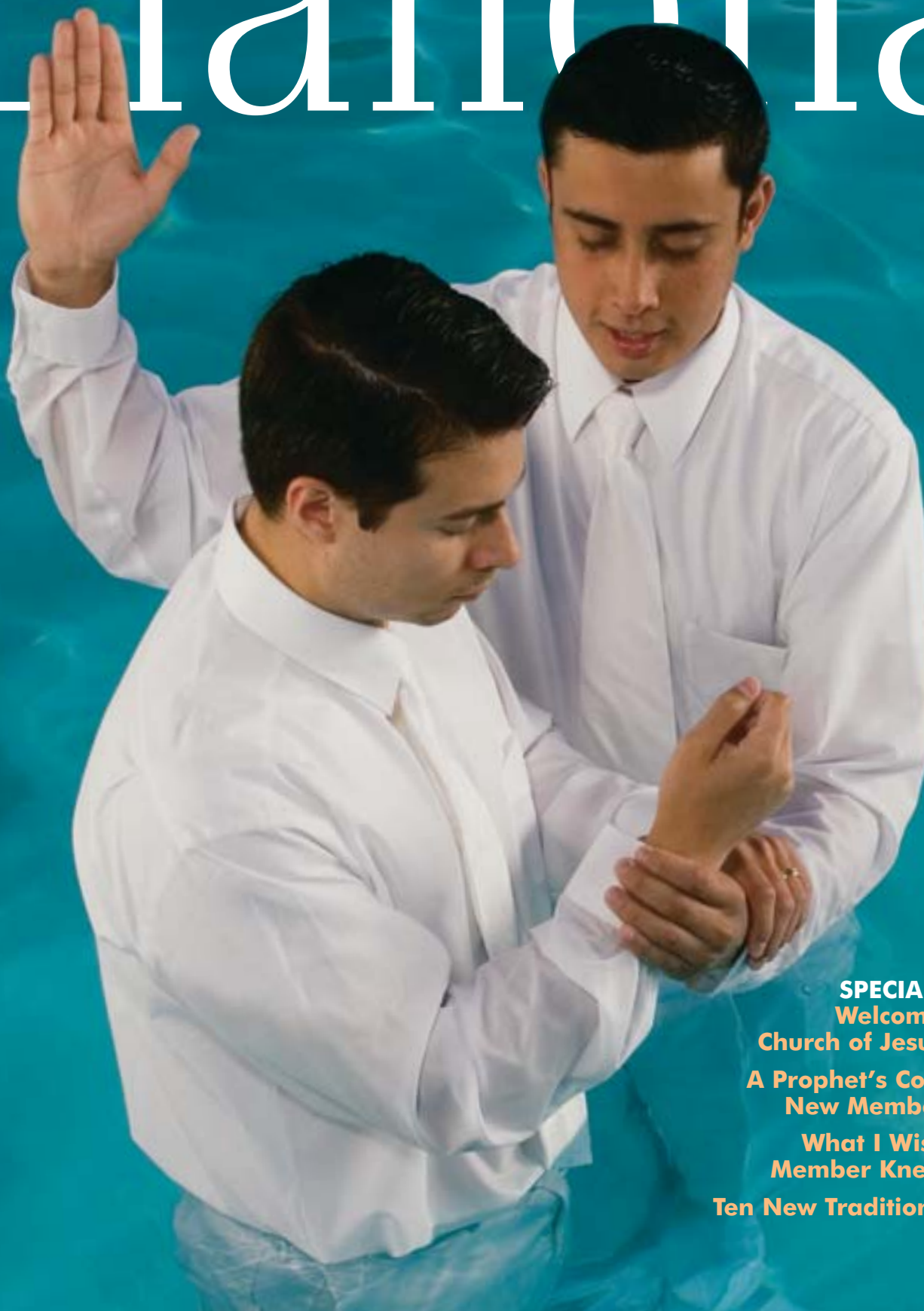


Liahona



SPECIAL ISSUE:

**Welcome to the
Church of Jesus Christ**

**A Prophet's Counsel to
New Members, p. 2**

**What I Wish Every
Member Knew, p. 10**

Ten New Traditions, p. 26

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Member Remembered



WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE OF THE LIAHONA

If You Are a Recent Convert . . .

This magazine was prepared for you. It contains inspired and loving counsel from apostles and prophets. You will also find advice from ordinary members who have lived what you are experiencing as a new member. We hope this issue will be helpful to you now and in the future as you refer to it for information and inspiration.

You have received a spiritual witness that the Church is true, but you may find that you still have

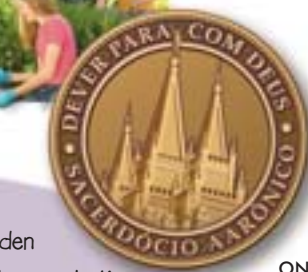
much to learn and some lifestyle changes to make. This issue can help you put those challenges into perspective and meet them successfully. You can do it because God truly is your Father *and* will help you succeed.

If You Are a Longtime Member . . .

It may seem strange to receive an issue addressed to new members. But by making you more aware of the challenges faced by new members, this issue can help you put

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As you look for the CTR ring hidden in this issue, commit to listen to or read the prophet's words from general conference.



your Church experience and gospel knowledge to use as a friend and mentor to new members.

If there's someone you could bless by sharing this magazine or just an article or two, we encourage you to do so. Additional copies of this magazine may be obtained through your local distribution center and in the United States and Canada at www.ldscatalog.com. Check first with your ward or branch leaders; they may have already ordered extra copies and

might have plans to share this magazine with that person.

If You Are a Missionary . . .

The articles in this magazine can strengthen recent converts and help them know what to expect as a new member. Please coordinate with ward or branch leaders as you share this issue with new members and with those who are soon to be baptized and confirmed.

—*The editors*

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- F4 Sharing Time: I Will Follow the Prophet Today *Elizabeth Ricks*
- F6 Journey to Baptism
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F10 Clean Again

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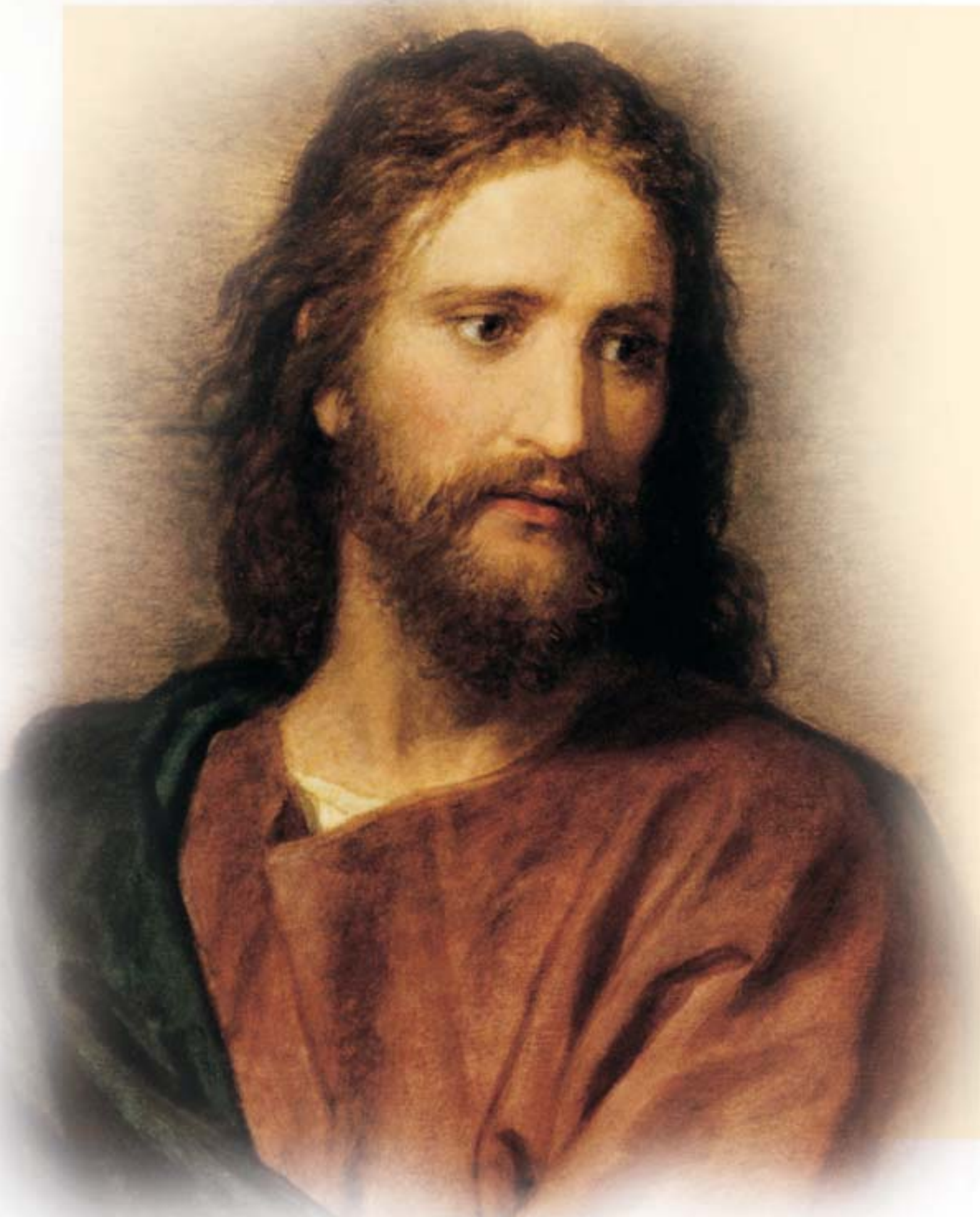
Photographs by John Luke and Christina Smith, posed by models.

THE FRIEND COVER

Photograph by Christina Smith, posed by models.

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A Perfect Brightness of Hope

TO NEW MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

We congratulate you on your recent baptism and welcome you most warmly. What a wonderful step you have taken in joining the Church! We stand ready to assist you in any way that we can.

At this critical time you may feel like the woman who wrote this letter:

“My journey into the Church was unique and quite challenging. This past year has been the hardest year that I have ever lived in my life. It has also been the most rewarding. As a new member, I continue to be challenged every day.”

She continues: “When we as investigators become members of the Church, we are surprised to discover that we have entered into a completely foreign world, a world that has its own traditions, culture, and language. We discover that there is no one person or no one place of reference that we can turn to for guidance in our trip into this new world.”¹

What you are going through as a new member should be exhilarating. Your faith in the Savior is strong. Your excitement to learn more and more about the restored gospel is sincere.

But it is also easy to feel overwhelmed by new words, new meetings, new teachings, and new challenges. Even new people may be something to deal with. You may wonder if you can ever measure up to the standard of being a true Latter-day Saint. I have a simple message for you: Of course you can! Don’t give up!

On the Path

Remember what Nephi said:

“Ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son. . . .

“And now, . . . after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

“Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure



This is God’s holy work. This is His Church and kingdom. I leave this testimony and my invitation to continue to be part of this great latter-day miracle that is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



We need you. We will do our best to comfort you, to make you feel welcome and accepted. We love you, and we know the Lord loves you. Come and work with us side by side as we grow and learn together.

to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:18–20).

Joining the Church is a serious thing. Each convert takes upon himself or herself the name of Christ with an implied promise to keep His commandments. But coming into the Church can be a perilous experience. Unless there are warm and strong hands to greet you, unless we reach out to you with love and concern, you may begin to wonder about the step you have taken. Unless there are friendly hands and welcome hearts to greet you and lead you along the way, you may drop by the side. We have the challenge of helping you to strengthen your testimony of the truth of this work. We cannot have you walking in the front door and out the back! Every one of you is precious. Every one of you is a son or daughter of God.

I have said before, and I repeat it, that each of you as a convert needs three things:

1. A friend in the Church to whom you can constantly turn, who will walk beside you, who will answer your questions, who will understand your problems. You also have home teachers, visiting teachers, and other members who will help you on your marvelous journey of faith.

2. An assignment. Activity is the genius of this Church. It is the process by which we grow. Faith and love for the Lord are like the muscles of my arm. If I use them, they grow stronger. If I put them in a sling, they become weaker. Each of you deserves a responsibility.

In handling that responsibility you may make some mistakes. So what? We all make mistakes. The important thing is the growth that will come of activity. Your leaders can help you find ways to be involved. Be willing to accept new challenges, and trust that the Lord will help you be equal to them. If you get discouraged, ask for help. But don't give up. As you keep trying you will find that your abilities increase.

3. You need to be constantly “nourished by the good word of God” (Moroni 6:4). You will be affiliated with a priesthood quorum or the Relief Society, the Young Women, the Young Men, the Sunday School, or the Primary. Come to sacrament meeting to partake of the sacrament, to renew the covenants you made at the time of your baptism. Read from the scriptures every day. Pray every morning and every evening, that you may stay close to the Lord.

You know and we



know that there are many good people in other churches. There is much of good in them. Your family and your prior religious traditions may have taught you many good things and established many good habits. As the Apostle



Paul said, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Bring the good things with you, keep them, and use them in the Lord’s service.

Rejoicing Together

We rejoice with you in the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are many blessings in store for you. We know at times it can be terribly lonely. It can be disappointing. It can be frightening. We of this Church are far more different from the world than we are prone to think we are. But the gospel is nothing to be ashamed of. It is something to be proud of. “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,” wrote Paul to Timothy (2 Timothy 1:8).

To those of you who are new, I plead with you to continue with us. We need you. We will put our arms around you and be friends with you. We will do our best to comfort you, to make you feel welcome and accepted. We love you, and we know the Lord loves you. Forgive our faults and weaknesses. Come and work with us side by side as we grow and learn together.

This is God’s holy work. This is His Church and kingdom. The vision that occurred in the Sacred Grove was just as Joseph said it was. There is in my heart a true understanding of the importance of what happened there. The Book of

Mormon is true. It testifies of the Lord Jesus Christ. His priesthood has been restored and is among us. The keys of that priesthood, which have come from heavenly beings, are exercised for our eternal blessing. Such is our testimony—yours and mine—a testimony which we must live up to and which we must share with others. I leave this testimony, my blessing, and my love with each of you and my invitation to continue to be part of this great latter-day miracle that is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ■

NOTE

1. “Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Liabona*, July 1999, 122; *Ensign*, May 1999, 104.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. Bring three objects that represent the three things mentioned in the article that every new convert needs. For instance, you could bring a gift from a friend, a Church handbook, and scriptures.

- If you are teaching new converts, discuss how these things will help them rejoice in their membership in the Church. Also help them see what contribution they can make as new members.

- If you are teaching longtime members, discuss why a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing by the word of God are so important to new members. Invite them to help meet the needs of new members of their ward or branch.

2. Have family members imagine they have just entered a foreign country where they do not know the language, traditions, or culture. Ask them how they feel. What are the first things they want or miss? Compare this to what a new member might experience. Read the last section of President Hinckley’s message, and testify of the blessings of becoming “part of this great latter-day miracle.”

Latter-day Saints from around the world share their testimonies of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



Rejoicing in the Gospel

The Power of the Priesthood

“My mum fell seriously ill one morning, and I was home alone with her. Her condition got worse. My dear mother was suffering. Her tears and screams were too much for me to bear.

“Our neighbors came rushing into our house. They suggested that I should take her to the hospital, but none of them could help me. My stake president and bishop were not at home. I was completely confused.

“Deep within me I pondered in my heart what to do. I asked my Heavenly Father to deliver me out of this situation. Just then my mum called me and asked, ‘Have you been ordained to the higher priesthood?’

“I answered, ‘Yes.’

“‘Then bless me,’ she said.

“I was very surprised, because when the missionaries taught her about the priesthood, she didn’t believe it was true. Now I was the only one around commissioned of Jesus Christ to act on behalf of God. I examined myself and found myself worthy to perform such a great task. I excused myself for a while and offered a short prayer to my Heavenly Father to heal my mother.

“After my prayer I felt something within me. Immediately I knew that it was the power of God.



Amos Kwame Tofah

I returned and gently helped my mother sit up. I laid my hands on her head and blessed her. Soon after the ordinance she fell asleep. She slept about eight hours. I never heard any screams or moans from her again.

“How great was my joy when my mum woke up. I inquired of her condition. She replied, ‘I am very well, my son. I thought the priesthood was not real, but when I was suffering and prayed for help, I suddenly realized that the priesthood was true. So I asked for a blessing, and I was able to sleep.’”—*Amos Kwame Tofah, Ghana*



Sunil Massey family

Changing Attitudes

“Following the Savior makes me happy. It has changed my attitude and my family’s attitude toward other people. We’re more polite and courteous to everyone. We’re more outgoing and friendly.”—*Sunil Massey, India*

Helping Raise Seven Children

“Six years ago my wife, Sachiko, died from cancer. Others worried that our family of seven children might fall apart without a mother, but that is the way the world thinks. We knew there is great strength in the gospel, so we continued to have family home evening and family prayer and scripture study. These have been very helpful in strengthening our family bonds.

“Because we had the gospel in our home, our children knew where their mother was.

The gospel blessed their lives, and they felt that they needed to share those blessings with others. The children have gone on missions, one after another.”—*Masahiro Yonamine, Japan*

Risking a Career

“While interviewing for my present position as a senior vice president of a large international company, I told my direct manager of my religious beliefs about drinking. I said that I would not be able to accept the job if abstaining from drinking would be problematic in fulfilling my responsibilities.

“At the time, social drinking was very important in the corporate culture and considered good stress therapy. It was commonly understood that social drinking was a part of a successful career. My manager, though disappointed that I would not be able to join him in many executive social circles, offered me the position, with respect for my beliefs.



Masahiro Yonamine family



Darlla Lauer

Coming unto Christ

“The biggest change in my life since joining the Church is how I act toward people. I’m not cynical anymore. I’m kinder, more loving. I share. I don’t feel any evil feelings toward anyone. It’s just so simple. Live life and enjoy it because you’ve got Christ in your life.

“I rejoice in the gospel because it’s healing to my soul. And I know Christ lives today.”—*Darlla Lauer, Utah, USA*

“Since I joined the company, the corporate culture has changed so that abstaining from drinking is rarely a problem anymore. My firm

testimony is that I will be ahead in my life, including my career, when I follow the values of Jesus Christ.”—*Yong-In S. Shin, South Korea*



Jeffrey and Analili Burrows family

Finding Answers to Life’s Questions

“We rejoice in the gospel because it gives answers to life’s questions. After we went through the pain of two miscarriages, holding our little daughter has almost been more than the heart could take without bursting. The priesthood has given us hope to see the fruits after the trial of our faith.

“The Church offers the keys to success in a young family like ours through the material we are given on how to raise righteous children. Where else could we find that type of guidance? The gospel has given us an eternal perspective of life and death, of sickness and health, and of love everlasting.”—*Jeffrey and Analili Burrows, Guatemala*



Garry and María Guanilo family

Being Together Forever

“One day two missionaries got into my taxi,” says Garry Guanilo of Peru. “They asked me if I knew that families could be eternal. That question really had an impact on me. And they spoke to me about the Prophet Joseph Smith. I went home and told my wife, María, about it. We invited the missionaries to our home. During the first lesson, they sang ‘Families Can Be Together Forever’” (*Hymns*, no. 300).

María adds, “Since our baptism, we are progressing in many ways. It’s like a staircase—we keep climbing higher and higher, and less important things are dropping out of our lives.”

Garry continues, “I want to marry my wife for eternity in the temple and to have our daughters sealed to us. We had no idea this world existed!”—*Garry and María Guanilo, Peru*

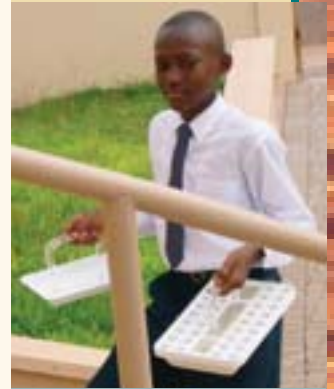
Singing Brought Courage

“I received a crucial testimony in February 1945, when I was 13. We found ourselves between the battlefronts in World War II and came into a life-threatening predicament with four other families. About 15 soldiers aimed their rifles at us, intending to kill us. In this dangerous situation my mother placed herself between the weapons and us five children. She said, ‘Children, hold each other’s hands.’ Then she sang the hymn ‘Abide with Me’ (*Hymns*, no. 166)!

“Today, after 60 years, I still hear this hymn in my spirit. At that moment I prayed to my Heavenly Father and made a covenant with Him that if He would preserve my life, I would keep His commandments and laws. This promise has given me the strength to turn from worldly things and align my life with the gospel of Jesus Christ.”—*Erich Stank, Germany*



Erich Stank



Franklin M. Konduah

I Am a Home Teacher

“I love learning the doctrines of the gospel. I enjoy singing the hymns because hymns teach doctrine. I want to serve a mission, and I am a home teacher. I go with my father, and with the Lord’s help we have helped activate two families.”

—*Franklin M. Konduah, Ghana*

What I Wish Every and Every Longtime



BY ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

When men, women, and children are baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, they begin a wonder-filled journey marked (figuratively speaking) by majestic mountains, lush valleys, and beautiful vistas as far as the eye can see. It is at times a demanding journey but an absolutely essential one to make nevertheless, for this is the journey back to our Father in Heaven. Fortunately, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has promised to lead us on our way:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye are little children, and ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father hath in his own hands and prepared for you;

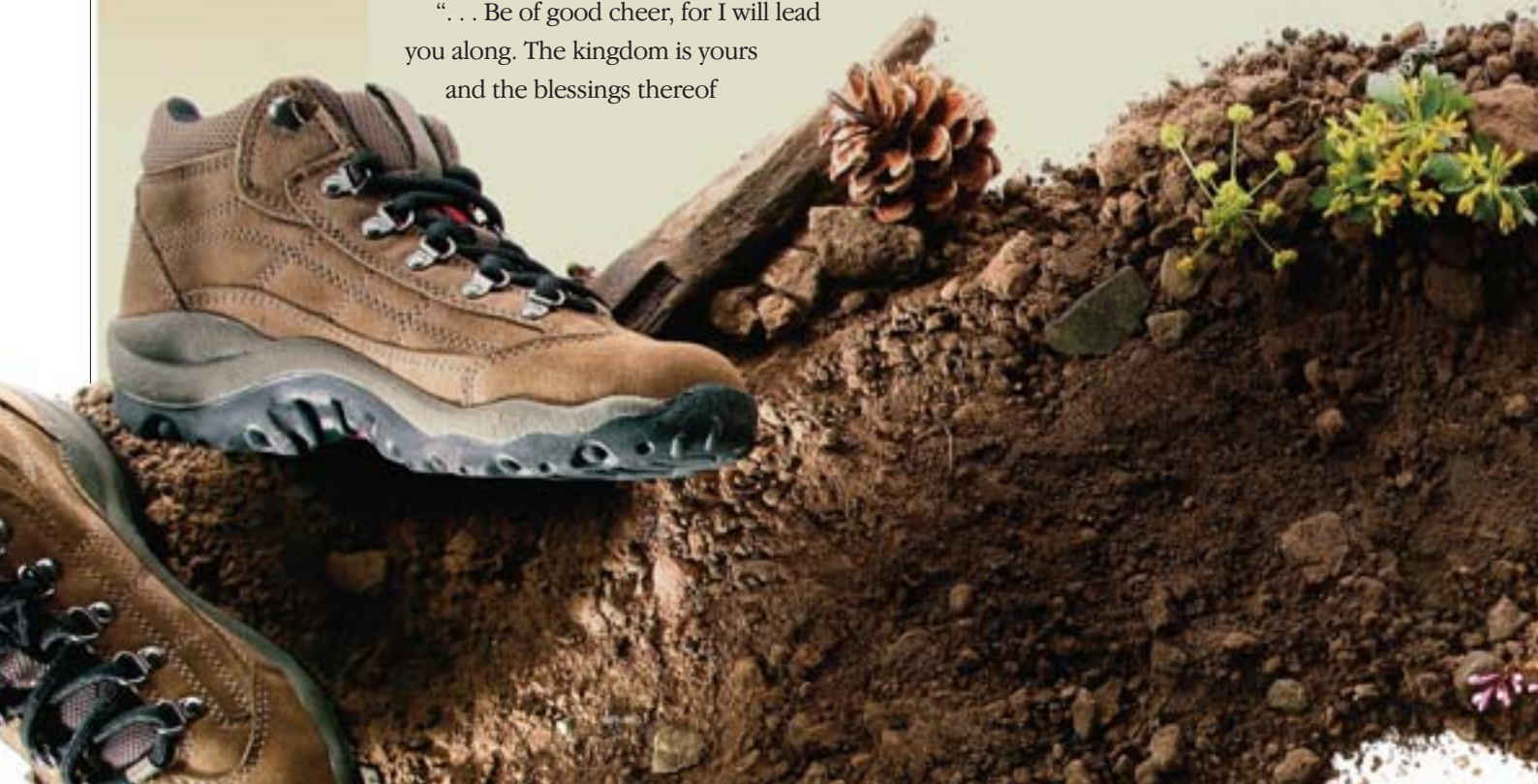
“. . . Be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof

are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours.”¹

As members of the Church, we are all on this journey. Our age and experience will always be varied, as will our languages, cultures, and degrees of gospel understanding. But whatever your circumstances, we welcome you. As the Apostle Paul said, “Ye are . . . [now] fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God,”² and that means we are in this together.

There are some things I wish you and every member knew, things that will provide spiritual strength for the road ahead. It is important to remember that we need to succeed—not just finish the course,³ but

It is important to remember that we need to succeed—not just finish the course, but “finish [our] course with joy.”



New Member Knew— Member Remembered

“finish [our] course with joy.”⁴ *For a celestial reward, it is absolutely essential that we remain faithful to the end.* There is nothing in the Church that is directed toward the telestial or terrestrial kingdoms. For us it is a celestial goal every step of the way. We cannot flag or fail or halt halfway. Christ Himself pronounced:

“Whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name . . . if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.

“ . . . Nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who

have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.”⁵

The Way of the Covenant

This way we each have chosen, the way along which our Savior assists us, is the way of the covenant. Beginning with our baptism, we make covenants as we follow this path to eternal life, and we stay on the path by keeping them. His light is one of the rewards of keeping covenants.

“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life,”⁶ Jesus assured.

In His light we live spiritually and become more able day by day



The Master's life was marked by loving service and devotion to others, and so too will be the lives of His disciples.

to discern that light and receive more of it. Furthermore, we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost at the time of our confirmation, the first of many gifts reserved for members of the true Church. The promptings of the Holy Ghost will always be sufficient for our needs if we keep to the covenant path. Our path is uphill most days, but the help we receive for the climb is literally divine. We have three members of the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—helping us because of the covenants we have made.

To remind us of those covenants, we partake of the sacrament each week. In the prayer offered on the bread, we “witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that [we] are willing to take upon [us] the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given

[us]; that [we] may always have his Spirit to be with [us].”⁷

The Sanctity of Service

One of the covenants we make at baptism is to serve. Loving service and devotion to the needs of others was perhaps the chief characteristic of the Savior’s mortal life. It will always be a mark of the Master’s disciples. At the Waters of Mormon, that small band of believers clapped for joy when they were invited to covenant through baptism that they would bear each other’s burdens and comfort those who needed comfort.⁸

In our day the Savior Himself has counseled: “All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and . . . are willing to take upon them



the name of Jesus Christ, *having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works* that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church.”⁹

Service is our duty—but it is more than duty; it is Christlike opportunity. He bore our burdens, and in bearing one another’s burdens, we truly become more like Him. Service in the Church can be a burden of sorts, but it is a “light”¹⁰ burden—all because we are in shoulder-to-shoulder association with the Savior of the world.



reached out to support them. But don’t let them be the only ones to make a move. Reach out yourself to make friends among the other members. Remember—you too have covenanted to serve, and you too can bring blessings into other lives, even in the very earliest hours of your membership in the Church.

Even better than having earthly

help, you can have the generous assistance of heaven. Surely there is nothing that God or His angels are more eager to do than assist each of us to make and keep sacred covenants. In section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants, we are told:

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

“And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.

“For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.”¹²

This promise is to you as much as to anyone in the Church. It is not only to those with an extensive pioneer heritage. This promise is to every faithful and obedient member, wherever you may live or however new to the fold you may feel.

Leaving the Past Behind

Now that you have entered into this path lighted by our Redeemer and are being assisted by angels, avoid backward glances toward the darkness and remorse of the past.¹³ True repentance allows you to walk away from that darkness. One of the most encouraging scriptures I know says, “*Ye must press forward* with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope.”¹⁴ So press forward. Leave the past in the past. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985),

The Holy Temple

If our covenant path has an earthly symbol of an eternal destination, it is the house of the Lord, the holy temple. There we make covenants that can bind us together with God and loved ones everlastingly. Outside of the temple we speak only sparingly of those covenants, but within its walls the Holy Ghost can testify of them to the pure in heart in a manner that is unrestrained. The blessing of receiving that sweet, affirming guidance of the Spirit as you go to the house of the Lord again and again is a blessing I long for all adult members to embrace.

From where you stand today as a new member, going to the temple might seem a distant goal, too difficult to reach, but truly it is not. We need not cover the distance to the temple in one great leap. Every act of faith, every step toward repentance, every quiet victory in keeping the commandments moves us closer to the temple monthly, weekly, daily, hourly. “Be not weary in well-doing,” the Lord has said, for “out of small things proceedeth that which is great.”¹¹

Actually, the path to the temple will be easier than it might appear at first because you will find happiness as you move along it and you will also find help for the journey. Those of us who know the blessings of the temple will gladly—excitedly!—walk with you as you prepare to have your own experience there.

Members of your ward or branch may make the first move, reaching out to support you the way someone

twelfth President of the Church, taught: “The Savior urged us to put our hand to the plow without looking back. In that spirit we are being asked to have humility and a deep and abiding faith in the Lord and to move forward—trusting in him, refusing to be diverted from our course, either by the *ways* of the world or the *praise* of the world.”¹⁵ Or, we might add, by past experiences in the world.

But don’t be surprised if the pull of the past is great. It may involve old friends and old habits—strong habits that may have been deeply entrenched in your behavior, such as addictions to tobacco, alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling, sexual transgression, or dishonesty, to name just a few. These things separated you from the influence of the Holy Ghost then, and they would be even more damaging if you were to return to them now. *But the power of your covenants is greater than the power of temptation.*

Don’t let the fear of past transgressions weaken your resolve to repent and abandon them. Remember! God has promised to save you “from the hand of him that hated [you], and [redeem you] from the hand of the enemy.”¹⁶

You may feel entirely inadequate to overcome addictions or problems of the past by yourself, but you need not handle those problems alone. God has given to every member a priesthood leader with keys, or authority, to assist in the process of repenting and finding new strength. Seek that help. Go to those priesthood leaders—usually a bishop or branch president for matters of repentance and spiritual struggle—and they will put you on the road to healing, a healing that ultimately comes from the Savior. In matters not involving confession, others can help—a friend, a loved one, a home or visiting teacher, a competent professional, or a solid member—all depending on the issue. Again I stress that we are on this journey together, and “whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”¹⁷



As you exert all your spiritual strength to overcome weakness, as you righteously seek the help of our Savior and your priesthood leaders, the Holy Ghost can help you feel again the spiritual certainty you had when you were baptized. He can fill your heart once more with the knowledge that the course you have chosen is the course our Father in Heaven desires for you in time and eternity.

Do you wonder if the Holy Ghost will really speak to you? Be reassured He already has—many times. We may be a little inexperienced at recognizing that guidance, but every member of the Church has the gift of the Holy Ghost and has had many promptings and help as a result of that gift—even if we didn’t consciously seek it. God is our Father, and parents do everything possible in righteousness to help children—including (sometimes especially) wayward children. These helps from heaven through the

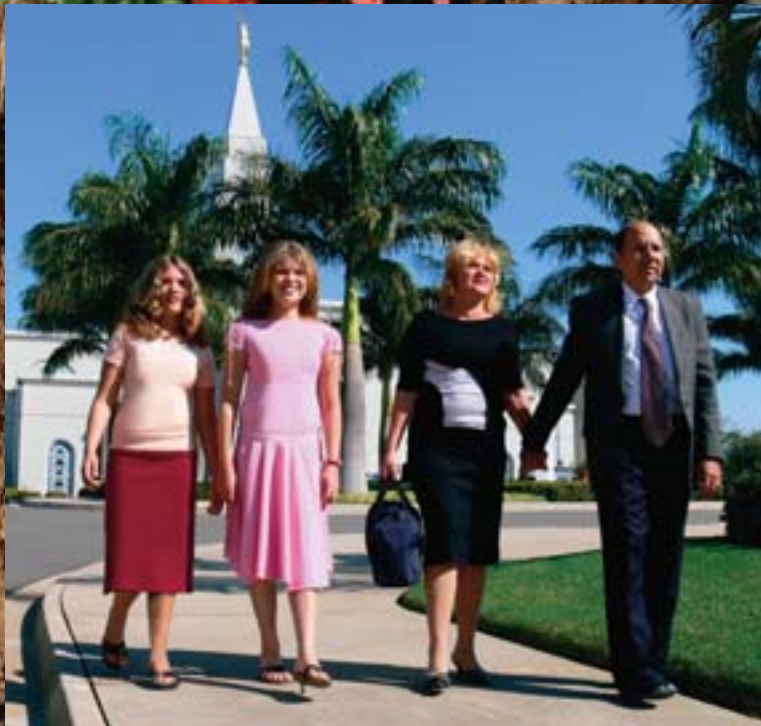
Holy Ghost will usually come as feelings more than as external sensory experience.

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, described it this way: “The Holy Ghost communicates with the spirit through the mind more than through the physical senses. This guidance comes as thoughts, as feelings, through impressions and promptings. It is not always easy to describe inspiration. The scriptures teach us that

we may ‘feel’ the words of spiritual communication more than hear them, and see with spiritual rather than with mortal eyes.”¹⁸

Everyday Victories

On this upward and sometimes hazardous journey, each of us meets our share of daily challenges. If we are not careful, as we



The temple is an earthly symbol of our celestial goal, and every daily act of faith and obedience moves us closer to its blessings.

peer through the narrow lens of self-interest, we may feel that life is bringing us *more* than our fair share of trials—that somehow others seem to be getting off more lightly.

But the tests of life are tailored for our own best interests, and all will face the burdens best suited to their own mortal experience. In the end we will realize that God is merciful as well as just and that all the rules are fair. We can be reassured that our challenges will be the ones *we* needed, and conquering them will bring blessings we could have received in no other way.

If we constantly focus only on the stones in our mortal path, we will almost surely miss the beautiful flower or cool stream provided by the loving Father who outlined our journey. Each day can bring more joy than sorrow when our mortal and spiritual eyes are open to God's goodness. Joy in the gospel is not something that begins only in the next life. It is our privilege now, this very day. We must never allow our burdens to obscure our blessings. There will *always* be more blessings than burdens—even if some days it doesn't seem so. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."¹⁹ Enjoy those blessings right now. They are yours and always will be.

Let me summarize only a few of those blessings. There are untold others.

Knowledge of the truth. In a world that wonders and speculates and drifts, we can be certain who our Father is, who we are, and what our destiny is if we follow the path that has been marked for us. We can enjoy the highest of all higher education—the learning that comes, in both spiritual and temporal affairs, when our spirits and our minds respond to the light that streams from heaven to the faithful.

Peace in daily living. We can walk our path day to day with comfort, hope, and direction despite the challenges and obstacles we meet along the way. We can have these blessings because of our source of strength—He who “descended below”²⁰ all things and triumphed over all trials. When we center our faith in Him, we draw on His strength and our reward is, among other things, “peace in this world.”²¹

Strength in virtue and confidence in integrity. The world may wonder what the standard of moral behavior is, chasing here and there the driftwood of political correctness or the frivolous fashions of the day, but we have a sure rock²² on which to build and to which we cling, an absolute anchor to the certainty of our moral judgment. “Let virtue garnish [our] thoughts unceasingly,” we are taught, and the Holy Ghost will be our constant companion. When our minds are so focused and our lives so directed, “then shall [our] confidence wax strong in the presence of God.”²³

The fellowship of good people. Surely one of the greatest strengths and joys of membership in the Church is the fellowship of good men and women, new friends with whom we have so much in common. The Church is a community—a community of believers, a community of those striving to be faithful, a community of Saints. Association with people hoping for the same things we hope for brings strength for the journey and delight along the way. “A friend loveth at all times,”²⁴ says the writer of Proverbs, and many of our dearest friends will inevitably be members of the Church.

Walk with us. Stay with us. We need your company and your unique strength. We welcome you to a fellowship based on covenants, with “a determination that is fixed,



The gift of the Holy Ghost, given to every member at confirmation, is one of many gifts our Father offers to help His children along the path He has marked for us.

immovable, and unchangeable.” We pledge to be your friend, your brother or sister “through the grace of God in the bonds of love, to walk in all the commandments of God blameless, in thanksgiving, forever and ever.”²⁵

Welcome to the Church. Welcome to the blessings. Welcome to the

celestial journey. Take courage and take hope. You have help from heaven and on earth. As the Lord told the missionaries (including the missionaries who taught you), so He promised us all: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.”²⁶

And remember, the most significant sign of your progress on this journey is not so much your location on the path at the moment, but rather the direction in which you are moving. When you come to the end of your time in mortality, you will not yet have completed the process of perfection—none of us will have done so—but if you have loved and served, sacrificed and stayed faithful to the end, you will hear those glorious words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”²⁷ Your journey then will continue in unspeakable glory in the company of loved ones who have gone before you and the very angels of heaven themselves. Welcome to “the way, the truth, and the life.”²⁸ ■

NOTES

1. D&C 78:17–18.
2. Ephesians 2:19.
3. See 2 Timothy 4:7.
4. Acts 20:24.
5. 3 Nephi 27:16, 19.
6. John 8:12.
7. D&C 20:77.
8. See Mosiah 18:8–11.
9. D&C 20:37; emphasis added.
10. Matthew 11:30; see also vv. 28–29.
11. D&C 64:33.
12. D&C 76:5, 9–10.
13. See Luke 9:62.
14. 2 Nephi 31:20; emphasis added.
15. “Let Us Not Weary in Well Doing,” *Ensign*, May 1980, 81.
16. Psalm 106:10.
17. 1 Corinthians 12:26.
18. “Revelation in a Changing World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 14; see also 1 Nephi 17:45.
19. John 10:10.
20. D&C 122:8.
21. D&C 59:23.
22. See Helaman 5:12; 3 Nephi 11:39–40.
23. D&C 121:45; see also v. 46.
24. Proverbs 17:17.
25. D&C 88:133.
26. D&C 84:88.
27. Matthew 25:21, 23.
28. John 14:6.

Loving Families, Different Faiths

Gospel principles—particularly respect, love, and prayer—have blessed my own part-member family.

BY ELDER WALTER F. GONZÁLEZ
Of the Seventy

Many Latter-day Saints, particularly new members, face the important task of learning how to relate positively with family members of other faiths.

Even the Savior had family members who did not share His beliefs. In the Bible we read, “For neither did his brethren believe in him” (John 7:5).

It is not uncommon for family members to have mistaken ideas about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Loving and clear communication can do much to ease any tension that may arise in these situations. I joined the Church when I was a teenager. Shortly after my baptism, I learned that my Catholic grandmother believed I would no longer consider myself her grandson due to my newfound faith. What a relief it was when I was able to clear up this misunderstanding!

We can strengthen our relationships with each other by demonstrating that the

teachings of the gospel are intended to strengthen *all* families, regardless of individual beliefs. Many of these teachings are expressed in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” which states, “Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.”¹

Any family that lives by these principles will gather the fruits thereof. I have seen how these principles—particularly respect, love, and prayer—have blessed my own part-member family.



Our family members are more likely to be tolerant and accepting if we show respect for their differing beliefs.

Respect

After the initial strain and misunderstandings that stemmed from my conversion to the Church, my family members and I learned to apply tolerance and respect in our relationships with each other. For example, once I became a Latter-day Saint, I participated in different Sunday activities. Instead of playing soccer, I attended church. When my family members realized why I changed my Sunday activities, they showed understanding and respect. In the

same way, I was respectful of their traditions. For instance, I did not criticize my parents for not having family prayer. Mutual respect has been very important in our family.

The Book of Mormon emphasizes the principles of tolerance and respect. In Alma 1:21 we read, “Now there was a strict law among the people of the church, that there should not any man, belonging to the church, arise and persecute those that did not belong to the church, and that there should be no persecution among themselves.”

Alma taught the following principle in the great city of Zarahemla. He asked, “Is there one among you that doth make a mock of his brother, or that heapeth upon him persecutions?” (Alma 5:30). Then he stated that a person who does so needs to repent: “Wo unto such an one, for he is not prepared, and the time is at hand that he must repent or he cannot be saved!” (Alma 5:31).





We can show love to our family members by focusing on the good in their lives and respecting their beliefs while not compromising our own.

Respect for our family members' differing religious beliefs is essential.

Love

The principle of love also contributes tremendously to good rapport with our family members. As the Book of Mormon teaches: "Charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all" (Moroni 7:46).

We can show Christlike charity for our family members by focusing on the good in their lives. I feel deep gratitude and love for my parents, who are not members of the Church. They taught me righteous principles by example and precept, enabling me to recognize the truth of the missionaries' message. Realizing that fact has helped me love my parents even more deeply.

We can bless the lives of our family members by lovingly sharing with them those principles that could be added to the good they already have. If they do not agree with some teachings, we must respect their beliefs while not compromising our own. In cases of disagreement, let us avoid contending with family members, remembering

that "a soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). Anger will only damage our relationships, while love and kindness can help soften hearts. (See 3 Nephi 11:29.)

Prayer

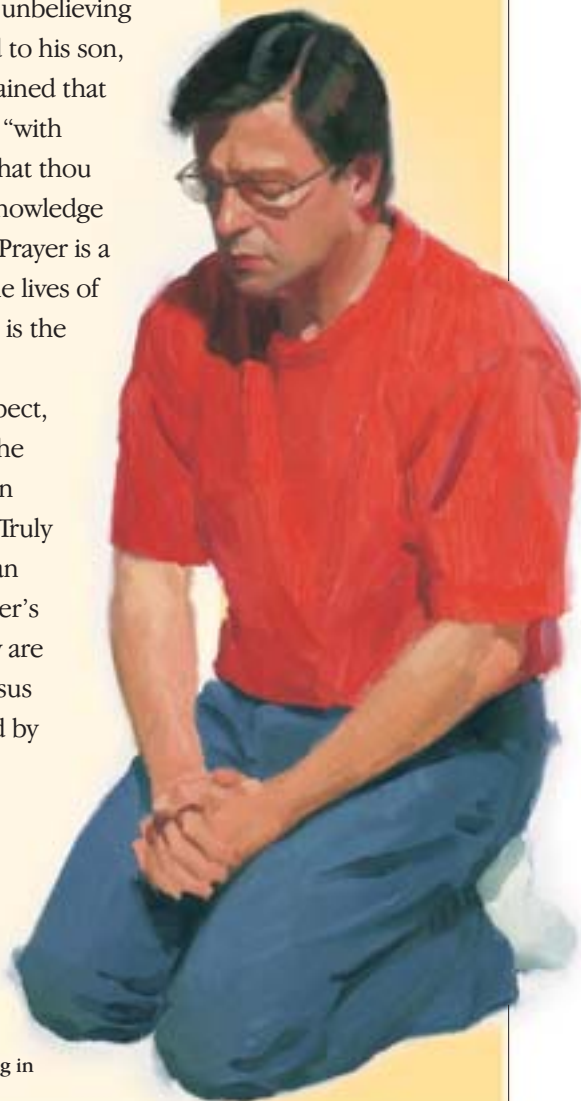
Sometimes all we can do is pray for our beloved family members—just as they may pray for us. We will always desire that those we love will become members of the Church. We can empathize with the feelings of Alma the Elder, who prayed for his unbelieving son. When an angel appeared to his son, the heavenly messenger explained that his father had prayed for him "with much faith concerning thee that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth" (Mosiah 27:14). Prayer is a mighty instrument to bless the lives of our families. In some cases, it is the only thing we can do.

The principles of love, respect, and prayer are only a few of the many gospel principles we can apply to benefit our families. Truly the teachings of the gospel can bless all of our Heavenly Father's children, whether or not they are members of the Church of Jesus Christ, for all are deeply loved by Him. ■

NOTE

1. *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102. Written by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, this prophetic proclamation to the Church and the world spells out the doctrine of the family. It was first read to the public by President Gordon B. Hinckley in the general Relief Society meeting in September 1995.

Prayer is a mighty instrument that can bless the lives of our family members.



Worth It!

BY VERONICA GARCIA WALKER

I joined the Church when I was 16 years old. My parents gave me permission, but they did not join with me. On the day of my baptism, my mother told me I could still “get out of it” if I wanted to. But I did not want to get out of it; I wanted to get into it and start my new life. I knew the gospel was true.

Not having my family at church with me, I often felt lonely on Sundays. But it helped when people from the ward would take me to church and sit by me. It also helped to have a calling. When I was called to teach the three-year-olds, I felt much more a part of my ward family.

I didn't want my baptism to affect my family's unity. Still, things at home were not always as I wished them to be. My family would do heavy work on Sunday and chide me for not participating. They told me I was lazy. I said I was trying to honor the Sabbath. My family liked to eat out on Sunday, and now I would not go. They said I was tearing apart our family, but I was just trying to live the commandments.

What kept me going was the Spirit of the Lord. I really felt it in my life. I felt it when I bore my testimony, when I read my scriptures, and when I prayed. These were all things I learned to do from my teachers at church. I listened very hard and tried to learn the things that would improve my life.

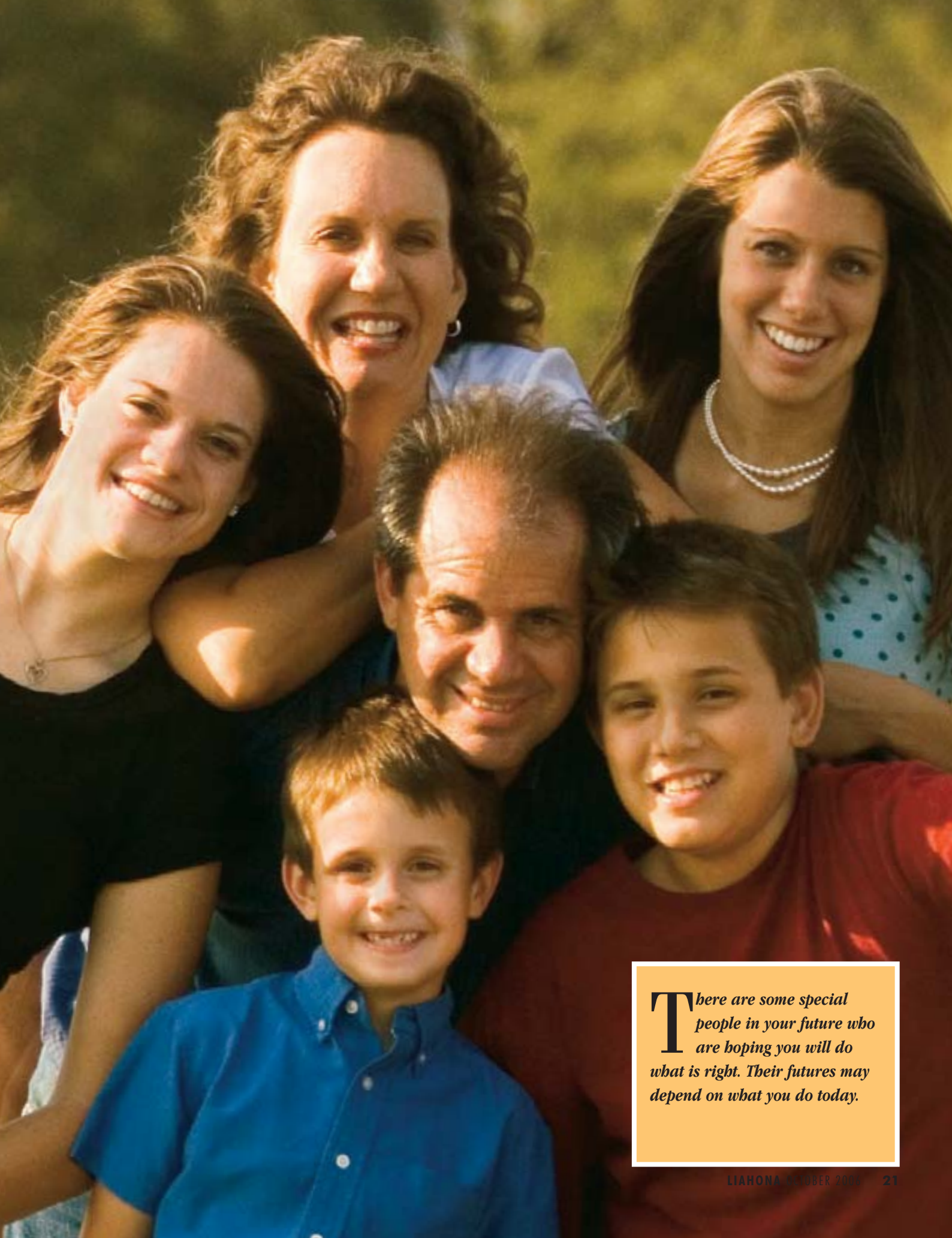
But I often felt out of place at church because I was learning so many new things. I bought some new long skirts to replace my short ones. When I wore them to church, I found out they were still too short to meet

Church standards. I didn't understand what my friends meant when they used Church-related abbreviations. I was too nervous and shy to ask them the meanings of things.

What helped was the teens befriending me and taking time to include me. They seemed to have a natural way of caring for new members. Another thing that helped was visualizing my family in the next life. I never wanted them to be disappointed in me for not living the gospel when I knew it to be true. Even though times were difficult when I was a teenager, I tried to think of the future and my responsibility to my family. If I did not live the gospel, how would my family ever have a chance of accepting it?

Now I am older and married and have teenagers of my own. They are strong in the Church and do not have problems knowing things about the Church that I had to learn from experience. They fit in well and serve in the presidencies in their classes. When I was a teenager I was trying to be a good example for my mom and dad. Unfortunately, they never did join the Church. But I did not realize then that doing what was right was crucial to teenagers I would meet later in my life, who became dearer to me than life itself—my own children.

What you choose today will affect the people who are in your life now. But there are also some special people in your future who are hoping you will do what is right. Their futures may depend on your choosing what is right today. No matter how awkward others may make you feel for making right choices, in the end it will all be worth it. ■



There are some special people in your future who are hoping you will do what is right. Their futures may depend on what you do today.

Questions & Answers

“Now that I’ve joined the Church, some of my friends and family are questioning my decision. How do I answer them?”

L I A H O N A

Being a new member of the Church is challenging enough, without criticism or doubts from friends or family members. But getting baptized and confirmed was the right decision, and being a member of the Church is a great blessing. Those who are questioning you just don’t understand that—yet. With your help, patience, and good example, however, they can understand, and even if they don’t approve of your decision, they may at least come to respect it.

It will be good for you to prepare to answer your family’s and friends’ questions. It will give you a chance to think about why you became a member of the Church. You will remember answers to prayers and spiritual experiences you have had. As you share your testimony and conversion story with those who are questioning your decision, you and they will feel the Spirit.

If they are questioning your decision because they’re not familiar with the Church, you could tell them what the Lord

Joining the Church was the right decision. You can help your family and friends understand that truth, but it may take some time.

Share with them your testimony and conversion story. It will be good for them to hear and good for you to recall spiritual experiences you have had.

Invite them to church and Church activities, and introduce them to other members.

Continue to do things that invite the Holy Ghost in your life so you can be comforted and guided in this challenge.

told people in His day: “Come and see” (John 1:39). Invite your friends and family to church, to Mutual, to family home evening, to a Church activity. Let them know they are welcome to see what the Church is and does. At these activities, they will meet other Church members and feel the peaceful influence of the Holy Ghost. When they do, they will begin to understand why you became a member of the Church. As they feel the Spirit and have their questions answered, they might even join the Church later, and your testimony and good example will have helped them.

Even though you may have lost some friends because you joined the Church, remember that you have gained a lot of new friends now that you’re a member. Get to know your brothers and sisters in the gospel. They can help you through this challenge. Some have probably gone through what you’re going through.

It’s not your responsibility alone to handle the concerns of those who are



questioning your decision. The full-time missionaries, supportive friends and family members, home teachers, and other ward or branch members can help.

Elder Walter F. González’s article on page 17 of this issue also shares some good ways to deal with this challenge. Sometimes, he says, all you can do is pray for those with beliefs different from yours. Respect their beliefs, and be friendly as you “agree to disagree.”

Most important, stay close to the Lord through daily prayer and scripture study and weekly attendance at church and Mutual. This trial won’t seem so hard when you find comfort and strength in these things. The Holy Ghost can guide you to know what to say and do.

The Lord knows you are going through this trial, and He knows you can handle it. He can guide you to help those who are questioning your decision.

READERS



I would tell them that I had some doubts at first, but I found out that all the bad things I’d heard were untrue and all the good things I’d

heard were true. The more I spoke to the missionaries, the more this religion made sense to me. They answered all my questions. I feel very good about my decision to become a member of the Church.

Cody D., 14, Texas, USA



Explain to them the feeling you felt—and still feel—when you were baptized and when you read the scriptures and pray. Try to show them how your life changed for the

better. And maybe one day, through your influence, they will join the Church. So stay strong.

Jasmyrn S., 16, New South Wales, Australia



Actually, I was the one who questioned at first. I was a teenager when my mother and brother met with the missionaries. I listened only halfheartedly. But when they joined

the Church, I saw that the things they had learned agreed with what I'd been taught my whole life.

After I joined the military, I sought out the missionaries, went to meetings, studied and prayed, and then went home to be baptized. The gospel made me happy, and the Spirit told me it is true.

Nicole V., 20, Georgia, USA



I tell my friends that I joined the Church because I can feel the influence of the Holy Ghost when I go to church. This not only helps me grow spiritually but also gives me guid-

ance for my school life and daily life. I am grateful that missionaries helped my family join the Church. I found out that when we build our lives on Jesus Christ's gospel as the foundation, it is the best happiness we could ever have in this life.

Fan J., 17, Taiwan



It's hard when people question your decision. But there's a difference between others doubting you and you doubting your own testimony.

Respond by holding strong to your

testimony; that's the best thing you can do.

Sometimes their reaction might not be the best, but the truth will always prevail.

Michael W., 17, Alabama, USA



“When new members come out of the world into the kingdom of God, they leave much behind them. Oftentimes they too must leave behind friends and even family as well as social contacts and a way of life that is not compatible with the standards of the Church.

“After baptism, the new member of the Church must learn how to become a fellow citizen with the Saints in the kingdom of God through study, prayer, member example, and nurturing.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “When Thou Art Converted, Strengthen Thy Brethren,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 80.



I would tell people that I was baptized because I found out for myself that this is the true Church and that Heavenly Father and

Jesus Christ love me and want me to return to Them. I believe in eternal life and that one day my family can be together forever.

Baptism is the first step on the path that will lead us back to live with Heavenly Father and our family again. The fact that I could ask and receive an answer that this is true comforts me and makes me happy.

Ignacio R., 17, Chile



Be careful not to overreact. Talk things through, and be a peace-maker whenever you can. Reassure them that you love them. They don't have all of the same beliefs

you do, but a disagreement doesn't need to become an argument. Ultimately, they will judge how right your decision is based on the way you act. Give them a chance to see changes for good in you.

Ricky J., 19, Idaho, USA

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

NEXT QUESTION

“One day I read 1 Nephi 7:12, which says that the Lord is able to do all things for us if we exercise faith in Him. How do we exercise faith in Christ?”

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

Questions & Answers 11/06

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: liahona@ldschurch.org

Please respond by November 15, 2006. ■

Receive the Blessings of the Priesthood



Prayerfully select and read from this message the scriptures and teachings that meet

the needs of the sisters you visit. Share your experiences and testimony.

Invite those you teach to do the same.

Blessings of Belonging to Relief

Society: Relief Society helps sisters learn the importance of sustaining, supporting, and working in harmony with priesthood holders. Relief Society also helps sisters prepare to receive the ordinances of the gospel and enter into the covenants of the temple.

How Can New and Longtime Members Receive the Blessings of the Priesthood?

D&C 84:35–38: “They who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord; for he that receiveth my servants receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; and he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father and I will receive him.”

Father’s kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.”

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

“Once in the kingdom of God, as a newly baptized member, we honor the restored priesthood. Honoring the priesthood and being obedient in living the commandments are important elements in the conversion process.

Adult male members receive the Aaronic Priesthood soon after baptism. After a period of time, if worthy, they should receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, and each individual in the family shares the blessings of the priesthood in the home. Women are welcomed and enjoy the blessings of sisterhood in the Relief Society. . . .

“We faithfully progress for at least one year after baptism and prepare ourselves to enter the temple of the Lord. In the holy temple we receive our sacred endowments, which teach us how we must live to return into the presence of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Then we are sealed for time and all eternity” (“When Thou Art Converted, Strengthen Thy Brethren,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 80).

How Do Sisters of Relief Society and Brethren of the Priesthood Support One Another?

Philippians 1:27: “Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“Women in the Church are associates with their brethren in carrying forward this mighty work of the Lord. . . . They stand in an associate role to the priesthood, all striving together to build the kingdom of God in the earth. We honor and respect you for your capacity. We expect leadership, and strength, and impressive results from your management of the organizations for which you are responsible. We uphold and sustain you as daughters of God, working in a great partnership to assist him in bringing to pass the immortality and the eternal life of all of the sons and daughters of God” (“If Thou Art Faithful,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 89).

Kathleen H. Hughes, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: “Relief Society was established by God, through a prophet, by the power of priesthood authority; its existence is a necessary part of the organization of the Church. Men and women stand together in priesthood and Relief Society as we strive to bring families to Christ. As women, we should never think that our role in the Church is a lesser role than that played by men. Just as we as righteous women honor the priesthood, we need to hold sacred our calling as women as well. . . . [Relief Society] grew out of our divine calling and our desire to serve, to love, and to care for each other. Just as the ordinances and direction of the priesthood are necessary in the Lord’s work, so is the service that we do” (“In Covenant with Him,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 108). ■



New Members, New Traditions



BY ELDER F. MELVIN HAMMOND

Of the Seventy

When we join ourselves to the kingdom of God on the earth, we leave behind our former traditions that are not in harmony with the gospel, and we take upon us new traditions.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has no limit to its capacity. It is a living, growing entity. The Lord welcomes every soul who wishes to repent, pass through the door of baptism and confirmation, and enter His kingdom. Said He, “All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church” (D&C 20:37).

Having met these requirements, we who are baptized become the children of God by spiritual rebirth: “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans

8:17). We become part of the most remarkable family on earth, and “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children

of God” (Romans 8:16). Peter described this family as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9). It makes no difference if we are poor or rich, learned or illiterate, old or young, sick or well—all are invited to repent, be baptized and confirmed, and become part of this unique family.

When we become members of this new family, we should remember that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). There are no social strata in this Church. No one is any better than anyone else, for God is “no respecter of persons” (D&C 1:35).

What this family can be is described beautifully by Mormon following the visit of the Savior to the American continent: “There was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

“And there were no envyings, nor strifes, no tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.





“There were no robbers, nor murderers, neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God” (4 Nephi 1:15–17).

When we join ourselves to the kingdom of God on the earth, we leave behind our former traditions that are not in harmony with the gospel, and we take upon us a new culture with new traditions. Our loyalty is to Jesus Christ and His prophets. We leave behind those old things that pollute the body, the mind, and the spirit, and we cling to a better way of life. Some of the wonderful traditions that we adopt as new members are the following:

1. We sing the hymns. Too many of us are hesitant to sing the Church hymns, thinking that our voices are not good enough or that it takes too much effort. Remember that “the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me,” saith the Lord (D&C 25:12). To the young and the old alike, open your mouths and sing out! It will help you feel more a part of the Church family, and it will bring the Spirit into your life.

2. We attend all our meetings. On Sunday we attend our meetings, including sacrament meeting, and during the week we attend any other meetings to which we are invited. We attend to learn more about the Savior, to renew the covenants we made with Him at our baptism by partaking of the sacrament, and to discuss and learn the important truths of the gospel. We are also given an opportunity to mingle socially with our brothers and sisters in this new family and to cultivate eternal friendships.

3. We fast and pay fast offerings. The law of the fast is God’s way to teach us charity, the pure love of Christ, by providing for the poor and the needy among us. It is intended that every member who is physically able go without food or drink for two meals once a month on fast Sunday and then contribute the cost of those two meals to the Church to assist our brothers and sisters in need. There are few things that humble us more and help us to draw nearer to the Lord than fasting with prayer.



4. We pay tithing. Tithing is one-tenth of our increase. This money is returned to the Lord because of His

goodness to us. The money is used to further the work of the Lord by building chapels and temples, sending missionaries to preach the gospel, printing Church materials, and doing a host of other meaningful activities. Every member old and young should pay his or her tithing.

We often say, “Tithing is not a principle of money, but of faith.” The Lord said, “Prove me now herewith, . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10). We cannot afford to withhold our tithes from Him who gives us everything.

5. We have family and individual prayer. The Savior commanded us to pray always. Prayer allows us to communicate personally with our Heavenly Father in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ. Each prayer is heard and answered in God’s own way and time, and even if the answer is not what we wanted or expected, it always blesses us. We ought to take the opportunity to offer a prayer of thanksgiving over every meal and to pray morning and night as families and individuals. Through prayer we come to know our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. And to know Them is to have eternal life (see John 17:3).

6. We have family home evening on Monday night. Monday night is to be kept free from other activities to allow us to be together as a family. It is a wonderful time to study the scriptures, have fun and exciting activities, make future plans for the family, and thus progress together spiritually.

Adjust home evening to the size and needs of your family. If you are single, ask your bishop or branch president about home evening groups. Even if you have no spouse or children, you can still be blessed by having family home evening and adapting it to your own situation.

7. We have a calling in the Church. Every member should have an assignment or responsibility to serve his or her brothers and sisters in the Church. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), First Counselor in the First Presidency,

said, “In the service of the Lord, it is not where you serve but how” that is important.¹ We do not aspire to callings nor should we ever turn down a call to serve, even if we do not feel adequate for the position. When we serve each other, we serve God and grow in our love for our fellowmen and our Heavenly Father.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said many times that every new member in the Church ought to have a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing by the good word of God.² Serving one another is one of the greatest traditions we enjoy in the Church.

8. We prepare ourselves to go to the temple. Only those who are faithful may enter the temple, the house of the Lord. In the temple we participate in ordinances and make covenants for ourselves and for our ancestors. No unclean thing can enter the presence of God. To enter the temple, a recommend is required, which is signed by the bishop and the stake president (or by the branch and mission president). The temple prepares us for the most sublime privilege of all, to enter the celestial kingdom, where God and Christ dwell. “Families can be together forever,” but only through temple covenants and ordinances.³

9. We study the scriptures daily. We have been counseled to study the scriptures every day. The Prophet Joseph Smith said that “the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (Book of Mormon introduction). Certainly we should study the scriptures and, especially, read from the Book of Mormon every day.

10. We live the Word of Wisdom. God has instructed His children that by following His law of health, they can be strong in body and in spirit. We are counseled to abstain from alcohol and tobacco in any form. We are told that tea and coffee are harmful to our bodies. Drugs are addictive. They destroy the senses and cripple the body. Regular exercise, when done wisely, can strengthen us and prolong our lives. The promise to those who obey this commandment is that they “shall

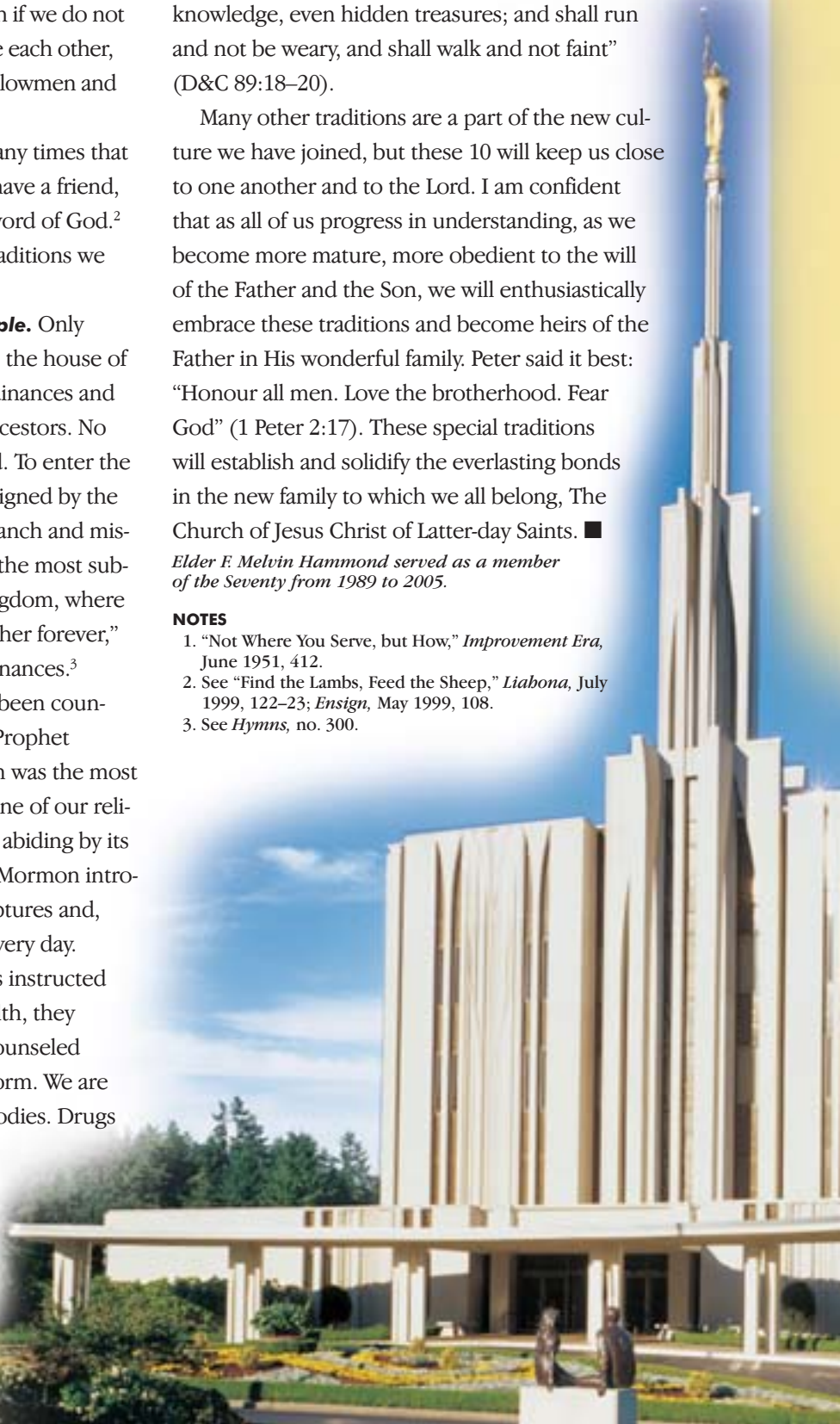
receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; and shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint” (D&C 89:18–20).

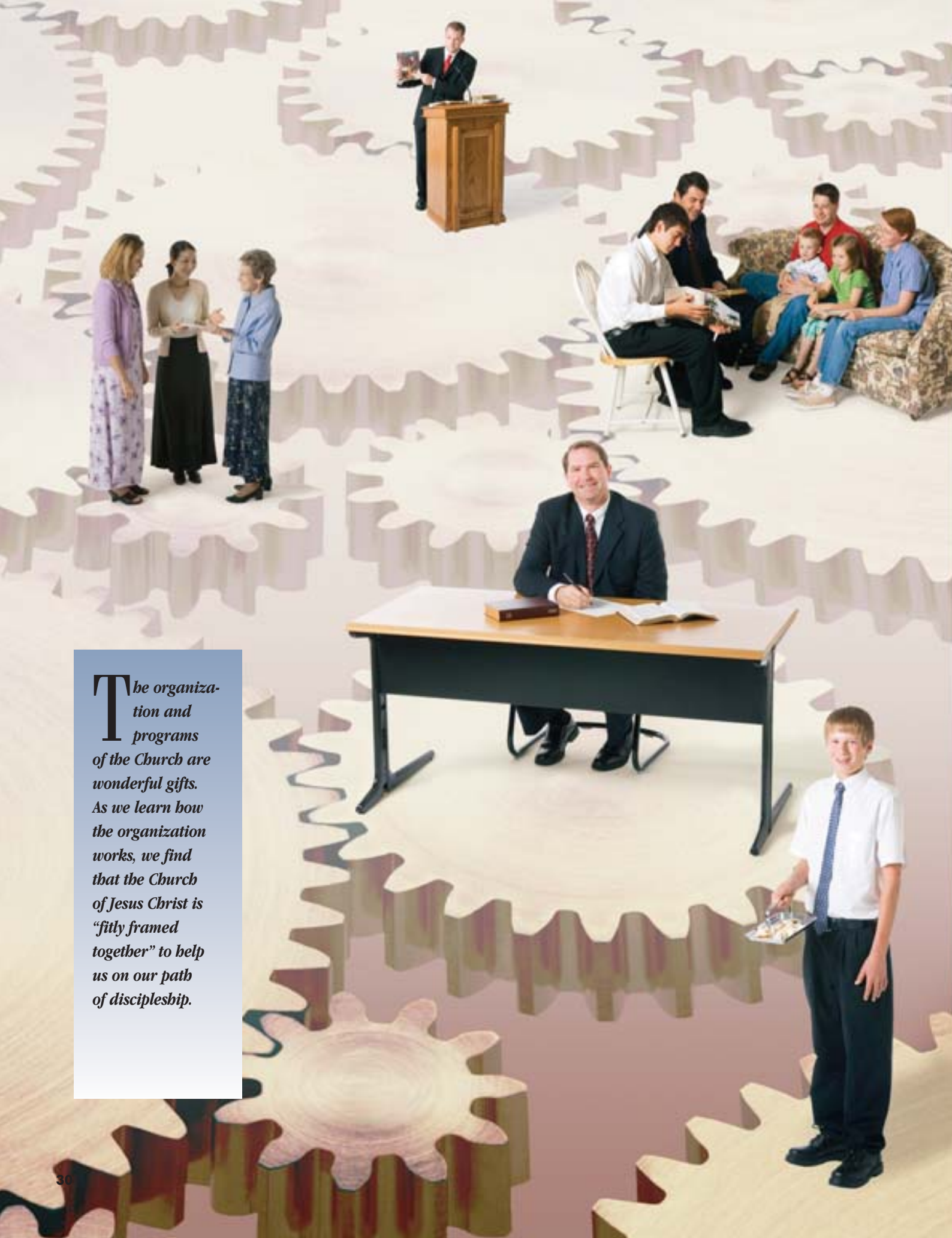
Many other traditions are a part of the new culture we have joined, but these 10 will keep us close to one another and to the Lord. I am confident that as all of us progress in understanding, as we become more mature, more obedient to the will of the Father and the Son, we will enthusiastically embrace these traditions and become heirs of the Father in His wonderful family. Peter said it best: “Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God” (1 Peter 2:17). These special traditions will establish and solidify the everlasting bonds in the new family to which we all belong, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ■

Elder F. Melvin Hammond served as a member of the Seventy from 1989 to 2005.

NOTES

1. “Not Where You Serve, but How,” *Improvement Era*, June 1951, 412.
2. See “Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Liabona*, July 1999, 122–23; *Ensign*, May 1999, 108.
3. See *Hymns*, no. 300.





The organization and programs of the Church are wonderful gifts. As we learn how the organization works, we find that the Church of Jesus Christ is “fitly framed together” to help us on our path of discipleship.

Learning How the Church Works and Finding Your Place in It

BY JAN PINBOROUGH
Church Magazines

The first time Lori Solomon attended a Latter-day Saint ward, she noticed something significant. Not only were the people she met there extremely friendly and kind, but they also had their own copies of the scriptures. During the meetings, they were reading from, talking about, and trying to apply the scriptures to their lives. This impressed Lori because she had never been able to understand the Torah when it was read in Hebrew in her Reform Jewish congregation.

When Lori went to church the second time, a powerful feeling propelled her to the microphone in fast and testimony meeting. Standing before a roomful of

strangers, she tried to put into words the feeling that was already growing into a conviction. "I'm home," she said. Lori was baptized in Chicago, Illinois, in 2001.

The Apostle Paul compared the experience of conversion to finding our spiritual home: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far

off are made nigh. . . . Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:13, 19).

But, as Lori soon discovered, knowing the Church is true is not the same as understanding how the Church works. Like most new members, Lori found herself unfamiliar with the procedures, protocol, and specialized vocabulary that long-term members take for granted. For example, she didn't know that Church members don't make comments in sacrament meeting. And the first time she heard someone refer to "home, family, and personal enrichment meeting," she thought she needed to bring her family with her. It takes time to learn these and other unwritten "rules."

For each of us, conversion is at least a two-part process. One part is the very individual process of learning and accepting restored truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ and becoming spiritually changed or converted by our new faith. It is a lifelong process that includes repenting, making and keeping covenants with the Lord, and striving to do His will. Because all of us need support in these central endeavors, we also engage in a second process—fellowshipping with other Latter-day Saints. This includes becoming part of a new community, attending meetings, taking part in activities, serving, and being served. And each aspect of the Church organization can give us vital aid in our spiritual conversion.

Serving in an "Active" Church

Having grown up as a practicing Catholic in Maryland, Jean Gardner always thought of bishops as full-time



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN LUKE AND CHRISTINA SMITH, POSED BY MODELS

A PLACE FOR EVERY MEMBER



Within the Church, every member belongs to a group where he or she can serve and be served.

Men—Beginning at age 12, every male member of the Church who is ordained to the priesthood belongs to

an *Aaronic* or *Melchizedek Priesthood* quorum. (See D&C 20; 107.)

- In the Aaronic Priesthood, under the direction of the bishop or branch president, *deacons* gather fast offerings and pass the sacrament, *teachers* prepare the sacrament and visit members as home teachers, and *priests* offer the sacrament prayers, perform baptisms, and ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons. Teachers can be assigned the duties of deacons, and priests can be assigned the duties of deacons and teachers.

- In the Melchizedek Priesthood, *elders* (who are at least 18 years old) can carry out the responsibilities of deacons, teachers, and priests. In addition, they can confer the gift of the Holy Ghost

and bless the sick. *High priests* have these and additional responsibilities to serve as members of bishoprics, high councils, and stake presidencies.

Young men between the ages of 12 and 17 also belong to the *Young Men* organization, where they take part in gospel learning and wholesome activities.

Women—Every young woman in the Church between the ages of 12 and 17 belongs to the *Young Women* organization. In this organization young women learn gospel principles, participate in wholesome activities, and practice service and leadership skills. Each adult woman age 18 and older belongs to the *Relief Society*, which enables women to grow spiritually and serve those in need.

Children—Between the ages of 3 and 11, children belong to the *Primary* organization, where they learn gospel principles and enjoy activities with other children. Children ages 18 months through 2 years may be enrolled in a nursery class.

professional clergymen. So when she moved to Utah, she was naturally surprised to learn that her neighbor across the street was not only a truck driver but also the bishop of a local Latter-day Saint ward. Baptized in 2005, Sister Gardner now appreciates belonging to a church with a lay ministry (people who serve part-time and without pay).

Serving in Church callings has been the key to learning to understand the organization of the Church for Madhu Menon. Born in India and coming from a Hindu background, Brother Menon joined the Church in 1984. “As I respond to callings and become actively involved in helping others, I receive help from my leaders to understand the organization of the Church and the responsibilities of the offices in which I serve. Whether it is as a home teacher or on a welfare assignment, with each calling or opportunity to serve, I have learned something more about the organization of the Church,” says Brother Menon. Today he serves on a stake high council, where his understanding of the Church continues to deepen and expand.



Reaching Out to Others

Joining a church where members teach and speak and pray publicly can be intimidating to those for whom church membership was once a more passive experience. Today Aileen Figuerres serves on the Relief Society general board, where she teaches Relief Society leaders throughout the Church. She joined the Church in Hawaii at age 21, and she still remembers how worried she was the first time she was asked to pray in a meeting and teach a lesson as part of a teacher improvement class. In the Buddhist church she grew up attending, she recalls, “The minister did everything, and we sat and listened.” Having come from a non-Christian background, she also found the scriptures difficult to understand at first. She confided her feelings to a friend, and the friend offered to study the scriptures with her. Friends also taught her how to pray.

Sister Figuerres now emphasizes how important it is for new members to reach out to make connections with other Church members. She says it’s important to be brave enough to let others know what you need so they can help.

In retrospect, Sister Figuerres also realizes that as a new member she need not have been so concerned about the “form” as opposed to the “substance” of her service. To keep new challenges from feeling burdensome and overwhelming,

Sister Figuerres recommends that new members try to approach challenges with a sense of joy in the learning process. “Because I had sufficient experiences of feeling the Spirit and God’s love, I could proceed in my own conversion process in spite of feelings of inadequacy and fear,” she recalls.

Learning “Line upon Line”

Like all new members, Jana Riess has found learning about the Church to be a “line upon line” experience (see Isaiah 28:10). She was preparing to become a Presbyterian minister in 1991 when she began listening to the missionary lessons. To express her appreciation, one Sunday she invited the sister missionaries to join her for lunch at a restaurant. They kindly explained that they would prefer not to eat out on the Sabbath. Fifteen years and many Church callings later, Sister Riess still sees her own conversion as ongoing. “Discipleship is a lifelong process that doesn’t end when someone rises from the waters of baptism,” she says. “I’m still ‘converting.’”

Looking back, Sister Riess counts among her greatest blessings as a new Church member those who reached out to her and took an interest in her spiritual development. Today she prizes the blessing of being able to help other

CHURCH GOVERNMENT: “BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF APOSTLES AND PROPHETS”

Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. He extends His governing authority through priesthood quorums, each with specific responsibilities. The men in the following positions hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and are called General Authorities (except for members of the Third through the Eighth Quorums of the Seventy, who are called Area Seventies).

The First Presidency is a quorum consisting of the President of the Church and his counselors, who preside over the whole Church.

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles directs ecclesiastical work of the Church throughout the

world, overseeing missionary work and the administration of Church programs. The Apostles are “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world” (D&C 107:23).

The Quorums of the Seventy work under the direction of the Twelve to help build up the Church throughout the world. The Church today has eight Quorums of the Seventy. (See Numbers 11:16; Luke 10:1.)

The Presiding Bishopric serves as the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood and oversees temporal matters such as building construction, tithing collection, and welfare services.

converts along the path of discipleship by talking to them about their concerns, praying for and with them, and passing along helpful materials to read. She knows that the transition is often more painful and costly than many people realize. So, while her current official Church calling is Primary chorister, she also considers it a personal calling to reach out to other converts and help them become more committed disciples of Christ through the Church's teachings and programs.

How Much They Add

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said to those who are

learning about the Church, "Bring with you all that you have of good and truth which you have received from whatever source, and come and let us see if we may add to it."¹ While the restored gospel adds to new converts' understanding, new converts add to the strength of the restored Church.

"I like helping converts realize just how much they add to the Church's richness and beauty with their different experiences, backgrounds, and talents," says Sister Riess. "New members contribute to the overall spiritual vitality of the Church through the freshness and strength of their testimonies, which are often born out of great heartache. The reality is that we are all converts. Even those who have been taught the gospel all their lives come to a

OTHER IMPORTANT TERMS TO KNOW

Here are a few key terms relating to Church organization (see also page 48).

Ward: A local congregation made up of Church members living in a certain geographical area.

Branch: Like a ward, but with fewer members and a smaller range of programs.

Bishopric or branch presidency: A bishop or branch president and his two counselors, who preside over ward or branch members and programs.

Stake: An administrative unit containing several wards.

District: An administrative unit containing several branches.

Stake or district presidency: A stake or district president and his two counselors, who preside over stake or district members and programs.

Stake center: The building that houses the stake presidency offices and one or more wards.

Stake high council: A group of 12 men who help the stake presidency oversee the Lord's work in their stake.

moment when they must decide to make it their own."

After his own conversion, the Apostle Paul used a metaphor that describes equally well the life of each Church member and the organization of the Church itself: "[Ye] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:20–21). The organization and programs of the Church are wonderful gifts. Through them all of us—new and longtime members alike—can enjoy the fellowship of shared faith as we strive to build sustaining testimonies of the gospel of Jesus Christ and progress along the path of discipleship. ■

NOTE

1. "The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith," *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 81.





Home

BY MEGAN WALKER

I stepped out of the car in my Sunday best and opened my umbrella. My host father merely smiled and pointed to a red brick building, saying, “Das Gebäude dort drüben.” I thanked him and watched his car roll back into traffic.

When I left home in the United States to come to Germany I thought I didn’t need the Church, that I wouldn’t notice two weeks without sacrament meeting. But the past two weekends I had noticed. I noticed something missing that now made me

quicken my pace as I approached the building shown to me the night

before by the two missionaries serving in this small German town.

When I reached the door, an elder opened it and beckoned me inside. The room was about the size of my bedroom and had plain, whitewashed walls. Four rows of chairs and a plain wooden table holding one tray for bread and another for water were all this tiny room had in the way of furniture. White lace covered the windows.

Though the room was small and the people unknown to me, the first thought that entered my mind was “I’m home. I’m home.”

I sat down and the service began. We sang “The Spirit of God” (*Hymns*, no. 2) loud and clear in German, and my heart sang with the familiarity. Never had that hymn had a greater impact on me.

I wanted to laugh and dance and say to the people walking on the rainy streets, “Don’t you realize? Don’t you realize this Church is true? Isn’t it wonderful?”

The sacrament prayer began, and I bowed my head, listening to the familiar prayer in German. I listened intently, loving each word. I’m home. I’m home.

Tears began to form in my eyes as a plastic sacrament tray was passed. Though the congregation was small, the Spirit was strong. Others were crying too. I felt the Spirit burn and leap inside my heart as it never had before.

I looked through the lace curtains at the gloomy world outside and smiled through my tears. Thousands of miles away from my family, I knew I was at home in the Church. ■

Meeting the Challenges

BY LARRY HILLER
Church Magazines

When I first met Judy 30 years ago, I had no idea she had been a member of the Church for only 4 years. She had an important responsibility in the Church, and I had no reason to believe she had not been a member all her life.

Three years ago Laura gave a lovely opening prayer in our stake conference. After the prayer we were informed that Laura had been baptized just a few months earlier. “Wow!” I thought. “She has made remarkable progress.”

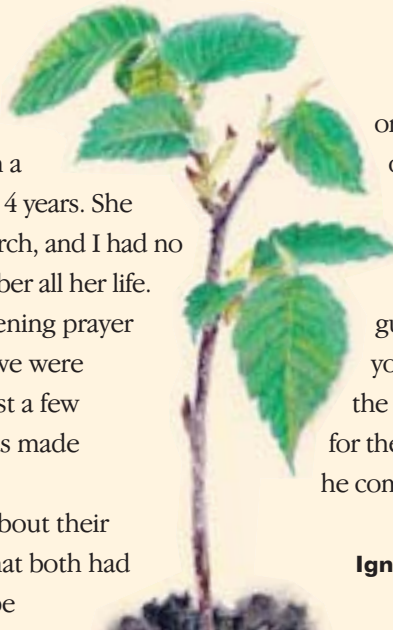
Only when I talked to Judy and Laura about their experiences as new converts did I learn that both had found their new Church membership to be more challenging than expected. It’s something they have in common with many—if not most—new converts.

It’s Challenging

Judy says, “You don’t just change *where* you go to church. You change your *life*. After my baptism I found myself asking, ‘Can I really do this?’”

Laura agrees: “I had no idea it would be that hard.”

It’s important to recognize that you are not alone in feeling challenged or even overwhelmed. Knowing that your experience is shared by many, you can be patient with yourself. You can reach out for help—to your bishop



Conversion is a process, not just a single event. A new testimony is like a tender seedling, filled with promise but needing time and careful nurture.

or branch president or to home teachers or other members—without feeling embarrassed or ashamed. And most important of all, you can have real hope that, yes, you *can* do this with the Lord’s help. He did not guide you into His Church only to abandon you. “The Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).

Ignorance Is Not Bliss

If ignorance is not bliss, it’s not a sin either. You may feel overwhelmed because there are new words and terms to learn. (Tithing settlement?) There is a whole organization that is unique to the Church. (Stake high council?) Reading and navigating the scriptures may be a new experience. (Where *is* the book of Omni?) There are responsibilities, or callings, in the Church that you didn’t know existed, and all of a sudden you are asked to accept one of them. (Just what does a Young Women secretary do anyway?)

Don’t worry. The Lord does not condemn you for what you don’t know. But He’s the only one who can read your mind. Others can’t, so don’t be afraid to ask questions. As you reach

W*eathering the storms of life makes the tree stronger. The reward for faithful nurture and endurance is fruitful maturity and a bountiful harvest that is “sweet above all that is sweet” (see Alma 32:42).*

out and begin to make friends in the Church, find a mentor—a member friend who can answer questions and explain things. If you have trouble finding a mentor, ask your bishop or branch president to help you find one. If you have a calling, ask to have your duties explained to you. Request a copy of any handbooks or other helps that may be available.

Then, as Judy counsels, “just build knowledge line upon line. Start with the basics.” And remember that you already have the foundation for the rest of your gospel learning: you know the Church is true.

Dealing with Disappointment

Sometimes you will disappoint yourself. Baptism and confirmation made you clean, not perfect. It’s the same for the other members of the Church. We all make mistakes, and we all have to repent and renew our baptismal covenants by taking the sacrament. (For more about those covenants, see Elder Jeffrey R. Holland’s article on page 10.) And as we continue to repent and strive to do better, the Holy Ghost helps us become more pure. We begin to lose our desire to sin (see Mosiah 5:2). The power of the Atonement begins to change our very nature.

Laura says, “It has now become easier to be a member. Heavenly Father has given



me a greater desire to do what is right. Things are coming more easily and naturally.”

As for those occasions when other Church members show their less-than-perfect side, Laura says she’s not bothered by the imperfections of others. “I work hard at not being judgmental,” she says. “I try to accept others for who they are. We’re all doing the best we can.”

An Easy Yoke, a Light Burden

The Savior has given this invitation to all:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

A yoke is a device that allows two animals to fairly and comfortably share a burden that one alone would find difficult or impossible. It is still used in many parts of the world today where animals plow fields or pull wagons.

Speaking of the Savior’s yoke, President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), fourteenth President of the Church, said: “His yoke requires a great and earnest effort, but for those who truly are converted, the yoke is easy and the burden becomes light. . . .

“Obviously, the personal burdens of life vary from person to person, but every one of us has them. . . . To one and all, Christ said, in effect: As long as we all must bear some burden and shoulder some yoke, why not let it be mine? My promise to you is that my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”¹

Conversion is a process, not just a single event. Our Heavenly Father is patient, kind, and gracious. He gives gifts of the Spirit not only “to those who love [Him] and keep *all* [His] commandments” but also to “him that *seeketh* so to do” (D&C 46:9; emphasis added). Live what you know, and more knowledge and strength will come. Let the Lord make of you what you could never make of yourself. He promises,

“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” (Ether 12:27). ■

NOTE

1. “Come unto Me,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 17.

WHEN IN DOUBT . . .

Doubts are natural. They can spring up from within, or they can come from others. Regardless of the source, there are some tried-and-true ways to deal successfully with doubt.

1. Remember the spiritual experiences you’ve already had. For example, Oliver Cowdery was Joseph Smith’s scribe during much of the translation of the Book of Mormon. He had already received a witness of the truthfulness of the Prophet Joseph’s testimony regarding the golden plates. But apparently he wanted additional reassurance from the Lord. Speaking through the Prophet, the Lord counseled Oliver:

“If you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon [remember] the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

“Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?” (D&C 6:22–23).

The Lord expects us to remember the witness we have already received from the Spirit.

2. Be patient. When you come across things that you don’t understand, be patient. Hold fast to what you already know (in other words, remember). As Laura says, “I cling to what I already know and don’t let questions bother me. I keep asking in prayer, knowing the Lord will answer when I’m ready for it.”

3. Feed your faith; starve your doubts. As you continue to pray, search the scriptures, and keep the commandments, you will receive additional strength to your testimony. Alma compares this process to nurturing a seed as it sprouts and grows into a tree that provides sweet, precious fruit (see Alma 32:28–43). Nurturing doubts produces the opposite effect, and testimony withers.

2,00 m

BECOMING A LATTER-DAY SAINT TEEN

What a great decision you've made to be baptized and confirmed. As a new member of the Church, you will find many happy things to fill your life. The following activities and programs will help you learn and give you guidance in all parts of your life. (For ideas for children, see page F16.)

Attend Aaronic Priesthood or Young Women. Each Sunday, you'll meet with the other teens in your ward or branch, the boys in Aaronic Priesthood and the girls in Young Women. Each week, the lessons will be geared to your age group.

Join your family in holding family home evening. Part of being a Latter-day Saint is becoming a better person. Family home evening can help you learn to be more kind and loving to your family as you study the gospel with them.

Go to Mutual. During the week, the youth and your leaders will get together for group or class activities and participation in service or sports. It's the place where you'll get to know good people, make friends, and have a lot of fun.

Attend seminary. From age 14 to 18, you can attend seminary, where you'll have a chance to really get into the scriptures with an interesting teacher and classmates who are also there to learn. Even if you have to get up early to attend, you'll learn more than you could have imagined.

Work on your Personal Progress or Duty to God program. Your Young Women or Aaronic Priesthood leaders will give you a small book outlining Personal Progress or Duty to God and

explain the program to you. Your parents and leaders will help you choose the goals and experiences to work on. These programs can take several years to complete and will help you learn to set and achieve goals and develop important new skills.

Study the scriptures daily and pray often. Through prayer and scripture study you can receive answers to your questions and comfort in your trials. In prayer, give thanks for your blessings.

Learn to listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. The gift of the Holy Ghost was

given to you at your confirmation. As you learn to understand and respond to promptings from the Holy Ghost, you will feel God's love for you and you will experience spiritual growth. ■



1,80 m



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTINA SMITH, GARTH BRUNER, AND RUTH SCHÖNVALD, POSED BY MODELS



Faith under the Overpass

By Greg Carlson

I grew up in a small community outside of Seattle, Washington. It was relatively close to a big city but just rural enough that opportunities to earn money for

a mission were extremely limited. There were, however, a large number of gentlemen farmers in the area, so my brother and I decided to haul alfalfa hay from the big farms in the eastern part of the state, over the Cascade Mountains, to the small farms in our community. We fixed up an old truck that had fallen into disrepair and prepared it for hauling up to 20,000 pounds (9,000 kg) of

hay. We made a number of successful trips with our dad along to make sure we had things figured out before he left the operation to us.

My brother and I left very early one morning for our first solo trip. We made it over the mountains but had some difficulties loading the hay. Eventually we headed back over the mountains with a full load.

The return trip was uneventful

until we noticed that it was starting to sprinkle just a bit. We immediately found an overpass on the freeway and parked underneath it just as the sprinkles turned into rain. We had not yet been able to purchase a tarp to cover the hay, and no animals can eat the alfalfa hay if it gets wet because it starts to rot and mold

My brother prayed, and the rain did not let up. Then I prayed, and it started to rain harder.

quickly. We knew that if we lost this load of hay, our business venture would probably fail.

We sat under the overpass for quite a while, waiting for the rain to stop. Eventually, we realized that the Lord would help us if we prayed. My brother

offered a prayer, and we waited. The rain did not let up. We decided that perhaps I, the elder brother, should offer a prayer. It started to rain harder. We sat there for what seemed an eternity. We knew that once we left the protective cover of the overpass, the next possible shelter was an hour away and home was another hour past that.

Finally, one of us remembered the admonition that faith precedes the miracle, and we realized that we needed to exercise

our faith. We put our trust in the Lord and left the cover of the overpass. To this day I remember every drop of rain that I saw land on the hood of the truck as we inched out from under the overpass. It was a severe trial of our faith, but by the time the cab of the truck was out in the open, the rain had stopped. The next two hours were filled with much prayer and thanksgiving.

We made it home with our load in good shape, and as we were pulling the truck into the barn, the heavens released their pent-up downpour. Our business survived, and both of us were able to successfully fund our missionary service.

Not all of my prayers have been answered this way, but I am very thankful for the lesson in faith my brother and I learned sitting under the freeway overpass in the rain. ■

Groceries or Tithing?

By Charlotte Arnold

I was in my first year of employment with a cosmetics company. At the time I was divorced and lived alone with my two children. In December the company sent each salesperson large boxes containing the Christmas merchandise we were to sell during the holiday season. That meant, however, that a large amount had been withdrawn from my salary. When I calculated all my monthly

Because of the large amount that had been withdrawn from my monthly salary, I had only enough money to cover our expenses for one week.



expenses and tithing, I had enough for three people to live on—but only for one week. And this money had to cover groceries for the entire month and gas for the car, which I needed for my work.

When our home teacher came, I told him about our situation. I told him I would not be able to pay my tithing because if I did, I wouldn't be able to feed my family. My faithful home teacher counseled me to pay tithing. He recommended that I do it faithfully, and the Lord would surely bless me. My home teacher had always been distinguished by faithfulness and reliability. I jokingly told him, "If I cannot buy groceries, I will come to you." But I trusted him and did not want to disappoint him by not following his advice. So I paid a full tithing.

When I presented the Christmas merchandise early in the month, I was able to sell many of my goods. By the end of the month I had sold all of the Christmas items and all of the goods I had had in stock for several months. Had I had more products on hand, I would likely have been able to sell them too.

My home teacher's promise was completely fulfilled. The Lord really did open the windows of heaven. We had more money than we needed that month. Later I inquired of my colleagues how their Christmas business had gone. They were not satisfied. At that time, a recession had

caused a strong decline in sales in the cosmetics industry.

How grateful I am to that home teacher for giving me this good counsel. I have had a strong testimony of

tithing ever since. When I visit teach sisters who feel they have too little money to pay tithing, I share my testimony about how much we will be blessed if we do so. ■

The Right Place for Me

By Francisco Javier Lara Hernández

I have heard the account many times of the arrival of the pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley under the direction of Brigham Young. Although I live in Mexico, my own story is similar. I had been praying to find the true Church and the purpose of my life. A friend of mine, Sandro, introduced me to the missionaries, and soon I was listening to their message. One day while they were teaching me about the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ in the latter days, I was suddenly filled with a great joy. I knew I had arrived, or as President Young said: "This is the right place. Drive on."

But just like the pioneers, I had to adapt to the place where I had arrived. It was a world unknown to me—wonderful, but unknown. The way people dressed, the way they talked, the way they acted were all new to me. I didn't always understand the meanings of the phrases commonly used in the Church. For example, when talking to people who had been members for longer

than I had, they might talk about someone whom they described as a "powerful member," meaning someone who was righteous and a good example to others. My idea of power was different. These things were common knowledge to the rest of them, but I had to learn them.

This period of transition from investigator to active member was not easy. Fortunately, like the pioneers, I was never alone. Sandro and other understanding members were always close by to answer my questions, simple as they were, and to guide me on the path I had undertaken. My leaders were concerned enough to see that I remained worthy and received the priesthood, and later I was able to serve as a counselor to the bishop. My teachers always took care to see that I was nourished by the good word of God. I realize now that through these good people, the Lord helped me stay strong in the Church.

I am no longer the only member of the Church in my family. And the years I have spent as a member of the Church—two of them as a missionary—have been wonderful.

Like the pioneers, I was never alone. Sandro and other understanding members were always close by to answer my questions.

Thanks to the Lord and His prophet, President Young, the pioneers were able to establish themselves in the Salt Lake Valley and become a powerful people in the mountains. Great men and women made this possible. In like manner I have received what I needed to remain strong in the Church, to progress, and to have an opportunity to return to the presence of our Heavenly Father. ■



Where Do I Go from Here?

Becoming a Latter-day Saint can be a big change. But there are many people and resources available to help you. Here are some answers to questions new members often ask.

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY AND VICTOR D. CAVE
Church Magazines

Am I the only one who may feel alone in this experience?

You may be the only recent convert in your ward or branch, but worldwide, more than 200,000 people join the Church each year. Members of your ward or branch rejoice with you in your conversion. During lessons and meetings, you will hear some of them share feelings about their conversion. You can also read about such experiences in the *Liabona*.

Will I be able to do all that's expected of me? There is much to do in the Church, and it can seem overwhelming, especially if you come from a religious background that involved attending meetings less frequently. But the Lord wants us to achieve our potential, so He has provided many opportunities to live a Christlike life. Participate faithfully, and you'll be amazed to see how much you accomplish over time.

How do I prepare to attend the temple? One of the most important goals you can set as a new member is to receive your endowment and be sealed to your family in the temple. Simply put, the endowment involves making

sacred promises to Heavenly Father and receiving blessings from Him. Being sealed means receiving the blessing, through priesthood authority and personal worthiness, to be together as a family throughout eternity.

The temple is sacred, so we need to be worthy to enter it and prepared to receive what we learn there. Your bishop or branch president may ask you to attend a temple preparation class. To prepare to attend the temple, you need to continue to pay tithing, support Church leaders, repent of sins or wrongdoings, attend church regularly, keep the Word of Wisdom and law of chastity, and strengthen your testimony.

Soon after their baptism and confirmation, Church members 12 and older can receive, after an interview with their bishop or branch president, a limited-use recommend to participate in baptisms and confirmations for the dead. One year after baptism, adults can seek additional blessings and covenants in the temple. Arrange interviews with your





One of your most important goals should be to be sealed to your family in the temple.

bishop or branch president and your stake or mission president. If you are worthy and prepared, they will sign a recommend for you to enter the temple.

What is family history? It's a record of your ancestry and of your own life. Members of the Church are asked to keep and research family records, including genealogy, journals, and personal histories. Such records are helpful in providing the blessings of the temple to those who have died. Family history will also help you and your children appreciate the eternal nature of family relationships and help you record your spiritual experiences. For example, take a moment to remember your baptism and confirmation. Then write down

your thoughts and feelings. As you write of such events, you and your children will come to treasure your own spiritual record.

Family history specialists in your ward or branch are eager to help you. You may also wish to visit the Church's family history Web site, www.familysearch.org.

Where can I find friends in the Church?

You are already surrounded by friends. When you join the Church, you join a great circle of fellowship and love. Your bishop or branch president, his counselors, and other leaders and members are eager for you to find joy in the gospel. Two men who hold the priesthood will serve as your home teachers. At least once a month, they will visit you and

Your Bishop, Your Friend

Be sure to get to know your bishop or branch president. He is the presiding priesthood leader of the ward or branch and has particular responsibility for the youth. He conducts interviews with members and can help you know how to prepare for the temple or for a patriarchal blessing. He will also help you find ways to serve, and he or another leader can provide you with gospel study materials.

General Conference

Every April and October, the Church holds general conference: two days of meetings during which general Church leaders speak. The conference is broadcast on some TV and radio stations, via satellite to local meetinghouses around the world, and on the Internet at www.lds.org. Talks are published in the May and November *Liahona*.

Traveling?

To find meeting times and addresses of Church meetinghouses around the world, use the Meetinghouse Locator under “Other Resources” at www.lds.org. Your bishop or branch president, area office, country Web site, or even the phone book may also have some of this information.

Moving?

One of the privileges of belonging to the Church is having a membership record that follows you when you move. Along with your name and date of birth, it contains a list of important dates and events in your Church life, such as your baptism and confirmation. Please give your ward or branch clerk your new address so your record can be sent to your new ward or branch.



You will make many friends with members of your ward or branch.

share a gospel message. If you are a woman, two women will also be your visiting teachers. Over time you will make friends with many Latter-day Saints.

Remember, the best way to have a friend is to be one, so don't be afraid to reach out in kindness.

How can I get involved? Church members are given responsibilities so they can learn and grow through service and use their time and talents to bless others. You might be asked to speak or pray, read a verse of scripture, join the choir, or accept a specific assignment known as a calling. Don't be afraid. Training is available, and other members and leaders will help you. You may make some mistakes; we all do. But do your best, and trust the Lord to help you. It is His work; He will bless you.

What about helping others? In the Church you will regularly have opportunities to serve those in need. While some service will come

by way of Church-sponsored service projects and assignments, you can also do much good by following the example of the Savior: visit the sick, cheer up the sad, lighten what burdens you can. Ask yourself, “What would the Savior do?” Then do your best to do it.

Is there time to have fun? Most wards and branches hold social activities, which add a lot of enjoyment to membership in the Church. If you're shy or uncertain about what to do, just show up. Get to know those around you. Ask if you can set up chairs or help clean up. In the Church we all pitch in to work—and play—side by side.

How will I continue to learn the gospel? One of the best ways is to prayerfully read the scriptures each day. Of course, attend Sunday meetings to learn more about the scriptures and teachings of latter-day prophets. There are also weekday study programs: seminary (for teens) and institute of religion (for young

adults). Ask other members; they can help you know what is available.

What is a patriarchal blessing? It is a blessing of counsel and wisdom to guide your life, given under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost by a man ordained to the office of patriarch in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Your bishop or branch president can help you know how to prepare to receive it.

Besides tithing, what donations am I expected to make? Once a month (usually the first Sunday), members fast for two meals and donate a fast offering—the money they would have spent on those meals—to help care for the poor.

The Church is also involved in a variety of humanitarian, temple, and missionary efforts

worldwide. You can donate to these efforts if you are able. Use the same donation envelopes you use to pay your tithing and fast offerings.

How can I share the gospel with others?

Let your example be a light to them, and share your excitement about joining the Church. Invite them to meet with the full-time missionaries. Share a copy of the Book of Mormon. Share your testimony as you feel prompted by the Spirit, but be gentle and kind, not confrontational. Members and missionaries will be happy to include you in their efforts and to guide you as you share the gospel.

How can I stay close to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and continue to feel the influence of the Holy Ghost? One of the best ways is to partake worthily of the sacrament each week. The sacrament prayers will remind you of the promises you made to Heavenly Father when you were baptized and confirmed—that you are willing to take upon yourself the name of Jesus Christ, always remember Him, and keep His commandments. By doing those things, you are promised that you may always have His Spirit with you. You will also be blessed by keeping the Sabbath day holy.

Also invite the Spirit to be with you by praying often, reading the scriptures, and keeping God's commandments.

What else do I need to know? Most of all, remember that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true. Heavenly Father is merciful and kind, and He is pleased with your decision to become a member of the Church. Be of good cheer, and remember that with God all things are possible. ■

Need Church Materials?

Visit a distribution center if there is one in your area. Distribution centers provide pamphlets, manuals, magazines, posters, videos, and other Church materials at low cost or for free. In the United States and Canada, you can also order items at www.ldscatalog.com.

Need Definitions of Church Words?

There are many resources: Ask other members. Read Church materials such as *Gospel Principles* (item no. 31110) and *True to the Faith* (item no. 36863) that include lists of words. Also, check the glossaries at www.mormon.org and on page 48 of this issue.



HELPFUL WORDS TO KNOW

Many terms are defined in articles throughout this issue. But you may find the list below helpful as a quick reference for unfamiliar words.

Aaronic Priesthood (see also Priesthood):

This priesthood is held by worthy young men ages 12 to 18 and new adult male members of the Church. The offices, or positions, in the Aaronic Priesthood are bishop, priest, teacher, and deacon. This priesthood administers the preparatory gospel, “the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins” (D&C 84:27).

Baptism for the dead: In temples a living person is baptized on behalf of someone who has died. This ordinance offers the opportunity to accept the blessings of baptism to deceased persons who did not receive the teachings of Jesus Christ in mortal life.

Brother/Sister: Because we are all children of our Heavenly Father, the title *Brother* or *Sister* followed by a person’s last name is a common way for members to refer to one another.

Calling: An assignment or position of service in the Church. Each calling has specifically defined duties that a member fulfills until he or she is released, often to fulfill a new assignment.

Covenant: A sacred promise, or agreement, made between a person or a group of people and God.

Deacon: An office of responsibility in the Aaronic Priesthood generally held by young men ages 12 to 13.

General Authorities: Melchizedek Priesthood leaders who administer the affairs of the entire Church. They include the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the Presidency of the Seventy, the First and Second Quorums of the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric.

Latter-day Saint: Shortened title or name used to refer to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Laying on of hands: The act of priesthood holders placing their hands on a person’s

head to give that person a Church ordination or blessing.

Melchizedek Priesthood (see also Priesthood): Under the direction of local priesthood leaders, worthy adult male members (18 and older) may receive this priesthood. Those who have this priesthood lead the Church and administer such ordinances as naming and blessing children, conferring the Holy Ghost, and giving other priesthood blessings. Elders, high priests, patriarchs, Seventies, and Apostles hold this priesthood.

Mission/mission president: A geographically defined area where full-time missionaries work. The leader of a mission is called a mission president.

Mutual: A weeknight meeting or activity for youth ages 12 to 17.

Ordain: To give priesthood authority to a worthy male member of the Church by the laying on of hands.

Ordinance: A sacred rite, or ceremony, by which members make covenants (promises) with God, such as baptism, the sacrament, and temple ordinances.

Priest: An office of responsibility in the Aaronic Priesthood generally held by young men ages 16 to 18 and new adult male members of the Church.

Priesthood: The authority and power that God has granted to act in His name. All worthy male members age 12 and older may be given priesthood authority.

Priesthood blessing: A prayer for healing, comfort, or counsel given by a Melchizedek Priesthood holder, who lays his hands on the head of the person receiving the blessing.

Primary: The Church organization for children ages 3 to 11.

Quorum: An organized group of young men or men who hold the same office of priesthood authority, such as deacons, elders, or members of the Seventy.

Release: To relieve members of their duties in a Church assignment or position with appreciation for the service they have given.

Relief Society: The Church organization for women age 18 and older.

Set apart: To give a Church member the responsibilities and blessings associated with a Church calling by the laying on of hands of a properly authorized Melchizedek Priesthood holder.

Sister: See Brother/Sister.

Sustain: To give support to those serving in Church callings or to give one’s approval for an action being taken by the Church. This is usually signified by raising one’s right hand when asked to do so by a Church leader in a meeting.

Teacher: (1) An office of responsibility in the Aaronic Priesthood generally held by young men ages 14 to 15; (2) a person who teaches a Church class or quorum.

Temple: A Church building dedicated for the performance of sacred ordinances, such as baptisms for the dead, the endowment, and the sealing of families.

Testimony: An assurance or conviction of faith revealed by the Holy Ghost that God the Father and Jesus Christ live and that Their teachings and the Restoration of the gospel are true. When a person bears testimony, he or she is making a brief, heartfelt statement of this conviction to others.

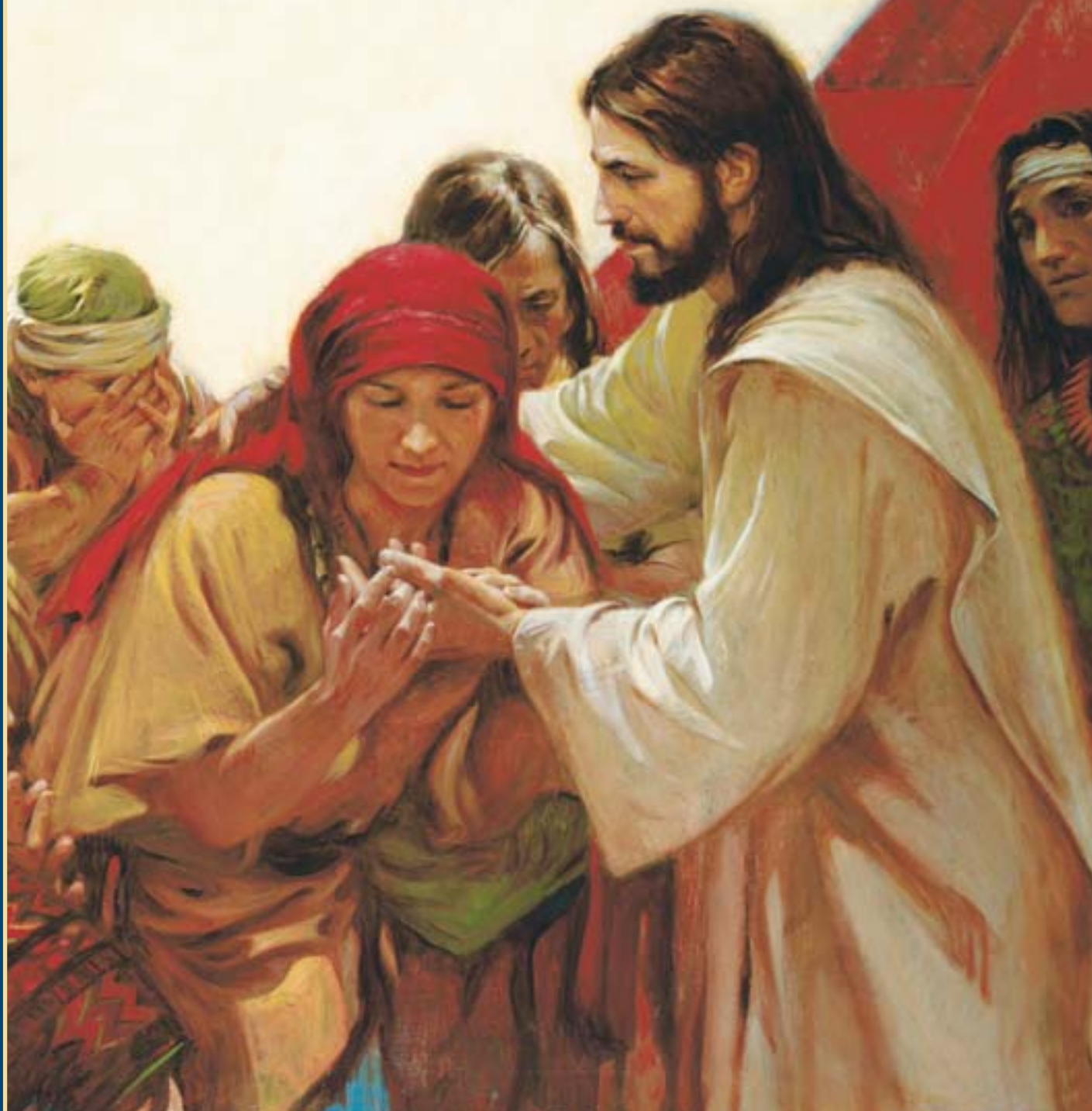
Tithing: The donation of 10 percent of a person’s income to the Church.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

You can find more information about these and other terms in *Guide to the Scriptures* and in *True to the Faith* (item no. 36863), which are available in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org.

COME UNTO ME

THAT I MAY HEAL YOU.
(See 3 Nephi 9:13–14.)



the Friend



Latter-day Prophets Speak

The first latter-day prophet, Joseph Smith, once said, “It is the privilege of the children of God to come to God and get revelation.”¹ One way we can receive revelation from Heavenly Father and know what He wants us to do is by listening to His prophets. Here are statements from four latter-day prophets, including our leader today—President Gordon B. Hinckley.

“I feel to exhort and counsel you, my young friends, to listen to the voice of God and obey it while young, as Samuel did, that you may be great, good, and useful, and the beloved of the Lord and your parents and by all good men. Obey your parents and honor them, for by doing this you will obtain those great blessings which God has promised you.”²

Wilford Woodruff (1807–98), Fourth President of the Church

“I raise my warning voice this day to the youth of Zion. Be not deceived when storms of persecution break over your heads. There will be unkind things said in the future as there have been in the past. See that your feet are planted upon the rock. . . . If you are pure and virtuous and upright, the evil one will have no power to destroy you.”³

George Albert Smith (1870–1951), Eighth President of the Church

“Heavenly Father . . . wants you to pray to Him every day. He wants to help you because He loves you, and He *will* help you if you pray to Him and ask Him for His help. In your prayers, also thank Him for your blessings. Thank Him for sending our oldest brother, Jesus Christ, into the world. He made it possible for us to return to

our heavenly home. Thank Him for your family. Thank Him for the Church. Thank Him for this beautiful world you live in. Ask Him to protect you. In your prayers, ask Him to help you know what to do in your life. When you make mistakes, your Heavenly Father still loves you. So pray to Him, and He will help you try again to do right.”⁴

Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), Thirteenth President of the Church

“I love you children. You are very much the same the world over. Regardless of the color of your skin and of the circumstances in which you live, you carry with you a beauty that comes of innocence and of the fact that it was not long ago that you lived with your Father in Heaven. How lovely you are, wherever you are, you precious children!”⁵

“I know this work is true. I know that God our Eternal Father lives. I am thankful for the knowledge that He loves us as His children. I am grateful that I feel in my heart a great love for Him. I know He lives, my Father in Heaven. I can scarcely comprehend the wonder of it all. He who is the Creator and Governor of the universe knows me, knows you, each of you children. . . . He knows you, He loves you, He is concerned for you. I know that Jesus is my Redeemer, my Lord, my Savior.”⁶ ●

Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–), Fifteenth President of the Church

NOTES

1. *The Words of Joseph Smith*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (1980), 13–14.
2. *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham (1946), 265.
3. In Conference Report, Oct. 1906, 48.
4. “To the Children of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 82.
5. “We Have a Work to Do,” *Friend*, Aug. 1997, inside front cover.
6. “Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1996, 61.



Following the prophet is like building on a solid foundation. As we obey his counsel, we will have strength to be righteous and faith to overcome fear.



a. _____

d. _____

b. _____



e. _____



a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____



f. _____

f. _____



1.



6.



2.

Matching Activity
Above are pictures of the First Presidency and some members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. There are also pictures of the same men when they were children. Match the picture of the child with the picture of the man. Fill in the lettered lines with what these General Authorities speak about in general conference.

Answers: a1, b2, c4, d6, e3, f5



3.



4.



5.

I Will Follow the Prophet Today

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

BY ELIZABETH RICKS



There are many ways that Heavenly Father can talk to you. He can speak to you through the Holy Ghost. He can speak to you through the scriptures. One very important way that Heavenly Father talks to His children is through His living prophets. When the prophet speaks, he tells us things that Heavenly Father wants us to know.

In the Book of Mormon the people of King Noah were very wicked. Heavenly Father sent His prophet Abinadi to preach to them. King Noah's wicked priests were angry and tried to kill Abinadi. But Abinadi said, "Touch me not, . . . for I have not delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver" (Mosiah 13:3). Alma, one of the priests, believed Abinadi's words and learned the way to obtain God's promised blessings.

In the Bible we read of God's promises to the children of Israel. Through Moses, His prophet, the Lord delivered them from Egypt. Moses taught the children of Israel the way to obtain God's promises and blessings.

There was not a prophet on the earth when Joseph Smith prayed to find out which church to join. Joseph Smith became God's prophet and restored the true Church of Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith taught the people what they needed to do to obtain God's promises and blessings.

Today President Gordon B. Hinckley tells us what God wants us to know and do. When we listen to general conference, it is as if God Himself is speaking to us. We can learn the way to obtain God's promised blessings when we listen to our prophet.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Help the children memorize D&C 1:38. Ask the children to think of things the prophet spoke about in recent general conferences. Write their ideas down the middle of the blackboard. Then write the words Present and Future on either side of the list. Tell them that we can do some of the things that the prophet asks us to do right now (pay tithing, be honest, attend church). We will need to be older to do other things the prophet counsels us to do (have a temple marriage, receive the priesthood, magnify our Church callings). Have the children point to either "Present" or "Future" when you read one of the items on the list. Explain that although we cannot do everything right now, we can do many things. Bear testimony of the blessings you have received from following the living prophet. Sing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" (Hymns, no. 19).

2. Display a copy of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102; or item no. 35602). Ask a child to read the following sentence from the proclamation: "Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities." Tell the children they can strengthen their families. Divide the children into nine "families." Remember that families are all different sizes. Write the principles (faith, prayer, and so on) on small pieces of paper, and place them in a basket. Have each family draw a word. Instruct the families to act out the principle. Give the children time to prepare. For example, to demonstrate faith, the children could pretend to plant a seed and wait for it to grow. Post wordstrips of the principles listed. Write a song that relates to the principle on the back of the corresponding wordstrip. Invite the groups to act out their word for the rest of the Primary. When the correct principle is guessed, remove the wordstrip from the board, and sing the song listed on the back. ●

Journey to Baptism

When people are baptized and confirmed, they become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They begin a journey back to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. There is another journey that children under age eight need to take—the journey of preparing to be baptized.



Study the scriptures by yourself and with your family.



At church you learn about Jesus Christ and His gospel. Try to be a Christlike example to those around you.



The day before my baptism I was very excited, but the closer I got to the font the scarier it became for me. But when I actually got in the water it was like there were angels singing in the sky. Afterward I was very happy. As I was getting the gift of the Holy Ghost, I was thinking, “Heavenly Father will be pleased.”

Jacqueline E., 11, Quebec, Canada



When you pray you grow closer to Heavenly Father. Ask Him to help you choose the right every day.



My life has changed because the gospel has taught me many truths I did not know before: I am a child of God, I lived in the spirit world before I came to earth, and our family can be forever! We are so blessed to have a living prophet—he loves us and blesses us. The prophet teaches us the word of God. He tells me to be good and teaches me what God wants me to do.

Michael F., 9, Tonga



Near your eighth birthday, you will have an interview with your bishop or branch president. Don't be nervous! He will help you prepare for your baptism.



Happy eighth birthday!



Before my eighth birthday I fasted and prayed to Heavenly Father to know if I should be baptized. The answer was yes! After I was baptized I felt a wonderful warm feeling of happiness. I was grateful to be confirmed and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Since my baptism I have tried to keep the commandments, be kind to my family and friends, and always set a good example.

Huia K., 8, Victoria, Australia



Now that I have been baptized and confirmed, I have received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and He can be with me all the time to help me choose right from wrong. When you pray, the Holy Ghost can help you understand the answers to your prayer.

Emily S., 8, Louisiana, USA



It's your baptism day! When you come up out of the water, you will be clean and pure, just like the white clothes you are wearing.

After your baptism, priesthood holders will confirm you a member of the Church and give you the gift of the Holy Ghost. When you covenant, or promise, to take upon you the name of Jesus Christ and always remember Him, He promises that you will always have the Holy Ghost to guide you. You can remember this covenant each time you take the sacrament. ●

BAPTISM

I read the Book of Mormon every day. Move forward 2 spaces.

After arguing with my friends, I ask for their forgiveness. Move forward 1 space.

I attend church every week, even though it's far away. Move forward 2 spaces.

My brother asks me to help him. I say no. Move back 2 spaces.

A classmate asks to copy my homework. I say no. Move ahead 2 spaces.

I break a plate and tell my dad that my little sister broke it. Move back 2 spaces.

I do kind deeds for my family. Move forward 1 space.

Keeping Our Baptismal Covenant

BY JENNIFER ROSE
Church Magazines

When we are baptized we make a covenant, or promise, with Heavenly Father. We promise to take upon ourselves the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and always remember Him and keep His commandments. When we keep our part of the covenant, we are promised that we will have the Holy Ghost in our lives to guide and comfort us.

The covenant we make at baptism is the first step on our journey to the temple. There are other steps along the way that help us keep our baptismal covenants and prepare to receive temple blessings.

To play the game you will need a small piece of colored paper for each player and a die.

To prepare: (1) Remove these pages from the magazine. (2) Cut out the puzzle pieces, glue them to heavy paper, trim, and set aside. Then glue the game board to heavy paper. (3) Divide the players into two teams, and give each player a piece of colored paper to write his or her name on. Each team should have its own color of paper. (4) Start the papers on the space marked "BAPTISM."

I don't read my scriptures. Move back 2 spaces.

Listening to general conference, I sustain the General Authorities. Move forward 2 spaces.

My friend asks me to play on Sunday. I invite him to Primary. Move ahead 2 spaces.



Instead of participating in family home evening, I watch TV. Move back 2 spaces.

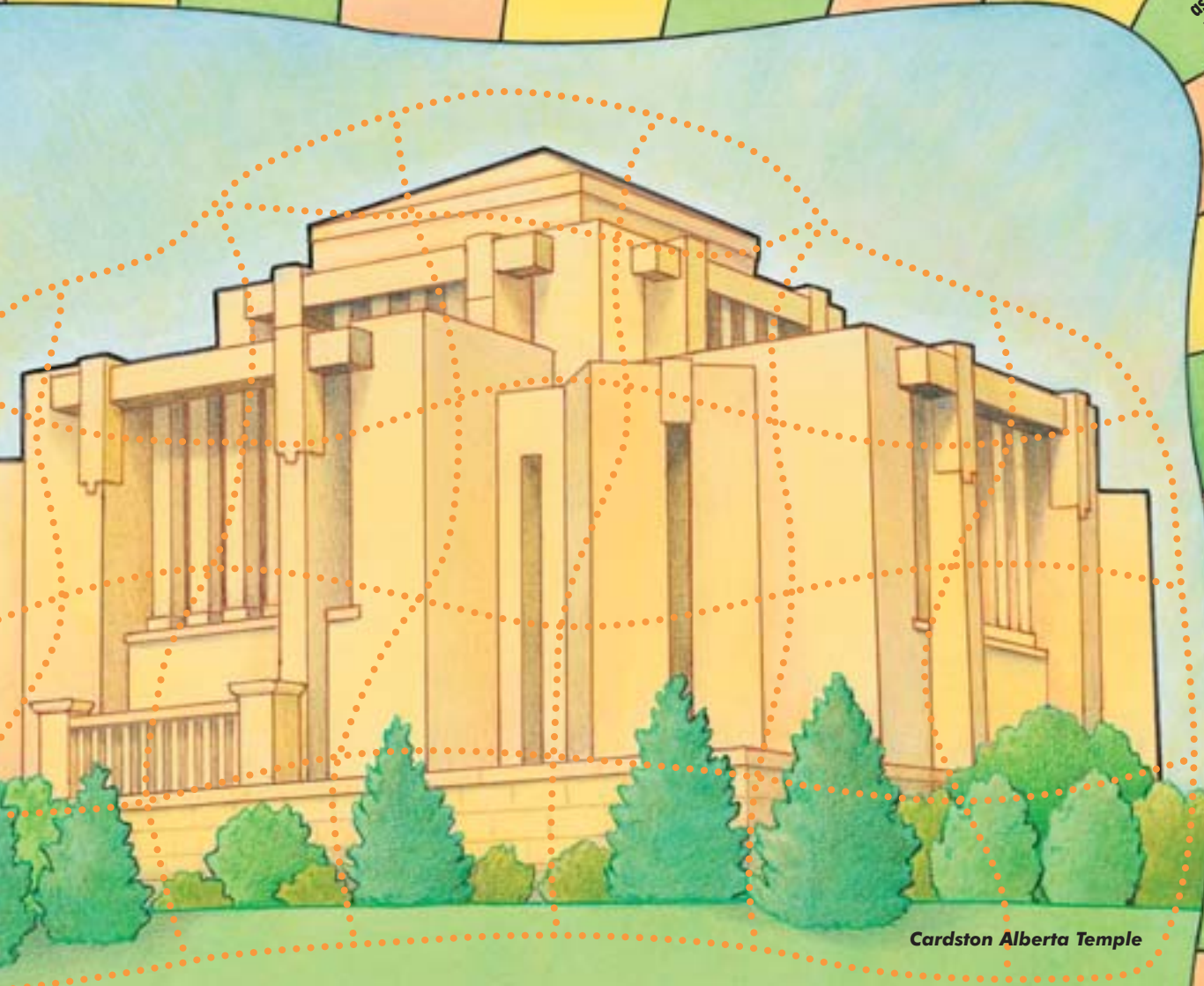
I do kind deeds for my family. Move forward 1 space.

I ignore my mom when she asks me to help make dinner. Move back 1 space.

I earn some money and pay my tithing. Move ahead 2 spaces.

I pick up the newspaper for a sick neighbor. Move forward 1 space.

I hang a picture of a temple in my room and make a goal to go there. Move ahead 1 space.



Cardston Alberta Temple

To play: One player rolls the die and moves his or her paper. If you roll a 2 or higher, you can share it with your teammates and help them move too (for example, if you get a 3, you and two teammates could each move one space). When you land on a square with words, read it aloud and follow the instructions. If the

instructions tell you to move forward, put a puzzle piece in place.

The next team takes a turn, with one player rolling the die and moving.

The teams and players take turns rolling the die and moving around the board until the puzzle is completed.

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

I say my prayers in the morning and at night. Move forward 1 space.

I take a piece of candy from the store and don't pay for it. Move back 2 spaces.

It's been a busy day, and I'm tired, so I don't pray. Move back 2 spaces.

I ask a friend to turn off bad music. Move forward 1 space.

“Your garments have been cleansed and made white through the blood of Christ” (Alma 5:27).

Clean Again

BY ANNE BENTLEY WADDOUPS

Based on a true story

The water felt warm and smooth as I stepped into the font. Dad walked down the steps across from me, grinning. I looked around at all the people bunched up in front of the baptismal font: people who loved me and had come just for me! Dad said the baptismal prayer and lowered me into the water. I'll never forget how I felt coming up out of the water—happy and clean. As I climbed out of the font, Mom was ready with a big towel and wrapped it around me in a warm hug.

I dried off and got dressed in the new white eyelet dress we had picked out for this day. Then I went back into the room where my family and friends were waiting. My dad, both grandpas, and my uncle put their hands on my head and confirmed me a member of the Church.

Afterward, everyone came up and hugged me or shook my hand. My home teacher said, “Right now you're clean! You don't have any sins!”

I hadn't thought about that before. I realized that right then I was practically



perfect. I decided to stay that way as long as I could.

Everyone went outside and sat on the big rolling lawn, talking, eating refreshments, and enjoying the view of the Potomac River.

After a while my cousins and friends and I got up to run around a little. “Be careful,” Mom called. “Remember you have on your new dress.”

We played hide-and-seek and chased each other around the trees. I loved how my dress billowed out when I spun around.

Then the worst thing happened. I slipped and fell into a mud puddle left by the morning’s rain. I heard a lot of gasps and a few giggles as I got up. My white dress was muddy! And worse, I had already done something wrong by ignoring Mom’s instructions. I ran inside to the bathroom, my tears starting before I got there. The dress *had* to come clean. I’d scrub until it did. I pulled my dress up into the sink, running the water over the mud. The dirt faded but the stain stayed there on the front of my new white dress.

I went out to the other side of the church and sat on the curb near the parking lot, watching the air above the blacktop waving from the heat. I heard the door open and close behind me. Mom sat down and put her arm around me.

“So you fell in the mud.”

I nodded.

“I’m sure we can wash it, and it’ll come out,” she said.

I shook my head. “I already tried that in the bathroom, and it didn’t work. I’m sorry. I don’t think it will ever come out. Will I ever be able to wear it again?” As I spoke, my tears started again.



I thought Mom was going to scold me for ruining a new dress, but she said, “I think you’ll remember this day even more now.”

That was true. Who could forget ruining her own baptism!

“You know, in your life, you’re going to make some mistakes,” Mom said. “We all do. And no matter how hard you try on your own, you won’t be able to completely erase them from your life. Do you know who can?”

“Jesus Christ?”

Mom nodded. “Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ want to forgive us. If we repent and ask humbly, Jesus can make us clean again—as clean as you were when you stepped out of the baptismal font. Christ’s Atonement is Heavenly Father’s greatest gift to us. And do you know what we can do every week to help us become clean?”

I nodded slowly. “Take the sacrament.”

“That’s right. When we partake of the sacrament we renew the covenants we made when we were baptized.”

Mom leaned her hand on my knee and stood up. “I think a little bleach will make the dress white again. This isn’t our first mud stain, and I’m sure it won’t be our last.”

I sighed. It wouldn’t be my last mistake either. But I did understand a little bit more about what it meant to be baptized and confirmed. It wasn’t just taking



“None of us . . . is perfectly obedient, and thus we rely on our baptismal covenant to bring a remission of sins

after baptism just as . . . before baptism. We rely on repentance to . . . bring the Holy Spirit and, with it, atoning grace.”

**Elder D. Todd Christofferson
of the Presidency of the Seventy,
“Justification and Sanctification,”
Ensign, June 2001, 24.**

away all my old mistakes. It would allow me to stay clean—not by being perfect all the time, but by repenting and trying harder. ●



I Want to Give the Lord My Tenth

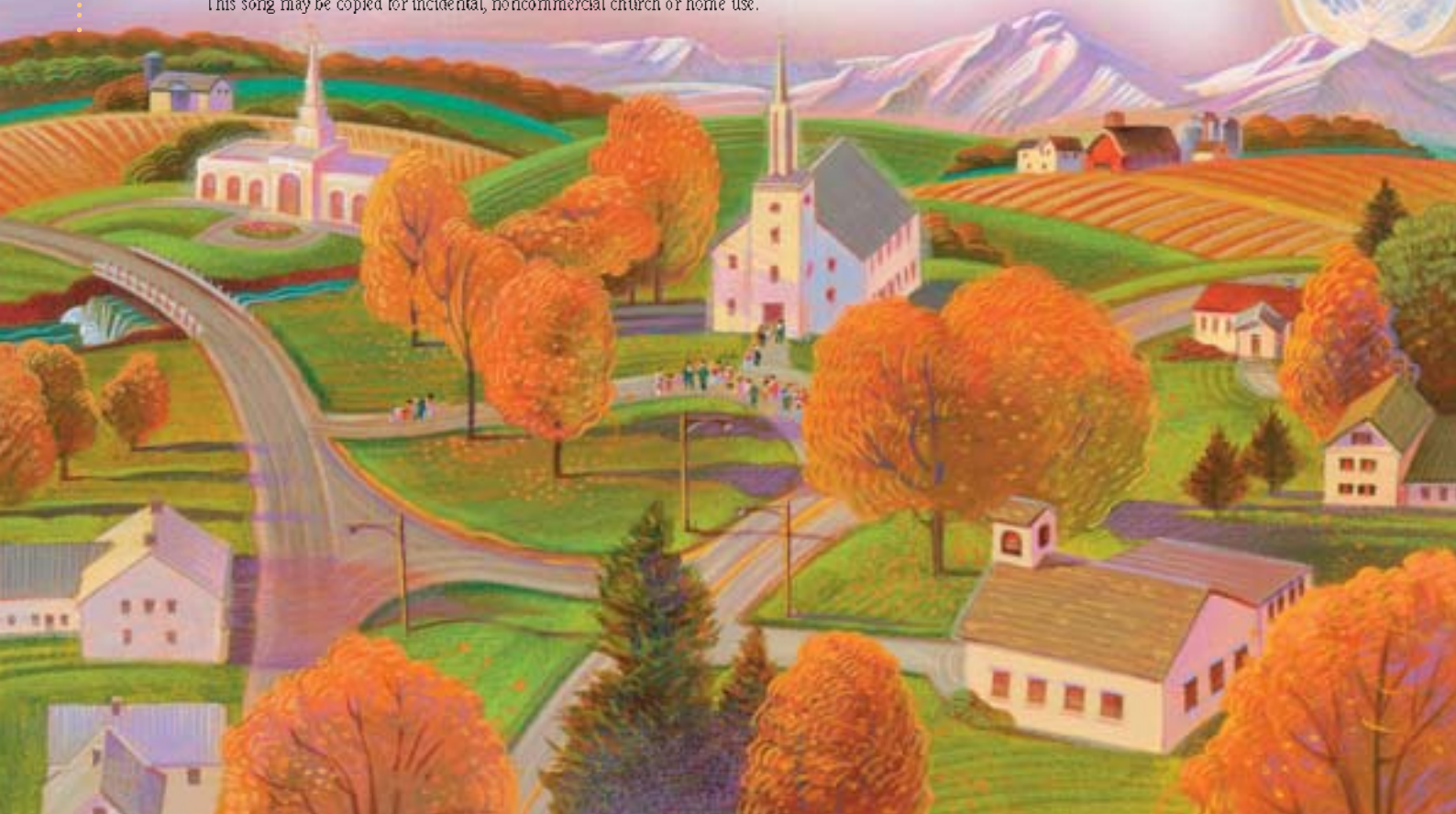
Cheerfully ♩ = 104-112

1. I want to give the Lord my tenth, For ev - 'ry time I do _____ It
2. He gives us life, this love - ly world. And though my tenth seems small, _____ It

makes me think of all the gifts He gives to me and you.
shows my faith and grat - i - tude To Him, the Lord of all.

Words and music: Lonnie Dobson Adams, b. 1942. © 1969, 1989 [R]
This song may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use.

Malachi 3:10



Standing for Righteousness

“Thou standest by faith” (Romans 11:20).



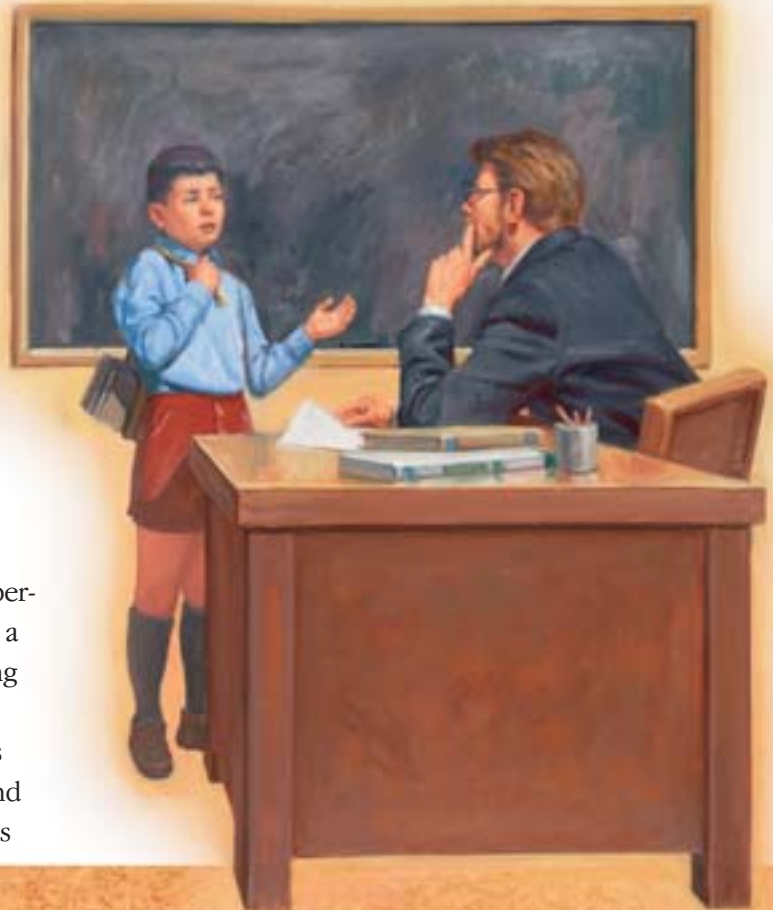
From an interview with Elder Wolfgang H. Paul of the Seventy, currently serving in the Europe Central Area; by Kimberly Webb, Church Magazines

When I was growing up in Germany, my family and I were the only members of the Church in our city of about 60,000 people. We couldn't go to sacrament meeting, Sunday School, or Primary because the nearest Church building was several hours away. With special permission, we had church at home. My father conducted the meetings, blessed the sacrament, and often taught the lessons.

I was always the only Church member at my school. Sometimes classmates made fun of me for my beliefs, and at first I was a little uncomfortable. But I knew that they didn't have the gospel knowledge I had been blessed with, and remembering that made me grateful to be a Church member instead of being embarrassed.

One time one of my teachers teased me about the Church, and I told him, “It's not funny. This is

something that I really believe.” After that he didn't tease me anymore. When my classmates saw that I stood up for my principles, they respected me and even elected me as the class president. I learned that I would never regret standing up for my beliefs.



I carried that lesson with me as a young man when I joined the German military. Once again, my fellow soldiers made fun of me at first. But after they learned that I lived my beliefs, they protected me instead. They tried to make sure no one offered me alcohol. If I had ever gone against my beliefs, they would have been disappointed in me.

Children, sometimes you may be teased or misunderstood because of your beliefs. You too can stand for righteousness. Perhaps the people who make fun of you now will one day see you as an example and show their respect for you. No matter what others may think, Heavenly Father is pleased when you are true to your standards. He will help you.

Part of my testimony comes from having received so many answers to prayers. When I was five or six years old, I had a terrible pain in my ear. I received a priesthood blessing, and I was amazed when the pain disappeared. That was the first time I remember feeling the power of prayer and the priesthood in my young life.

Answers to prayers have continued to help me as an adult. One time I had to give a presentation, and I needed a very important file. I looked through all the material I had and could not find it. Time was running out. I was nervous. I locked my door, knelt down, and prayed. When I opened the closet where I had looked

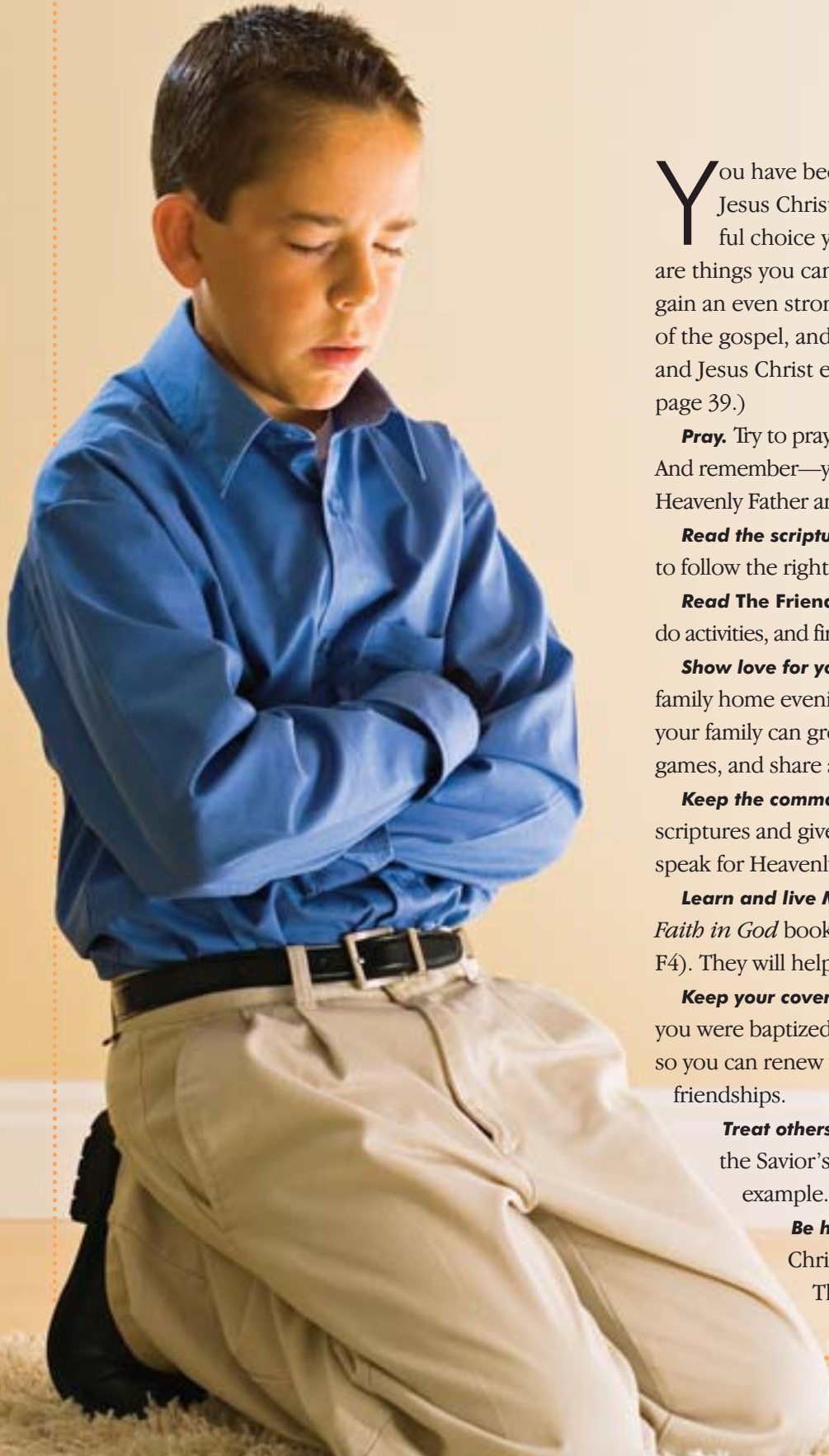
many times before, I discovered that two folders in a pile were stuck together. That is why I couldn't find the one I needed at first.

I rely very much on Heavenly Father's help. My dear young friends, you too can trust in the Lord and rely on Him. Always remember the answers to prayer you have already received. If you have simple faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, you will have personal miracles that help you solve your problems and stand for righteousness. ●



Right: At age 6. Far right: At age 14.

What to Do **Now?**



You have become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. What a wonderful choice you have made! What's next? There are things you can do daily that will help you be happy, gain an even stronger testimony and understanding of the gospel, and come to know Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ even better. (For ideas for teens, see page 39.)

Pray. Try to pray on your knees morning and night. And remember—you can offer a silent prayer to Heavenly Father anytime, anywhere.

Read the scriptures. Pray to understand them, and try to follow the righteous examples you find there.

Read The Friend. In this magazine you can read stories, do activities, and find the hidden CTR ring!

Show love for your family. And don't forget to join in family home evening each week. This is a time you and your family can grow closer, learn about the gospel, play games, and share a great treat.

Keep the commandments. They are recorded in the scriptures and given to us by modern prophets, who speak for Heavenly Father.

Learn and live My Gospel Standards (printed in the *Faith in God* booklet; see also *The Friend*, June 2006, F4). They will help you choose the right.

Keep your covenants—the promises you made when you were baptized (see Mosiah 18:8–9). Attend church so you can renew your covenants, learn, and build friendships.

Treat others kindly and serve them. You will feel the Savior's Spirit with you when you follow His example.

Be happy! Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love you and have a plan for you. That's something to smile about! ●



“We congratulate you on your recent baptism and welcome you most warmly,” writes President Gordon B. Hinckley. “What a wonderful step you have taken in joining the Church! We stand ready to assist you in any way that we can.” See “A Perfect Brightness of Hope—to New Members of the Church,” p. 2.