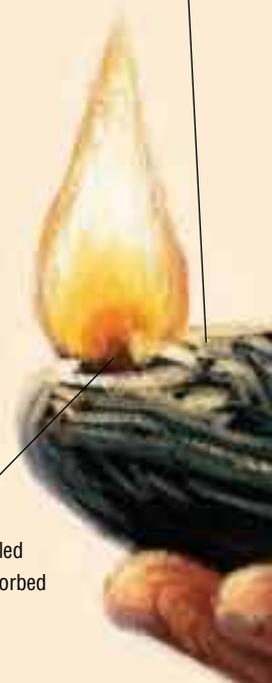
# THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

*In this parable, the Savior taught us how to prepare for His Second Coming.*

**I**n these last days, the Lord has said, “Be faithful, praying always, having your lamps trimmed and burning, and oil with you, that you may be ready at the coming of the Bridegroom” (D&C 33:17). This counsel refers to the parable of the ten virgins, which illustrates how we are to prepare for Christ’s Second Coming (see Matthew 25:1–13). Here are some explanations that may help you as you study this parable and ponder its meaning.



The **spout** or nozzle was made from a mold.



## Ten Virgins

It was a custom among the Jews for the bridegroom to come at night to the bride’s house, where her bridesmaids attended her. When the bridegroom’s approach was announced, these maidens went out with lamps to light his way into the house for the celebration.

In this parable the virgins represent members of the Church, and the bridegroom represents Christ. The Lord explained to Joseph Smith that the wise virgins are those who “have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived” (D&C 45:57).

A **wick** made of flax fibers or a rush stem was placed in the spout, and then the lamp was filled with olive oil. Once the wick absorbed the oil, the lamp was lit.



The lamps were lit at dusk.



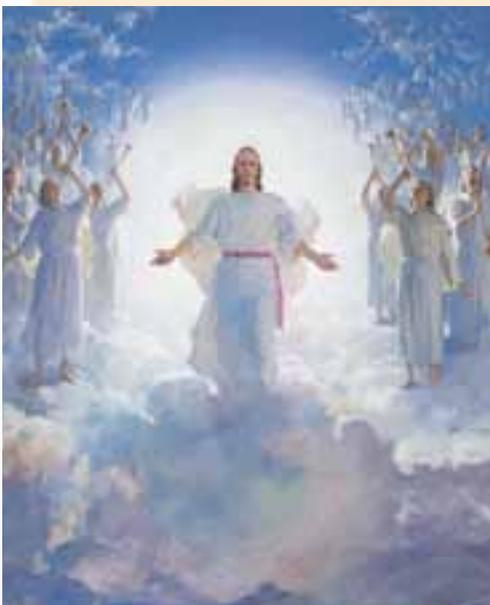
The bridegroom came at midnight.

## Bridegroom

In the Bible, the image of a wedding is used to portray the coming of the Lord (see Isaiah 62:5; Matthew 22:1–14). Jewish weddings included the announcement of the bridegroom’s coming to the bride’s house. The weddings usually began in the evening, with the lamps lit at dusk. So midnight was later than the ten virgins would have expected

the bridegroom—and the announcement came suddenly.

We do not know the timing of Christ’s Second Coming, but we should prepare for it as though it could come at any time—whether soon or late.





### Vessels

The vessels in the parable were containers for storing extra oil.

Being wise means being prepared for the unexpected with an extra measure of faith, testimony, and the Spirit in our lives. Sometimes we grow complacent, thinking we have enough to get by. But following the Savior means more than just getting by. It means always striving to draw closer to Him, preparing for those times when our patience, faith, and testimony will be tried.

### DROP BY DROP



*“Attendance at sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures—each act of dedication and obedience is a drop added to our store. Deeds of kindness, payment of offerings and tithes, chaste thoughts and actions, marriage in the covenant for eternity—these, too, contribute importantly to the oil with which we can at midnight refuel our exhausted lamps.”*

**President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 256.**

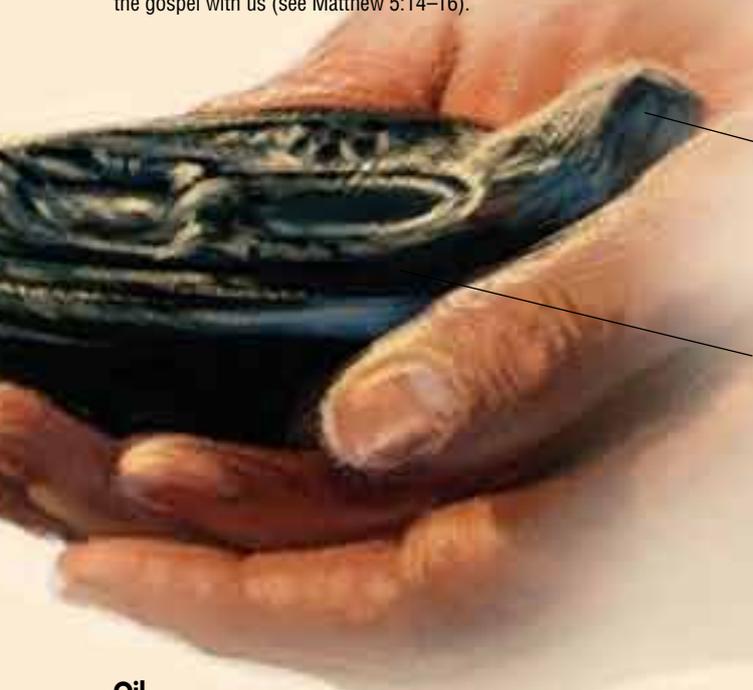


### Lamps

The oil lamps used by the Jews in Jesus’s day are called Herodian lamps, after King Herod. These lamps enabled people to carry light wherever they went. In the same way, we are to carry the light of the gospel with us (see Matthew 5:14–16).



*Herodian lamps could usually burn for about two hours.*



The **handle** was shaped by hand and then attached to the lamp.

The **body** of the lamp was made of clay and shaped on a potter’s wheel.

### Oil

Olives are first soaked in water to clean them and purge them of their bitterness, and then they are crushed to extract their oil. Olive oil, produced throughout the Mediterranean region, had multiple uses anciently: food, cooking oil, condiment, treatment for wounds, ingredient in cosmetics and soaps, and fuel for lamps.

The oil in the parable represents our faith and testimony, our purity and dedication, our good

works, and our keeping of covenants—all of the ways in which we have “taken the Holy Spirit for [our] guide” (D&C 45:57).

The wise virgins could not share their oil with the foolish virgins because “the oil of spiritual preparedness cannot be shared” (Marvin J. Ashton, “A Time of Urgency,” *Ensign*, May 1974, 36).



# Walking by Faith, Not by Sight

BY ADAM C. OLSON  
Church Magazines

**D**aggi Ramirez de Vargas has been blind for 15 years, but in many ways she sees quite clearly. “Physical vision is very entertaining,” says the 70-year-old. “But it can get in the way of our spiritual vision.”

Sister Daggi, as she is known, lost her eyesight when her retinas detached following cataract surgeries on both eyes.

“At first I wondered how I was going to do everything,” she says. “But I can get around just fine. I iron, I sew, I cook. No one comes in while I’m cooking,” she laughs. “I use some big knives.”

As worried as Sister Daggi was about maintaining her physical independence, she was just as determined to remain spiritually self-reliant, living by the light of her own personal testimony of Christ rather than depending on another for a knowledge of the truth.



*Sister Daggi of Viña del Mar, Chile, is an example of maintaining not only physical self-reliance but spiritual self-reliance as well.*

## **The Light of the Gospel**

Before she joined the Church in 1962, Sister Daggi, now a member of the Miraflores Ward, Viña del Mar Chile Archupallas Stake, found herself newly married and wondering which church was right.

One night she dreamed about people from around the world, and she saw unusual white clothing. The next day, at the home where she was employed to help with cleaning, she recognized the same clothing drying on the clothesline.

Her employer told her the clothing was associated with the temples of the Mormon Church. Sister Daggi was soon meeting with missionaries who had come from around the world to open her spiritual eyes to the light of the gospel.

## **A Path Lit by the Word**

Sister Daggi loves the gospel of Jesus Christ, and she used to read her scriptures faithfully until she went blind.



LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH © CONSTOCK.COM; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM C. OLSON

“When I lost my sight, I prayed to be able to retain His word,” she recalls. Retaining His word was important to her as a symbol of spiritual vision.

And though she must now study the gospel in other ways, Sister Daggi believes “the word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). She is a living example of the Savior’s promise: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

According to her husband, Juan, the Lord honored her sincere request. “Her mind captures things well. She could discourse for hours,” he smiles wryly.

“If you ask, you will receive,” she replies. “My spirit still has very good vision.”

### The Works of God Made Manifest

The experiences Sister Daggi has had seeking to maintain both her physical and spiritual self-reliance since losing her eyesight bring to mind the blind man in the Gospel of John about whom the disciples asked, “Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”

The Savior replied, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him” (John 9:2–3).

The works of God have been made manifest in Sister Daggi’s life. Despite being without sight, she has seen many miracles and can testify that “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

One Sunday evening the family’s home teachers visited. The family was struggling through unemployment at the time, and that night she had only a half cup of rice, a little bit of oil to cook it in, and two small tomatoes. But appreciative of these faithful home teachers, she asked them if they would like to stay for dinner.

“My daughter asked how I could do that,” Sister Daggi



***“Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”***

recalls. She told her daughter to set the table. Then she went into the kitchen and prayed, “Lord, Thou fed 5,000. I’m asking only for seven.”

“That rice fed seven people,” she testifies.

### Giving Thanks for His Marvelous Light

Sister Daggi knows that though her physical eyesight has gone dark, there is a greater light by which to see.

Isaiah taught that “the sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall

the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light” (Isaiah 60:19).

“Jesus talked about people who could see but were blind. It is the same today,” Sister Daggi laments. “There are miracles all around us, but so many don’t see them.”

Sister Daggi is grateful for the many blessings she enjoys and strives to live Peter’s admonition to “shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

“I’m content. Heavenly Father gave me a wonderful companion. We went to the temple and were sealed,” she says. “My life is full of miracles. Spiritually, I can see just fine.” ■



### INDIVIDUAL REVELATION

*“If we lose our emotional and spiritual independence, our self-reliance, we can be weakened quite as much, perhaps even more, than when we become dependent materially.*

*“If we are not careful, we can lose the power of individual revelation.”*

**President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Solving Emotional Problems in the Lord’s Own Way,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 92.**

## Uphold, Nourish, and Protect the Family



Teach the scriptures and quotations that will bless the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you visit to share what they have felt and learned.

### Why Must I Defend the Doctrine of the Family?

**The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:** “The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

**Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president:** “As a disciple of Jesus Christ, every woman in this Church is given the responsibility for upholding, nurturing, and protecting families. Women have distinct assignments given to them from before the foundation of the world. And as a covenant-keeping Latter-day Saint woman, you know that raising your voice in defense of the doctrine of the family is critical to the strength of families the world over” (“What Latter-day Saint Women Do Best: Stand Strong and Immoveable,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 110).

### How Can I Defend the Family?

**D&C 88:119:** “Establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.”

**President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985):** “Home is a haven against the storms and struggles of life. Spirituality is born and nurtured by daily prayer, scripture study, home gospel discussions and related activities, home evenings, family councils, working and playing together, serving each other, and sharing the gospel with those around us. Spirituality is also nurtured in our actions of patience, kindness, and forgiveness toward each other and in our applying gospel principles in the family circle” (“Therefore I Was Taught,” *Tambuli*, Aug. 1982, 2; *Ensign*, Jan. 1982, 3).

**Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:** “I call upon members of the Church and on committed parents, grandparents, and extended family members everywhere to hold fast to [the family] proclamation, to make it a banner not unlike General Moroni’s ‘title of liberty,’ and to commit ourselves to live by its precepts. . . .

“In today’s world, where Satan’s aggression against the family is so prevalent, parents must do all they can

to fortify and defend their families. But their efforts may not be enough. Our most basic institution of family desperately needs help and support from the extended family and the public institutions that surround us” (“What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 42–43).



**Elder Robert S. Wood of the Seventy:** “For too many, responsibility seems to end with hand-wringing and exclamations of dismay. Yet talk without action accomplishes little. We need to be vigorously engaged in the world. If our schools are inadequate or destructive of moral values, we must work with fellow members of the community to bring about change. If our neighborhoods are unsafe or unhealthy, we must join with the civic-minded to devise solutions. If our cities and towns are polluted, not only with noxious gases but soul-destroying addictions and smut, we must labor to find legitimate ways to eliminate such filth. . . . We have the responsibility to be a blessing to others, to our nation, to the world” (“On the Responsible Self,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2002, 30–31). ■

# Focusing on the Lord's Work of Salvation



*In an interview with Church magazines, Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president, shared her testimony of Relief Society.*

## **What is the role of Relief Society in furthering the work of the Savior?**

*Sister Beck:* As Relief Society sisters, we are united first and foremost because of our faith in Jesus Christ. He is our leader and exemplar. I bear testimony of the reality of His Atonement. I testify that He lives and that His power is real.

As Latter-day Saints, we want to come unto Christ. When the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the Relief Society, he said that the women were not only to look after the poor but also to save souls.<sup>1</sup> This is still our purpose. We are to assist in the Lord's work of salvation, which is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

We can start by strengthening ourselves spiritually through prayer and becoming self-reliant in scripture knowledge. We embrace the ordinances, covenants, and commandments the Lord has provided us.

We can then help gather scattered Israel. We have a duty to help prepare missionaries, to share the gospel, and to help retain those who are baptized. We have a responsibility to get ourselves and family members prepared for the temple. We can collect our





family history and help the Lord's children to be sealed in eternal families.

Step by step, in Relief Society we can help each other come unto Christ by doing the work we were organized to do.

### **How can busy Relief Society sisters do all this?**

*Sister Beck:* The wonderful women of this Church are capable of doing this and more—we just can't do it all at once. That is why it is so important to prioritize and use our resources and time where they will do the most good—assisting in the Lord's work.

Each sister should seek to have the Holy Ghost guide her. If she is helping the Lord with His work, she is entitled to His help.

### **What helped you learn the importance of Relief Society?**

*Sister Beck:* When I was a young girl, my father served as president of the only mission in Brazil. There were fewer than 4,000 members—most of whom were full of potential yet not prepared to lead. Only a handful of branches had a Relief Society.

My mother was called to organize Relief Societies in the mission. She spoke no Portuguese and had no manuals. What she did have was a testimony of the gospel and of Relief Society. She and her counselors began by helping sisters learn how to be visiting teachers.

They started their training in a small branch in São Paulo. Seven humble women attended the meeting. My mother's counselor, a Brazilian, greeted the sisters. After the prayer, she stood with trembling hands and read a message explaining visiting teaching. Then my mother stood. She knew four sentences in Portuguese: "I know that God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ. I know that we have a living prophet. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen." The meeting ended. She hugged the women and bade them good-bye.

What a humble beginning to such a great work! Eventually, a Relief Society was established in every branch in Brazil. The sisters worked to prepare for a stake and the first temple in South America. They learned about ordinances and covenants and how to save souls.

In part, because the Relief Society sisters helped further the Lord's work, the Church in Brazil now numbers over one million members. Like these sisters in Brazil, we must do our part. No one can do it for us. We cannot delegate

our responsibility for building the kingdom to anyone else. It is our work. Let us embrace it and excel in building faith, strengthening families, and giving relief.

### **What are the blessings of focusing Relief Society activities on the Lord's work of salvation?**

*Sister Beck:* As we carry out the Lord's work of saving and blessing lives, we become unified and can call down the blessings of heaven. I have a vision of the women of this Church uniting in powerful ways. I believe that when we focus on the important and forgo the frivolous, we gain confidence and our spirits are lifted. We cope better and feel less burdened. We will, of course, still be busy, but we will be busy doing the work of salvation.

### **How can Relief Society help us keep the proper perspective in this troubled world?**

*Sister Beck:* Relief Society helps provide defense in these perilous times. Sunday lessons, Relief Society activities and meetings, and visiting teaching are how we do the Lord's work and strengthen individuals and families.

Though we are confronted with issues such as divorce, disobedience, debt, depression, apathy, and addiction, we cannot forget that we also live in a day when the Lord's Spirit is poured out upon us. This is a day when the gospel is being preached throughout the world, when the children of Israel are being gathered, when temples are upon the earth, and when we have the protection of priesthood covenants and ordinances.

We must ask for a broader vision to see what the Lord sees. This work is bigger than we realize. We *can* be successful against a deceitful and determined enemy. Our homes *can* and should become places of refuge.

### **What is the role of Sunday lessons in Relief Society?**

*Sister Beck:* The purpose of our Sunday meeting is to study the doctrines of the gospel together. Women who are called to serve in Primary, Young Women, and other areas also learn doctrines of the gospel in their callings. Because our curriculum is so important, we must keep the opening portion of



Relief Society brief and dignified in order to establish the Spirit for the gospel study that follows.

In Relief Society we study *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, which is a series of manuals that provide prophetic teachings and a personal library of those teachings to the men and women of the Church. The words of the prophets are clear and inspired. We cannot—we *must* not—be passive and nonchalant in our study of them.

We are studying the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith from the best compilation of his works ever produced. This manual is the result of years of research and careful review. While the scriptures and Church magazines can enrich a

discussion, we do not need to supplement the words of prophets with other sources, especially non-Church sources.

We call upon our teachers to ask insightful questions and encourage open sharing. The Spirit is the teacher, and we must prepare in such a way that He will be in attendance at every Sunday lesson.

### **What is the role of Relief Society weekday meetings?**

*Sister Beck:* In Relief Society weekday meetings, we apply the doctrines of salvation. Our unity and sisterhood will come naturally as a result of working together. For example, we can learn skills for sharing the gospel and preparing missionaries. We can learn about each other through family history. As we improve our homemaking skills such as cleaning, organizing, cooking, sewing, and gardening, we learn to create a climate of nurturing and spiritual growth in our homes.

We must also learn to be self-reliant in temporal things such as education, career development, and keeping up with technology. We should be storing up a supply of food, and we should know how to budget our money. We should also be working to improve physical and mental health.

When planning these meetings and activities, we need to assess our precious resources of time, energy, and consecrated funds. Use them only to help us live the gospel in our homes and further the Lord's work.

### **How can we help young women make the transition into Relief Society?**

*Sister Beck:* Our talented young women are crossing the bridge from youth to adulthood, and Relief Society sisters have the charge to see that not one of them is lost.

Young women have been taught to keep their baptismal covenants, and in Relief Society we help them prepare to make temple covenants. Eighteen-year-old Relief Society sisters can chair committees, teach skills, help with missionary work, serve as visiting teachers, participate in family history and temple projects, and be full participants in the work of saving souls.

### **What is the role of visiting teaching?**

*Sister Beck:* Visiting teachers minister in behalf of the Savior. Our hands are His hands, our love is His love, and our service is His service.<sup>2</sup> Good

visiting teachers know the sisters they visit. They love them, serve them, and help them learn the gospel by the Spirit. They focus on fortifying homes and lives. There is no greater privilege than to watch over and strengthen another person—it is truly the business of salvation.

### **How does Relief Society make a difference in the world?**

*Sister Beck:* I met with a group of women cabinet ministers and parliament members from West Africa who asked me how we help African women. I explained that in their countries we have many organized groups of women, called Relief Societies.

We send the *Church Handbook of Instructions* to the president of each group. The women gather together often to study the gospel and to learn how to care for their families.

The president divides the Relief Society women into pairs that visit the women in their homes, where they assess needs. Is anyone sick? Do they have enough food and clothing? Do they have the education they need? After the visits the women report what they found. Someone needs shoes, someone is having a baby, and one of them needs work. They ask if within their group they have the needed

resources. Most of the time they do. That is what we do for our women in Africa.

As I talked, these women nodded their heads and smiled. One said to me, “That model would work for our women.”

I believe that Relief Society is a model that works throughout the world and that our sisters are the finest, most capable, greatest force for good on the earth today. I have confidence in our ability to further the Lord’s work of salvation together. ■

*This interview was conducted by LaRene Porter Gaunt of the Church magazines staff.*

### **NOTES**

1. See *History of the Church*, 5:25.
2. See Henry B. Eyring, “Rise to Your Call,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 76.



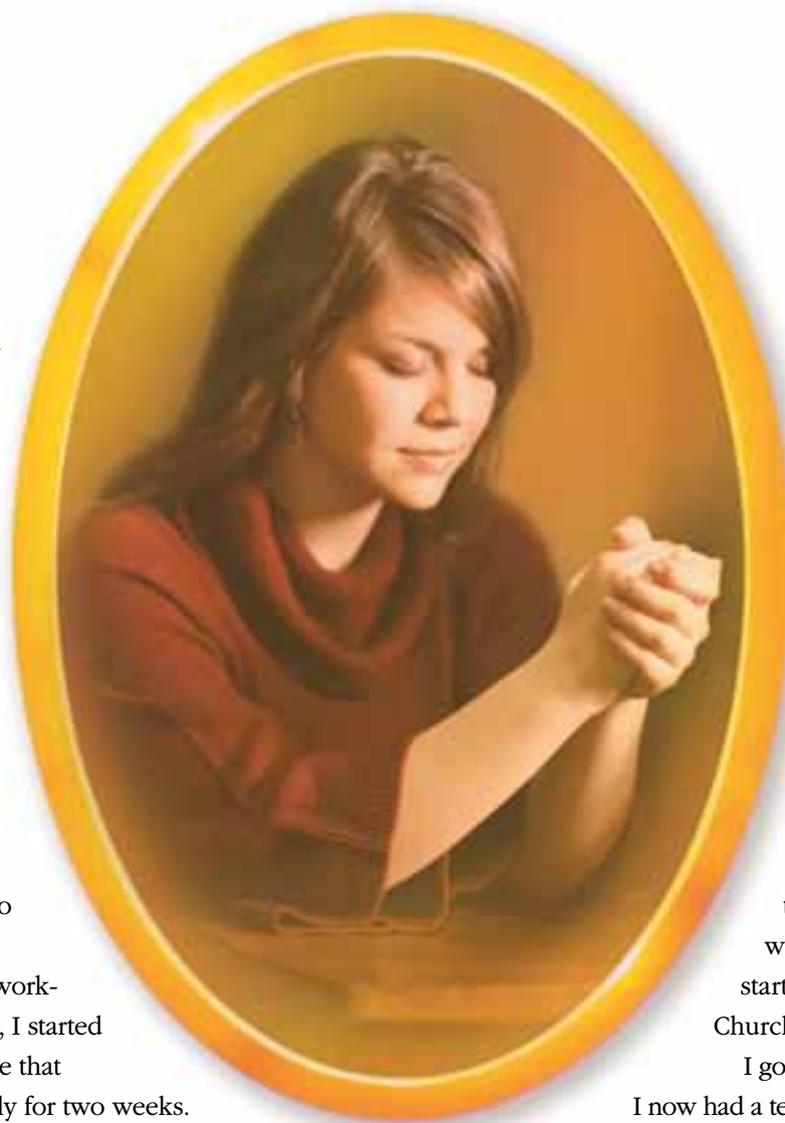
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW REIER

# PRAYERFUL PERSONAL PROGRESS

BY YÉSICA ANABELLE BENAVIDEZ

**W**hen I changed schools, I became good friends with a girl who was not a member of the Church. But after being my friend for a couple of years, she started to feel jealous of the Church because I was always going to activities and didn't have a lot of time to spend with her. The situation became worse and worse—even though I really wanted to be her friend.

One day while I was working on Personal Progress, I started to work on an experience that included praying regularly for two weeks. One of the things I decided to pray for was that my friend would respect me and understand that the Church was very important to me. Two weeks later,



when the experience was completed, I kept praying for the same thing.

Later when I was reviewing my Personal Progress, I was reminded of my experience with prayer. As I thought more about it, I realized that Heavenly Father had answered my prayers about my friend.

My friend had totally changed; she no longer thought about me the way she had, and she had started to think about the Church in a positive way.

I got very emotional because I now had a testimony of sincere prayer.

I know my Father in Heaven changed my friend's heart. I also know that He will help us and will work miracles if we do our part. ■



# Why Do We Baptize for the Dead?

BY ELDER D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



*It matters tremendously what we do in relation to those who have gone before, because they live today as spirits and shall live again as immortal souls, and that because of Jesus Christ.*

Christian theologians have long wrestled with the question, What is the destiny of the billions who have lived and died with no knowledge of Jesus? With the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ has come the understanding of how the unbaptized dead are redeemed and how God can be “a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also” (Alma 42:15).

While yet in life, Jesus prophesied that He would also preach to the dead. Peter tells us this happened in the interval between the Savior’s Crucifixion and Resurrection (see 1 Peter 3:18–19). President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) witnessed in vision that the Savior visited the spirit world and “from among the righteous [spirits], he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness. . . .

“These were taught faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins, [and] the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands” (D&C 138:30, 33).

The doctrine that the living can provide baptism and other essential ordinances to the dead vicariously was revealed anew to

the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 124; 128; 132). He learned that the spirits awaiting resurrection are offered not only individual salvation but they can be bound in heaven as husband and wife and be sealed to their fathers and mothers of all generations past and have sealed to them their children of all generations future. The Lord instructed the Prophet that these sacred rites are appropriately performed only in a house built to His name, a temple (see D&C 124:29–36).

The principle of vicarious service should not seem strange to any Christian. In the baptism of a living person, the officiator acts, by proxy, in place of the Savior. And is it not the central tenet of our faith that Christ’s sacrifice atones for our sins by vicariously satisfying the demands of justice for us? As President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) expressed: “I think that vicarious work for the dead more nearly approaches the vicarious sacrifice of the Savior Himself than any other work of which I know. It is given with love, without hope of compensation, or repayment or anything of the kind. What a glorious principle.”<sup>1</sup>

Some have misunderstood and suppose that deceased souls “are being baptized into the Mormon faith without their knowledge.”<sup>2</sup> They assume that we somehow have



power to force a soul in matters of faith. Of course, we do not. God gave man his agency from the beginning. The Church does not list them on its rolls or count them in its membership.

Our anxiety to redeem the dead and the time and resources we put behind that commitment are, above all, an expression of our witness concerning Jesus Christ. It constitutes as powerful a statement as we can make concerning His divine character and mission. It testifies, first, of Christ's Resurrection; second, of the infinite reach of His Atonement; third, that He is the sole source of salvation; fourth, that He has established the conditions for salvation; and, fifth, that He will come again.

### **The Power of Christ's Resurrection**

As regards the Resurrection, Paul asked, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Corinthians 15:29). We are baptized for the dead because we know that they will rise. "The soul shall be restored to the body, and the body to the soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame" (Alma 40:23). "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Romans 14:9).

It matters tremendously what we do in relation to those who have gone before, because they live today as spirits and shall live again as immortal souls, and that because of Jesus Christ. We believe His words when He said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25). By the baptisms we perform in behalf of the dead, we testify that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. . . .

"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:22, 25–26).

### **Jesus Christ, the Sole Source of Salvation**

Our anxiety to ensure that our kindred dead are offered baptism in Jesus's name is testament to the fact that Jesus Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life" and that "no man cometh unto the Father, but by [Him]" (John 14:6). Some contemporary Christians, concerned for the many who have died without a knowledge of Jesus Christ, have begun to wonder if there truly is only "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). To believe that Jesus is the only Savior, they say, is arrogant, narrow-minded, and intolerant. We say, however, that this is a false dilemma. There is no injustice in there being but One through whom salvation may come, when that One and His salvation are offered to every soul, without exception.

### **Conditions of Salvation Set by Christ**

Because we believe that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer, we also accept His authority to establish the conditions by which we may receive His grace. Otherwise we would not concern ourselves with being baptized for the dead.

Jesus confirmed that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life" (Matthew 7:14). Specifically, He said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). This means we must "repent, and be baptized every one . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and . . . receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Notwithstanding He was sinless, Jesus Christ Himself was baptized and received the Holy Ghost. He said, "He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do" (2 Nephi 31:12).

There are no exceptions granted; none are needed. As many as will believe and be baptized—including by



**N**otwithstanding He was  
sinless, Jesus Christ  
Himself was baptized  
and received the Holy Ghost.



proxy—and endure in faith, shall be saved, “not only those who believed after [Christ] came in the meridian of time, in the flesh, but all those from the beginning, even as many as were before he came” (D&C 20:26). It is for this reason that the gospel is preached “also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (1 Peter 4:6).

### Freeing the Dead from Prison

The vicarious ordinances we perform in temples, beginning with baptism, make possible an eternal welding link between generations that fulfills the purpose of the earth’s creation. Indeed, without these ordinances, “the whole earth would be utterly wasted at [Christ’s] coming” (D&C 2:3).

In the scriptures, the spirits of the dead are sometimes referred to as being in darkness or in prison (see Isaiah 24:22; 1 Peter 3:19; Alma 40:12–13; D&C 38:5). Contemplating God’s glorious plan for the redemption of these, His children, the Prophet Joseph Smith penned this psalm: “Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free” (D&C 128:22).

Our charge extends as far and as deep as the love of God to encompass His children of every time and place. Our efforts on behalf of the dead bear eloquent witness that Jesus Christ is the divine Redeemer of all mankind. His grace and promises reach even those who in life do not find Him. Because of Him, the prisoners shall indeed go free. ■

*From an October 2000 general conference address.*

### NOTES

1. “Words of the Living Prophet,” *Liahona*, Aug. 1998, 16–17; “Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1998, 73.
2. Ben Fenton, “Mormons Use Secret British War Files ‘to Save Souls,’” *The Telegraph* (London), Feb. 15, 1999.

# MY FIRST BATTLE

BY COLIN SLINGSBY

*My first Saturday night in the army was one of the hardest in my life. I had to make a choice that would affect my future.*

**W**hen I was 17 years old, I enlisted in the Royal Canadian Army Reserve. I was sent to a training base, and for the first time in my life, I was on my own to determine my path. I suspected that I would be tempted not to remain active in the Church and that my testimony would be challenged.

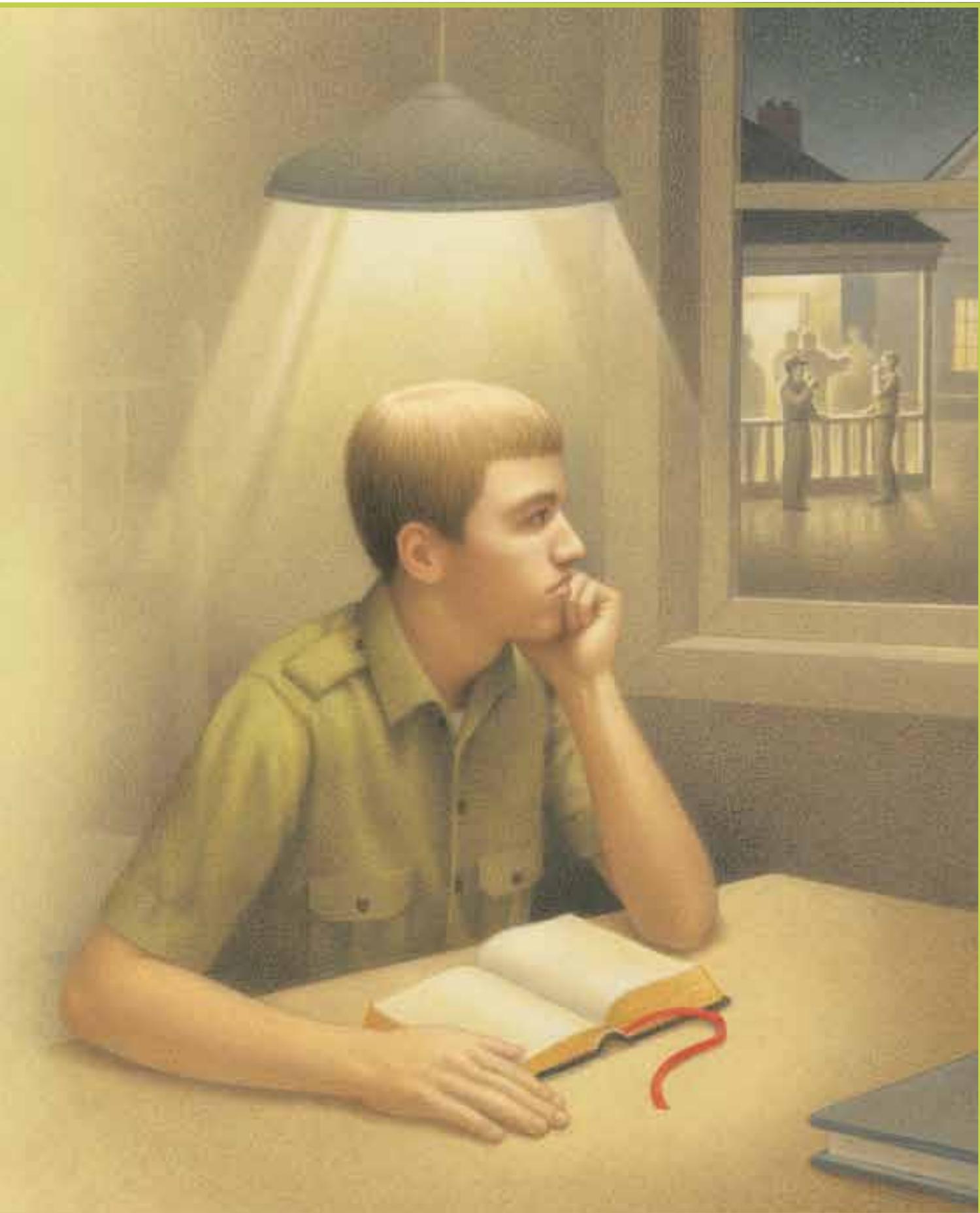
When I arrived on the base, a course sergeant gave a tour of the different buildings and churches. I was prompted to ask where the LDS branch was located. The sergeant paused for a moment. Then he said that the LDS Church wasn't found on base, but if I would like to attend, I could go with him and his wife. He was a recent convert to the Church and was happy to take anyone who wanted to go. I was glad to have the option of going, even though I had not decided if I was going to go that Sunday. After all, I was alone and free to choose for myself now. But something in my heart told me I needed to attend.

That Saturday night was one of the hardest in my life. I have since called it my "tree of life" experience. It started when my friends wanted me to hang out with them at the mess hall. I knew they were just going to drink, and

I told them I needed sleep because I had to get up early for church. They laughed at my choice and went their way.

After they left, I sank into my bunk. From there, I could look out the window and watch my friends on the mess hall balcony, drinking and laughing. I remembered how they had teased me for not joining them. I felt like I imagine Lehi must have felt when he looked at the great and spacious building, where people were similarly laughing at him (see 1 Nephi 8:26–27). I turned around to face my desk, only to notice my scriptures. I eagerly opened them and began to read. These were my iron rod, and just as the word of God had kept Lehi's family safe, I knew they would likewise protect me.

I don't recall what I read that night, but I do recall the Spirit I felt. I felt it again when I went to church the next morning. By attending church every Sunday while I lived on the base, I built a lasting testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Since my time at training camp, I was given the opportunity to share my testimony with others as a full-time missionary in the California Sacramento Mission. ■



# SEARCH AND RESCUE

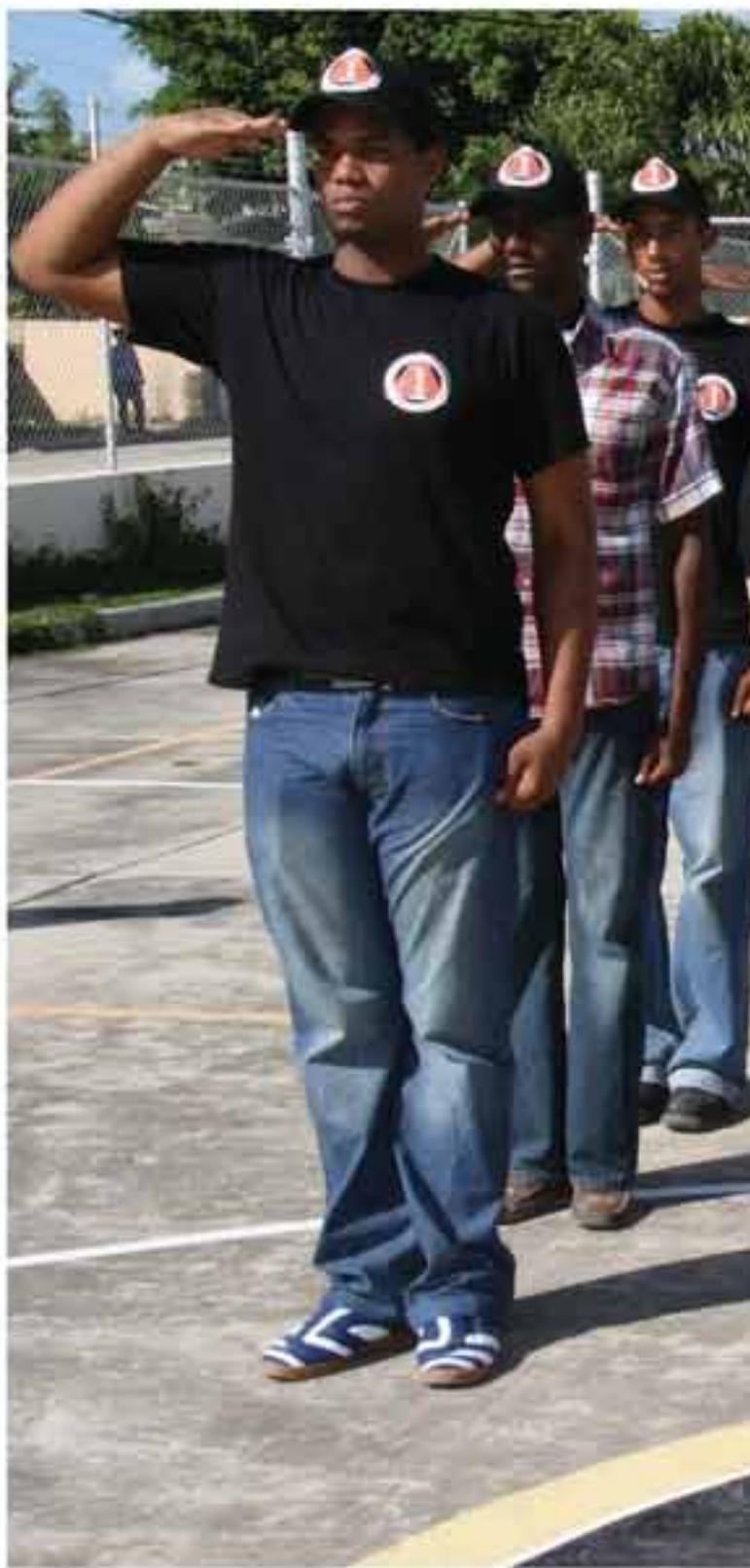
*What does emergency preparedness mean to you? In the Dominican Republic, it means these young men and young women are ready to lend a hand.*

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY  
Church Magazines

**T**hey help people injured in car accidents. They rescue drowning swimmers and find hikers or cave explorers who get lost or hurt. On holidays they operate sidewalk booths to assist those in trouble. They help with community vaccination programs. And they know what to do in an earthquake, hurricane, or other disaster.

They are trained in basic and advanced first aid, water rescue, confined-space rescue, disaster response, and survival skills. They know their training manuals and classroom drills, but they also train in the outdoors, hiking into the mountains and caves where they simulate real dangers. Then they take on actual emergencies.

Since they were organized in 2003, they have helped more than 300 people, many with serious or critical injuries. They have also drawn a lot of teens from the troubled streets into their ranks and taught them about discipline and love.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY



*The Comité de Emergencias Santo de los Últimos Días (the Latter-day Saint Emergency Committee) includes both Latter-day Saints (above) and other members of the community (left) who are trained and ready to help.*

### **Service Oriented**

They are the *Comité de Emergencias Santo de los Últimos Días*, the Latter-day Saint Emergency Committee, a volunteer group open to anyone willing to follow their rules of courtesy and service. And at their core are teenage Latter-day Saints, led by dedicated adults. More than 200 youth have participated in the group since it began.

“I found out about the committee when I came to a baptismal service one Saturday,” says Junior Rivera. “In another room, I saw all these kids like me, dressed in black, with a logo on their T-shirts and hats, learning about first aid. What really got me interested was when I found out they were preparing to help other people. I saw it as a way to do something good, and that’s part of Church teachings, to reach out and help those around us.”

Onel Rodriguez explains that the group learns procedures similar to gospel principles. “For example,” he says, “in an emergency we learn to take care of our own families first. Then when we know they are all right, we are able to assist others. That’s what the Church teaches about welfare. Take care of your own family; then help others.”

Franklin de los Santos says working on disaster preparedness has helped him realize that sometimes the need for spiritual search and rescue is just as important as physical care. “Some people need a helping hand or a kind word or a shared testimony to help them be strong,” he



*Committee members like Franklin de los Santos (above) are trained using proper equipment and techniques. As well as assisting with search and rescue, they provide additional services to the community, such as helping with emergency preparedness and with vaccination programs.*

says. “When we’re living the gospel, we should care about and strengthen other people spiritually too.”

### **Application Oriented**

Omar Rodriguez points out that many of the committee’s activities have been used to fulfill Duty to God requirements and have been planned in coordination with Aaronic Priesthood and Mutual activities.

José Núñez, second counselor in La Caleta Ward bishopric, says that while youth learn the gospel in their classes and quorums, the committee helps them apply what they learn to everyday life. “When they’re in the street having direct contact with needy people, then they



really learn what it means to love one another,” he says. “They develop love for the people around them. And they also develop love for themselves because they learn about self-discipline, and that gives them confidence to act in appropriate ways no matter where they are.”

Brother Núñez also points out that the committee doesn’t replace the normal activities of the Church. “It complements them,” he says. “In priesthood quorums and Young Women classes, for example, they are taught gospel principles. But in gospel-oriented activities like the committee and other service projects, they have the opportunity to practice what they have learned.” That’s one of the ways, he says, that they can become “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

### **Community Oriented**

Omar says the committee is often asked to help with community programs like measles vaccinations. “We want to be present wherever help is needed,” he says, “and the community knows that. They trust us because we prepare well.” In fact, the *comité*, founded by Church members Basilio Cabrera and Domingo Peralta, uses the same techniques as Red Cross and civil defense units. The public health department has given the LDS-sponsored group special recognition, and the governments of the city and the province have also given the group awards.

Brother Núñez explains that the committee creates emergency-response plans according to a study of critical

zones in Santo Domingo and nearby communities. “In an emergency we would go into those zones and determine if there are members of the Church who need help,” he says. “At the same time, we would assess the needs of all the people in that area and report to authorities. We have identified which places would be most critical in the case of a cyclone, earthquake, flood, or something similar. We know which areas will need an immediate evacuation. We even know where tree branches can be trimmed to avoid damage if high winds come. This is part of what the youth are assigned to do.”

Committee members also give up some of their own celebration time at Christmas and Easter so that, under adult supervision, they can participate in a 24-hour watch. “We do this because these are the days when a lot of people get into accidents or have trouble because they are drinking,” Brother Núñez says. That fact has taught committee members, in a very practical way, the value of living the Word of Wisdom (see D&C 89).



### **Ready, Willing, Motivated**

So why do committee members give up time to serve? Why go through all that training?

Omar says that although being involved requires time and effort, it’s worth it. He feels particularly good that he can help other people, something he learned a lot about after tropical storm Noel. “Our duty was to help those in need to get clothing and food,” he says. “I saw people who were suffering, and to be able to bring them something to wear and something to eat and then to see their satisfaction, that made me feel good.”

Osiris Rodriguez says he appreciates the unity he feels in the committee. He sees it as an extension of the unity he feels in his quorum and among the youth in the Church in general.

Junior Batista, who joined the Church several months ago, said that when he learned about the emergency committee, he was eager to be involved. And he hasn’t been disappointed. “We feel good because we are fulfilling the commandment that says we should love one another. We are together as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of God.”

When you feel that way about service, you will continue to serve. ■

Note: If you desire to start a similar committee, please check first with your priesthood leaders and local government officials.

*Why do committee members give up time to serve? Why make the effort to go through all that training? Participants say they feel good because they are fulfilling the commandment to love and serve those around them.*



**Osiris Rodriguez**



**Junior Rivera**

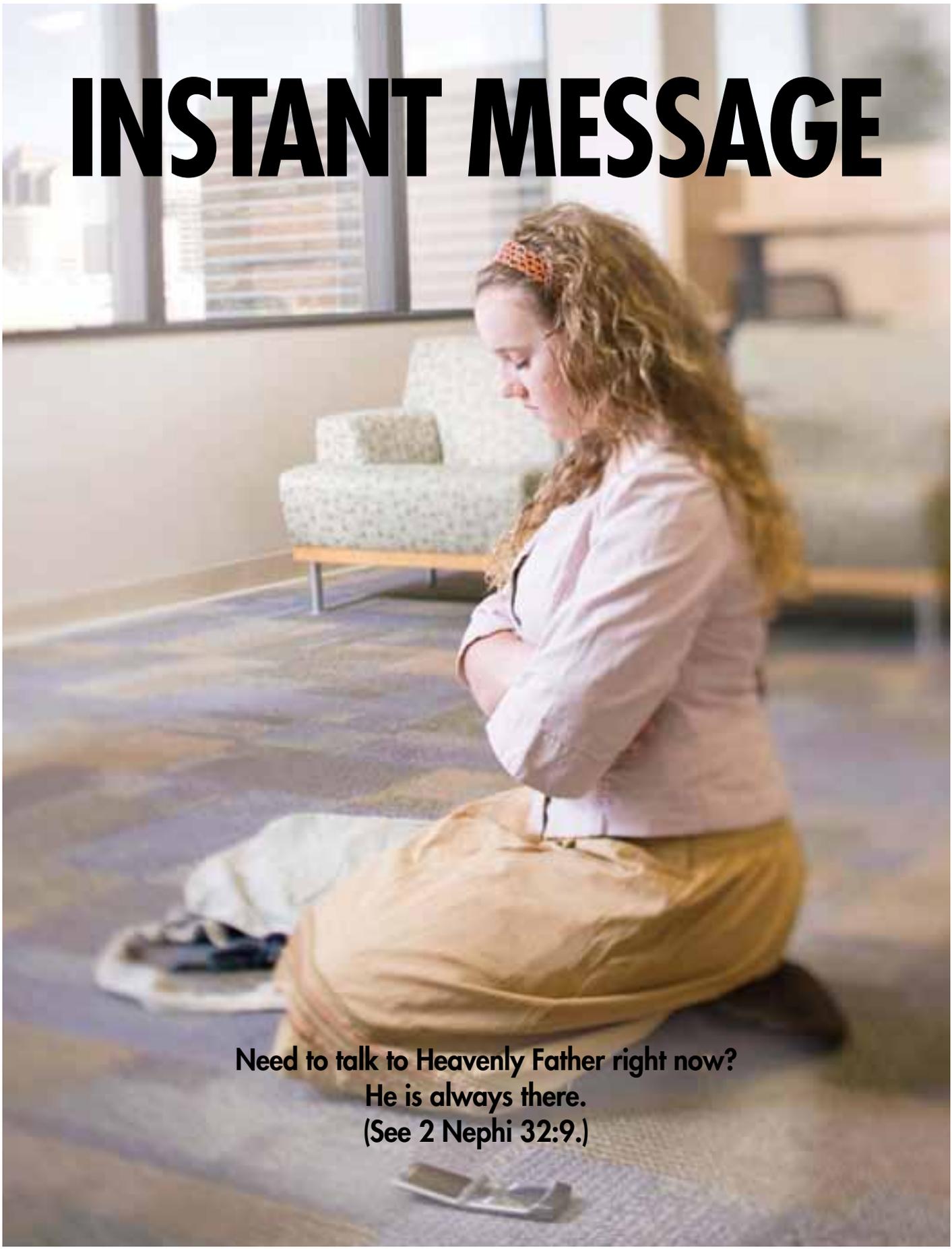


**Junior Batista**



**José Núñez**

# INSTANT MESSAGE



**Need to talk to Heavenly Father right now?  
He is always there.  
(See 2 Nephi 32:9.)**

## *I Found Peace and Hope in the Gospel*

By Bryan Chatima

**I** was born the youngest of six children in a small town called Bindura, Zimbabwe, Africa. My parents divorced a few years after my birth, and my good, loving mother had to raise us—four girls and two boys—by herself.

Life was tough for us. I had to walk four or five kilometers (3 miles) to school, and I would go without shoes or anything to eat. Each year I could never complete the term because we could not pay the school fees. There was no place in the world to get money to pay the fees on time. Whenever we did get money, I tried to trace how we got it, but it was untraceable. It's miraculous to consider how well we were raised. It's all because of the love and will of our Father in Heaven.

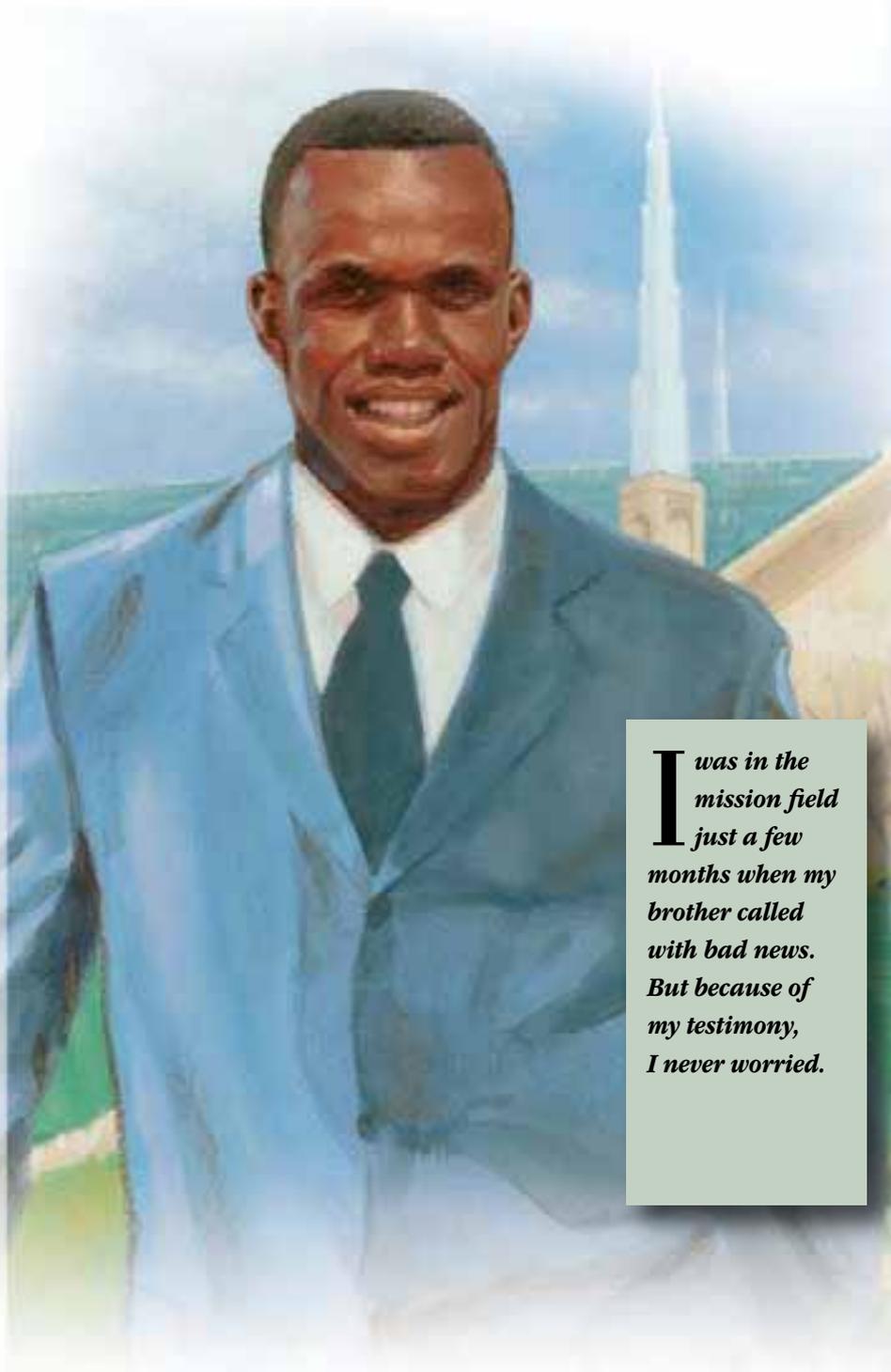
My mother liked going to church, and because I was the youngest, I would go with her. In 1998, when I was 13 years old, two Latter-day Saint missionaries came to my neighborhood to visit less-active members. I was playing soccer with my friend when the missionaries passed through. We spoke with them, and the missionaries asked if they could visit us the following week. They taught us, and

we accepted the invitation to be baptized.

Four years later, in 2002, my father and one of my sisters died just a week apart. I carried on, serving as a district

missionary until I received my full-time mission call in July 2004 to serve in the South Africa Durban Mission. I was in the mission field just a few months when my brother called my

**I** was in the mission field just a few months when my brother called with bad news. But because of my testimony, I never worried.



mission president, informing him that my mother had died and had already been buried. Can you picture how it feels to lose such a mother? Four months later another sister died.

As a missionary, I had been teaching people about the restored gospel. Because of my testimony, I never worried about my losses. I had peace of mind and hope that in due time I would see my parents and sisters again. On the way home from my mission in July 2006, I went to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple and was baptized on behalf of my male family members who had passed on, and I had baptisms performed for my sisters who had died.

Conditions in Zimbabwe remain difficult, but I have a tremendous testimony of the good that can come through following Church leaders and programs. Despite all our challenges, we can find peace and hope in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. God be thanked that He watches and guides His Church and His children. I thank Him for the temple, which gives us peace and hope that we will meet with our families again.

The Lord said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Despite life’s challenges, may we keep hoping for good, never doubting and never questioning the Lord’s will. ■

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## *Exactly What I Needed*

By Sarah Cutler

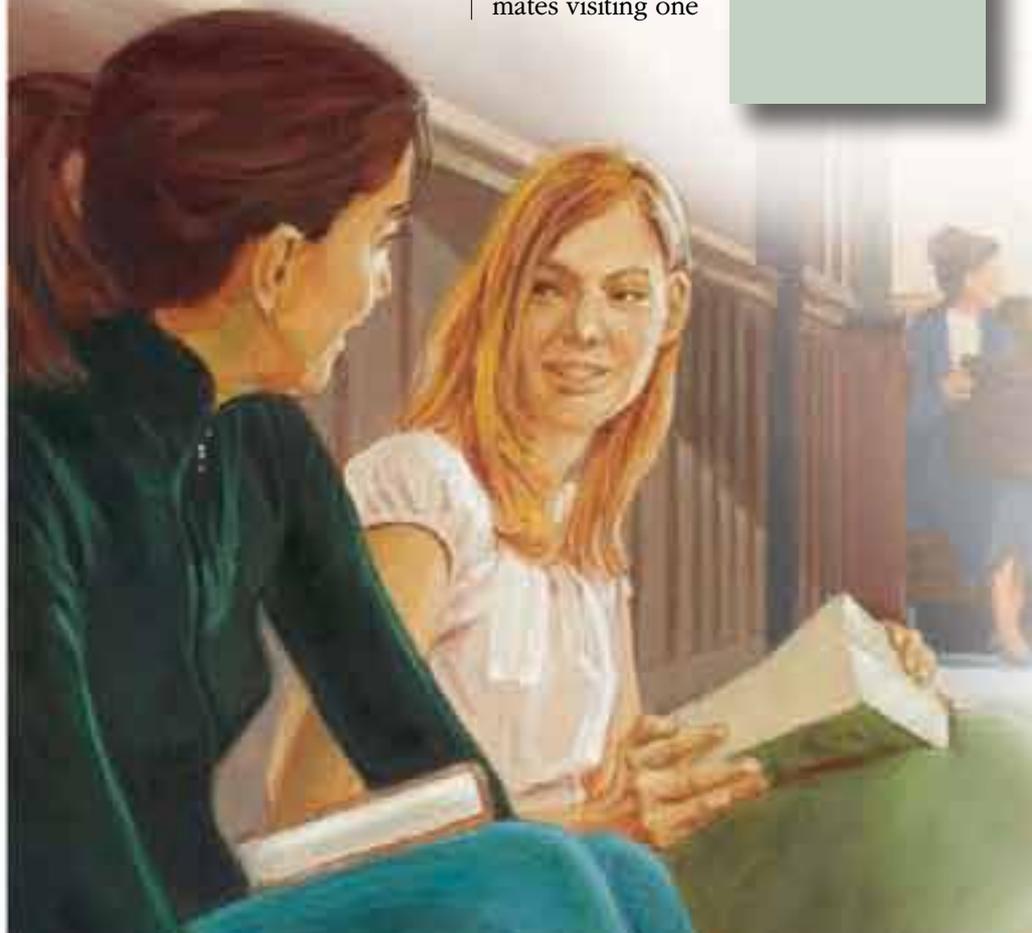
**W**ith a full schedule ahead of me, I dashed out the door early, my backpack full to bursting with the textbooks, self-defense uniform, dance shoes, sack lunch, and sack dinner I would need to survive yet another busy college day. I had two tests I didn’t feel prepared for, reading I hadn’t finished, and not enough time to get everywhere I needed to go that day.

Wearing the skirt I would need for my dance test, I felt ridiculous

with my huge backpack and desperate that I wouldn’t be on time to my first class. When I tripped and fell in the middle of a busy intersection in front of dozens of students and cars, my embarrassment and frustration, along with the hole in my new nylons, pushed me to tears. Seven o’clock in the morning, and I was already crying.

As I picked myself up and hobbled to school, I prayed fervently for the Lord to send someone to cheer me up. It would have been nice to see my mom, but she was two states away. Maybe the Lord could answer my prayer through one of my roommates visiting one

**I** prayed fervently for the Lord to send someone to cheer me up.



of my classes. Or maybe He would send that boy in the ward whom I liked so much.

I looked around expectantly as I hurried to my first class but didn't see anyone I knew. I took my first test, still in tears, and rushed to my second class, arriving late. I was still upset as I ran to my third class and as I hurried to get ready for my next test. I did better on my test than I had expected and was calming down a little when I found a quiet hallway where I could eat my lunch while studying. I was bent over my books when I heard someone call my name.

I looked up to see my visiting teacher, whom I had never before seen on campus. She sat down next to me, and we talked for almost an hour—not about my frustrations that day but about things that were going well for me, our plans, and things that worried her.

It wasn't until she left that I remembered my pleading prayer that morning. *Of course* the Lord would answer my prayer through the woman called to watch over me. I had wanted someone to cheer me up early that morning, but He knew I'd be ready to see a friend later in the day—when I had calmed down enough to be able to receive the comfort I needed and to extend comfort to another who had her own challenges.

The Lord knew me and sent me exactly what I needed exactly when I needed it. ■



## *My Prayer in a Stockyard*

By Connie Crookston Forsgren

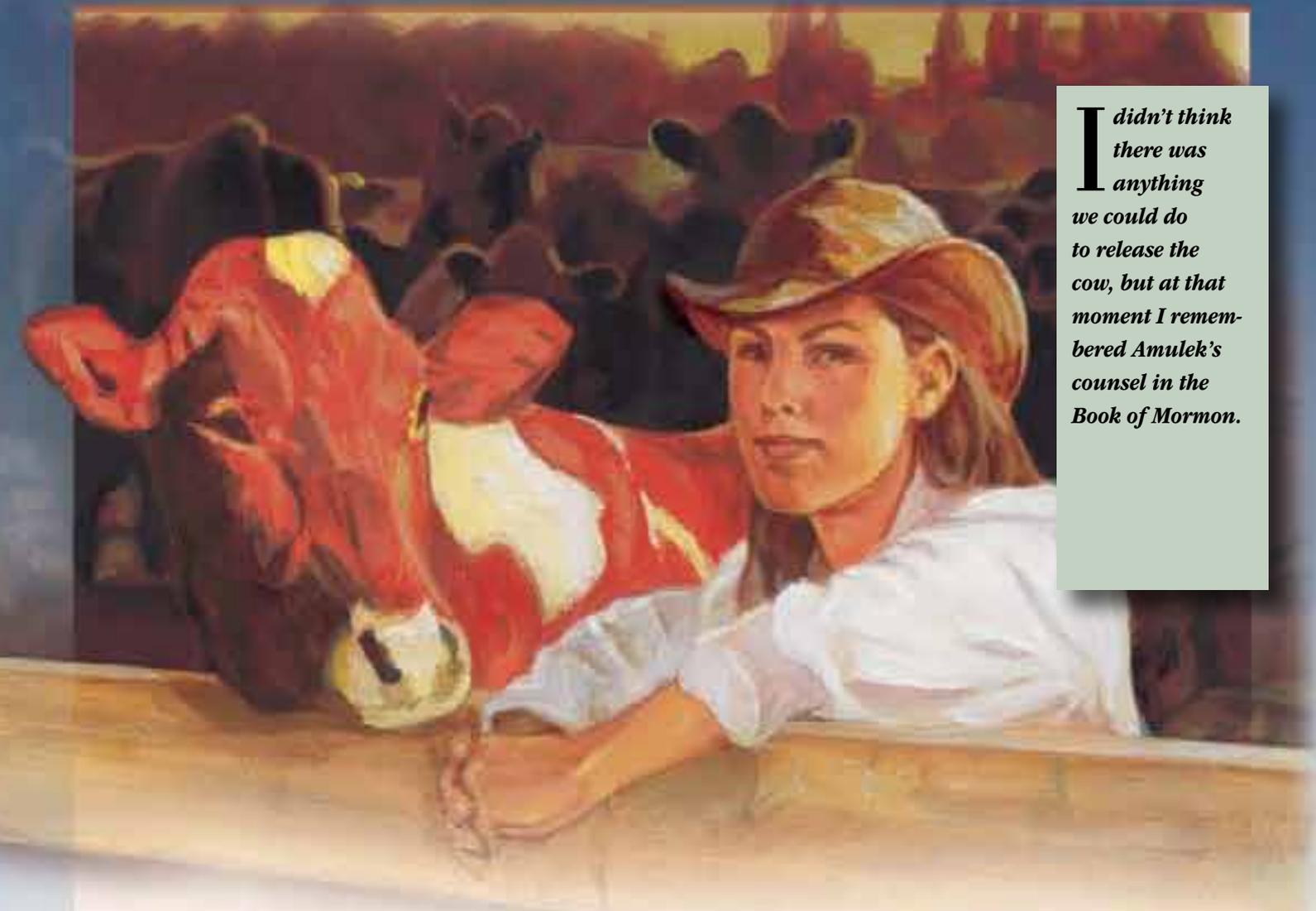
**B**ecause of a drought, my husband, John, and I had to either sell our beef cattle at a loss or move them from the Melba Valley, in southwestern Idaho, USA. Fortunately, John found summer range at a cousin's family farm, located in the Preston area, about 300 miles (480 km) away.

We arranged for a trucker to take all 40 cattle in one load, but he didn't like the looks of a rough ranch road that led to the

cattle pasture, still 20 miles (32 km) away. To our disappointment, he unloaded them at nearby stockyards. There we were, late in the day with 40 head of cattle to transport and no way to do it.

John stopped a local farmer, explained our plight, and asked for help. Minutes later Bishop Steve Meeks and his young son followed us to the stockyards to see what could be done.

The cattle had become unsettled. Seeing a broken section of fence at the stockyard, they ran toward it, seeking freedom. All the cattle hurdled the fence into another enclosure—except for one cow. She managed to get most of the way over, but one hind leg



**I** didn't think there was anything we could do to release the cow, but at that moment I remembered Amulek's counsel in the Book of Mormon.

slipped between two fence planks. She ended up hanging precariously on the fence, one front foot barely touching the ground. She kicked her other hind leg furiously in an effort to free herself.

Releasing the cow would require hoisting equipment. If she broke a leg, we would have to put her down. To lose a cow would put considerable financial strain on us.

The cow weighed more than 1,000 pounds (455 kg), and we could not get near her, nor help her if we did. The havoc on the fence made the rest of the cattle nervous.

I didn't think there was anything we could do, but at that moment

I remembered Amulek's counsel in the Book of Mormon: "Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks" (Alma 34:20). I withdrew myself from the others, knelt down, and prayed with all the sincerity of my heart. Concluding my supplication, I pleaded, "Heavenly Father, please help the cow."

I returned to the corral, the prayer still lingering on my lips. By now the cattle had quieted somewhat, including the one on the fence.

Suddenly, the largest of the milling animals broke away from the herd. Resisting our efforts to turn her back, she moved toward the dangling cow. Lowering her head, she dropped to

her knees, forced her way under the stranded cow, and staggered slowly to her feet. She lifted the tangled cow into the air and then lowered her. The cow was free! A hoist could not have done as well.

As the two cows ran back to the herd, Bishop Meeks stared in disbelief at what he had just witnessed. My tears flowed as I whispered, "Thank You, Heavenly Father."

Anyone who knows cattle will tell you that cows do not reason things out in their minds. But there is an explanation for this incident. Heavenly Father hears and answers prayers. He answered mine—at a stockyard in Preston, Idaho. ■

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# Stacking Wood in Kuopio

By Briant Jenson

In late summer of 1968 my missionary companion, Elder Ken Heaton, and I visited a part-member family in Kuopio, Finland. The mother and daughter were members of the Church, but the father was not.

At the wife's request, we taught her and her daughter the discussions—loudly enough for the husband to hear from where he was in an adjacent room. When we tried to get him to join us, he said he didn't have time. On one occasion his excuse was that he had a pile of lumber in the backyard that needed to be cut and stacked for winter.

"If the lumber were all cut and stacked, would you let us teach you?" we asked.

"Yes," he replied. But there was so much wood, he added, that it would take him a long time before he could complete the job.

Several days later, after waiting for the father to leave for work, my companion and I returned to the home. With the wife's permission, we spent the entire day cutting and stacking wood. We finished at 5:00 p.m., just before he returned home.

We couldn't wait to see his face, but we scurried away before he caught us. After riding our bicycles home and cleaning up, we pedaled back to the home at about 7:00 p.m.

"OK, the wood is cut!" we proclaimed. "Now will you let us teach you?"

He could only smile, nod his head, and join us in the front room. Several weeks later, after hearing the missionary discussions, this good brother was baptized and confirmed. ■



**T**he wood is all cut!" we proclaimed. "Now will you let us teach you?"

# FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

*These teaching suggestions can be used in the classroom as well as in the home. You may tailor these ideas to your family or class.*

**“The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance,”** p. 15: Share President Marion G. Romney’s story about the gullible seagulls. Why couldn’t they catch fish? Define *self-reliance*, and discuss ways your family can become more self-reliant. Read the last two paragraphs of the article. Make a goal to help a neighbor, using your family’s strengths.

**“Walking by Faith, Not by Sight,”** p. 22: Blindfold different family members, and give them small items to identify. Discuss how they identified the items. Read about Sister Daggi, and discuss what it means to walk by faith, not by sight.



**“Why Do We Baptize for the Dead?”** p. 32: Begin the lesson by reading the first paragraph of the article. With family members, read the scriptures mentioned in the article. Discuss the meaning of each scripture and how it applies to baptism for the dead. Conclude by role-playing how to share the principles learned in the article with friends and family.

**“Search and Rescue,”** p. 38: Share the article with your family. Create your own emergency committee within your family; assign each family member a responsibility. Discuss emergency situations you might face. Plan what you can do to help prevent or prepare for these situations. Make a goal to maintain an emergency plan and practice using it.

## TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

*Number represents first page of article.*

F = <i>The Friend</i>	
Baptism for the dead, 32	Preparedness, 10, 20, 38
Conversion, 43	Prophets, F2
Courage, 36, F8, F14	Relief Society, 26
Example, F8, F10	Resurrection, 32
Faith, 2, 22	Second Coming, 20
Family, 25, F4	Self-reliance, 10, 15
Finances, 10	Service, 15, 38, 47, F6
Food storage, 10	Smith, Joseph, F6
Grace, 8	Spiritual self-reliance, 15, 22
Hope, 43	Standards, 36
Humility, 8	Sustaining leaders, F2
Kindness, F6, F8	Temples, 32, F4
Miracles, 22	Temple work, 32
Missionary work, 43, 47	Trials, 8, 43
Parables, 20	Visiting teaching, 25, 26
Personal Progress, 31	Word of Wisdom, 36, F10
Plan of salvation, 32	
Prayer, 2, 31, 42, 44, 45, F10, F13	

**“Standing Up for Caleb,”** p. F8: Invite everyone to tell something good about each person in the family. Tell the story of Caleb. Discuss Luke’s actions and what happened because of his courage. Invite family members to share a time when they or someone they know stood up for someone else. Make a goal to stand up for others.

## Family Home Afternoons

One day while I was at church, one of the sisters expressed to me that she was feeling lonely. Like her, I was also a widow and lived by myself. Suddenly, I had an idea: why didn’t we get together on Mondays and hold family home evening? We could also invite other sisters who lived alone.

I did a little research and found eight women in our ward who

might participate. Six were widows, one was single, and one’s husband wasn’t a member of the Church.

With my bishop’s approval, I arranged for all of us to hold family home “afternoons” together. (We hold it early in the day because most of us don’t see well and don’t like being out after dark.) We take turns meeting in each other’s homes and giving a brief lesson. Perhaps the

most important thing that has come from this is a true feeling of friendship that binds us together in love as sisters.

All of us eagerly await our family home “afternoons.” We feel happy to be studying the gospel together, and we enjoy wonderful friendships that strengthen our faith and our love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Irma de Mackenna, Chile

## YOUR FAVORITE HOME EVENING

Send a description of your favorite family home evening to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org).

# the Friend



# The TRUE CHURCH

BY PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING  
First Counselor in the First Presidency

**M**y testimony that this is the true Church began in my childhood. One of my earliest memories is of a conference meeting. A man was speaking whom I did not know. I knew only that he was someone sent to our little district in the mission field by someone who held the priesthood. I do not know what he said. But I received a powerful, certain witness before I was eight, even before I was baptized, that I was hearing a servant of God in the true Church of Jesus Christ.

In my teen years, I felt the power of priesthood quorums and of a loving bishop. I still remember and can feel the assurances that came when I sat in a priests quorum next to a bishop and knew that he had the keys of a true judge in Israel.

That same witness came early in my life on two Sundays. In each case I was present on the day that a stake was organized. Seemingly ordinary men whom I knew well were called as stake presidents. I raised my hand on those days and had a witness come to me that God had called His servants and that I would be blessed by their service and for sustaining them. I have felt that same miracle countless times across the Church.

I saw that those stake presidents were lifted up to their callings. I have seen the same miracle in



**President Eyring tells how he gained his testimony that the Church is true.**

the service of President Monson as he received the call to preside as the prophet and President of the Church and to exercise all the keys of the priesthood in the earth. Revelation and inspiration have come to him in my presence, which confirms to me that God is honoring those keys. I am an eyewitness.

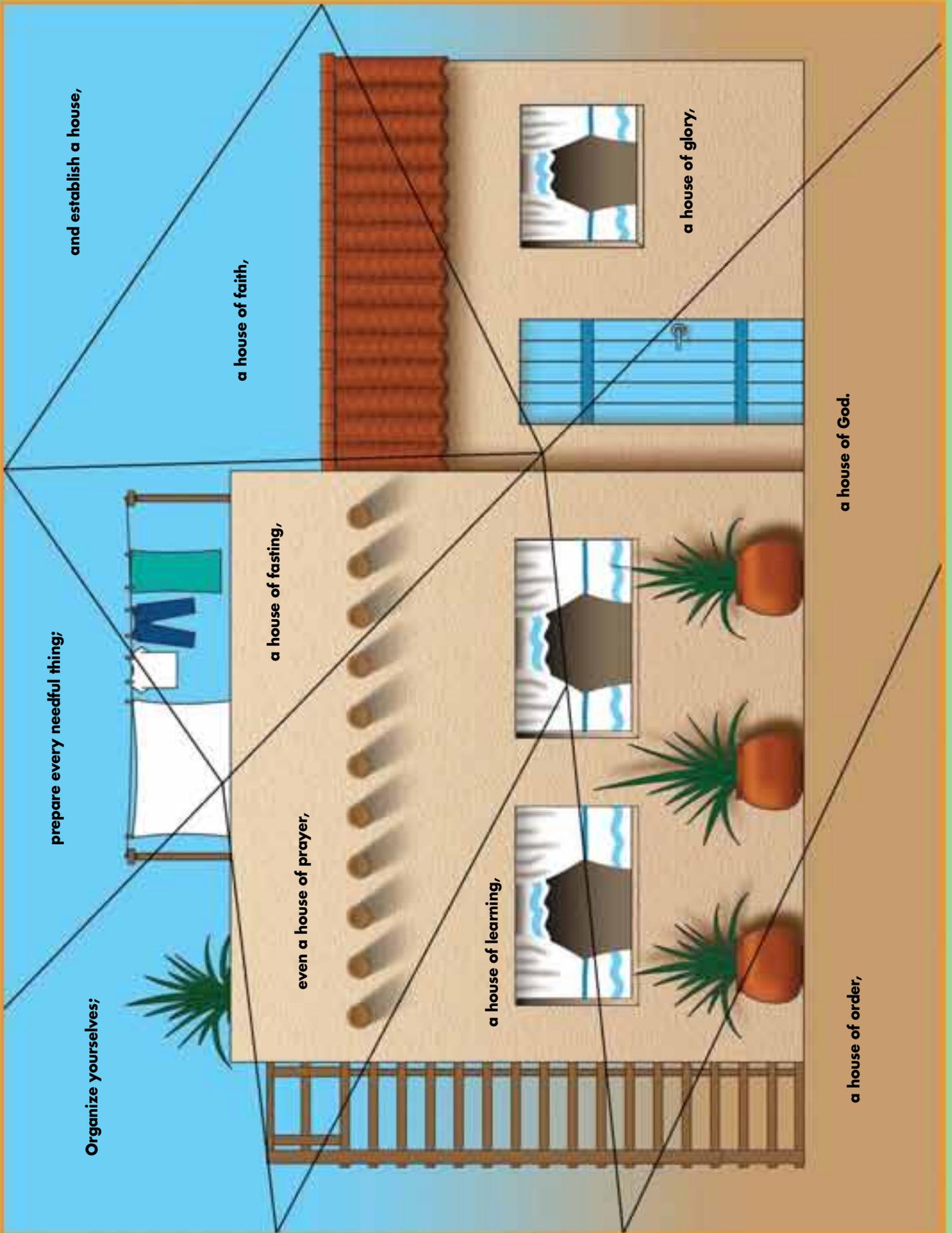
I bear you my solemn witness that this is the true and living Church of Jesus Christ. Heavenly Father will answer your fervent prayers to know that for yourself. ●

*From an April 2008 general conference address.*

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. In family home evening, talk about experiences you or your family have had that help you know the Church is true. Then draw a picture of one of those experiences. If you want to, show your picture and share your testimony.
2. Who are some Church leaders, including home teachers and bishops or branch presidents, who have helped you and your family? How can you show your appreciation to them?
3. Think about how you felt when President Thomas S. Monson was sustained as prophet and President of the Church in general conference in April 2008. Record your feelings by drawing a picture or writing in your journal.





**Note:** This activity may be copied or printed from the Internet at [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org). For English, click on **Gospel Library**. For other languages, click on **Languages**.

# “Mine House Is a House of Order”

BY CHERYL ESPLIN

**“Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 88:119).**



The Lord said, “Mine house is a house of order” (D&C 132:8). The temple is the Lord’s house, but our homes can be a house of order too. A house of order is a home where we try to do as Jesus taught. It is a home where we can feel love and peace.

Heavenly Father has given parents the responsibility to teach and care for their children with love and kindness. He has given children the responsibility to obey and honor their parents. Heavenly Father wants every member of the family to work together to make his or her home a happy, peaceful place where the Spirit can be.

Elder Glenn L. Pace of the Seventy told how his youngest daughter helped their family do things the Lord’s way. He said: “She was the one who reminded us to have family prayer. She was the one who tried to get us excited about family home evening. She devised treasure hunts; she fixed treats; she would do anything to try to get the family excited about having family home evening” (“Friend to Friend,” *Friend*, Feb. 1997, 7).

## Activity

Remove page F4 from the magazine, and mount it on heavy paper. Cut out the puzzle pieces. Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:119, and then put the puzzle together in the correct word order, matching the verse.

When you have completed the puzzle, say the scripture several times and try to memorize it. Think about things that you can do to help your family have a home like Heavenly Father wants you to have—a home where

you can feel love and peace, a home where you can feel His Spirit.

## Sharing Time Ideas

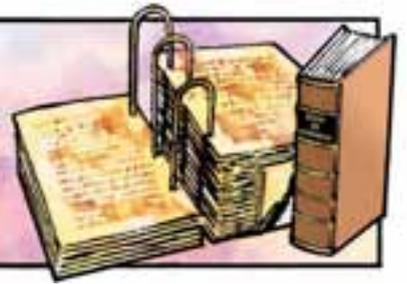
1. *Invite a Primary leader to tell about a time she obeyed her parents. Have her share the consequences. Have the children turn to Colossians 3:20. Explain that this verse was written by Paul, who was an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Before reading the verse together, tell the children to look for answers to these questions: To whom is Paul speaking? What does Paul tell them to do? Read the scripture, and ask for responses. Then ask: What are some of the ways obeying your parents has helped you stay safe or helped you choose the right? Toss a beanbag to several children, and ask them to tell one thing their parents ask them to do that they could obey. Testify of the importance of obeying parents.*

2. *Song presentation: “Building a Family” (2009 Outline for Sharing Time and the Children’s Sacrament Meeting Presentation). Have the children listen to the music a few times. Then play the music again, and have the children tap out the rhythm of the melody notes by lightly tapping their fist into the palm of their other hand to represent hammering like a builder. Find pictures that represent key words of the first verse (see Primary 1 picture packet). Tape or glue each picture to a box. Write the key word on the opposite side of the box. First teach the song by showing the key words. When the children learn a phrase, stack the box as if you are building a house with blocks. When the children can sing the verse all the way through using the key words, put all of the boxes randomly ordered in a line with the pictures facing forward. Sing each phrase, and let the children choose a picture they think matches the phrase. If it matches, have a child put the box back in place to build a house with the picture side showing. Every time the children sing the words “I am a builder,” have them tap their fists to the rhythm. Teach the second verse by cutting a picture of a family into puzzle pieces. On the back of each piece write a key word from each phrase of the second verse. Teach the phrase using the key word. When the children know the phrase, put the piece on the board to show the picture side. Repeat with each piece until they have completed the puzzle of the family. Teach the chorus. ●*



FROM THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

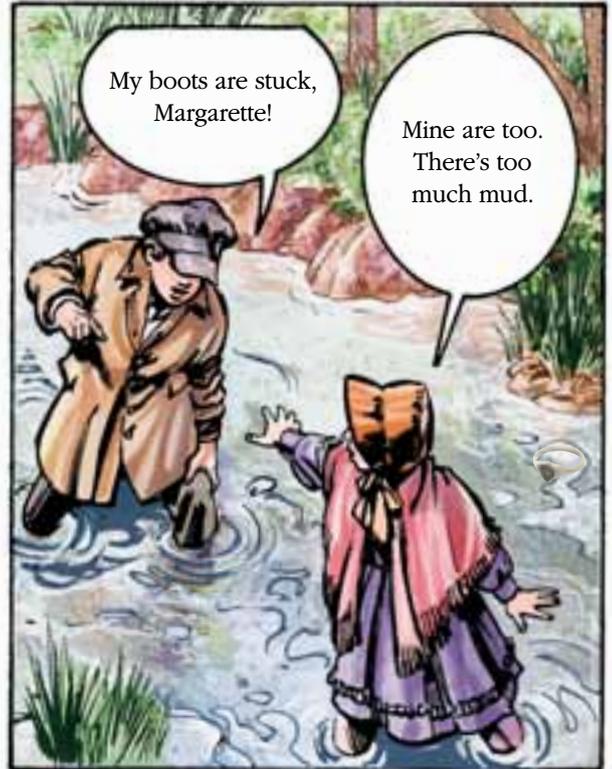
# A Life of Kindness



One day, just after it had rained in beautiful Nauvoo, Margarette McIntire and her older brother Wallace were walking to school.

Hurry up, Wallace, or we'll be late.

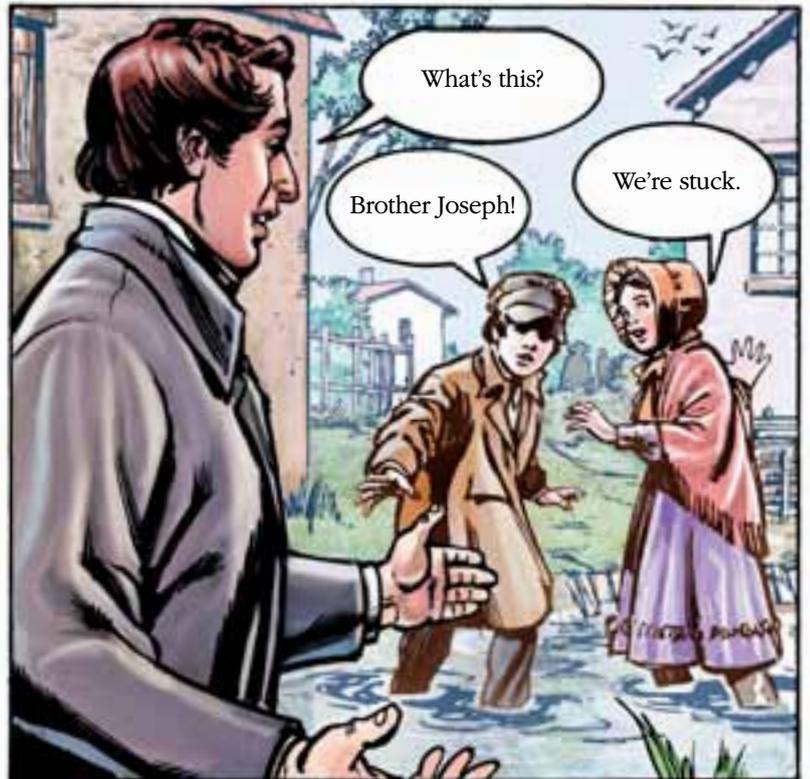
I'm coming.



My boots are stuck, Margarette!

Mine are too. There's too much mud.

The children found they couldn't get out, so they started to cry, thinking they would have to stay there.



What's this?

Brother Joseph!

We're stuck.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAL VELLUTO AND EUGENIO MATTOZZI

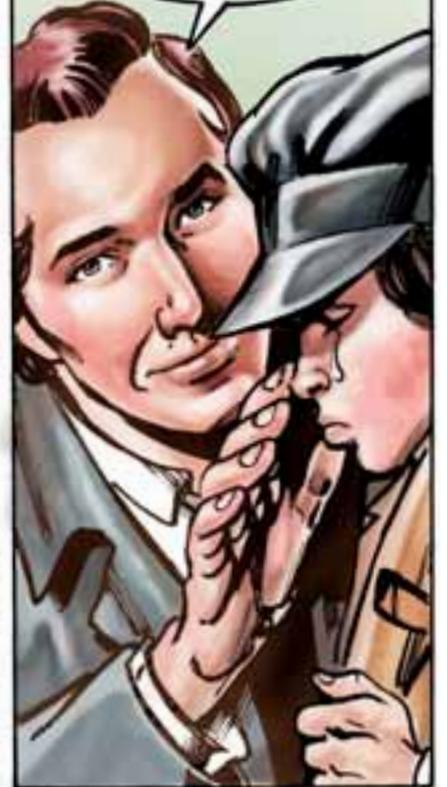
Joseph pulled the two children out of the mud.

He cleaned the mud off their boots.

He dried their tears.

You look very pretty today, Margarete. Don't worry about the mud—it will come off.

Cheer up, young man. You're a very good older brother. Keep taking good care of your sister.



Margarete later recalled the experience: "Was it any wonder that I loved that great, good, and noble man of God?"



# STANDING UP

# FOR CALEB

BY AMY S. TATE

Based on a true story

*"Remember . . . brotherly kindness" (D&C 4:6).*



**I**t started out like any other day at school. Our teacher, Miss Blackstock, was writing on the chalkboard while I sat daydreaming at my desk. Then our principal walked in with a boy I had

never seen before. The principal whispered something in Miss Blackstock's ear, and everyone got quiet trying to listen.

The boy stood at the front of the classroom while the other kids stared at him. His faded plaid shirt hung loosely. There was a hole in the knee of his pants. With slumped shoulders, he dug his hands

*"We should always think about how others feel. We should be kind to everyone, as Jesus was. He loves all of us. It doesn't matter how we look."*



**Cheryl C. Lant, Primary general president, "The Savior's Love," Liahona, Mar. 2006, F15; Friend, Mar. 2006, 9.**

deep into his pockets and stared at the floor.

After the principal left, Miss Blackstock said, "Class, I would like you to meet Caleb Sanders. He recently moved here from Montana. That is quite a distance from here! Caleb, you may take the seat next to Luke."

She pointed to the seat next to mine, and the class watched as Caleb nervously made his way down the aisle. As Miss Blackstock turned back to the chalkboard, whispers filled the room. Some of the kids were saying mean things about the way Caleb was dressed.

"Look at those weird boots," someone said.

"He could hike up the Himalayas in those!" another boy chimed in.

I glanced over at Caleb, but he just sat there staring at his blank notebook page and clutching his pencil. I knew that he must have heard them because I saw him shifting uncomfortably in his seat. Then a couple of boys snickered so loudly that Miss Blackstock stopped writing.

"I see that everyone is eager to talk to Caleb, so let's have him come up here and tell us a little bit about himself," she said.

The class got quiet and stared at Caleb. I felt sorry for him. The boy who sat behind him kicked the back of Caleb's chair and jeered, "Go ahead, mountain boy."

Caleb slowly made his way to the front of the class. His hair partly covered his eyes, and his boots scuffed the floor when he walked. The kids around me snickered again. I knew that Miss Blackstock was trying to help, but I was afraid this would only make things worse.

One boy raised his hand and asked, "Where did you live in Montana, under a rock?"

The class burst into laughter.

The girl on the front row asked, "Does everyone in Montana dress like you?"

I felt my face getting hot as anger welled up inside me. If someone didn't stop this, I knew Caleb would remain an outcast for the rest of the school year. But if I stuck up for him, the kids might laugh at me too.

Then I remembered what my stepmom told me when I tried out for the soccer team. She told me about David in the Old Testament. David was the youngest of all his brothers, but the Lord chose him to be king. It didn't matter what he looked like. Sometimes people judge others by their appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

I knew Caleb needed help, so I raised my hand. Miss Blackstock called on me. Caleb didn't look up. He probably expected me to make fun of him too.

"I've heard that there are some cool parks in Montana with great hiking trails. What are they like?" I asked.

The class got quiet. I felt my face turning red again, but Caleb smiled. I could see that he was relieved to answer a kind question. In a quiet voice he started to speak.

He told us that his family had lived on a large ranch in Montana, and he had even owned a horse. He told about his favorite trail in Glacier National Park and how he had encountered a real live bear. As he told more and more about his home, the other kids began asking questions about the bear, the hiking, and the rock climbing.

After school I wasn't sure if anyone would sit by me on the bus. I held my backpack close and stared out the bus window. Suddenly, I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was Caleb.

"Can I sit here?" he asked shyly.

"Sure!" I said, moving over to make room.

I never would have guessed how that day would turn out. I am glad I had the courage to be nice to Caleb. Now he has many friends—and I'm proud to be one of them. ●

# Lifted by Prayer

**Children all over the world pray to Heavenly Father—just like you!  
This month let's meet Jared Azzarini of Porto Alegre, Brazil.**

**J**ared Azzarini, age 10, was devastated as he watched his coach and teammates board their flight to Goiânia for the Brazilian National Gymnastics Championship without him. He had prayed as hard as he could that the airport officials would let him on the plane so he could compete with his team. But they said he could not travel without his original birth certificate. All he had brought was a copy. The original was at home.

So while his team prepared to defend the national title that he had helped win in their age group the year before, he went home with his mother. He thought about his coach's last words to him: "If you don't make it to the

competition, the whole team will lose. We need you."

The next available flight was the following morning. It would get him to the competition, but just in time—without a chance to warm up or get used to the equipment.

"Mom," he said when they arrived at home, "you taught me that when we pray earnestly, the Lord will answer our prayers. I have prayed with all my heart, and nothing happened. If I go on the flight tomorrow, I will have no chance."

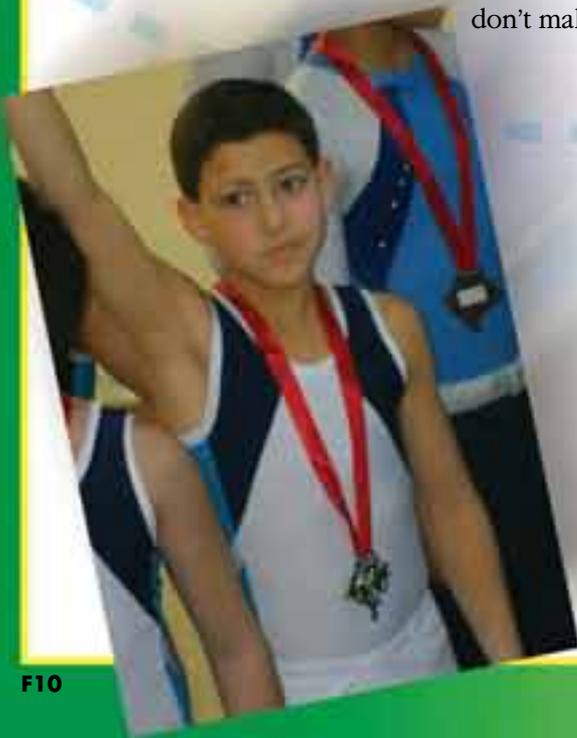
Jared's mom reassured him that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). She called the airport. Within half an hour, the airline called and asked if Jared could get to the airport immediately. A seat had opened up on a flight that would leave right away.

"Heavenly Father really *does* answer our prayers!" Jared thought as he hurried to his room to thank Heavenly Father.

Jared, a member of the Intercap Ward, Porto Alegre Brazil Partenon Stake, made it to the competition in time to earn a third-place individual finish and help his team win their age division's national championship again.

## **Jared and Gymnastics**

When Jared was six, his mother enrolled him in the only class available for his age at the local university: gymnastics. The instructor was amazed to learn that Jared didn't have any experience. The university's coach





tested Jared and helped him get a tryout with a well-known gymnastics club. Jared made the team, and four months later he earned an individual sixth place at a state competition.

His goal is to one day compete in the Olympics. To reach that goal, he trains five hours every day but Sunday.

#### **Jared and the Word of Wisdom**

Jared tries to keep his mind and body pure and not partake of things that are harmful. He knows he must take good care of his body if he wants to be a good gymnast. But his Olympic goals aren't the only thing prompting him to take care of himself. "If I don't keep the Word of Wisdom, besides spoiling my health, I will not be able to go back to live with Heavenly Father. The Word of Wisdom is a commandment," Jared says.



### Jared's Example

None of Jared's teammates are members of the Church, so he is careful to set a good example and treat others kindly. Jared has invited his friends to spend the weekend with him before and has taken them to church. He lent them white shirts and ties. "I always try to be ready to help," he says. "I pray for my teammates who are competing and even teach them how to pray."

Jared uses the names of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ reverently. He does not swear or use crude words, and he tries to help others do the same. He says, "My teammates watch each other so they will not say bad things, at least in front of me."

### Jared's Family

Jared loves his family. "Anything I do with my family is wonderful," he says. Jared's brother, Sam, is one year older. The two of them enjoy doing things together, especially singing. They even sang at a special meeting where Bonnie D. Parkin, then Relief Society general president, and Cheryl C. Lant, Primary general president, were speaking. ●



● **Porto Alegre**



### Jared's Favorites

Primary song: "A Child's Prayer"  
(*Children's Songbook*, 12–13)

Food: Rice, black beans, and mashed potatoes. Jared says, "And, of course, as a good *gaúcho* [a person from the state of Rio Grande do Sul], I love a good barbecue."

Sports: Gymnastics and soccer  
Hobby: Video games

Scripture: James 1:5—Jared says, "I love the history of Joseph Smith's life."

School subjects: Science, history, and physical education

Pets: Two dogs and two cats

“He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness,  
but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

# Praying for Dad

BY REBECCA C., AGE 10, WITH HELP FROM MAURIZIO E. D. BISI

I belong to a family of five, and we attend church every Sunday, all except my dad. He is not a member of the Church, and this makes me sad. He is a very good dad and sometimes comes to parties or trips organized by the ward. I would like it if he always came.

My mom taught me in Primary that Heavenly Father listens to our prayers and wants to help us. So I said a prayer that He would help my dad understand how much the gospel means for our family.

On Saturday I was about to watch TV when something happened. My dad came and said there were better things I could be

doing instead of sitting in front of the TV. “For example,” he said, “what would you think if I read you a nice story from the *Liahona*?”

So he sat down with me and my two little brothers and read to us. I don’t know how my dad knew those stories were in the *Liahona*. But I do know that Heavenly Father had listened to my prayers and answered, touching my dad’s heart so he read something in the Church magazine.

I thank my Heavenly Father because He listens to my prayers. ●

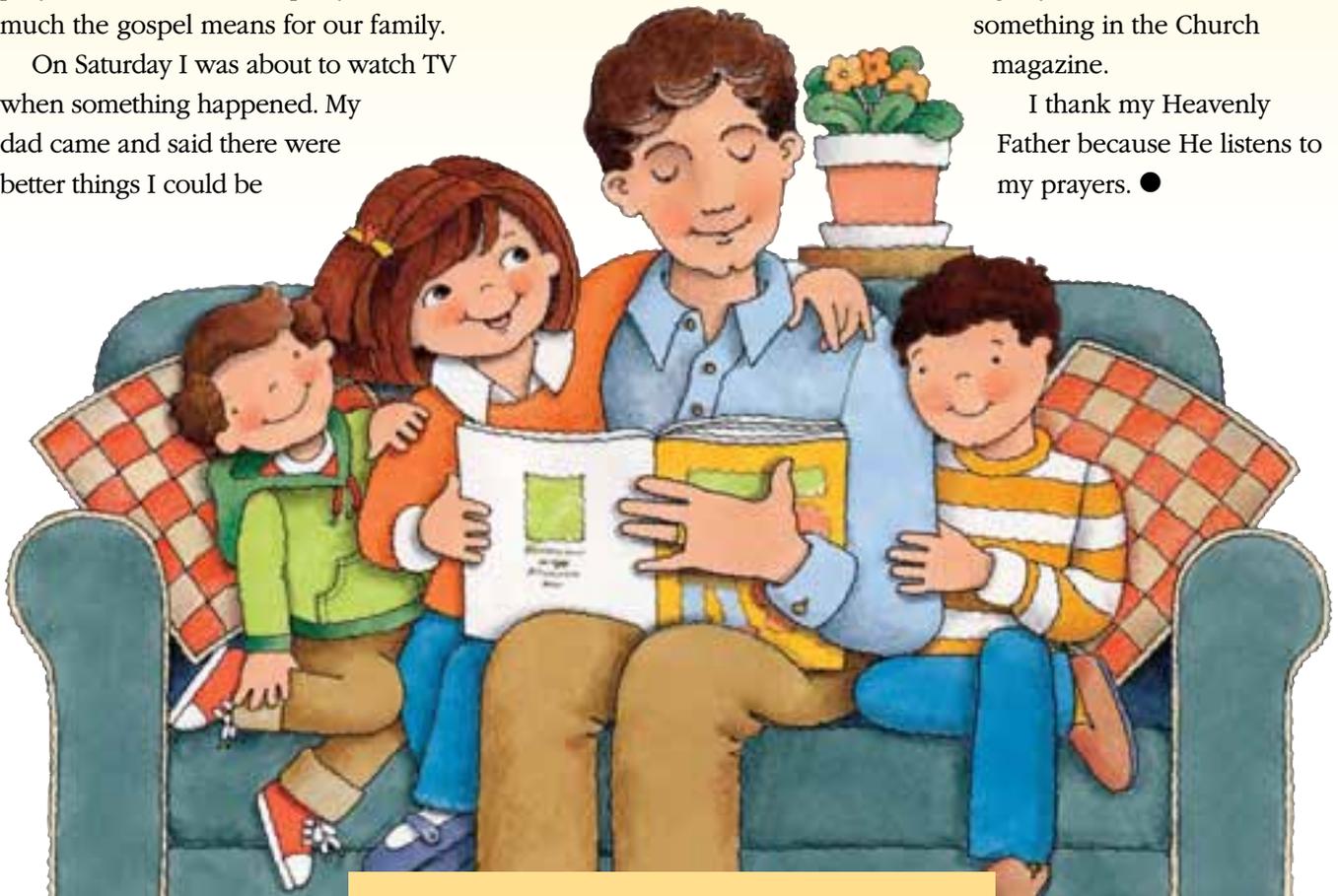


ILLUSTRATION BY JULIE F. YOUNG

# Courage to Live the Gospel

*From an interview with Elder Erich W. Kopischke of the Seventy, serving as First Counselor in the Europe Area Presidency; by Hilary M. Hendricks*

*“Be not afraid, . . . for the Lord thy God is with thee”  
(Joshua 1:9).*



My father, Kurt, was a young boy in Poland during World War II. Often he felt hungry, cold, and frightened. Then something wonderful happened. His 10-year-old friend Otto Dreger invited him to go to Sunday School with members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In Sunday School,

Kurt and Otto learned they were children of God. They sang songs. They learned to pray. Kurt loved the way he felt when he went to church: peaceful and happy. He asked his parents and his sister to go with him. Before long my father and his family were baptized. The gospel of Jesus Christ helped them feel brave through difficult times.

My father was very bright, and he wanted to study at a university. At that time the government where he lived chose who could attend universities and who could not. The government did not want people to believe in God. Dad was told that he could attend the university only if he would stop belonging to the Church and talking about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

My father knew he could not give up his faith.



*At age 10.*



Instead, he and my mother, Helga, decided to leave their home. They boarded a train for West Germany, praying that they would be allowed to enter that country. At the border the police officers checking the trains did not check the compartment where my parents were riding. So they were able to begin a new life in a country where they could worship God. Two months later I was born.

Like my parents, I needed courage to live the gospel. I spent one year as a soldier in the German army. Most of the soldiers used bad language, smoked, and did other things I knew I should not do. Sometimes I felt alone, but I always tried to keep Heavenly Father's standards. My officers respected my commitment and allowed me time off to participate in Church activities.

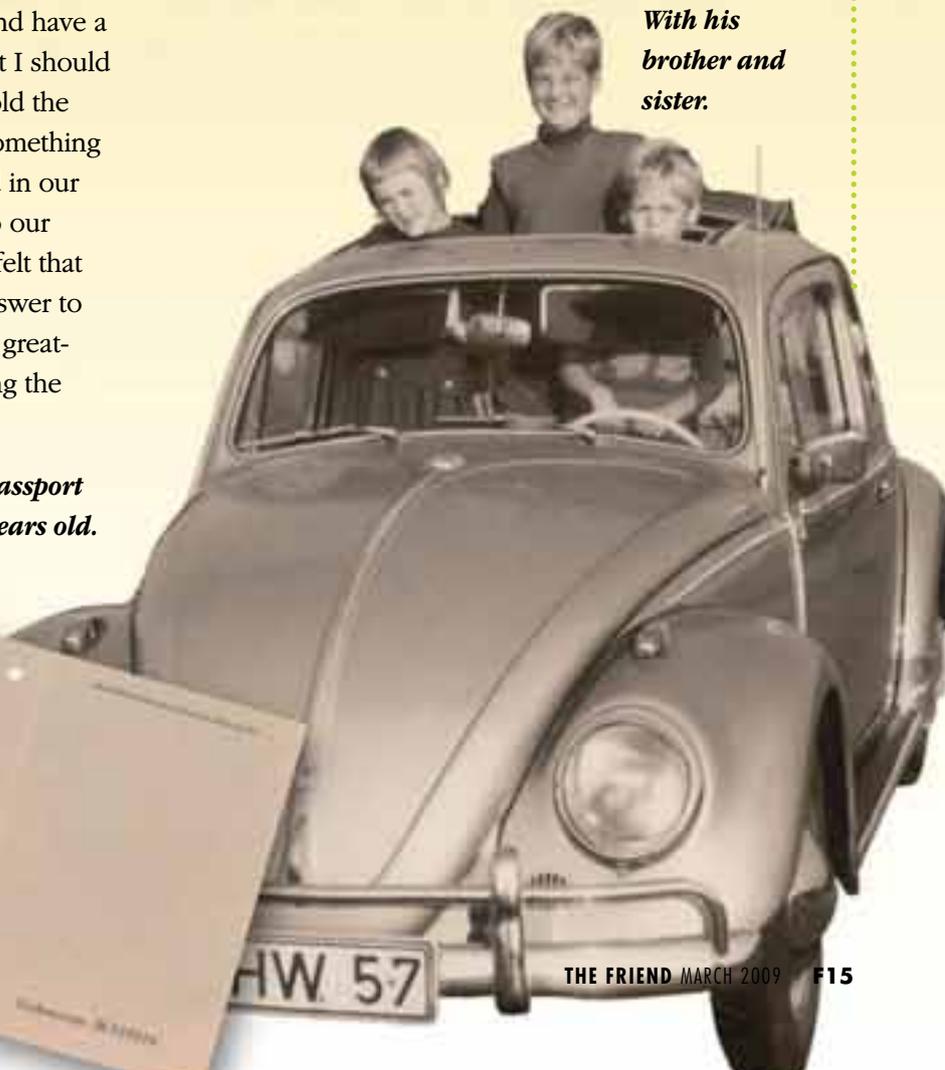
On the last night of a soldier's service, the soldier and his friends would drink a lot of alcohol and have a rowdy party. I thought and prayed about what I should do when my last night came. When it did, I told the group of soldiers serving with me, "Let's do something that has never been done before." We dressed in our best suits and went to say a quiet good-bye to our army leaders. Our major couldn't believe it. I felt that Heavenly Father had guided me to find an answer to my problem. Looking back, I can see that the greatest blessings in my life have come by following the

counsel of prophets and keeping God's commandments.

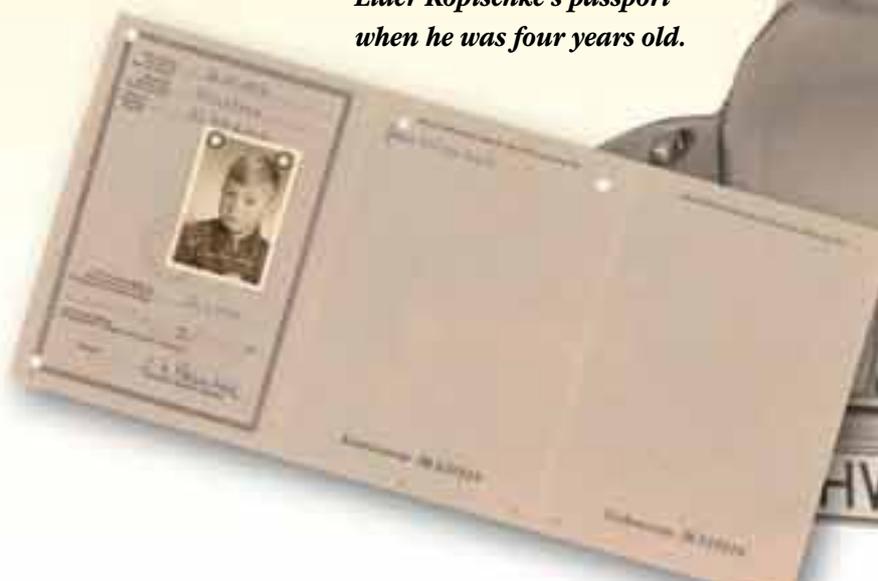
Sometimes your friends may want you to do things you know are not right. Never forget your promise to live Heavenly Father's standards. As you try to follow His commandments, He will

bless you to know what to say and do. He will help you not to feel afraid. Like my father's friend Otto, you can share with your friends what you know about Heavenly Father and the ways you feel His love. Your courage to do what is right will make a difference! ●

*With his brother and sister.*



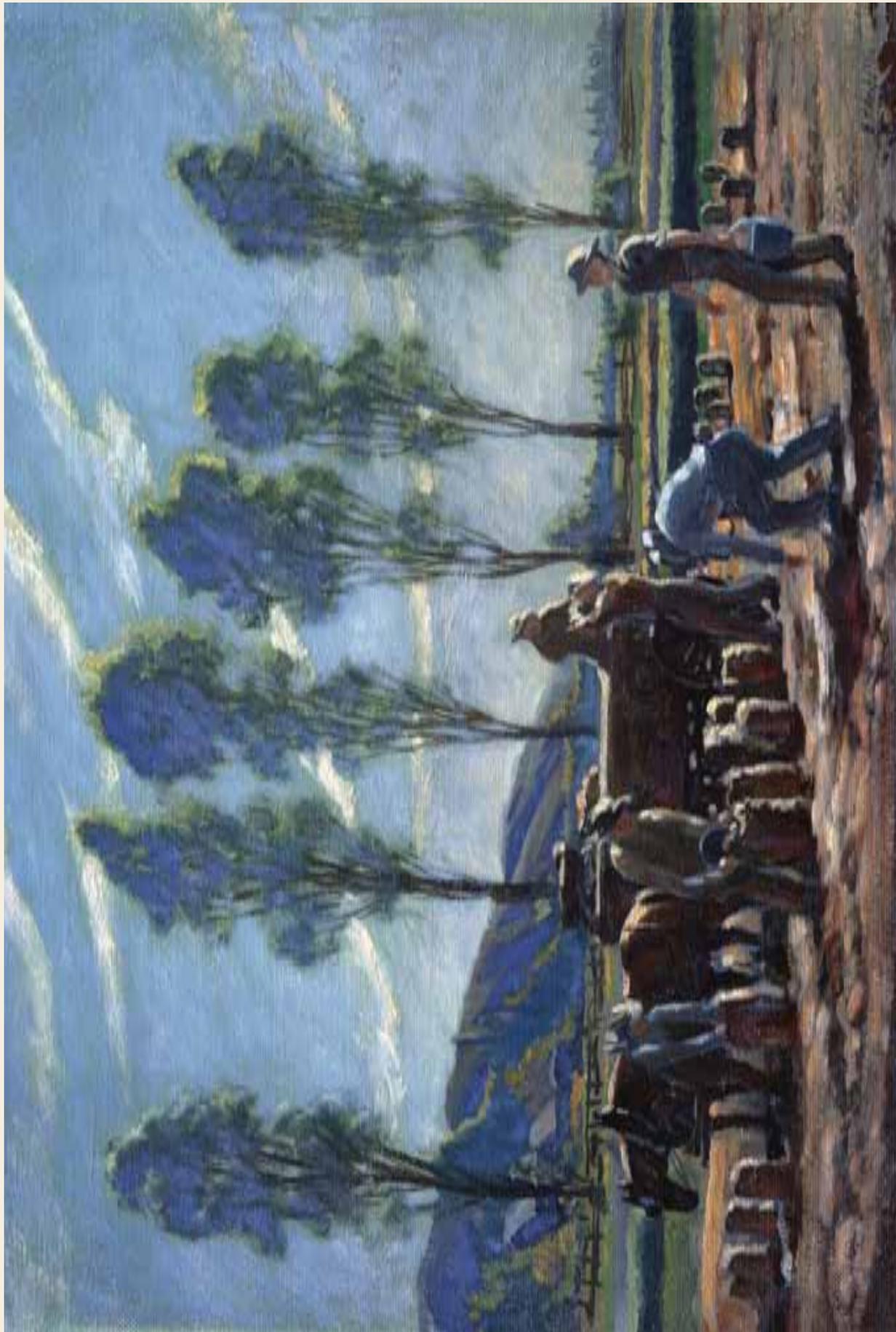
*Elder Kopischke's passport when he was four years old.*





**FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES**

“Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 88:119).



**Picking Potatoes, by B. Y. Andelin**

*“Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest” (Exodus 34:21).*



*As we follow the Church's counsel regarding family home storage, we learn that "if ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30). And as we become more prepared, we learn that "independence and self-reliance are critical keys to our spiritual growth." See President Marion G. Romney, "The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance," p. 15; see also pp. 10, 20, and 22.*

