

Liahona



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Temple, p. 14**

Worth the Seven-Year Wait, p. 29

My Brother Doesn't Come to Church, p. F12

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8 Turning Hearts
in a Land of
Temples

ON THE COVER

Front: Photograph by Lauren Fochetto, posed by models. Back (photographs clockwise from left): Seoul Korea Temple by Floyd Holdman; Copenhagen Denmark Temple and angel Moroni by Craig Dimond; Accra Ghana Temple by Norman Childs; Washington D.C. Temple by Christina Smith.

THE FRIEND COVER

Illustration by Steve Kropp.

FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

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

"Come to the Temple,"

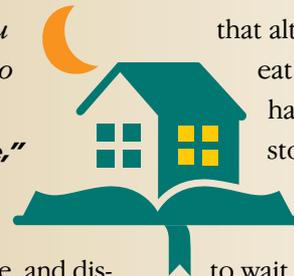
p. 14: Using the article, list the ordinances performed in the United States and Canada, and discuss the blessings of temple worship. Share ideas of how to prepare to go to the temple.

"Enduring to the Beginning,"

p. 29: Make your family's favorite

treat. Put it out so your family can see it and smell it. Tell them that although they may want to eat it right then, they will have to wait. Share Maria's story. Compare waiting to eat a favorite treat with Maria's having to wait to be baptized and confirmed.

"For the Strength of You," p. 32: The week before, invite each family member to prepare a short talk about one standard in *For the*





29 Enduring to the Beginning



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- F14 Making Friends: Growing in Faith—Yondonjamts of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Don L. Searle and Julie Wardell

F12 Missing Michael



As you look for the Mongolian CTR ring hidden in this issue, think of something you can do to share your testimony with someone else.

Strength of Youth. Share the talks, and then choose one or two standards to work on that week as a family.

“The Empty Cart,” p. F2: Before the lesson, write each family member’s name on a slip of paper. Share President James E. Faust’s story, and discuss the questions at the end of the article. Then have each person pick one of the slips of paper. Explain that they should watch for ways to give anonymous service that week

to the person whose name they drew.

“Missing Michael,” p. F12: Read the story, and discuss how Natalie helped her brother. Have family members look up 1 John 4:21. Discuss what it means to “love his brother.” You may want to help the children in the family write a note to someone who does not come to church regularly. They could also invite that person to attend Primary or the next Primary activity day.

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They Marked the Path to Follow

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

First Counselor in the First Presidency

Many years ago I marveled at the cover of one of our Church publications which featured a magnificent reproduction of a Carl Bloch painting. The scene which the artist captured in his mind and then—with a touch of the Master's hand—transferred to canvas depicted Elisabeth, wife of Zacharias, welcoming Mary, the mother of Jesus. Both were to bear sons—miracle births.

The son born of Elisabeth became known as John the Baptist. As with Jesus, son of Mary, so with John—precious little is recorded of their years of youth. A single sentence tells us all that we know of John's life from his birth to his public ministry: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel."¹

John's message was brief. He preached faith, repentance, baptism by immersion, and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost by an authority greater than that possessed by himself. "I am not the Christ," he told his faithful disciples, "but . . . I am sent before him."² "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh . . . : he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."³

Then occurred the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist. Later Jesus testified, "Among

them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."⁴

All of us need points of reference—even models to follow. John the Baptist provides for us a flawless example of unfeigned humility, as he deferred always to the One who was to come—the Savior of mankind.

Models of Faith

Learning of others who trusted God and followed His teachings whispers to our souls, "Be still, and know that I am God."⁵ As they resolutely kept His commandments and trusted in Him, they were blessed. When we follow their examples, we too will be similarly blessed in our day. Each one becomes a model to follow.

All of us love the beautiful account from the Holy Bible of Abraham and Isaac. How exceedingly difficult it must have been for Abraham, in obedience to God's command, to take his beloved Isaac into the land of Moriah, there to present him as a burnt offering. Can you imagine the heaviness of his heart as he gathered the wood for the fire and journeyed to the appointed place? Surely pain must have racked his body and tortured his mind as he "bound Isaac . . . and laid him on the altar upon the wood.



Learning of others who trusted God and followed His teachings whispers to our souls, "Be still, and know that I am God." When we follow their examples, we too will be similarly blessed in our day. Each one becomes a model to follow.

Noah had the unwavering faith to follow God's commandments. May we ever do likewise. The greatest lesson we can learn in mortality is that when God speaks and we obey, we will always be right.

“And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.” How glorious was the pronouncement and with what wondered welcome did it come: “Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”⁶

Abraham qualifies as a model of unquestioning obedience.

If any of us feels our challenges are beyond our capacity to meet them, let us read of Job. By so doing, there comes the feeling, “If Job could endure and overcome, so will I.”

Job was a “perfect and upright” man who “feared God, and eschewed evil.”⁷ Pious in his conduct, prosperous in his fortune, Job was

heaven, and my record is on high.”⁹ “I know that my redeemer liveth.”¹⁰

Job became a model of unlimited patience. To this day we refer to those who are long-suffering as having the patience of Job. He provides an example for us to follow.

To Obey and to Live

“A just man and perfect in his generations,” one who “walked with God,”¹¹ was the prophet Noah. Ordained to the priesthood at an early age, “he became a preacher of righteousness and declared the gospel of Jesus Christ, . . . teaching faith, repentance, baptism, and the reception of the Holy Ghost.”¹² He warned that failure to heed his message would bring floods upon those who heard his voice, and yet they

hearkened not to his words.

Noah heeded God’s command to build an ark that he and his family might be spared destruction. He followed God’s instructions to gather into the ark two or more of every living creature that they also might be saved from the floodwaters.

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught in general conference more than half a century ago: “As yet there was no evidence of rain and flood. . . . [Noah’s] warnings were considered irrational. . . . How foolish to build an ark on dry ground with the sun shining and life

moving forward as usual! But time ran out. . . . The floods came. The disobedient . . . were drowned. The miracle of the ark followed the faith manifested in its building.”¹³

Noah had the unwavering faith to follow God’s commandments. May we ever do likewise. May we remember that the wisdom of

to face a test which could have destroyed anyone. Shorn of his possessions, scorned by his friends, afflicted by his suffering, shattered by the loss of his family, he was urged to “curse God, and die.”⁸ He resisted this temptation and declared from the depths of his noble soul, “Behold, my witness is in



God oftentimes appears as foolishness to men; but the greatest lesson we can learn in mortality is that when God speaks and we obey, we will always be right.

A model of ideal womanhood is Ruth. Sensing the grief-stricken heart of her mother-in-law Naomi—who suffered the loss of each of her two fine sons—feeling perhaps the pangs of despair and loneliness that plagued the very soul of Naomi, Ruth uttered what has become that classic statement of loyalty: “Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”¹⁴ Ruth’s actions demonstrated the sincerity of her words.

Through Ruth’s undeviating loyalty to Naomi, she was to marry Boaz, by which she—the foreigner and Moabite convert—became a great-grandmother of David and, therefore, an ancestor of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Models of Obedience

I now turn to a mighty Book of Mormon prophet—even Nephi, son of Lehi and Sariah. He was faithful and obedient to God, courageous and bold. When given the difficult assignment to obtain the plates of brass from Laban, he did not murmur but declared, “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.”¹⁵ Perhaps this act of courage prompted a verse of counsel for us found in the hymn “The Iron Rod”:



*To Nephi, seer of olden time,
A vision came from God. . . .
Hold to the rod, the iron rod;
'Tis strong, and bright, and true.
The iron rod is the word of God;
'Twill safely guide us through.¹⁶*

Nephi personified unflagging determination.

No description of models for us to follow would be complete without including Joseph Smith, the first prophet of this dispensation. When but 14 years of age, this courageous young man entered a grove of trees, which later would be called sacred, and received an answer to his sincere prayer.

There followed for Joseph unrelenting persecution as he related to others the account of the glorious vision he received in that grove. Although he was ridiculed and scorned, he stood firm. Said he, “I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it.”¹⁷

Step by step, facing opposition at nearly every turn and yet always guided by the hand of the Lord, Joseph organized The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He proved courageous in all that he did.

Toward the end of his life, as he was led

There stands before us today another prophet of God—even our beloved President Gordon B. Hinckley. He has labored unceasingly to bring sacred blessings to members of the Church worldwide.

away with his brother Hyrum to Carthage Jail, he bravely faced what he undoubtedly knew lay ahead for him, and he sealed his testimony with his blood.

As we face life's tests, may we ever emulate that undaunted courage epitomized by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

A Model of Optimism

There stands before us today another prophet of God—even our beloved President Gordon B. Hinckley. He has presided over the largest expansion of the Church—both numerically and geographically—in our history. He has traversed frontiers not heretofore crossed by a Church President and has visited with government leaders and with members the world over. His love for the people transcends the barriers of language and culture.

With prophetic vision, he has instituted the Perpetual Education Fund, which breaks the cycle of poverty for our members in many areas of the world and provides skills and training which qualify young men and young women for gainful employment. This inspired plan has kindled the light of hope in the eyes of those who felt doomed to mediocrity but who now have an opportunity for a brighter future.

President Hinckley has labored unceasingly to bring sacred blessings to members of the Church worldwide by providing temples that are within the reach of all. He has the capacity to lift to a higher plane those from all walks of life, regardless of the faith to which they ascribe. He is a model of unfailing optimism, and we revere him as prophet, seer, and revelator.

The unique qualities possessed by these men and women whom I have mentioned can be of invaluable assistance to us as we face the problems and the trials which lie ahead. May I illustrate by mentioning the experience of the Pollard family of Oakland, California.

One Family's Faith

A few years ago, as Elder Taavili Joseph Samuel Pollard was traveling to the mission office on the last day of his mission in Zimbabwe, the mission car he was driving somehow spun out of control and hit a tree. A passerby was able to

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. Have family members try to draw something unfamiliar (for example, a map of a faraway country or a unique flower). Then provide a picture of the object, and have them draw it again. How do models help us? Relate President Monson's statements on using prophets as models for life. Share a personal experience illustrating how a prophet's example helped you.

2. Ask, "Whom do people in the world follow today? What qualities do these men and women possess?" Compare the righteous examples mentioned in the article with the world's examples. Challenge the family to choose and emulate a spiritual trait exemplified by these righteous men and women.

3. If the family has young children, have them mimic your actions. Clap your hands, nod your head, and so on. Discuss the meaning of following someone's example. Ask family members to think of righteous examples, and use the article to complement their responses. Conclude with President Monson's testimony of Jesus Christ being the greatest example to follow.

rescue Elder Pollard's companion, but Elder Pollard, who was unconscious, was trapped in the car, which burst into flames. Elder Pollard perished. His mother had passed away eight years earlier; hence, his father was rearing the family alone. A brother was serving in the West Indies Mission.

When the news of Elder Pollard's death reached his father, this humble man—who had already lost his wife—called the son serving in the West Indies to let him know of his brother's death. Over that long-distance telephone line, Brother Pollard and his son, no doubt grief stricken and heartsick, sang together "I Am a Child of God."¹⁸ Before concluding the call, the father offered a prayer to Heavenly Father, thanking Him for His blessings and seeking His divine comfort.

Brother Pollard later commented that he knew his family would be all right, for they have strong testimonies of the gospel and of the plan of salvation.

My brothers and sisters, in this marvelous dispensation of the fulness of times, as we journey through mortality and face the trials and challenges of the future, may we

remember the examples of these models to follow. May we have the unfeigned humility of John the Baptist, the unquestioning obedience of Abraham, the unlimited patience of Job, the unwavering faith of Noah, the undeviating loyalty of Ruth, the unflagging determination of Nephi, the undaunted courage of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the unfailing optimism of President Hinckley. Such will be as a fortress of strength to us throughout our lives.

The Exemplar

May we ever be guided by the supreme Exemplar, even the son of Mary, the Savior Jesus Christ—whose very life provided a perfect model for us to follow.

Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, He came forth from heaven to live on earth as a mortal man and to establish the kingdom of God. During His earthly ministry, He taught men the higher law. His glorious gospel reshaped the thinking of the world. He blessed the sick; He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even raised the dead to life.

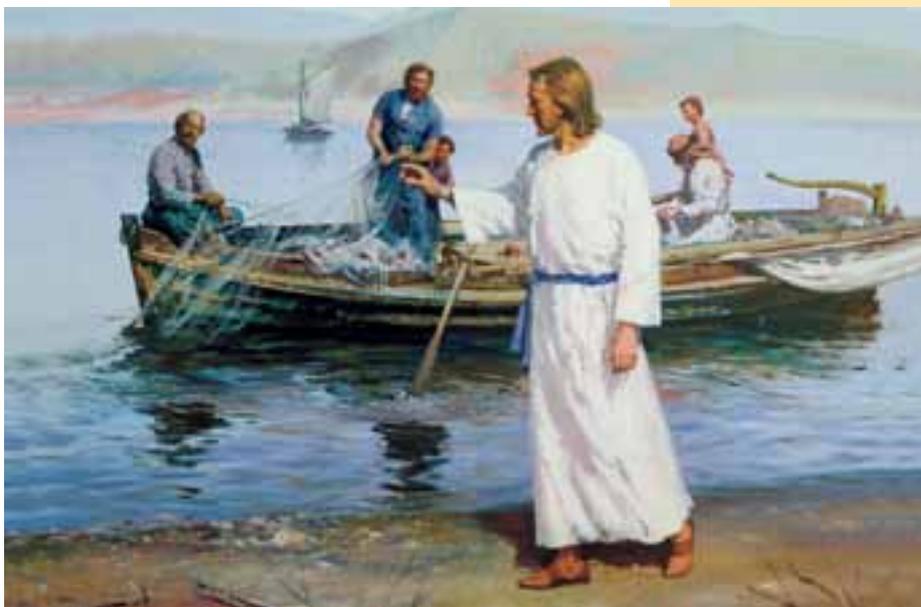
What was the reaction to His message of mercy, His words of wisdom, His lessons of life? There were a precious few who appreciated Him. They bathed His feet. They learned His word. They followed His example.

Then there were those who denied Him. When asked by Pilate, “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?”¹⁹ they cried, “Crucify him.”²⁰ They mocked Him. They gave Him vinegar to drink. They reviled Him. They smote Him with a reed. They spit upon Him. They crucified Him.

Down through the generations of time, the message from Jesus has been the same. To Peter and Andrew by the shores of the beautiful Sea of Galilee, He said, “Follow me.”²¹ To Philip of old came the call, “Follow me.”²² To the Levite who sat at receipt of customs came the instruction, “Follow me.”²³ And to you and to me, if we but listen, will come that same beckoning invitation, “Follow me.” May we all do so and reap the eternal rewards reserved for those who follow the path that He marked by His exemplary life. ■

NOTES

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Luke 1:80. 2. John 3:28. 3. Luke 3:16. 4. Matthew 11:11. 5. Psalm 46:10. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Ruth 1:16. 15. 1 Nephi 3:7. 16. Joseph L. Townsend (1849–1942), <i>Hymns</i>, no. 274. |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Genesis 22:9–10, 12. 7. Job 1:1. 8. Job 2:9. 9. Job 16:19. 10. Job 19:25. 11. Genesis 6:9. 12. Bible Dictionary, “Noah,” 738–39. 13. In Conference Report, Oct. 1952, 48. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Joseph Smith—History 1:25. 18. Naomi W. Randall (1908–2001), <i>Hymns</i>, no. 301. 19. Matthew 27:22. 20. Mark 15:13. 21. Matthew 4:19. 22. John 1:43. 23. Luke 5:27. |
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Down through the generations of time, the message from Jesus has been the same: “Follow me.”

Turning Hearts in a Land of Temples

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

As members or missionaries talked about their baptisms with Li, Chiun-tsan in preparation for his own in 1971, they described a powerful, invigorating experience. So the overwhelming weakness that Brother Li felt after emerging from the waters of baptism was not what he was expecting and was certainly out of the ordinary.

Baptized and confirmed in Taipei, Taiwan, at the age of 17, Brother Li had accepted Christianity several years earlier, but he didn't find the peace he was looking for until the Book of Mormon touched his heart.

"I felt the Spirit very strongly," he says. "The Holy Ghost told me this was the true Church."

So he couldn't understand why he felt so weak now that he was a member, and he prayed to find out why he suddenly lacked strength. The unexpected answer set his life's course.

"I would find strength as I searched out my ancestors to do their temple work," he remembers the Spirit whispering.

Over the past 35-plus years, Brother Li, a member of the Hu Wei Ward, Chung Hsing Taiwan Stake, has dedicated himself to family history and temple work. He and his wife,



Traditional temples and shrines abound in Taiwan, a land where honoring one's ancestors has long been an important part of life. The Taipei Taiwan Temple (above and opposite page inset) offers members like the Li family (opposite page inset) a place where honoring one's ancestors takes on eternal significance.

Li-hsueh, have traced his family line back nearly 5,000 years to the Yellow Emperor, said to be the ancestor of all Han Chinese. They have submitted more than 100,000 names to the temple.

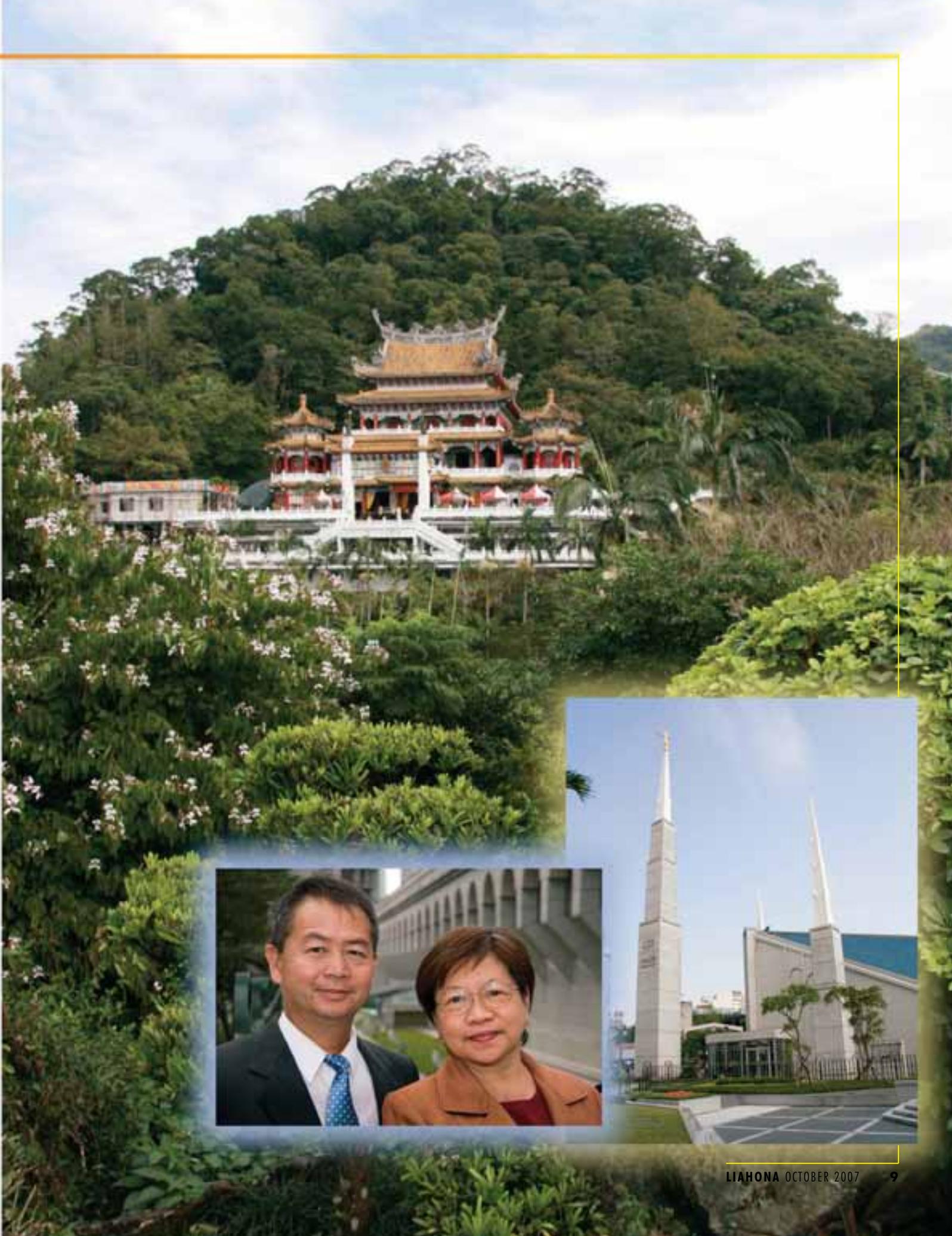
"Family history work can seem overwhelming sometimes," Brother Li says. "But the desire to bless one's ancestors is richly rewarded."

The experiences of Latter-day Saints in Taiwan bear testimony to the blessings of participating in the tightly intertwined responsibilities of family history and temple work.

A Land of Temples

Taiwan is a land of many different temples, a land where honoring one's ancestors is part of a long, rich history. Many families keep records that trace their patriarchal line back many generations. Countless traditional temples and shrines provide places where people believe they can connect with their ancestors. These carefully crafted, sometimes centuries-old buildings peek from around almost every corner in bustling Taipei and seem to spring from the lush vegetation that covers the quiet countryside.

"Our people's traditional beliefs put much emphasis on ancestors," Brother Li says. "Turning our hearts to our fathers is a part of our culture."





While most people use these traditional temples to seek blessings *from* their ancestors, there is a different temple in Taiwan in which people bring about blessings *for* their ancestors through the ordinances of the restored gospel.

Since the Taipei Taiwan Temple was dedicated in 1984, it has provided Church members the opportunity to obtain blessings for themselves, and by providing the opportunity to bless their kindred dead, it has also given eternal significance to their family history records.

A Special Connection

Like the Li family, the Wu family has also traced their family line back to the emperor. In doing so, they discovered that the Wu children were part of the 150th generation since the emperor. The story caught the attention of the media, and in 2005, Wilford Wu, then 19, was selected to represent the young people of Taiwan during an annual ceremony at the traditional tomb of the Yellow Emperor.

For the Wu family, members of the Ching Hsin Ward, Taipei Taiwan West Stake, family history has been a family effort. Brother Wu, Chi-Li and his wife, Shirley, did much of the research, and Wilford and his older sister, Camilla, have helped organize it and participate in temple ordinances for more than 3,000 of their ancestors.

Working together has helped bring the Wu family closer



together. They say it has also helped them feel a special connection with their ancestors.

“Doing the work for my parents brought a happiness from heaven I had never felt before,” says Sister Wu. “I have a great desire to be eternally united with my ancestors. I pray that they will be prepared.”

A Lot of Help

Connecting 150 generations was not easy. Like many others who are involved in searching out their ancestors, the Wu family acknowledges that they had help.

After going back 26 generations, they got stuck.

“About all we had was a nickname,” Sister Wu says.

On the final day of the Chinese New Year, Sister Wu had plans to attend a holiday celebration after serving in the temple. But when a friend on the shift mentioned she was going to stop by the family history center located on the temple grounds, Sister Wu felt impressed to go with her.

She went to a book containing information on people with the surname of the ancestor the family couldn't find. When she opened the book, it fell open to a page that listed information on this particular ancestor. With that information, they were able to connect to other lines that led back many generations.

“It was a very special experience for me,” Sister Wu says. “I can feel that our ancestors are very anxious to have their ordinances done.”

A Blessing to Posterity

The desire to participate in the blessings of the temple has led Chiang, Jung-feng

and his wife, Chun-mei, of the Chi An Branch, Hua Lien Taiwan District, to experience another aspect of Malachi's promise (see Malachi 4:6). Along with having their hearts turned to their fathers, as parents their hearts have been turned to their children.

Brother and Sister Chiang belong to a growing number of Church members in Taiwan who head three-generation families who have all been sealed together.

“It's our pleasure to see our grandchildren come to church,” says Brother Chiang, who was recently released as first counselor in the Taiwan Taipei Temple presidency. “It is our great duty to help them come unto Christ through the ordinances of the gospel. We cannot break the chain.”

The Li family believes the effects of temple ordinances begin with a couple.

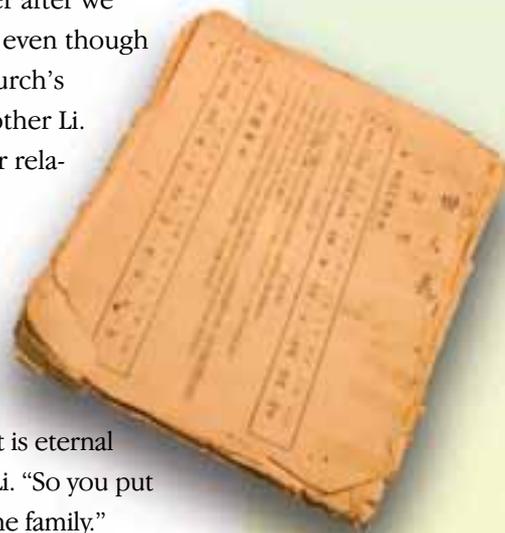
“Our marriage was better after we were sealed in the temple, even though we already lived by the Church's standards before,” says Brother Li. “Being sealed changes your relationship. When your life is over, you lose everything you've worked for in life—your car, job, house, money. But you don't have to lose your family.”

“It helps you realize what is eternal and what isn't,” says Sister Li. “So you put your effort and focus into the family.”

From there the effects spread.

“When you know you're an eternal family, you love your spouse more and you love your children more,” Brother Li says. “As a result our home is warmer. It is more comfortable there. The Spirit is there.”

Opposite page: The Wu family has gained some local media attention for tracing their family back 150 generations to the Yellow Emperor using historical records (below).



A Crowning Blessing

These Taiwanese families say family history and temple work have blessed their families in this life, and they find comfort in the promised blessings in eternity.

“As we have worked in the temple, we have experienced a gradual change in our lives,” says Brother Chiang, who has done the work for 16 generations of his family line with his wife. “We have experienced a rejuvenation in the gospel.”

Brother Chiang also believes that Satan’s influence is lessened in the lives of those who participate in temple work. “Attending the temple brings reverence to our



Doing temple work for more than 16 generations has not only blessed the Chiang family’s ancestors; it has also helped strengthen their posterity.

hearts,” says Brother Chiang. “We forget worldly things.”

Brother Wu agrees: “If we can learn to take the spirituality and happiness we find there back home with us, it will help our families overcome the pull of worldly things and be nearer to God.”

These families believe that receiving temple ordinances and providing them for those who did not receive them in this life are essential to reaching their eternal goals.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has taught, “The temple ordinances become the crowning blessings the Church has to offer.”¹

“The ultimate goal of our membership is to return to our Heavenly Father as eternal families,” says Brother Chiang. “For that we must receive *all* of the essential ordinances found in the temple.”

A Manifestation of Love

On her mission, Camilla Wu learned just how important each soul is to God. Camilla felt a great outpouring of the Savior’s love for each of the many people she was able to teach.

“When I came home and got involved with our family history,” she says, “I realized that I could maybe have just as great an influence on the salvation of souls by doing family history and temple work.”

The Wu family feels that the temple is one of the greatest manifestations of Heavenly Father’s love for His children for all that it offers.

“The meaning I find in the temple,” says Camilla’s brother, Wilford, “is God’s love for His children.” ■

NOTE

1. “New Temples to Provide ‘Crowning Blessings’ of the Gospel,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 87.



To Chen, Yang Su-yuan, family history and temple work are inseparable.

SEEING A CONNECTION

Chen, Yang Su-yuan has been blind since 1981, when she developed complications after cataract surgery. But losing her eyesight helped her find the gospel and ultimately helped her see the importance of temple and family history work.

Having recently gone blind, Sister Chen didn't realize that the two young ladies at her door asking for a glass of water were missionaries. Inviting them in made all the difference in her life.

"Most people considered me useless because I was blind," Sister Chen says. "But that's not what God wanted to tell me. He sent me missionaries after I lost my sight to teach me that we are all the children of God and that He ransomed us at a great price. I learned my worth because of the ransom Jesus paid. I am priceless."

Since then, Sister Chen has served in many callings in the Chung Li First Ward, Tao Yuan Taiwan Stake, as well as serving in the temple since 1992.

But losing her sight wouldn't be the only trial Sister Chen would have to face. In 1987 she almost died after developing a large cyst that required the removal of a rib. She survived, but the medical bills wiped out her life savings. She wondered why God hadn't just taken her.

She said His response was, "You have many things left to do."

Not long after, she felt the call of family history.

"I wondered, how am I going to do genealogy if I can't see?" she says. "But the feeling didn't go away."

With the help of a dear friend, she has researched 22 generations of her main family line and done all of the ordinances for the women herself. She is now working on related branches. Along the way, she has come to appreciate the inseparable connection between temple work and family history.

"There are many ordinances we receive in the temple, and they are all important," Sister Chen says. "But we must do our family

history. We can't give these ordinances to our ancestors without doing our genealogy."

"Family history and temple work are one work," said Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Seventy.

"Family history research should be the primary source

of names for temple ordinances, and temple ordinances are the primary reason for family history research."¹

Sister Chen is now battling a new disease and the aftereffects of a minor heart attack. Twenty years after first asking God why He had left her, she found herself asking the same question—and receiving the same answer. "Haven't I already told you?" she felt Him say. "You still have temple work to do."

So Sister Chen continues to spend one week per month at the temple.

"These are things we have to do for our ancestors that they cannot do for themselves," she says. "With my situation, I don't have the time commitments that others have with work and such. I need to work hard now while I can." ■

NOTE

1. "Bridges and Eternal Keepsakes," *Liabona*, July 1999, 100; *Ensign*, May 1999, 83.





Come to the

The doctrine that underlies the work in the holy temple, more than any other thing, sets The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints apart from and transcendent above every other religious organization on the face of the earth.

BY PRESIDENT BOYD K. PACKER

Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Around the turn of the twentieth century two missionaries were laboring in the mountain region of the southern part of the United States. One day as they were walking along a ridge in the hill country, they saw people gathering in a clearing near a cabin some distance down the hillside.

They discovered that there was to be a funeral. A little boy had drowned. His parents had sent for the minister to “say words” at the burial of the little fellow. The elders stayed in the background to watch the proceedings. The little fellow was to be buried in the grave already opened near the cabin. The minister stood before the grieving father and

mother and the others gathered and began his funeral sermon. If the parents expected to receive consolation from this man of the cloth, they would be disappointed.

He scolded them severely for not having had the little boy baptized. They had put it off because of one thing or another, and now it was too late. He told them very bluntly that their little boy had gone to hell. He told them that it was their fault, that they were to blame—they had caused their son endless torment.

After the sermon was over and the grave was covered, the friends, neighbors, and relatives left the scene. The elders approached the grieving parents. “We are servants of the Lord,” they told the sobbing mother, “and we have come with a message for you.”

FROM LEFT: DETAIL PHOTOGRAPH OF SALT LAKE TEMPLE BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN; PHOTOGRAPH OF JOHANNESBURG SOUTH AFRICA TEMPLE BY TREVOR SIMON; INTERIOR OF HELSINKI FINLAND TEMPLE BY JOHN LUKE © IRI, MAY NOT BE COPIED; PHOTOGRAPH AT SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA TEMPLE BY JOHN LUKE, POSED BY MODELS; LINE ART OF PAPEETE TAHITI TEMPLE



Temple

As the grief-stricken parents listened, the two young elders unfolded to their view something of a vision of the eternities. They read from the revelations, and they bore to these humble, grief-stricken parents their testimony of the restoration of the keys for the redemption of both the living and the dead.

I do not berate the itinerant preacher. Indeed, I have some sympathy for him, for he was doing the best he knew how to do with such light and knowledge as he had received. But there is more than he had to give. There is the fulness of the gospel.

The path the missionaries pointed out to those humble folk was more than conversion and repentance and baptism; for, to those who will follow, in due time that path leads to the sacred rooms of the holy temple. There members of the Church who make themselves eligible can participate in the most exalted and sacred of the redeeming ordinances that have been revealed to mankind. There we

may be washed and anointed and instructed and endowed and sealed. And when we have received these blessings for ourselves, we may officiate for those who have died without having had the same opportunity.

It is my hope to enlarge your understanding as to why we build temples and why ordinances and ceremonies are performed there.

Privilege of Temple Attendance

It is a privilege to enter the holy temple. If you are eligible by the standards that are set, by all means you should come to receive your own blessings; and thereafter you should return again and again and again to make those same blessings available to others who have died without the opportunity to receive them in mortality.

You should *not* come to the temple until you are eligible, until you meet the requirements that the Lord has set. But you should come, if not now, as soon as you can qualify.

The doctrine that underlies the work in the holy temple, more than any other thing, sets The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints apart from and transcendent above every other religious organization on the face of the earth. We have something that no other religious denomination has. We can give something they cannot extend.

The anguish in the hearts of those grieving parents can be satisfied only in the doctrines of this Church. These doctrines center on the ordinances of the holy temple.

Order in All Things

To explain something of the significance of the ordinances, I begin with the third article of faith: “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”

The word *ordinance* means “a religious or ceremonial observance,” “an established rite.”¹ Now, what about the ordinances of the gospel? How important are they to us as members of the Church? Can you be happy, can you be redeemed, can you be exalted without them? Answer: They are more than advisable or desirable, or even than necessary. More even than essential or vital, they are *crucial* to each of us.

Each Latter-day Saint needs to ask himself or herself the questions: Is my life in order? Do I have all of the ordinances of the gospel that I should possess by this time in my life? Are they valid?

If you can answer these questions affirmatively, and if the ordinances come under the influence of the sealing power and authority, they will remain intact eternally. In that case your life, to this point, is in proper order. You then would do well to think of your family, living and dead, with the same questions in mind.

The Temple Ordinances

The ordinances we perform in the temples include washings, anointings, the endowment, and the sealing ordinance—both the sealing of children to parents, and the sealing of couples, spoken of generally as temple marriage.

Here is a brief summary of the information that is available in print with reference to the temple ordinances.

The ordinances of washing and anointing are referred to often in the temple as initiatory ordinances. It will be

sufficient for our purposes to say only the following: Associated with the endowment are washings and anointings—mostly symbolic in nature, but promising definite, immediate blessings as well as future blessings. Concerning these ordinances the Lord has said, “I say unto you, how shall your washings be acceptable unto me, except ye perform them in a house which you have built to my name?” (D&C 124:37).

In connection with these ordinances, in the temple you will be officially clothed in the garment and promised marvelous blessings in connection with it. It is important that you listen carefully as these ordinances are administered and that you try to remember the blessings promised and the conditions upon which they will be realized.

To endow is to enrich, to give to another something long lasting and of much worth. In the temple endowment ordinances, “recipients are endowed with power from on high,” and “they receive an education relative to the Lord’s purposes and plans.”²

President Brigham Young (1801–77) said of the endowment: “Let me give you a definition in brief. Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the

Each Latter-day Saint needs to ask himself or herself the questions: Is my life in order? Do I have all of the ordinances of the gospel that I should possess by this time in my life? Are they valid?



Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.”³

The blessing of the endowment is required for full exaltation. Every Latter-day Saint should seek to be worthy of this blessing and to obtain it.

The sealing ordinance is that ordinance which binds families eternally. Temple marriage is a sealing ordinance. Children born to couples sealed in the temple are born in the covenant. When a couple has been married in a civil ceremony and then sealed in the temple a year or more later, children not born in the covenant are sealed to the couple in a brief and sacred ordinance.

I have always been impressed that the ordinances of the temple are reverently and carefully administered. They are not complicated or extravagant but are typical of the simplicity of the principles of the gospel.

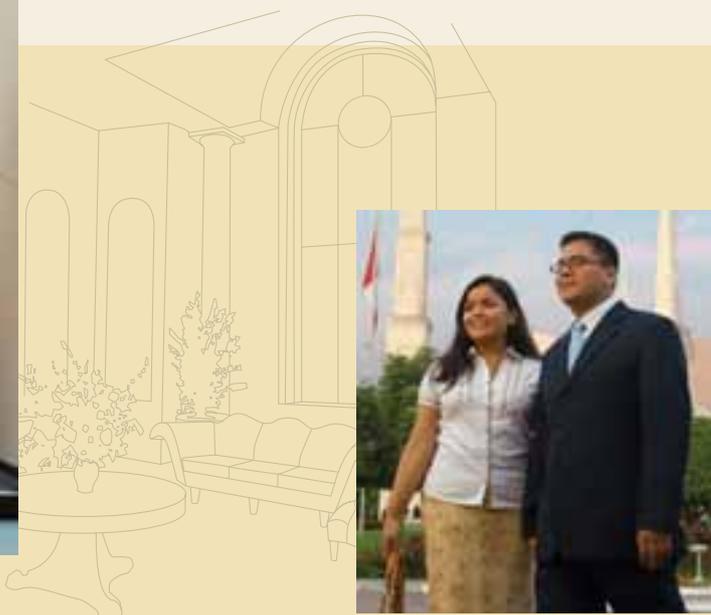
In the Church we hold sufficient authority to perform

all of the ordinances necessary to redeem and to exalt the whole human family. And because we have the keys to the sealing power, what we bind in proper order here will be bound in heaven. Those keys—the keys to seal and bind on earth and have it bound in heaven—represent the consummate gift from our God. With that authority we can baptize and bless, we can endow and seal, and the Lord will honor our commitments.

Ordinances Must Be Offered to the Dead

The itinerant preacher spoken of earlier had no answer to the question of what happens to those who died without baptism. What about them? If there is none other name given under heaven whereby man must be saved (and that is true), and they have lived and died without even hearing that name, and if baptism is essential (and it is), and they died without even the invitation to accept it, where are they now?

That question is hard to fathom, but it describes most of the human family. In other words, ask what power would establish one Lord and one baptism and then allow it to happen that most of the human family never comes within the influence of its doctrines? With that question unanswered, the vast majority of the human family must



What happens to those who died without baptism? If a church has no answer to this dilemma, how can it lay claim to be the Lord's Church?



This work came as a great reaffirmation of something very basic—that there is life after death. Mortal death is no more an ending than birth was the beginning. The great work of redemption goes on beyond the veil as well as here in mortality.

We have been authorized to perform baptisms and other temple ordinances vicariously for the dead so that when they hear the gospel preached and desire to accept it, those essential ordinances will have been performed.

be admitted to be lost, including the little boy who drowned—and against any reasonable application of the law of justice or of mercy, either.

If a church has no answer to this dilemma, how can it lay claim to be the Lord's Church? Surely He is not willing to write off the majority of the human family because they were never baptized while on earth.

In all reason those who admit in puzzled frustration that they have no answer to this question cannot lay claim to authority to administer the affairs of the Lord on the earth or to oversee the work by which all mankind must be saved.

One of the characteristics that sets us apart from the rest of the world and identifies us as the Lord's Church is that we provide baptism and other ordinances for our deceased ancestors.

Whenever I address myself to the question of those who died without baptism, I do so with the deepest reverence, for it touches on a sacred work. Little known to the world, this work is marvelous in its prospects, transcendent above what man might have dreamed of, supernal, inspired, and true. It is the answer.

With proper authority a mortal person could be baptized for and in behalf of someone who had not had that opportunity before passing on. That individual would then accept or reject the baptism in the spirit world, according to his own desire.

Come to the Temple

Every Latter-day Saint is responsible for this work. Probably no point of doctrine sets this Church apart from the other claimants as this one does. We have the revelations. We have those sacred ordinances.

To all of you I say, "Come to the temple." It may be that you look forward to the once-in-a-lifetime privilege of going there to receive your own endowment, to receive your own blessings, and to enter into your own covenants with the Lord. It may be that you have been there once or twice already. It may be that you go frequently. It may even be that you are an officiator. Whatever the circumstances may be, come to the temple.

If needed, set your lives in order; pray fervently. Start now that very difficult and sometimes very discouraging journey of repentance. Firmly resolve that you will do everything you can to aid temple work and the family history work that supports it and to assist every living soul and every soul beyond the veil in every way you can with every resource at your disposal.

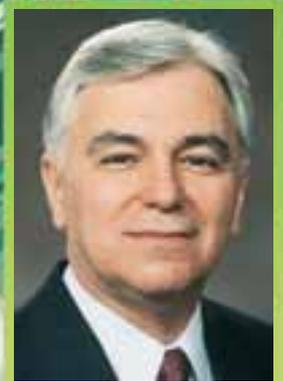
Come to the temple! ■

Adapted from The Holy Temple (1980).

NOTES

1. *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), "ordinance," 2006.
2. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 227.
3. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1941), 416.

A Testimony of Prophets



The missionaries were helping build a chapel. I was so impressed with them that I introduced them to my parents.

BY ELDER CLAUDIO R. M. COSTA
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

When I was 12, I introduced the missionaries to my family. I had met them on the street, and they were friendly to me. They were helping the Church build a chapel in my city in Brazil,

and they invited me to help them, which I began to do in my free time. I had never heard of young men who would choose to spend their time building a church.

I was so impressed with them that I decided to introduce them to my parents, and we invited them to come to our home.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL MANN



That night I began to read the history of Joseph Smith, and I prayed about each paragraph.

The missionaries gave our family the first discussion. We hadn't ever smoked, so our family was already keeping that part of the Word of Wisdom, and we had family home evening every night in our home. We didn't call it family home evening, but that's what we were doing. We were Catholics, and we attended our church regularly, so my father told them we felt comfortable with our religion.

The missionaries left, but they wrote about our family in the missionaries' area book that remained in the missionary apartment, including their impression that we would join the Church.

Learning about Eternal Families

Ten years later I was living in another city when new missionaries arrived in the area where my family lived. They didn't have a single person to teach and decided to look

in the area book. They found the name of my parents and decided to visit. The missionaries prayed before they went, and the Lord inspired them. Despite being very faithful in his religion, my father had a question. He couldn't believe that after death his wife would not still be his wife. He really felt that family ties needed to continue after death. He had asked ministers from different churches about this, and everybody explained to him, "No, after death your wife will be like your sister, and your son will be like your brother."

When these missionaries knocked on my parents' door, my father opened it and told them he had heard their message previously and was not interested. But the missionaries said, "We have another message for you. Do you know that your family can be together forever?" Those words inspired him. My

father invited them to come in and teach him. Guided by the Spirit, the missionaries told my family about eternal marriage and eternal families. With this introduction to the gospel, my family continued to meet with the missionaries until they gained a testimony and decided to be baptized and confirmed.

Gaining My Testimony

Five years later—I was 27 by then—I came back to my father’s home for a time. My father was ward mission leader, and the sister missionaries were teaching someone else in my home. I overheard them teaching about the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith, and I decided to pray about it. It made sense in my mind that if Joseph Smith was a prophet, then the Book of Mormon is true and the Church is true.

That night I began to read the history of Joseph Smith and of his vision in the Sacred Grove. Then I stopped, and I prayed to the Lord. I spent the whole night in this manner, reading and praying about each paragraph. It took me 14 hours. Something happened to me when I began to ponder. It seemed that I was in the grove with Joseph. It was a vivid and real experience. It seemed I could see what happened. When I finished the prayer the next morning, I *knew* Joseph Smith was a prophet.

I went immediately to find the missionaries. At noon, when the sister missionaries came home for lunch, I was



I know Joseph Smith was a prophet. And I know that President Spencer W. Kimball, the prophet at the time I joined the Church, was also a prophet.

sitting in front of their door waiting for them. I asked them to teach me the discussions. After they taught me the seven discussions in a short period of time, I was baptized and confirmed into the Church.

Following the Prophet

About a month after I joined the Church, I met my wife, Magareth, and one year later we got married. While we were dating, I told her that because I knew Joseph Smith was a prophet, I desired to build our family upon the words and teachings of the prophets. For example, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) was the prophet at that time, and he counseled Church members to stay out of debt. In close to 29 years of marriage, my wife and I have never paid one penny of interest. Never.

Since gaining a testimony of Joseph Smith, I have paid attention to every single word of the First Presidency and of the Twelve Apostles, and I put into practice what they teach. Because I know Joseph Smith was a prophet, it has never been difficult for me to follow the Brethren. They can ask me to do anything, and I will do it because I know they are prophets, seers, and revelators.

If you work to have a testimony of the prophets, you will be stronger. That is one of the keys to happiness. When you hear the prophets and do what they counsel you to do, you will be happy being obedient to them. ■

Questions & Answers

“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?”

L I A H O N A

Faith is having trust and confidence in the Lord. Your faith in Him is a power that will lead you to obey His gospel, and your obedience will help you have more faith, which is a gift from God.

As the scriptures say, if you have faith in the Lord, He can do all things for you, such as heal, forgive, comfort, and convert you. But having faith doesn't mean telling God what to do. It means trusting Him and understanding that all blessings come “according to his will” (1 Nephi 7:12) and “in his own time, and in his own way” (D&C 88:68). For example, you may not receive an immediate answer to your prayers. But your faith assures you that Heavenly Father hears your prayers and will answer at the right time.

To develop and exercise your faith, (1) learn the word of God, whether by reading the scriptures or listening to those who have the authority to teach it (see Romans 10:17). Knowing the word will help you see that God always keeps His promises.

(2) Act on what you learn, or as Alma says,

Exercising faith in Jesus Christ means having trust and confidence in Him.

Faith is the power to manifest His will in your life.

Faith, a gift from God, comes as you are righteous.

Three must-read chapters on faith are Hebrews 11, Ether 12, and Moroni 7.

experiment on the word. The word is like a seed. If it is good, it will enlarge your soul, enlighten your understanding, and begin to be delicious to you (see Alma 32:28). That is your spiritual confirmation that the word is true, which will build your faith.

(3) Obey the commandments. Your righteousness allows the gift of faith to grow in your life. Show your belief in Jesus Christ by following His example and teachings. Do what He asks of you through the scriptures, the teachings of living prophets, and the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Did you, for instance, accept President Gordon B. Hinckley's invitation to read the Book of Mormon by the end of 2005? Those who did acted with faith and received the promised blessings. (Of course, if you didn't finish reading the Book of Mormon then, you still can!)

While many people get through life without faith in the Lord, they can never inherit eternal life without faith in Him. Only through the gospel of Jesus Christ—with faith in Him



as the first principle—can we enjoy “eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7).

READERS



I believe our devotion to Christ and to His gospel is the best way of showing our love for and faith in Him.

When we live His principles and standards and walk steadily in the way He has shown us, we are bearing

witness not only to Him but also to other people in our life. We bear witness of our gratitude for His sacrifice for us and also for the Restoration of the gospel.

Jan V., 17, Moravia, Czech Republic



Having faith in Jesus Christ means trusting completely in Him and being sure in your mind and heart that He exists and that He is our

Savior. We must place our trust in Christ

because He knows how to help us overcome the difficulties in our lives. Our lack of faith in Him causes us to be worried about our spiritual state and to doubt God’s promises. Focusing on the Savior has helped me remain firm in the gospel, control my fears, and overcome obstacles.

Natalia N., 19, Chimborazo, Ecuador

Exercise faith in Christ by obedience. Faith without works is dead. By obeying when we don’t know why, we show our trust and

faith in Him. Obeying commandments shows that we trust Him and have faith in what He tells us to do. Prayer and reading the scriptures daily strengthen my relationship with Heavenly Father, giving me more faith in Him. Also, you have to expect answers to your prayers. Pray for help to obtain faith.

Meghan S., 18, Missouri, USA



We can exercise faith by allowing the Lord to lead our lives. By trusting God, following Him, and by working diligently to keep the commandments, we can exercise faith in Him. After submitting our will to His, we can witness great miracles in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

Dmitriy Z., 21, Donetsk, Ukraine



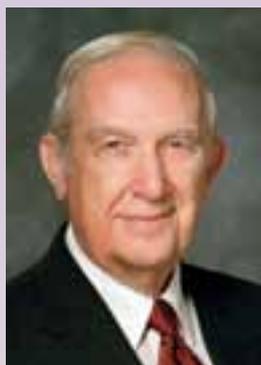
We have many ways to exercise faith in God such as reading the scriptures and praying every day, keeping the Sabbath day holy, giving tithes and fast offerings, serving others, and being willing to keep other commandments.

Seng S., 18, Battambang, Cambodia

When we believe in the help and the power of the Lord, then we can go forward having trust in Him. Our obedience to the commandments shows that we have faith in Him. I know with all my heart that He wants to give us great blessings and that faith and obedience are essential to obtain them.

Marco C., 18, Liguria, Italy

If we have a knowledge of the gospel and have faith in its truth, we need to experiment living it to receive the blessings. Faith without works is



Every time you try your faith, that is, act in worthiness on an impression, you will receive the confirming evidence of the Spirit. Those feelings will fortify your faith. As you repeat that pattern, your faith will become stronger. . . . With consistent practice, faith will become a vibrant, powerful, uplifting, inspiring force in your life."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Sustaining Power of Faith in Times of Uncertainty and Testing," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2003, 76.

dead. If there is faith with works, then faith becomes more and more firm. In 1 Nephi 7:12, we are reminded that we must be faithful to God. Being faithful is the first part of developing faith.

Otgonchimeg B., 15, Töv, Mongolia

We can exercise faith in Jesus Christ by relying on and trusting completely His omniscience and omnipotence. A nice way to do this is by paying tithing, for through it we can show that we are willing to give up worldly things for greater promised blessings.

Samantha L., 15, Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines

We exercise faith in Christ by coming to church, saying our prayers, reading the scriptures, accepting callings, repenting of our sins, taking the sacrament, and magnifying our callings.

Adam N., 18, Georgia, USA

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

NEXT QUESTION

"My friends and I have a problem with gossiping and saying mean things about others. What can I do to stop and help them stop?"

SEND US YOUR ANSWER, along with your full name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and photograph (including your parent's written permission to print your photo and response) to:

Liahona, Questions and Answers 11/07

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, 2007. ■

Become an Instrument in the Hands of God by Preparing for the Second Coming of Our Lord



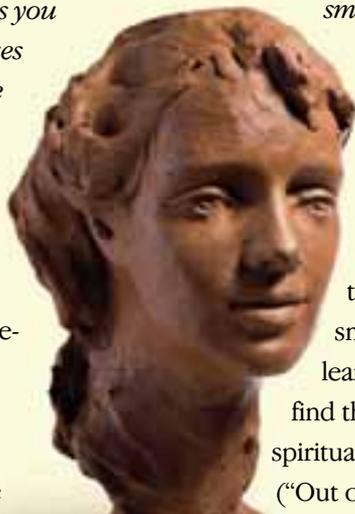
Prayerfully select and read from this message the scriptures and teachings that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Share your experiences and testimony. Invite those you teach to do the same.

How Can I Prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?

D&C 38:30: “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve

Apostles: “Four matters are indisputable to Latter-day Saints: (1) The Savior will return to the earth in power and great glory to reign personally during a millennium of righteousness and peace. (2) At the time of His coming there will be a destruction of the wicked and a resurrection of the righteous. (3) No one knows the time of His coming, but (4) the faithful are taught to study the signs of it and to be prepared for it. . . . We need to make both temporal and spiritual preparation for the events prophesied at the time of the Second Coming” (“Preparation for the Second Coming,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 7, 9).



Kathleen H. Hughes, former first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: “Ye are laying the foundation of a great work. *And out of*

small things proceedeth that which is great (D&C 64:[33]; emphasis added).

. . . The great work we wish to do will proceed from ‘small things.’ One of those small things, I have learned, is that I must find the time to fill my own spiritual reservoir each day” (“Out of Small Things,”

Liabona and *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 109).

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve

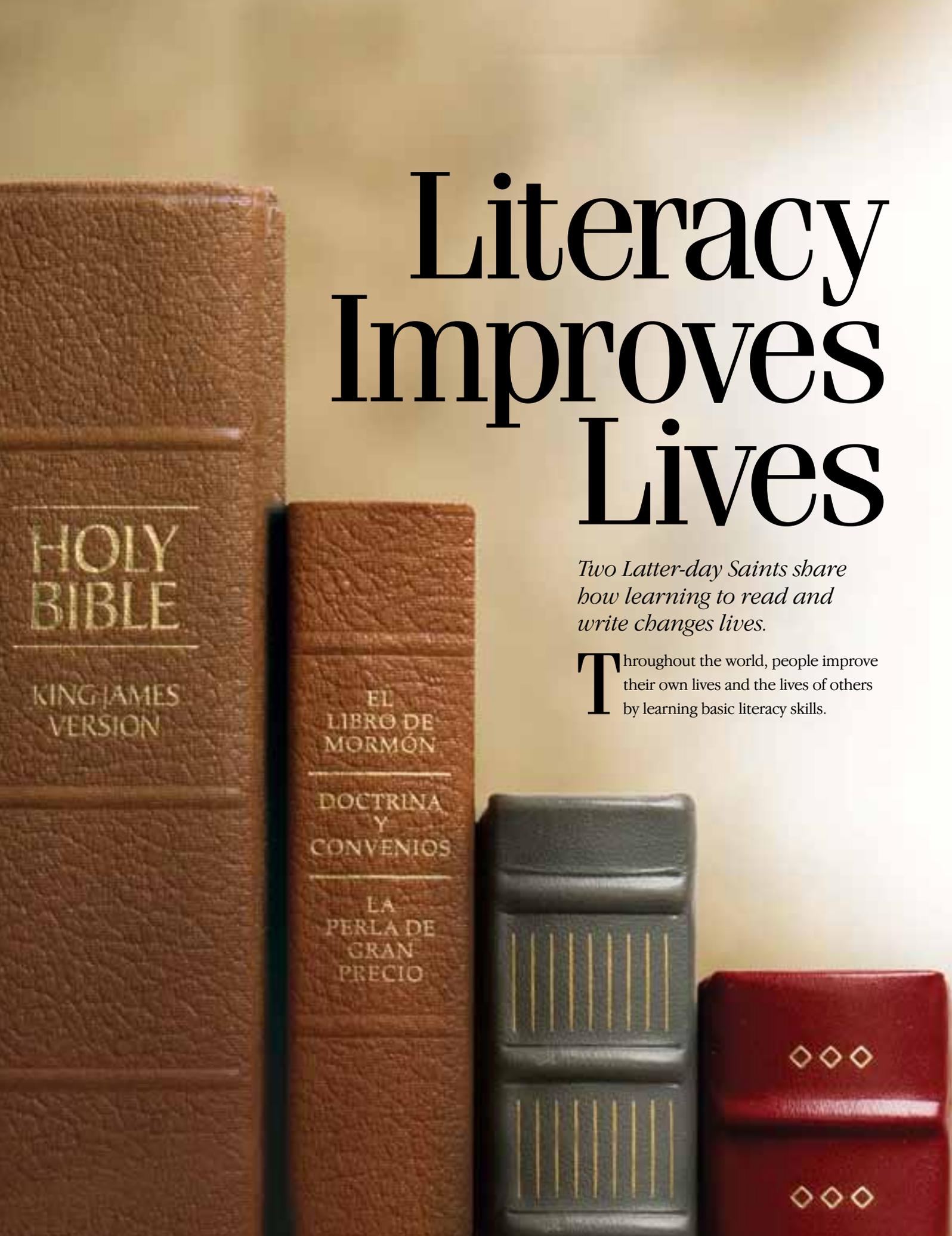
Apostles: “The Lord expects us to be as faithful, as devoted, as courageous as those who went before us. They were called to *give* their lives for the gospel. We are called to *live* our lives for the same purpose. . . . All dispensations prepared the way for the first coming of the Lord and His Atonement. Similarly, history and

prophecy laid the groundwork for the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Do we have eyes to see that the events and prophecies of *our* time are preparing us for the Savior’s *Second Coming*?” (“Preparations for the Restoration and the Second Coming: ‘My Hand Shall Be over Thee,’” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 91–92).

How Can I Be an Instrument in the Hands of God in Helping Others Prepare?

D&C 34:6: “Lift up your voice . . . and cry repentance . . . , preparing the way of the Lord for his second coming.”

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “To be a righteous woman during the winding up scenes on this earth, before the second coming of our Savior, is an especially noble calling. The righteous woman’s strength and influence today can be tenfold what it might be in more tranquil times. She has been placed here to help to enrich, to protect, and to guard the home—which is society’s basic and most noble institution. Other institutions in society may falter and even fail, but the righteous woman can help to save the home, which may be the last and only sanctuary some mortals know in the midst of storm and strife” (“Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 103). ■



Literacy Improves Lives

*Two Latter-day Saints share
how learning to read and
write changes lives.*

Throughout the world, people improve their own lives and the lives of others by learning basic literacy skills.

A Love of Learning

Shirley Florence Sainz, who was born in Mexico, tells the story of how her mother's struggle to become literate became a blessing to others:

"When my mother, Anita Valenzuela Mendoza, was two years old, my grandfather died in a mining accident, leaving my grandmother with their eight children and little means to care for them. My grandmother could not read, write, or understand numbers.

"When my mother was six years old, she had the privilege of attending school though she did not have pencils, paper, or books. Nevertheless, she loved learning, so she embroidered napkins, swept the classroom, and brought in firewood as a way to earn paper. At home, my grandmother stitched the sheets of precious newsprint paper together into a notebook for my mother.

"The teachers appreciated my mother's eagerness. Overlooking her worn-out clothes

and unruly hair, they nourished her hunger for knowledge. At the end of her elementary school years, the family of one of her schoolteachers offered my mother an opportunity for more schooling. However, she was unable to go and her formal education ended.

"Years later, when my mother was 27, her education blossomed when she met my father and he introduced her to the gospel. She loved learning through reading the scriptures. Relief Society also provided many opportunities for her to increase her knowledge.

"My mother instilled a love for learning in me, and I have graduated from college and am an elementary schoolteacher myself. In two generations, our family has been greatly blessed because, as a young girl, my mother learned to read and write. Her literacy skills opened the door for her to understand and embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ. As a result, all of my mother's posterity has been blessed."



My grandmother, Carmen Mendoza, could not read or write," says Shirley Sainz, who has a college degree. "In two generations, our family has been greatly blessed because, as a young girl in Mexico, my mother learned to read and write." Above, standing: Shirley's mother, Anita; Uncle Anselmo. Seated: Shirley's grandmother, Carmen Mendoza; Anselmo's wife, Delfina, and their two children.



WE CAN HELP

"I have done a little study on literacy in the world. A billion of the [six] billion people on earth cannot read or write. . . . What a tragedy—what a stark, miserable, and dark tragedy. To not be able to read, to understand, to write—what a tragedy. We can help to lift this curse. Things can be brought to pass to change this intolerable condition."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 314.

A Gospel Literacy Class

Sister Sainz's story is not unique. When people learn to read and write, they can grow in understanding of the gospel and bless the lives of others. Learning basic literacy skills helped Paul Imietehe of Nigeria, a convert to the Church, to better understand and share the gospel. He recalls:

"I joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Warri, Nigeria. My membership in the Church made me realize the need to learn to read and write. When my priesthood leaders extended assignments to me to give talks and say prayers, I would stay away from church. It was such a source of shame for me.



Paul Imietehe, a Nigerian sculptor, says, "Gospel literacy has built in me a strong desire to improve my formal education. It has also helped me understand the gospel better and made me better able to serve others."

"When I moved to Abuja, I saw Church books and magazines, and I felt a strong need to know how to read and write. I desired to read these publications that other members were reading and were happy about. Most of the Church members there gladly expressed themselves, sharing their testimonies of the gospel, and I wanted to be able to express the strong feelings I have of the truthfulness of the gospel. I knew then that I had to learn to read and write.

"One Sunday I decided to attend the Sunday School gospel literacy class. On my first day in class, I saw that the other students were mainly sisters and younger boys. I was the only adult man in the class. I was tempted to leave, but my strong desire to learn kept me there. Our teacher encouraged each of us to participate in reading from the gospel literacy manual and from the scriptures.

"I put much effort into learning to read. I read the scriptures and Church magazines. My understanding improved when I was called as second counselor in the Idu Branch Sunday School presidency. Initially, I was doubtful about my abilities. But as I was set apart, the branch president pronounced a blessing that I would have the ability to magnify the calling. During the setting apart, I had a feeling of confidence.

"Two weeks later, I was given the assignment to teach adult Sunday School. Although I worried about my abilities, I prepared all week long when I returned home from work and even during my break at work. When Sunday came and it was time to teach, I said a short silent prayer and asked Heavenly Father to lead me. When I opened my mouth to speak, I was surprised that the words just flowed. I thought I would stammer but did not.

"Most of the class members are more educated than I am, but their responses and the expressions on their faces encouraged me. I felt at peace throughout the class.

"Gospel literacy has built in me a strong desire to improve my formal education. It has also helped me understand the gospel better and made me better able to serve others.

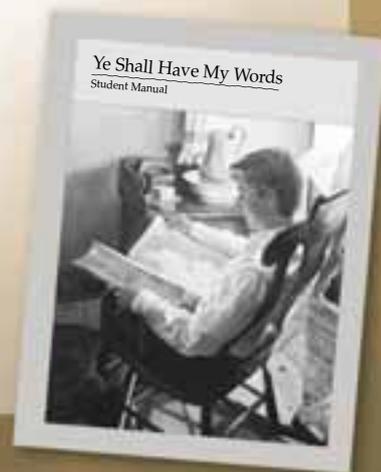
"I am a sculptor by vocation and am working with a construction company, where I use my woodworking skills. In Nigeria, we have a proverb that says, 'The axe we use in tearing wood is so important we carry it with two hands and rest it on our shoulder.' The axe is too important to set down. That's how I feel about the Church and gospel literacy. I carry them with my two hands and my shoulder and cannot put them down.

"I am thankful for my branch leaders who encouraged me to learn, especially Brother Lawrence Monyei, my gospel literacy teacher."

Brother Imietehe learned to read and write in his gospel literacy class, and as a result his confidence grew and his testimony of the gospel became stronger. He has since blessed the lives of many members of his branch.

Can You Help?

The gospel literacy student manual, *Ye Shall Have My Words* (item no. 34476), is available in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish. Those who could benefit most from it cannot read these words. Can you help them? ■





Enduring to the Beginning

It took seven years, but it was worth the wait.

BY MARIA KANEVA

Who are the teachers?" I asked my friend as we were walking down the street on a Saturday morning in February 2000. We were 14 then.

"They are my friends and are here on something like a mission," she said. We had never talked about religion before, even though we were best friends. She told me we were going to attend English classes that her friends were teaching for free. She knew I would be interested because I was going to an English high school.

When we entered the building, my eyes riveted on the pictures on the walls. Was this a church? It didn't look like a Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the only one I had visited before. Most people consider any other church a cult. Also, when Bulgaria was under communism until 1989, religious beliefs were condemned, and many people still look at religion as something not right.

My friend asked me whether I wanted to come to church the next day. I answered yes, more out of curiosity than piety. I knew that if she was going, there wasn't anything wrong with it.

I started going to church regularly. I wanted to know more about its teachings. I wanted to know why those young people with the name tags had left their country to come to Bulgaria and plunged themselves into the hostile religious atmosphere here. Even though I wasn't religious at that time, something made me keep going to Church activities.





It was a long journey to my baptism day (above), but I received strength from the scriptures, Personal Progress projects such as memorizing “The Living Christ” (opposite page), and branch members in my hometown of Sliven (opposite page).

I loved the friendly spirit of the missionaries and the warm smiles of the members.

I became friends with the young women in the branch. I was amazed by their faith and great desire to serve others. I remember when I said my first prayer at a Young Women class. I had never prayed before, and I didn't know how powerful a prayer could be. I hadn't felt the strong connection with our Heavenly Father that a prayer brings. I hadn't known I was His daughter. I never quit praying after that. Every time I had to overcome a hardship, I knew I could ask my Heavenly Father for guidance. Often, those prayers would bring tears to my eyes because I could feel the assurance of the Holy Spirit that God loves me. I started trusting the Lord.

When the temptations of the teen years

came along, I already had firm faith in Jesus Christ, which gave me strength to overcome these temptations. I could see how Satan tempted my peers with worldly things and how small compromises led to bigger ones. It was hard to stand for my principles, but the connection I had with my Father in Heaven through prayer helped me stay away from temptations. I had decided to live by the principles of the plan of salvation. I knew without a doubt that one day I was going to be blessed.

Unfortunately, I couldn't join the Church at that time. My parents strongly objected, especially my father. But I could understand him. His parents never took him to church; he was brought up when the country was under communist rule. Nevertheless, I knew the Lord had prepared a way for me to join the Church someday. I already knew that way would be very hard. But I had learned from the scriptures that tribulations can be for our good.

I went to seminary and later to institute, I attended Church activities, and I even started my own Personal Progress. I couldn't wait to go to Young Women activities. I will never forget the hours we spent cooking, making postcards or bookmarks, decorating our classroom, or playing games, as well as the wonderful spirit of friendship between us. Each activity helped me understand my divine nature and role in life.



One of the most difficult Personal Progress projects was memorizing “The Living Christ.”¹ When I looked at the text, I thought it would be a great challenge to memorize it. After a couple of weeks, I already knew why that project was in the Faith value. It was a test of faith and patience, a test with rewarding consequences. The testimony of the Apostles helped strengthen my faith and testimony. By remembering their inspiring words of Christ’s divine life and ministry, I got the courage to testify of Him myself.

When I was about 16, we had an activity about being a full-time missionary. We divided into pairs and lived like missionaries for a week. That was the first time I learned how important it is to share our testimonies with others. This activity helped me realize not only how hard it is to serve the Lord, but also the joy we feel by sharing the gospel and seeing how Christ’s teachings change someone’s life. It helped me understand what it is like to “stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9).



ЖИВИЯТ ХРИСТОС

СВИДЕТЕЛСТВОТО НА АПОСТОЛТЕ
ЦЪРКВАТА НА ИСУС ХРИСТОС НА СВИДЕТЕЛИТЕ ОТ ПОСЛЕДНИТЕ ДНИ

Делото облекчаваше разказването на Иисус Христос преди да започне да живее своето самоизявление. Писанието за разказването на Иисус Христос е библейската забележка на Иисусова жива свидетелства. Иисус Христос не е обикновен човек, а е обикновен човек, който живее вярно, както всички ние, но е живял като всички ние, но е живял като всички ние.

Той беше първият Иисус на Свещения Дух. Мисленето на Иисус Христос е първото, което Той сподели с нас. Той сподели с нас, че Той е първият Иисус Христос, който живее вярно, както всички ние, но е живял като всички ние.

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As an “active nonmember,” as everyone called me, I learned to have patience and hope that one day I would become a member of the Church. I knew it was a test of my faith and patience. I wondered how long it would take to be cleansed and start a new life.

That day came almost seven years after my friend took me to church on that cold February morning in 2000. I was baptized at 21 at the mission home in Sofia. My baptism day was one of the happiest days of my life. At that moment I felt the great redeeming love Heavenly Father has for me. I felt that even more when I partook of the sacrament the next day. I couldn’t hold back the tears. The Spirit burning inside me was telling me it was worth waiting for. I could finally enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost and other blessings of being a member of the Church.

I’m grateful to be blessed with knowledge of the restored gospel. I know we can overcome the tribulations of life through faith and patience. We have no greater and more rewarding privilege than being a member of the only true Church on earth. Nothing brings greater happiness than the knowledge we have that as worthy members of the Church, we can live with God again. ■

NOTE

1. See “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 2.



FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

A Conversation with the Young Women General Presidency



The Young Women general presidency—Susan W. Tanner (center), president; Julie B. Beck (left), first counselor; and Elaine S. Dalton (right), second counselor—talk about ways parents and leaders can help youth increase their desire and resolve to live gospel standards. Since the conversation, Sister Beck has been called as the Relief Society general president, and Mary N. Cook has been called to the Young Women general presidency.

What might parents and leaders focus on when talking to youth about standards?

Sister Susan W. Tanner: As a presidency we have a motto: “I can do hard things.” Our priesthood adviser, Elder John B. Dickson, suggested we change it to “When I know who I am, I can do anything He asks me to do.” We feel strongly that if youth understand who they are as children of God, then they will keep standards. The sense of their

identity gives them self-confidence.

Sister Elaine S. Dalton: Talking about standards is not about rules; standards are about qualifying for the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Standards are about standing in holy places so you’re worthy to have the companionship of the third member of the Godhead. He will be your guide along the path you entered at baptism and confirmation—the path that leads to the temple.

Sister Julie B. Beck: I remember a reporter who attacked our standards as restrictive. She had read the *For the Strength of Youth* book, and she felt that it was all about rules. So I talked to her about safety and choices, and I used the words *liberate* and *free* and *protect*. I said, for instance, if a young woman keeps our standard not to drink alcohol or take drugs, she will never be a slave to those habits. She’ll be free, and her ability to make choices will be multiplied because she won’t have the problem of addiction. The reporter started to nod her head when she understood that standards are not a fence to keep us in. Standards are what help us go out and function in a world full of choices. We can contribute in this world and live happy, productive lives because we are protected.

How can parents and leaders get standards into the hearts of youth?

Sister Tanner: Sometimes we look at the difficulties youth face and have an immediate instead of a long-range vision. It’s interesting to read *For the Strength of Youth* looking for



promises; it's interesting to read the scriptures looking for promises. Whenever we're admonished to do anything, generally it's followed by a promise. Parents and leaders who have lived standards are a great example. Youth can see that good things have happened in our lives, that we've been able to establish eternal families. Those are promises being fulfilled in our lives.

Sister Dalton: I have never met anyone who didn't want the promises in *For the Strength of Youth*: "You will be able to do your life's work with greater wisdom and skill," you will be able to "bear trials with greater courage," "you will have the help of the Holy Ghost,"

"you will feel good about yourself," you "will be a positive influence in the lives of others," and "you will be worthy to go to the temple" (2–3).

Sister Beck: If you're unapologetic about blessings, then you can't be apologetic about what gets you the blessings.

Sister Dalton: Sometimes parents think a standard is a small thing. They say, "I'm not going to fight that battle or die on that hill." But it's not about hills; it's about holiness. A standard is about understanding who you are as a son or daughter of God.

How can parents and leaders overcome the fear of offending or alienating youth?

Sister Beck: I think of some scriptures: "Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee" (Jeremiah 1:8) and "Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled" (Moses 6:32). The Lord expects His leaders—and every parent is a leader—to speak the truth.

Sister Tanner: Doctrine and Covenants section 121 says that when "reproving betimes with sharpness," you show "forth afterwards an increase of love" (v. 43). If youth know first that you love them, they're more willing to listen. And if you also follow up with your love, you can say the hard things.

Sister Beck: I think we underestimate youth. They're in a searching

age—it’s the “why” age. There’s a reason for that: the Lord wants them to get their own testimonies. It’s leaders’ and parents’ job to give them the doctrinal “whys” and to back up standards by teaching about the reasons for them. I remember some conversations I had with a daughter about Sunday dress. I explained how I felt she should dress to attend sacrament meeting. I also taught her about the sacrament and bore my testimony about why we go to church. It was done with love. She didn’t change the way she dressed that Sunday or the week after. But very soon she

adopted a more formal standard of dress for sacrament meeting. I was patient while she got her own confirmation. And she never went back to dressing the way she had before. She had been taught the doctrine, and her “why” question was answered.

How can *For the Strength of Youth* help parents and leaders answer the “why” questions?

Sister Tanner: I love *For the Strength of Youth* because it’s based on doctrine. Doctrine is eternal truth, set from before the foundation of the world. And standards are based upon doctrine, so the standards aren’t going to change either. They’re not

something out-of-touch adults made up just to make life difficult. *For the Strength of Youth* states doctrine and standards probably clearer than any other resource. It also talks about consequences. So you can see what the eternal truth is, what it is we should do or should not do, and why we should or should not do it. This book can be a huge help to parents. Sometimes when I think, “I want to explain this correctly in understandable terms,” I go to that book, and the idea I need is encapsulated in a sentence.

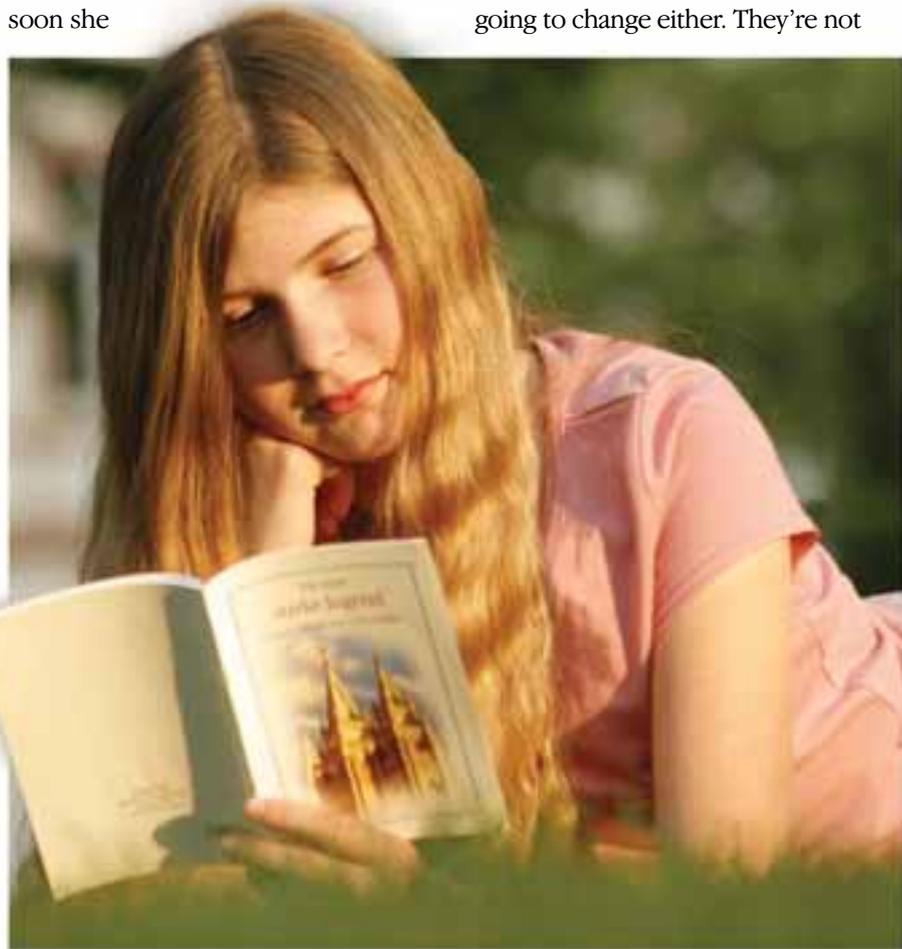
What are other ways parents and leaders can use *For the Strength of Youth*?

Sister Beck: You can discuss it a standard at a time in family home evening and in each section mark the doctrine, the standards, and the consequences. As a Church teacher, you could use it in any lesson. It has helped me to memorize some key phrases that I really want to emphasize, and I find that when I’m talking to youth, those sentences just pop out.

Sister Dalton: For example, one key phrase is “Satan wants you to think that you cannot repent, but . . .”

Sister Dalton and Sister Beck, together: “. . . that is absolutely not true” (30)!

Sister Tanner: Youth are often the best teachers of each other. One of the things we love to do when we speak to youth is hand a *For the Strength of Youth* book to some young people and say, “I’d like you



HELPING YOUTH FIND STRENGTH

One way to begin making the teachings in *For the Strength of Youth* (item no. 36550) part of our lives—and to get them into the hearts of youth—is to identify the doctrines, the standards, and the consequences in each section of this book. For example, consider the “Sexual Purity” section.

Doctrine answers the question “Why do we live these standards?”: “Physical intimacy between husband and wife is beautiful and sacred. It is ordained of God for the creation of children and for the expression of love between husband and wife. God has commanded that sexual intimacy be reserved for marriage” (26).

Standards teach us what we should and should not do: “Do not have any sexual relations before marriage, and be completely faithful to your spouse after marriage” (26).

Consequences are the positive and negative results of living standards: “When you obey God’s commandment to be sexually pure, you prepare yourself to make and keep sacred covenants in the temple. You prepare yourself to build a strong marriage and to bring children into the world as part of a loving family. You protect yourself from the emotional damage that always comes from sharing physical intimacies with someone outside of marriage” (26).

to choose any one of these standards and in a few minutes give a little talk on it.” I’ve had so many spontaneous talks fill the room with the Spirit. When youth share their experiences and bear their testimonies, *they* feel the Spirit and start learning the power of the book.

Sister Beck: Having a standards night once a year isn’t enough. We can use *For the Strength of Youth* at camp; we can use it at youth conference and in formal and informal situations. It’s a resource that has to be always in front of our youth. And parents and leaders have to live it. You can’t be the leader who tells youth what movies to avoid, and then you go to those movies. You can’t be the mother who says, “Don’t wear that immodest dress,” and then you’re wearing one. You can’t be the father who says, “Pay your tithing,” but you don’t.

Then does *For the Strength of Youth* have a role for people who aren’t youth?

Sister Dalton: I call it *For the Strength of “You.”* It applies to all of us.



Sister Beck: My copy has my name on it, and it's marked for me. The standards are not gender or age specific; they're for children of God.

What are some immediate blessings we receive by living the Lord's standards as taught in For the Strength of Youth?

Sister Dalton: Peace of mind.

Sister Beck: The companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Sister Dalton: And self-confidence. It ties with the 2007 Mutual theme: "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God" (D&C 121:45). Those immediate

blessings are important because sometimes youth think, "If I choose this, I won't have any friends." Unfortunately that could be true.

Sister Tanner: It was true for me in seventh grade. I was honest, going against what a popular group of girls wanted me to do. Because of that, I didn't have friends and I was sad, but I had confidence that what I had done was right. And I'm sure that's what sustained me through a period of time. I knew I could face whom I really needed to face—my Heavenly Father and my family. But even that knowledge doesn't mean it doesn't hurt.

Sister Dalton: *For the Strength of*

Youth doesn't promise you a life free of problems if you live standards, but it does say that "you will . . . bear trials with greater courage" (2). Although I didn't realize it the night I walked out of a party and closed the door on my whole social future—the popular kids shunned me from that time on—I know now that living standards enables you to be a leader. *One* young woman or *one* young man with the courage to live these standards and walk out of an inappropriate situation gives others the courage to follow.

What are the long-term blessings of living the standards in For the Strength of Youth?

Sister Beck: Last week I was shopping with my granddaughters. I noticed a sales clerk watching our fun. Later I gave her a pass-along card. She told me, "I'm at a point in my life where I'm trying to take charge, and I don't know how." So we talked. My closing comment to her was, "If you want this when you're my age"—and I pointed to my little granddaughters—"you have to be really careful what you're choosing now. The choices I made at your age determined who I am now."

Sister Dalton: Long-term blessings ripple through generations, and one small thing you're doing right now can make a lot of difference in where you end up and where the generations that follow you end up. And we can't forget that generations before us sacrificed for us to have the gospel and to know about standards.





SHARING STANDARDS



A young woman I know was a little frustrated with friends questioning her standards: “Why can’t you date before 16?” “Why don’t you drink?” When she prayed about how to handle this situation, this idea came to her mind: “I’m going to put a *For the Strength of Youth* booklet in my jeans pocket. When people question me about, for example, dating, I’ll give them the book and tell them to read the section on dating.”

It turned out to be a great idea! In three months she gave out 52 copies of *For the Strength of Youth*. And three new friends started attending church with her.

This young woman was bold in a friendly way and didn’t apologize for her standards. When youth live standards clearly and without apology, others will respect them and look to their example.

Mary N. Cook, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency.

How can youth handle temptation and receive those immediate and long-term blessings?

Sister Dalton: When I ask youth, “What’s the hardest thing you do?” many say, “It’s going to parties and being offered a drink and not drinking it.” So I ask, “Why are you at the party?” And they say, “I go to be a good example to others.” Then I always

respond, “You bring your friends to places where they can feel the Spirit. Don’t ever walk into places where the Spirit won’t go. Avoid them!”

Sister Beck: Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy has an analogy. He says that if you’re on a non-chocolate-chip-cookie diet, yet you go into the kitchen just after the cookies have been baked—it smells delicious and

you can picture the chocolate chips melting as you pull the cookie apart—how long is it going to be before you sample one? How strong are you really? That’s *resisting*—or trying to resist. But if you’re on a non-chocolate-chip-cookie diet and you don’t go into the kitchen where they’re baked and you don’t bake them yourself, then you are *avoiding* temptation. That’s easier!

What can youth who live these righteous standards accomplish?

Sister Beck: Satan is coming at our youth from all sides. But we have a defense, so we don’t need to be afraid. We can trust in the Lord’s promises. He says young men and women will dream dreams and see visions, that He will pour out His Spirit upon them in the last days and He will flood the earth with righteousness and truth (see Joel 2:28–32; Moses 7:62). There’s nothing righteous youth can’t do!

Sister Dalton: Our youth are major players in the winding-up scenes on the earth. We read about the calamities and things that will happen, but living the standards in *For the Strength of Youth* will preserve and protect and strengthen our youth in such a way that they’ll be able to serve and do what nobody else will be able to do.

Sister Tanner: Today’s youth are like the army of Helaman! Those youth were raised up to save the Nephite generation, and our youth are being raised up to save this generation. ■

An Exceptional Book, an Exceptional Answer

BY GRIGOR A. TADEVOSYAN

My concerns were troubling, but their resolution was quick, inspired, and, I think, no coincidence.

When I was going to be baptized and confirmed a member of the Church, I felt very troubled about whether I was choosing the right path. Our branch missionaries in Gyumri, Armenia, realized I had some doubts about the Book of Mormon and joining the Church, so they invited me to go with them while they taught some missionary lessons.

When we got to the first home, Elder Perrin asked Anichka if she had read the assigned chapters. “No,” she said, “I forgot.” So we read 2 Nephi 29–33 together. While reading chapter 29, we studied the prophecies about the Book of Mormon and the Gentiles rejecting it in the latter days by saying, “A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible” (v. 3). That chapter left an impression on me throughout the lesson.

Next we went to another home. When we were reading from the Book of Mormon there, the father of the woman we were teaching asked, “What is that book?”

I explained that it was the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ. He became angry and said, “We already have the Bible, and there can’t be another Bible.”

I remembered the chapter we had read just 10 minutes earlier with Anichka.

Elder Perrin spoke up: “You have a Bible,

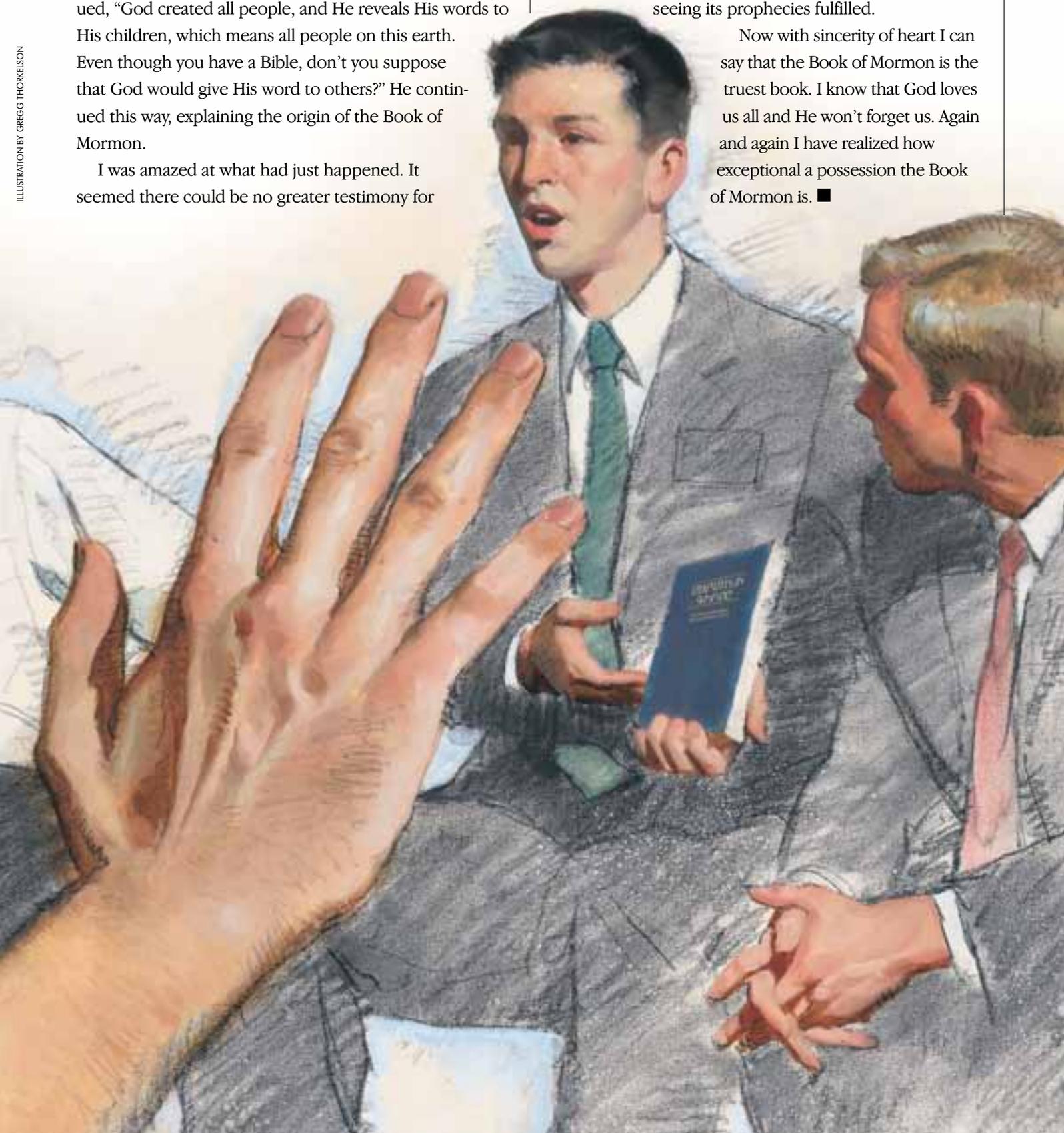


and it is from God's ancient covenant people." He continued, "God created all people, and He reveals His words to His children, which means all people on this earth. Even though you have a Bible, don't you suppose that God would give His word to others?" He continued this way, explaining the origin of the Book of Mormon.

I was amazed at what had just happened. It seemed there could be no greater testimony for

resolving my concerns about the Book of Mormon than seeing its prophecies fulfilled.

Now with sincerity of heart I can say that the Book of Mormon is the truest book. I know that God loves us all and He won't forget us. Again and again I have realized how exceptional a possession the Book of Mormon is. ■



Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction



You have a loved one or friend who struggles with same-gender attraction and asks for your help. What do you say? What can you do?

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

A pleasant young man in his early 20s sat across from me. He had an engaging smile, although he didn't smile often during our talk. What drew me in was the pain in his eyes.

"I don't know if I should remain a member of the Church," he said. "I don't think I'm worthy."

"Why wouldn't you be worthy?" I asked.

"I'm gay."

I suppose he thought I would be startled. I wasn't. "And . . . ?" I inquired.

A flicker of relief crossed his face as he sensed my continued interest. "I'm not attracted to women. I'm attracted to men. I've tried to ignore these feelings or change them, but . . ."

He sighed. "Why am I this way? The feelings are very real."

I paused, then said, "I need a little more information before advising you. You see, same-gender attraction is not a sin, but acting on those feelings is—just as it would be with heterosexual feelings. Do you violate the law of chastity?"

He shook his head. "No, I don't."

This time I was relieved. "Thank you for wanting to deal with this," I said. "It takes

courage to talk about it, and I honor you for keeping yourself clean.

"As for why you feel as you do, I can't answer that question. A number of factors may be involved, and they can be as different as people are different. Some things, including the cause of your feelings, we may never know in this life. But knowing why you feel as you do isn't as important as knowing you have not transgressed. If your life is in harmony with the commandments, then you are worthy to serve in the Church, enjoy full fellowship with the members, attend the temple, and receive all the blessings of the Savior's Atonement."

He sat up a little straighter. I continued, "You serve yourself poorly when you identify yourself primarily by your sexual orientation. That isn't your only characteristic, so don't give it disproportionate attention. You are first and foremost a son of God, and He loves you.

"What's more, I love you. My Brethren among the General Authorities love you. I'm reminded of a comment President Boyd K. Packer made in speaking to those with same-gender attraction. 'We *do not* reject you,' he said. 'We *cannot* reject you, for you are the sons and daughters of God. We *will not* reject you, because we love you.'"¹

We talked for another 30 minutes or so. Knowing I could not be a personal counselor

to him, I directed him to his local priesthood leaders. Then we parted. I thought I detected a look of hope in his eyes that had not been there before. Although he yet faced challenges to work through—or simply endure—I had a feeling he would handle them well.

God Loveth His Children

When an angel asked Nephi a question about God, Nephi answered, “I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17). I too affirm that God loves *all* His children and acknowledge that many questions, including some related to same-gender attraction, must await a future answer, perhaps in the next life.

Unfortunately, some people believe they have all the answers now and declare their opinions far and wide. Fortunately, such people do not speak for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Although I believe members are eager to extend compassion to those different from themselves, it is human

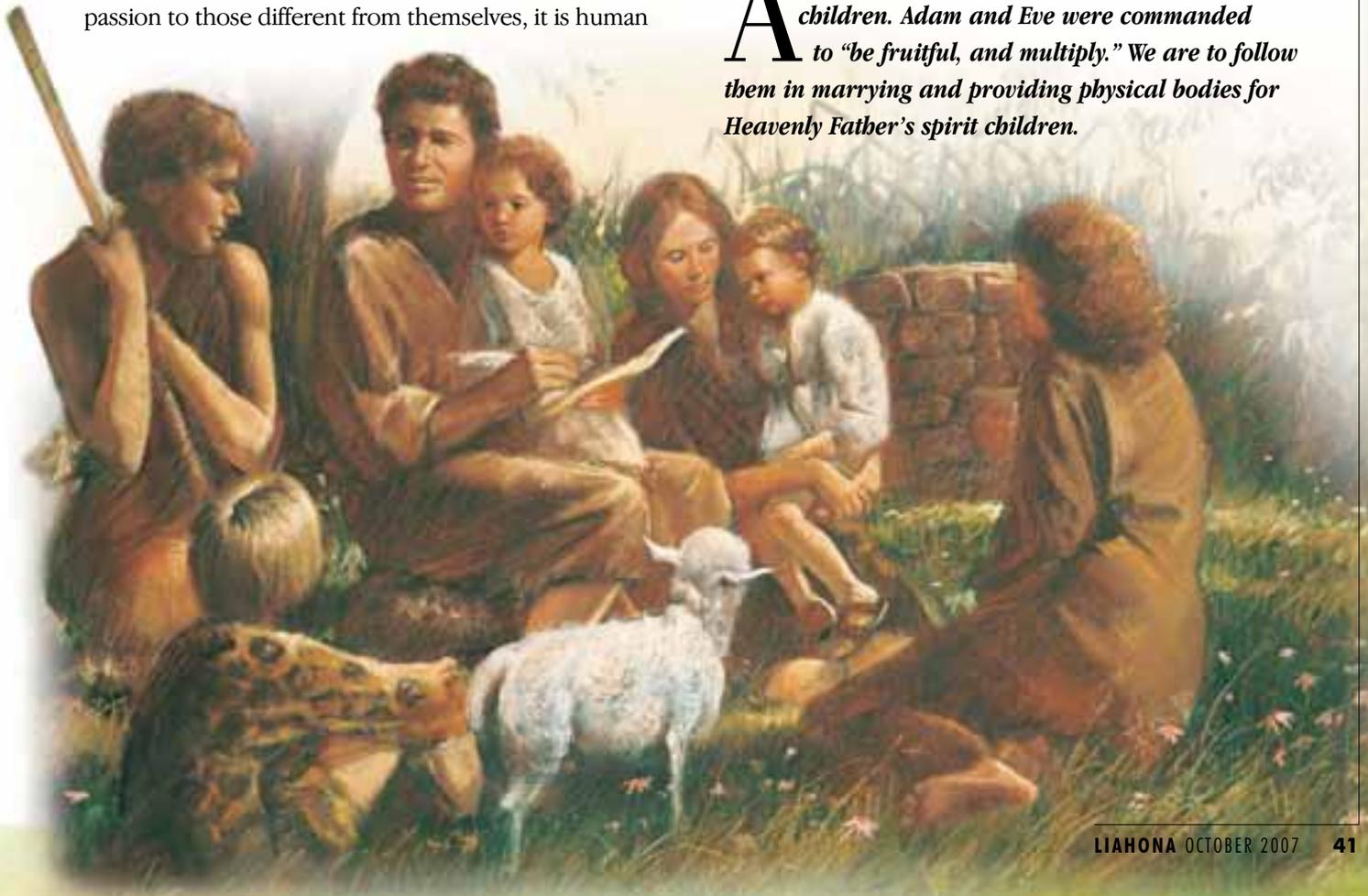
nature that when confronted with a situation we don't understand, we tend to withdraw. This is particularly true of same-gender attraction. We have so little reliable information about it that those wanting to help are left feeling a bit unsteady. Admitting my own inadequacy in this regard but wanting to assist, let me offer some suggestions to help those who have loved ones or friends who are attracted to the same gender.

Our Father's Plan of Happiness

First, let's be absolutely clear on what God wants for each of us. He wants us to have all of the blessings of eternal life. He wants us to become like Him. To help us do that, He has given us a plan. This plan is based on eternal truths and is not altered according to the social trends of the day.

At the heart of this plan is the begetting of children, one

A *t the heart of God's plan is the begetting of children. Adam and Eve were commanded to “be fruitful, and multiply.” We are to follow them in marrying and providing physical bodies for Heavenly Father's spirit children.*



of the crucial reasons Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden (see 2 Nephi 2:19–25; Moses 5:10–12). They were commanded to “be fruitful, and multiply” (Moses 2:28), and they chose to keep that commandment. We are to follow them in marrying and providing physical bodies for Heavenly Father’s spirit children. Obviously, a same-gender relationship is inconsistent with this plan.

For various reasons, marriage and children are not immediately available to all. Perhaps no offer of marriage is forthcoming. Perhaps even after marriage there is an inability to have children. Or perhaps there is no present attraction to the opposite gender. Whatever the reason, God’s richest blessings will eventually be available to all of His children if they are clean and faithful.

Through the exercise of faith, individual effort, and reliance upon the power of the Atonement, some may resolve same-gender attraction in mortality and marry. Others, however, may never be free of same-gender attraction in this life.

As fellow Church members, families, and friends, we need to recognize that those attracted to the same gender face some unique restrictions regarding expression of their feelings. While same-gender attraction is real, there must be no physical expression of this attraction. The desire for physical gratification does not authorize immorality by anyone, regardless of sexual orientation. Such feelings can be powerful, but they are never so strong as to deprive anyone of the freedom to choose worthy conduct.

In saying this, let me make it clear that attractions alone, troublesome as they may be, do not make one unworthy. The First Presidency has stated, “There is a distinction between immoral thoughts and feelings and participating in either immoral heterosexual or any homosexual behavior.”² If you do not act on temptations, you have not transgressed.

The failure to see that distinction sometimes leads to despair. I ache for those who do not understand that every

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Some of the ideas and language in this article come from a booklet prepared by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for those attracted to the same gender. It is titled *God Loveth His Children* (item no. 04824). If the booklet is available in your language, you can obtain a copy from your local distribution center or download it from www.lds.org/same-gender-attraction.

blessing offered by God is available to anyone who obeys the laws upon which those blessings are predicated (see D&C 130:20–21). No one who lives the gospel should despair. Hope and peace come from the Comforter, and the answer to despair is to invite the Holy Ghost into our lives.

Ways to Help

Let’s assume you are the family member or friend of someone with same-gender attraction who comes to you for help. What do you say? What do you do?

I’d begin by recognizing the courage that brought your son, daughter, sibling, or friend to you. I’d recognize the trust that person has extended. Discussing the issue with someone of trust is a healthy first step to dealing with confusing feelings, and it is imperative that these first steps be met with compassion.

Next, if you are a parent of one with same-gender attraction, don’t assume you are the reason for those feelings. No one, including the one struggling, should try to shoulder blame. Nor should anyone place blame on another—including God. Walk by faith, and help your loved one deal the best he or she can with this challenge.

In doing so, recognize that marriage is not an all-purpose solution. Same-gender attractions run deep, and trying to force a heterosexual relationship is not likely to change them. We are all thrilled when some who struggle with these feelings are able to marry, raise children, and achieve family happiness. But other attempts have resulted in broken hearts and broken homes.

Above all, keep your lines of communication open. Open communication between parents and children is a clear expression of love, and pure love, generously expressed, can transform family ties. But love for a family member does not extend to condoning unrighteous behavior. Your children are welcome to stay in your home, of course, but you have every right to exclude from your dwelling any behavior that offends the Spirit of the Lord.

The Garden Principle

Next, consider a principle learned in gardening. Someone said that if we plant a garden with good seed, there will not be so much need of the hoe. Likewise, if we fill our lives with spiritual nourishment, we can more easily gain control over inclinations. This means creating a positive environment in our homes in which the Spirit is abundantly evident. A positive environment includes consistent private and public worship, prayer, fasting, scripture reading, service, and exposure to uplifting conversation, music, literature, and other media.

This same environment extends to experiences at church. Some with same-gender attractions have unresolved fears and are offended at church when no offense is intended. On the other hand, some members exclude from their circle of fellowship those who are different. When our actions or words discourage someone from taking full advantage of Church membership, we fail them—and the Lord. The Church is made stronger as we include

Planting a garden with strong, healthy plants will help keep weeds under control. Likewise, if we fill our lives with the spiritual nourishment God has provided, we can more easily gain control over our inclinations.

every member and strengthen one another in service and love (see D&C 84:110).

You may feel prompted to encourage the one you are trying to help to visit with a priesthood leader who holds the keys of inspired counsel. Please do so, knowing that the First Presidency has asked Church leaders to discuss these matters confidentially and in a spirit of Christlike love.³

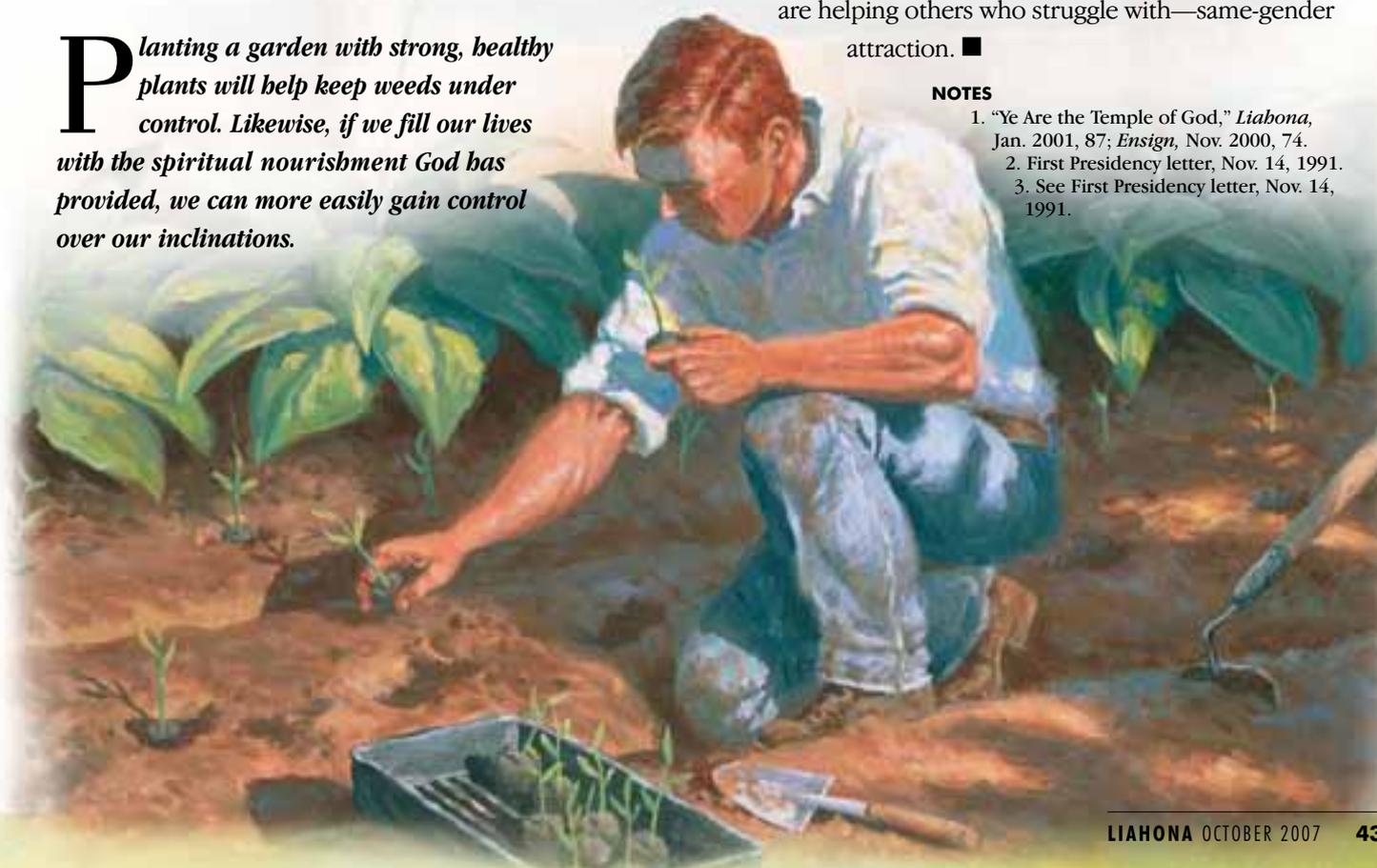
In the Lord's Hands

Not long ago I received a letter from a man in his early 30s who struggles with same-gender attraction. His struggle has not been easy, and he has not yet married. But, he wrote, “the Lord has helped me face my current circumstances, and I am content to do my best and leave my life in His hands.”

I weep with admiration and respect at the faith and courage of such a man who is living with a challenge I have never faced. I love him and the thousands like him, male or female, who “fight the good fight” (1 Timothy 6:12). I commend his attitude to all who struggle with—or who are helping others who struggle with—same-gender attraction. ■

NOTES

1. “Ye Are the Temple of God,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2001, 87; *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 74.
2. First Presidency letter, Nov. 14, 1991.
3. See First Presidency letter, Nov. 14, 1991.



Uncle Gilberto's Memory

By Esther Labibe de Beruben

When I began learning about ordinance work for the dead, I was inspired by the great love my husband showed for his grandmother in seeing that her temple ordinances were performed. This motivated me to learn more about my own ancestors. In the years since then, many brothers and sisters, including those at the family history center near my home in Guadalajara, Mexico, have helped me learn to do the work for my ancestors.

In 1991 I received my patriarchal blessing and was instructed that I should be concerned about my deceased relatives and dedicate myself to them. I set a goal to do this, which led to daily discussions with my parents, who were not members of the Church. I often asked questions about my family, but my mother could tell me only about my grandparents.

One day my mother told me that Uncle Gilberto, my father's brother, had suffered a heart attack. "I know he would love to talk

with you," my mother said. "He has a great memory, and he could give you a great deal of information about the family."

When I called him at the nursing home where he was staying, his wife answered and told me that my uncle was doing poorly and couldn't talk. I gave her my best wishes and told her that I would pray for them and their family.

The next day I called the nursing home again. To my surprise, my uncle answered the telephone.

"Uncle Gilberto!" I said. "I called to tell you that I have prayed fervently for your recovery and that I love you."

"Thank you very much, Bibi," he

replied. "I woke up this morning feeling much better. Tell me what's going on with you."

I told him of my eagerness to know the names of

family members who were from Arabia and Lebanon. My mother was right about my uncle's memory. He knew names, dates, and places for four generations on my father's side of the family.

When I hung up the phone, I felt that our conversation would be the last one we would share in this life. I was right. But the Lord had blessed us both so that I could obtain information I needed to unite our family—both now and in the eternities. ■

My mother was right about my uncle's memory. He knew names, dates, and places for four generations on my father's side of the family.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY KRISTIN YEE



A Ride to Church

By Stephen Baer

When I was seven years old, my mom and dad befriended a less-active family in our ward that consisted of a single mother and her two sons. My older brother, John, and I were the same ages as the two boys, Robin and Shannon, so it seemed appropriate that we extend a hand of fellowship.

The family didn't own a car, so my father offered to pick them up at their home in a nearby city and give them rides to and from church. I remember the days Dad summoned my brother and me to accompany him to pick them up. I begrudged it at the time, but despite my groaning, Dad continued to give them rides until they were actively attending church and had their own car. Robin and Shannon were soon baptized and confirmed, and their mom began participating in Relief Society. I didn't realize at the time the positive repercussions that would come from this act of service.

A few months before I began eighth grade, my dad passed away. To compound my grief, I was insecure about my physical appearance and

I didn't realize at the time the positive repercussions that would come from my father's offering to give two brothers rides to and from church.

lack of friends. I began to succumb to feelings of despair, and I spent my lunch hours walking to my house and back because I couldn't bear sitting alone.

That same year, the family we had befriended moved into our school district, and Shannon began attend-

ing my school. We became immediate friends. I felt accepted, and I was no longer so sad. Knowing that someone enjoyed being my friend boosted my confidence and self-worth. I no longer had to spend my lunch hour by myself.

Our friendship deepened during high school. When our older brothers left for college and missions, Shannon and I became surrogate brothers. We received our Eagle Scout Awards at the same court of honor, went to the same university, left on missions during the same summer, and became

roommates afterward. We were both married in the Salt Lake Temple to wonderful women, and our first children were born within three months of each other.

One evening shortly before Shannon's wedding, we began talking about our childhood. I told him how he had helped me overcome my insecurities and cope with the death of my father. It was his friendship, I added, that had helped me turn my life around. Shannon then told me that if my dad had not given his family rides to church, he would not have attended church, served a mission, and been sealed in the temple.

The Spirit touched me strongly during that conversation as I realized the blessings that a simple ride to church had on our lives. As I reflected on Shannon's friendship, I realized that my father not only helped save Shannon's family, but he also prepared a friend who helped save his own son. ■

Who Turned My Head?

By Hildo Rosillo Flores

During a sacrament meeting in Piura, Peru, in 1972, a speaker who was discussing the importance of family history work kept looking at me. At the end of his talk, he surprised me when he announced, “I know that Brother Rosillo is going to do this work.”

I had been a member of the Church for less than a year, but I set a goal to get started on my family history—not because of what he said but because I felt a desire to do so. I obtained a four-generation pedigree chart and started by interviewing my parents and relatives to find out what they knew. Each time I worked on my family history, I prayed and asked the Lord for help.

To find the death dates of my maternal great-grandparents, I traveled to the town of Zorritos, in northern Peru, where they had been buried. The cemetery was on the outskirts of town, and most of the dead had been laid to rest in vaulted compartments.

I entered the cemetery and started looking, but I didn’t find anything. I then decided to go to town to ask a cousin if she was sure that our

great-grandparents had been buried there. When she said yes, I told her, “Then I’m not leaving until I have those dates.”

I returned to the cemetery and began a methodical search, walking down every vault aisle and reading every inscription. I still couldn’t find their vaults, so I knelt and asked the Lord to help me. Then I searched again—but with the same results. I was tired, it was getting late, and I needed to leave so I could do other research I had planned.

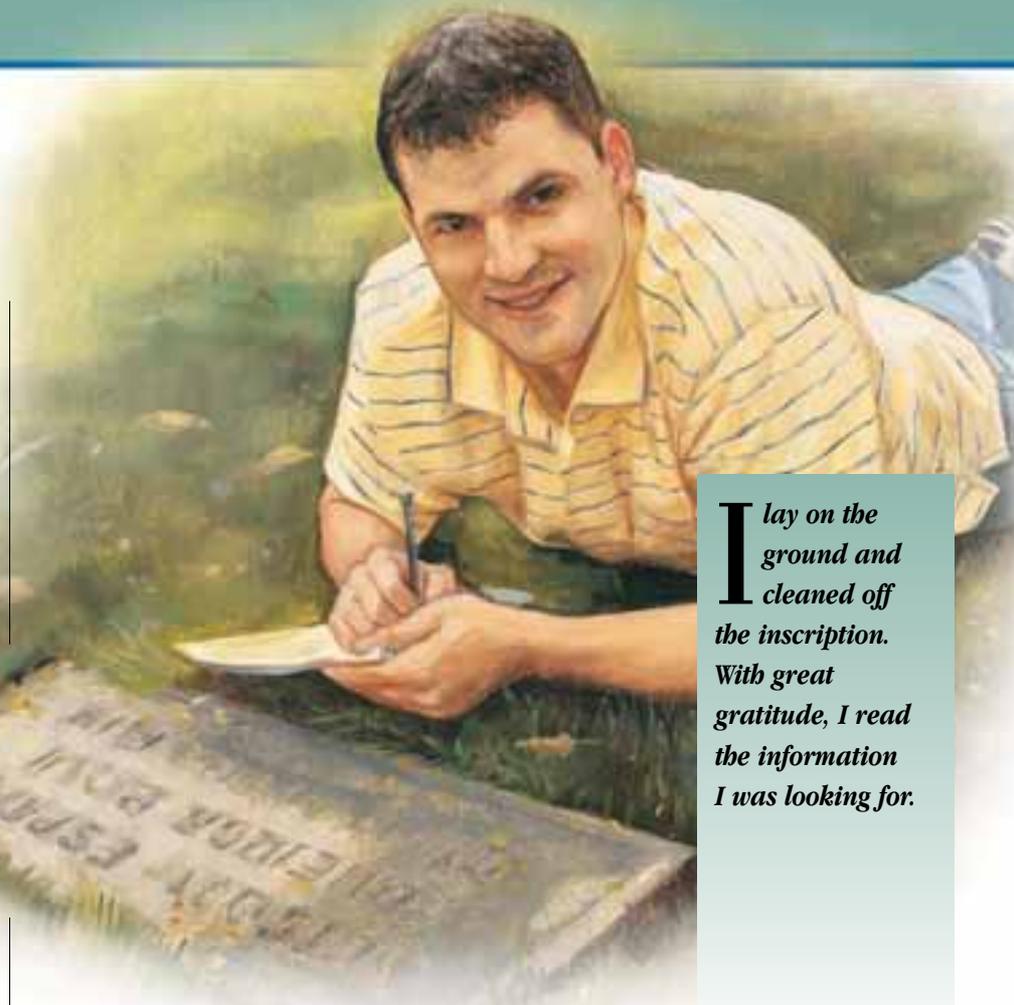
“Well, I did my part,” I thought to myself. I would have to leave without accomplishing my goal.

Ready to leave, I turned toward the front gate. But just as I took my first step, I felt two hands take hold

of my head from behind and turn it toward a certain spot. My eyes rested on a small, dirty headstone that was level with the ground. I looked behind me to see who had grabbed my head, but no one was there.

I walked to the headstone, lay on the ground, and cleaned off the inscription. With great gratitude, I read the information I was looking for: *Isidro Garcia Rosillo, died August 1, 1934. Francisca Espinoza Berrú, died January 31, 1954.*

My ancestors’ long wait to receive their saving ordinances ended in 1980. That was when my wife and I went to the São Paulo Brazil Temple to receive our endowments. At the temple I was sealed to my wife and baptized for my deceased loved ones.



I lay on the ground and cleaned off the inscription. With great gratitude, I read the information I was looking for.

As I entered the baptismal font, I remembered the small headstone at the cemetery. I went down into the calm waters knowing the Lord had guided my steps as I searched for my ancestors. ■

A Prayer with My Home Teacher

By Judy Stone

I am embarrassed to admit it, but there was a time when I thought home teachers were more of a nuisance than a blessing. At such times I would find ways to absent myself from their visits so I could get my work done.

That's why when Lincoln became our home teacher, I was especially annoyed. He never missed a visit. He always had a lesson prepared, and he faithfully carried out his home teaching duties. I appreciated his efforts but not enough to give him and his companion my undivided attention when they came for their monthly visit. Lincoln was always cordial; I was always a little rude.

One year during the early spring, I was out working in the yard. The day was clear and warm. Usually I find gardening therapeutic, but on this day I was distraught. My husband had just undergone debilitating back

surgery, and as a family we faced some tough decisions.

Needing answers, I found myself kneeling in the garden. Tears flowed as I prayed fervently for direction from the Lord. If I could only feel some peace. If I could only have some assurance that our future would not be as dismal as it seemed at the moment. I prayed earnestly, speaking aloud at times, begging the Lord for hope but most of all for peace.

When I returned to the house after pleading with the Lord, I was

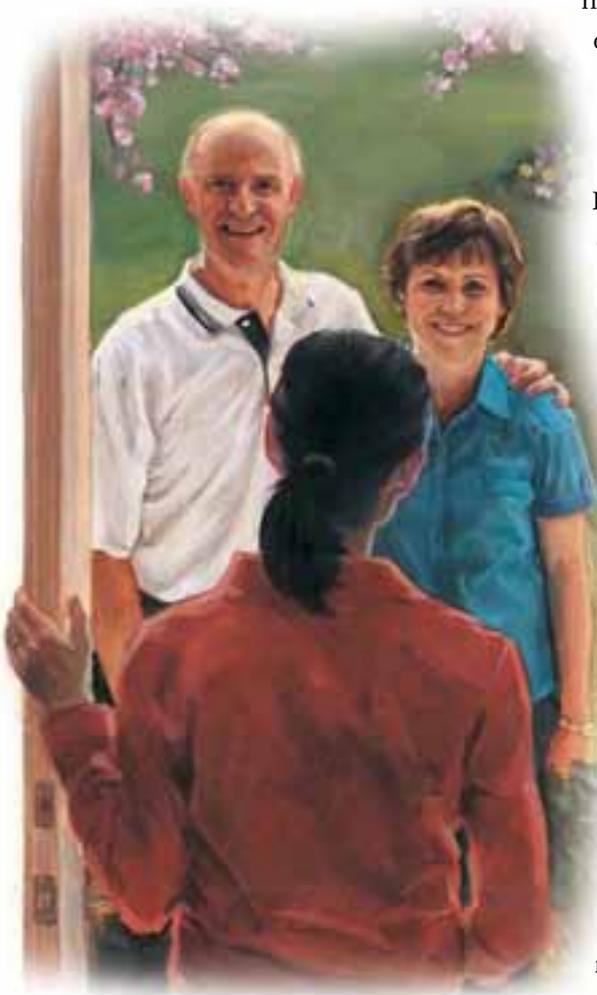
spent. I was glad no one was home so I could get myself together. But no sooner had I taken off my work shoes when the doorbell rang. Lincoln was the last person on my mind, but when I opened the door, there he stood with his wife, minus lesson materials.

For the first time, I actually found myself happy to see him. I invited them in. We chatted, and Lincoln asked about my husband's work, our five daughters, and other family matters. They didn't stay long, but as they got up to go, Lincoln asked if

he could leave a blessing on our home. I was grateful, wondering how he knew a prayer would be so welcome. We knelt, and as I listened to his words of comfort, he specifically asked for a blessing of peace on our home.

During that moment I felt a wave of comfort fill my soul. I knew then that the Lord was in charge and that everything was going to work out.

My prayers had been answered with clarity and assurance through Lincoln, our faithful home teacher. In honoring his stewardship and following the promptings of the Holy Ghost, he left me with a testimony of his sacred calling. ■



The First Presidency Message

The *Liabona* has helped many people make their lives whole. The First Presidency Message can't be ignored by anyone who wants a good life. The First Presidency Message has really helped me organize my life. Even though I can't always buy a copy of the *Liabona*, the issues I am able to read help me become a better person.

Abraham Adaranijo, Canada

Precept by Precept

When I was a newly baptized member of the Church, I couldn't fully comprehend the gospel, but through reading the *Liabona*, I have been able to understand it precept by precept. I am inspired by those who share their life experiences. Thank you for publishing good articles that support the principles of the gospel.

Federico G. Balut Jr., Philippines

How People Really Live the Gospel

What an excellent and perfect blessing it is to have the *Liabona* in our homes and libraries, where we can read it in our spare moments and spiritual times. I appreciate the wonderful articles about how people in one place or another really live the gospel. This unites us. It encourages the rest of us not to be afraid, and it reassures us that we are not alone.

Elsie Castillo, Ecuador

Encouraged to Return

As a child, I became less-active in the Church, but as a teenager I was considering coming back. Before

making this important decision, I prayed and pondered what it would mean to come back to the Church and the responsibilities it would entail.

That is when I decided to read some old issues of the *Liabona*. I was reading to find stories that would encourage me and reinforce my desire to return to church.

Through reading articles about people who had experiences similar to mine, I received a lot of encouragement. Most of all, the articles helped me understand that nobody at church is perfect and that I have my faults as well and need to do something to correct them.

I have now come back to church. I realize that the meetings are like they were before, but now I have a more positive vision, partly due to ideas that I found in the *Liabona* about how to enjoy classes and sacrament meeting.

Every time I read the *Liabona*, I feel satisfied as I find answers to my questions.

María Pilar Santana, Dominican Republic

The Talks of Our Dear Prophet

I would like to thank you for sending me the *Liabona* magazine regularly. I am now 93 years old. Since the day I was baptized and confirmed, I have received the magazine. It was small before but always interesting. I am delighted with all the content of the magazine;

however, I am especially interested in the talks of our dear prophet. It is wonderful to hear him twice a year during general conference.

Lydia Dominguez, USA

Several months ago many of you responded to a survey we included in the April news pages. Thank you! We received hundreds of responses, and we reviewed every one. Your feedback will help us improve the *Liabona*. If you didn't have a chance to take the survey, send us your comments anyway. You can reach us at the address below.

E-mail your comments to liabona@ldschurch.org. Or send them to:

Liabona, Comment

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

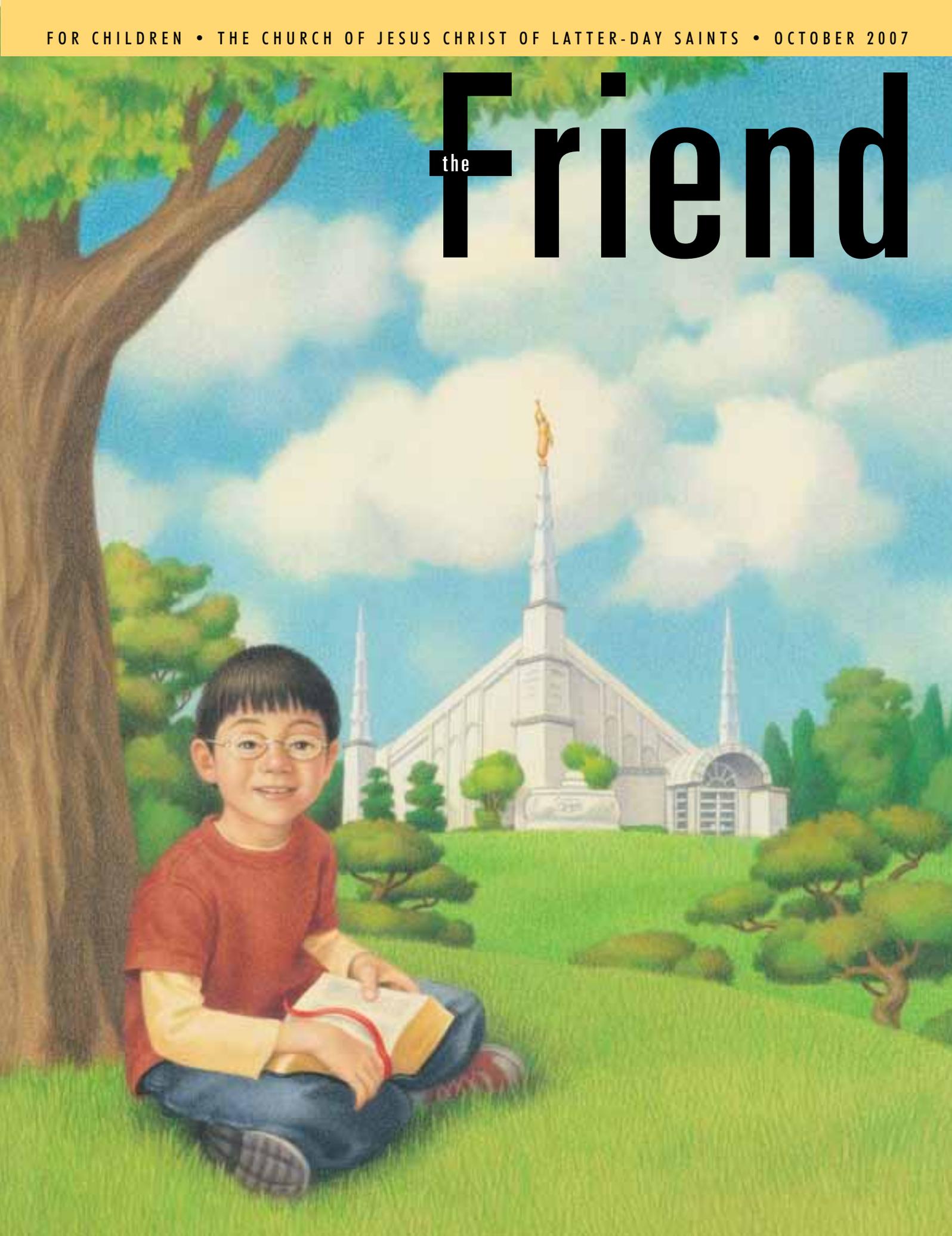


PEACE ON EARTH



FIND IT IN THE LORD'S HOUSE.
(see Haggai 2:9; *Hymns*, no. 247.)

the Friend



The Empty Cart

BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Some years ago a priests quorum decided to gather food for the needy as a service project. Jim, one of the priests, was excited to participate and was determined to collect more food than anyone else. The time arrived when the priests met at the chapel. They all went out at the same time and returned at a specified time later in the evening. To everyone's surprise, Jim's cart was empty. He seemed rather quiet, and some of the young men made fun of him. Seeing this and knowing that Jim had an interest in cars, the adviser said, "Come outside, Jim. I want you to look at my car. It's giving me some trouble."

When they got outside, the adviser asked Jim if he was upset. Jim said, "No, not really. But when I went out to collect the food, I really got a lot. My cart was full. As I was returning to the chapel, I stopped at the home of a nonmember woman who is divorced and lives within our ward boundaries. I knocked on the door and explained what we were doing, and she invited me in. She began to look for something to give me. She opened the refrigerator, and I could see there was



President Faust shows how selfless service made an empty cart full and a full cart empty.

hardly anything in it. The cupboards were bare. Finally, she found a small can of peaches.

"I could hardly believe it. There were all these little kids running around that needed to be fed, and she handed me this can of peaches. I took it and put it in my cart and went on up the street. I got about halfway up the block when I just felt warm all over and knew I needed to go back to that house. I gave her all the food."

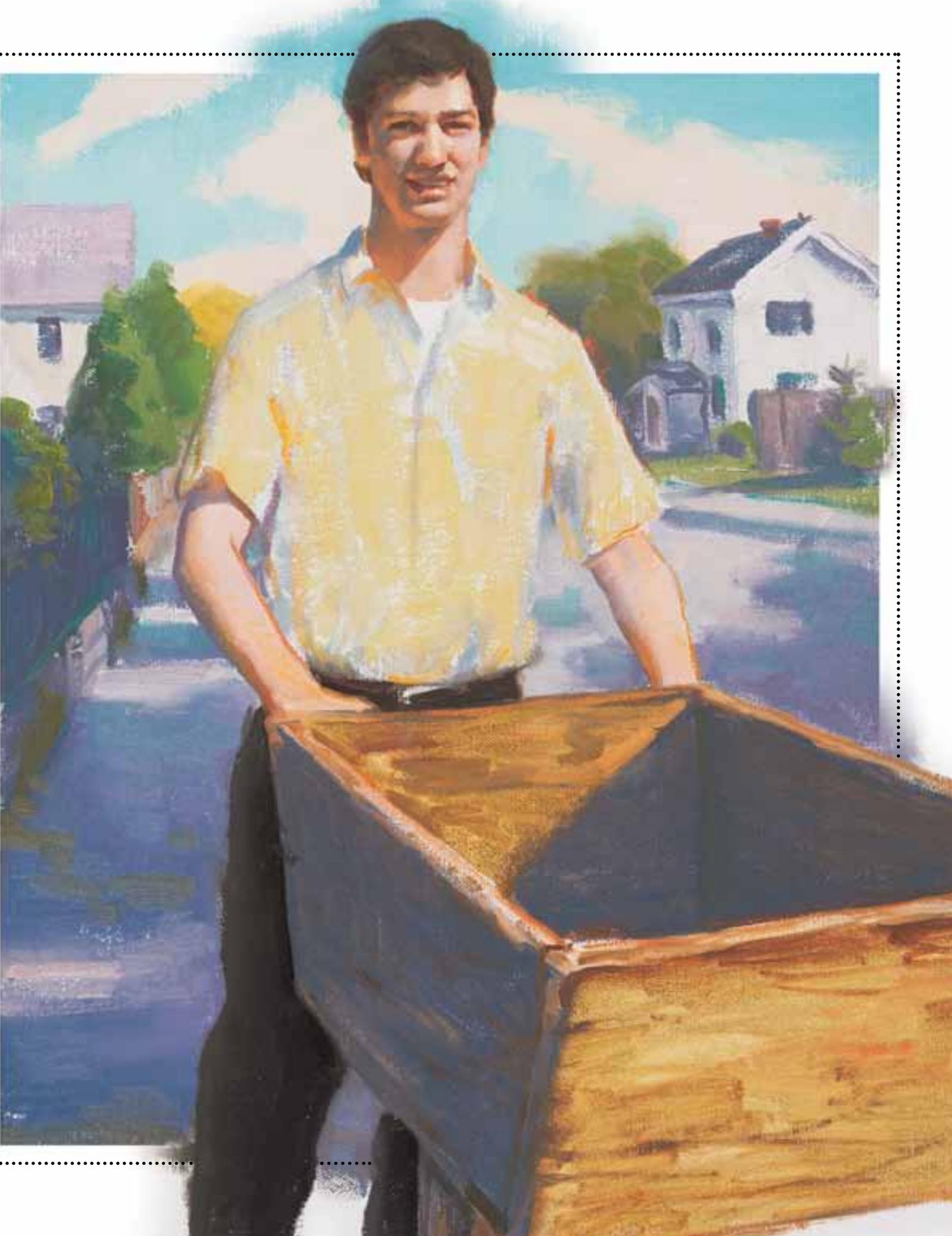
The adviser said, "Jim, don't you ever forget the way you feel tonight, because that's what it is all about." Jim had tasted

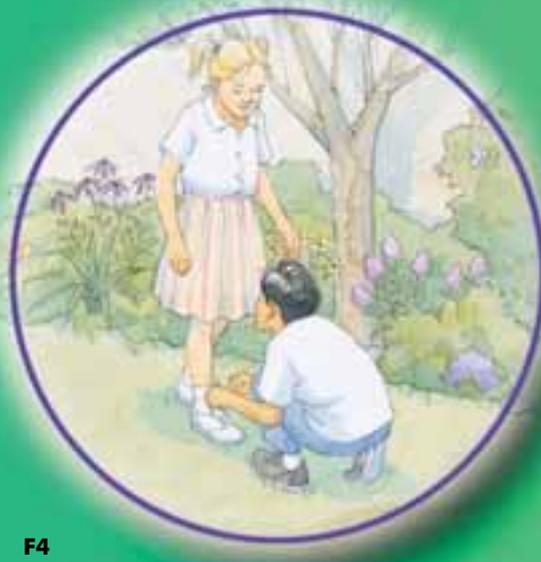
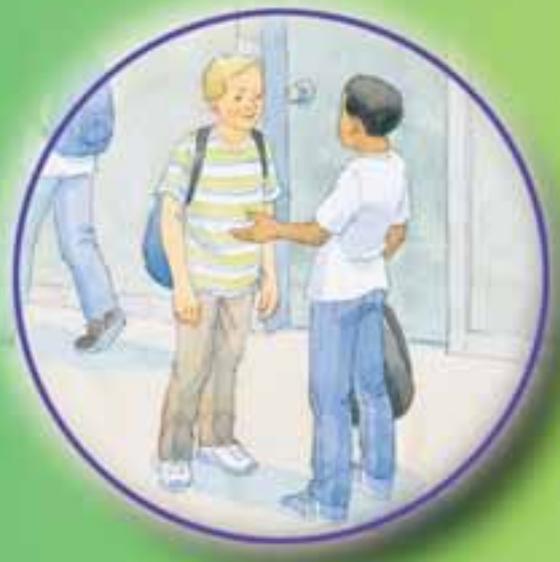
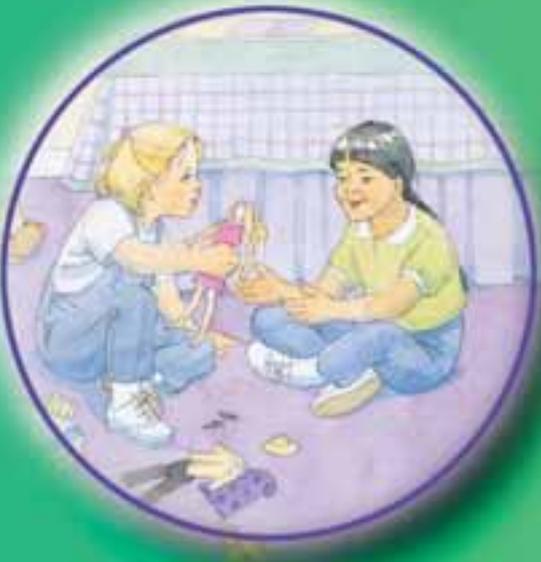
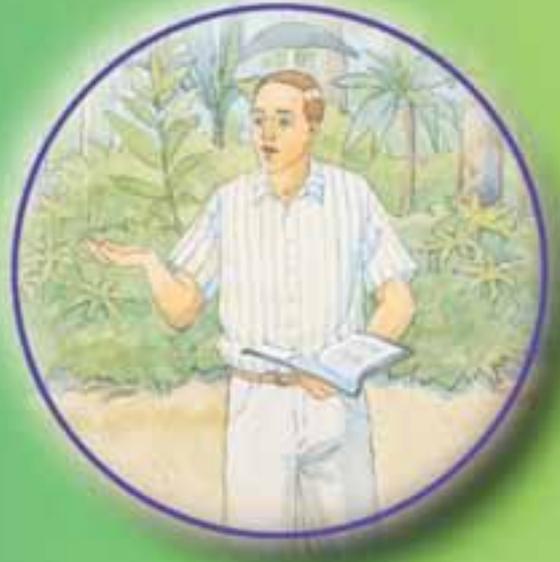
the nutrient of selfless service. ●

From an October 2006 general conference address.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- 1. When Jim felt "warm all over" and knew that he should go back, what do you think was happening to Jim?**
- 2. The adviser said that the way Jim felt was "what it is all about." What do you think he meant?**
- 3. What was Jim's purpose when he set out to collect food? What was his purpose by the end of the evening? How can this apply to your own life?**
- 4. What else do you think about Jim's experience?**





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

How Great Shall Be Your Joy

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

BY ELIZABETH RICKS



Have you noticed that when you share something like a treat or a toy, you feel good? Of course you have. You can share things other than treats or toys, like knowledge. Sharing knowledge can bring great joy—not just to the receiver but also to the giver. The best kind of knowledge to share is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Nine-year-old Ashley felt the joy of sharing the gospel. After Ashley was challenged to share a copy of the Book of Mormon, Ashley’s father drove her to her school principal’s house, and Ashley gave a Book of Mormon to her. Ashley also gave the full-time missionaries her principal’s name. What joy Ashley felt! (See “Nine-Year-Old Member Missionary,” *Friend*, July 1997, 42–43.)

The most important thing you can share is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord called Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer to preach the gospel. He explained the happiness they would receive:

“And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

“And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!” (D&C 18:15–16).

We show our faith in Jesus Christ when we share the gospel with others. And what great joy we receive when we help others know of Jesus Christ and of our Heavenly Father’s plan.

Activity

Write your name under one of the missionary figures. Cut it out, and glue it onto heavy paper. In family home evening, put your missionary figure next to each picture, and explain to your family how the person in each situation is being a missionary. Ask your family to act out the situations in the pictures or different situations they think of and let you practice sharing the gospel.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Prepare several pieces of paper on which you have written actions that set an example, good and bad. Have some children each draw one piece of paper from a box. Take turns reading them. Have the children decide if the situation sets a good example or a bad example. Attach the papers to the chalkboard under either a “Good Example” heading or a “Bad Example” heading. For example, “I wear modest clothing” would go under “Good Example,” and “I swear sometimes” would go under “Bad Example.” Help the children look up, read, and memorize Matthew 5:16. Bear your testimony that Jesus Christ set the example for all of us.

2. Ask the children to think of a time when they bear others bear testimony. Explain that even though testimony meeting is a time for sharing testimonies, we can bear our testimonies at other times too. Look up 2 Timothy 1:7–8. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, “I wish that every member of this Church would put those words where he might see them every morning as he begins his day” (“Be Not Afraid,” *Liahona*, Feb. 2005, F2). He says that those words will give us courage, faith, and strength. Have the children write out verse 7 and the first part of verse 8 to take home and place it where they can see it every morning. Help the children feel the power of the testimonies of the prophets and apostles. If available, play a recording of a testimony from general conference or from the video Special Witnesses of Christ. Or read from an issue of the *Liahona*. ●



FROM THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Overcoming Challenges

Throughout his life, President Spencer W. Kimball faced many health challenges.

You may have cancer in your throat. I recommend we operate.

My sister died of cancer. I'd better have the operation.

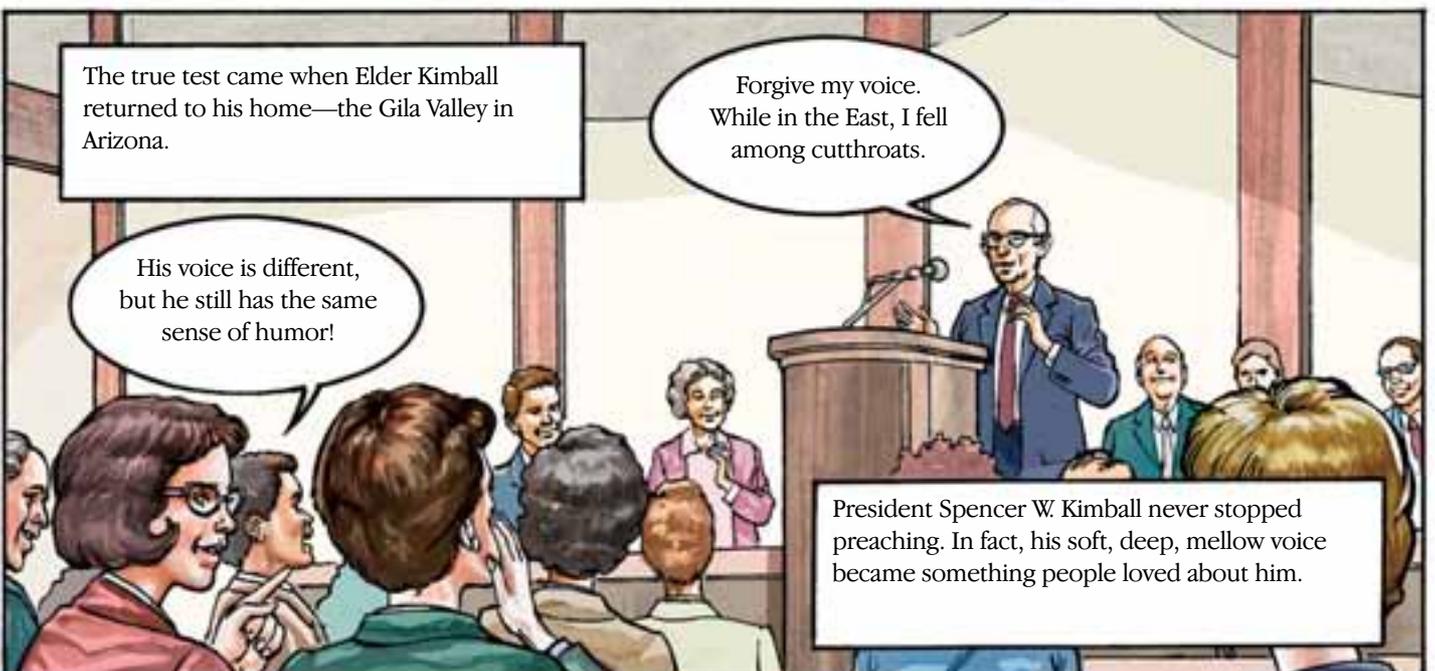
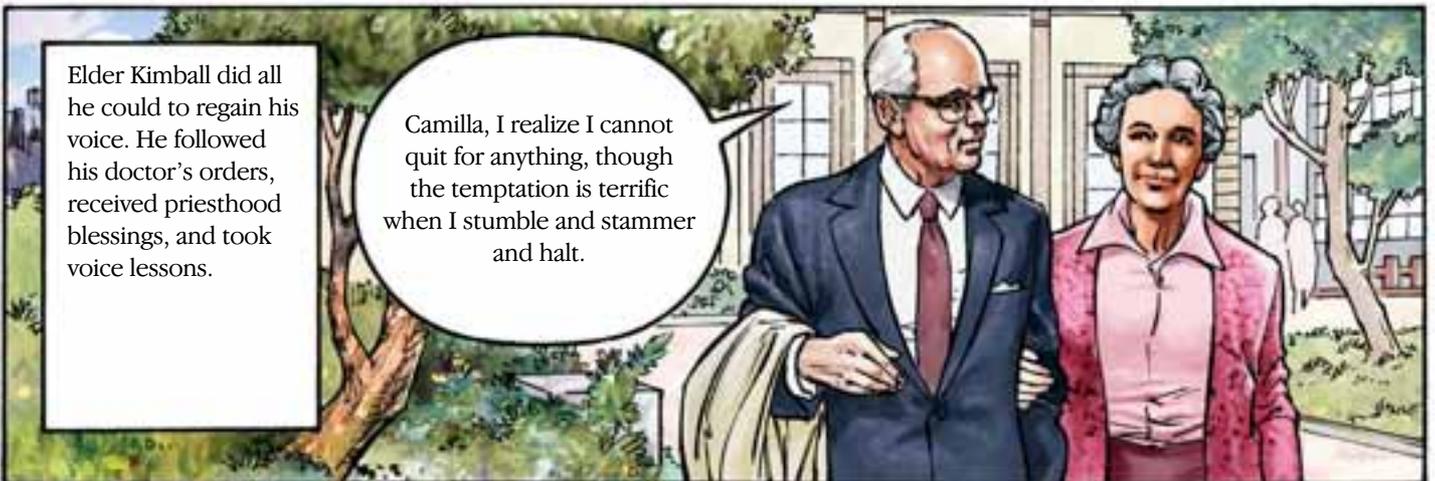
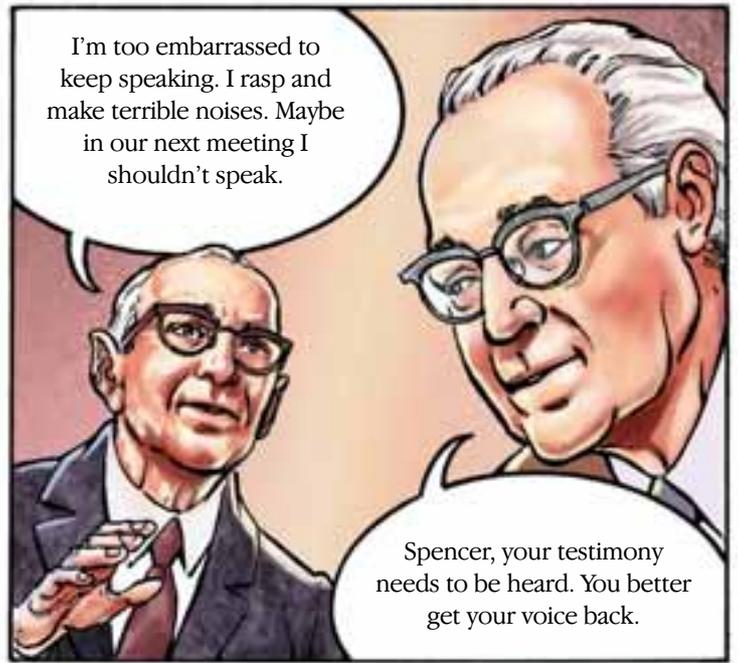
The surgeries that worried him the most were on his throat.

How can I continue to serve as an Apostle of the Lord if I lose my voice?

Once, as he was being wheeled out of an operating room, the attendant, angry at something, cursed, taking the Lord's name in vain.

Please don't say that. He is the person I love most in this world.

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said it.



Adapted from Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball (1977)*, 263–64, 306–312; Francis M. Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball: Resolute Disciple, Prophet of God (1995)*, 179–81, 211–15; and *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball (2006)*, xxv–xxvi, 157.

The Glory of God



From an interview with Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; by Kimberly Webb, Church Magazines

“If a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience . . . , he will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130:19).

I have spent most of my life involved in education. When I was younger, I thought education meant going to school, taking tests, and getting good grades. But as I grew older, I began to learn the difference between doing well in school and becoming educated. A person can do well on tests and still not be educated. True education is learning how to learn. Once I discovered that lesson, learning became fun.

One of the primary purposes of mortality is to learn—to gain knowledge and intelligence. Doctrine and Covenants 93:36 states, “The glory of God is intelligence.” You might think intelligence means being gifted in academic

work, but intelligence also means applying the knowledge we obtain for righteous purposes.

Knowledge, both temporal and spiritual, comes in steps. My testimony grew line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little (see Isaiah 28:10)—the way it does for almost all members of the Church. As a boy, I recall my mother reading Book of Mormon and Church history stories to me. I felt a sweet, peaceful, reassuring feeling that what I was learning was true. This feeling developed into a sincere desire to learn more by studying the scriptures. Nothing has had a greater impact upon my life than reading, studying, and searching the scriptures in order to gain more knowledge and intelligence.

I grew up in California as a teenager



Is Intelligence

during a time when evil influences, such as drugs and bad music, became increasingly popular. Because of the knowledge I had been blessed to receive, I chose not to participate in those things. I was preparing to become a missionary and serve the Lord. In the mission field, the knowledge that I was serving the Lord strengthened my determination to work hard in building His kingdom. Laboring as a missionary is perhaps one of the greatest ways to learn and obtain spiritual knowledge.

The real value of learning is that it enables you in any situation to be resourceful—to figure out what to do when you have no idea what to do! We are

frequently taught in the scriptures to seek learning by study and by faith (see D&C 88:118). In our own lives, in our families, and in the Church, we can receive blessings of spiritual strength, direction, and protection as we seek by faith to gain intelligence and apply spiritual knowledge in righteousness. ●

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DILLEEN MARSH



HOME

Lovingly ♩ = 92 100

D G D G A⁷ D

1. Home is where the heart is And warmth and love a - bound.
 2. Home is where there's fa - ther, With strength and wis - dom true.
 3. Home is where our Fa - ther, Who dwells in heav'n a - bove,

G D G A⁷ D

Home is where warm, cir - cling arms Go all the way a - round.
 Home is where there's moth - er And all the chil - dren, too.
 Guides us in the way we live And lets us feel His love.

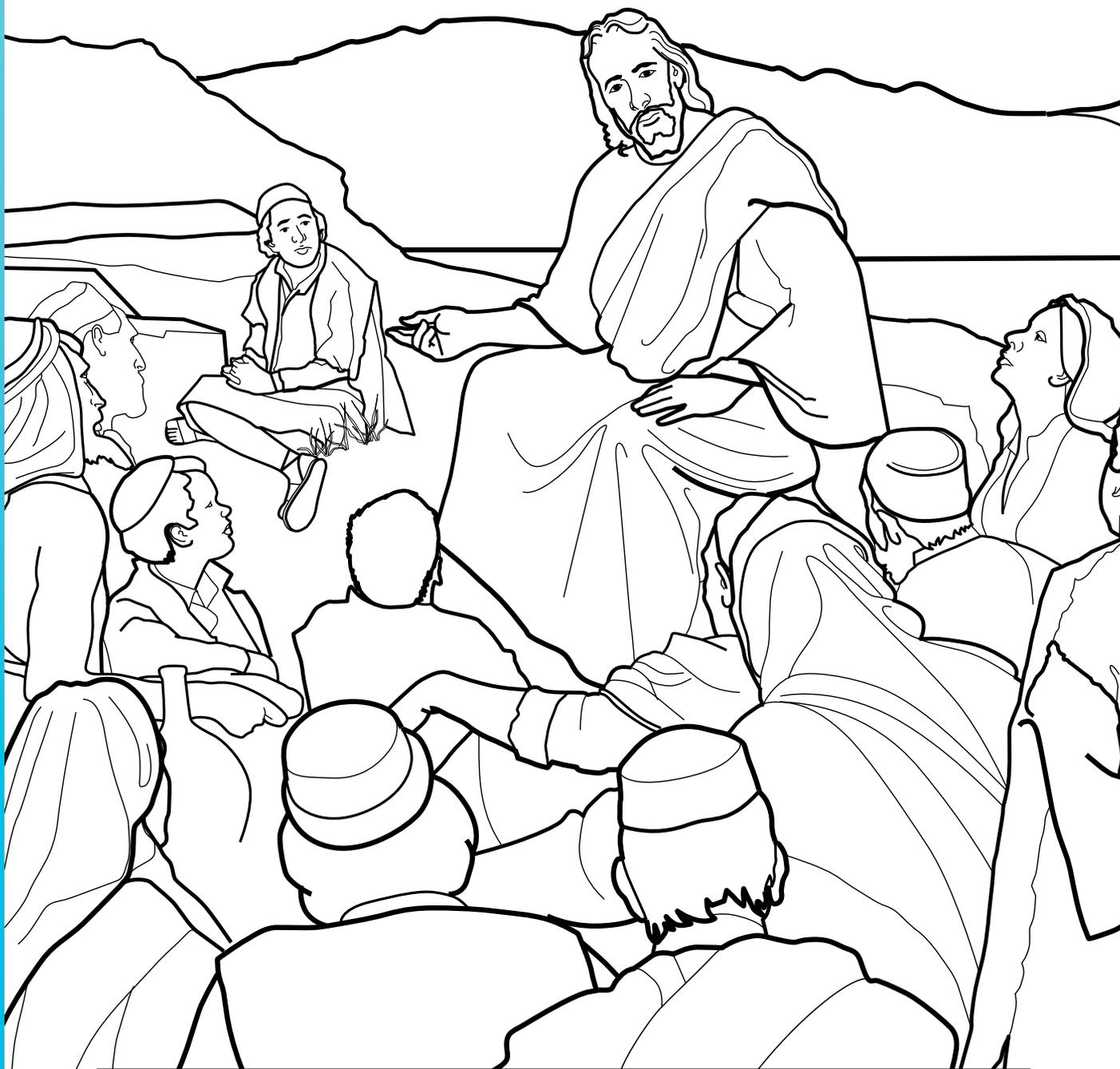
Words: Caroline Eyring Miner, 1907 1999
 Music: K. Newell Dayley, b. 1939

1 John 4:7

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ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE KROPP





I SHOW MY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST WHEN I SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH OTHERS

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

"He who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:21).

Missing Michael

BY SHEILA KINDRED

Based on a true story

There's the steeple!" Natalie called out. She loved going to church. Sunday was her favorite day of the week, except for one thing—she was sad that her brother, Michael, chose not to go to church with the rest of the family.

As Natalie sat quietly during sacrament meeting, she thought about Michael. When he used to come to church, Natalie liked to sit next to him while she looked at her picture books about Jesus. After sacrament meeting, Michael would take her hand and walk her to Primary. "See you later, Sis," he would always say. But Michael hadn't been to church in a long time.

Natalie wished she could tie him up with her jump rope and pull him to church in her little red wagon, but she knew he wouldn't like that. What else could she do?

In Primary, Sister Chang greeted her class cheerfully. "I am so glad you are all here today," she said. "It makes me happy to see your smiling faces. But who is missing?"

Natalie looked around the room. She raised her hand. "Jed," she called out. "Jed isn't here today."

"You are right," Sister Chang said. "Jed wasn't here last week either."

"Maybe he's sick," Lisa suggested.

"Maybe he's on a trip," Boyd said.

"Maybe he just didn't want to come," Natalie said quietly.

"We need to let him know we love him and miss him when he's gone," Sister Chang said.

"How can we do that?" Natalie asked.

"We'll tell him," Sister Chang said. "Little things can often make a big difference. I made a card for you to sign, and you can each draw a special picture for Jed."

Natalie decided to draw a picture of a mountain and trees because she knew that Jed liked the outdoors. And then Natalie asked her teacher if she could draw another picture to take home.

When Natalie got home from church, she found Michael in his room listening to music. "Hi, Sis," he greeted her. "What's up?"

Natalie handed him a folded piece of paper. "I made you a card."

"For me?" Michael smiled. "Why? It's not my birthday or anything."

"Sister Chang helped me write the inside. It says, 'I miss you when you don't come to church with us. I love you.' And I signed my name."

"Thanks," Michael said softly. "It's a nice card. You did a good job."

"You're welcome." Natalie gave her brother a hug and hurried off to help Mom fix dinner. She felt happy inside. She loved her brother so much, and now he knew it too.





The following Sunday, Natalie was so excited when Michael decided to go to church. She held his hand as they entered the chapel. She sat quietly next to him during the service. Natalie saw Jed sitting two rows up and gave him a little wave.

Natalie loved going to church, especially when all her friends and family were there. She decided that from now on, if she missed someone, she would say so, because sometimes little things can make a big difference. ●



“It is our responsibility . . . to see that every one who is baptized is encouraged and made to feel the wondrous warmth of this gospel of our Lord.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Liahona*, July 1999, 124; *Ensign*, May 1999, 110.

Growing in Faith

YONDONJAMTS OF ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA

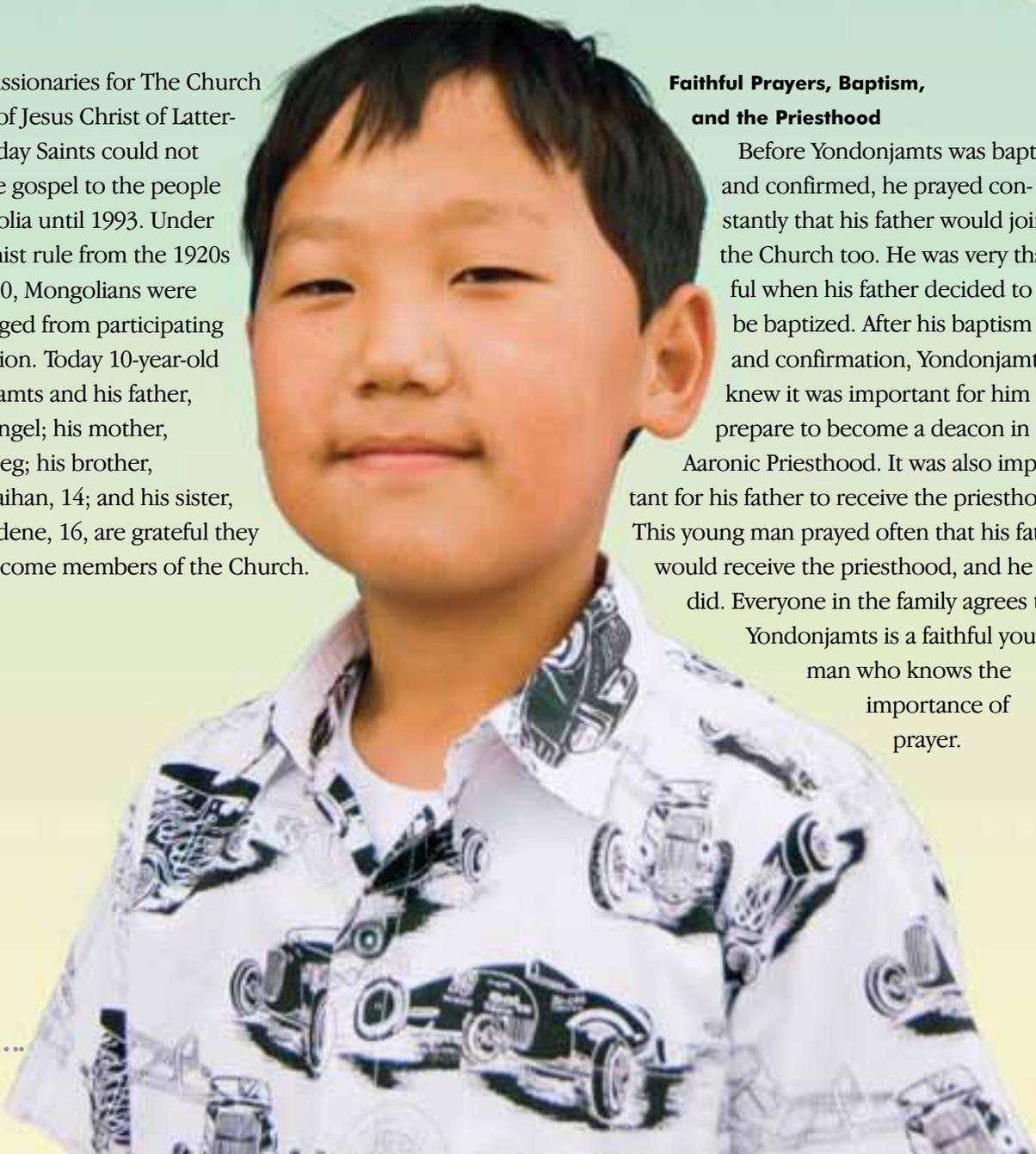
BY DON L. SEARLE AND JULIE WARDELL

Church Magazines

Missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints could not teach the gospel to the people of Mongolia until 1993. Under communist rule from the 1920s until 1990, Mongolians were discouraged from participating in a religion. Today 10-year-old Yondonjamts and his father, Bayartsengel; his mother, Gantsetseg; his brother, Monkhsaihan, 14; and his sister, Bolor-Erdene, 16, are grateful they could become members of the Church.

Faithful Prayers, Baptism, and the Priesthood

Before Yondonjamts was baptized and confirmed, he prayed constantly that his father would join the Church too. He was very thankful when his father decided to be baptized. After his baptism and confirmation, Yondonjamts knew it was important for him to prepare to become a deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood. It was also important for his father to receive the priesthood. This young man prayed often that his father would receive the priesthood, and he did. Everyone in the family agrees that Yondonjamts is a faithful young man who knows the importance of prayer.



Forever Family

Just more than a year after his dad was baptized and confirmed, the family traveled to the Hong Kong China Temple. Yondonjamts was glad his family was sealed in the temple so they can be a forever family. While at the temple, he asked that a woman's name be put on the prayer roll so people in the temple could pray for her. He was concerned about her injured leg, and he was grateful when she got better.



His Favorite Things to Do

1. Play basketball.
2. Draw.
3. Make finger puppets.
4. Go to church.
5. Eat rice soup and grapes.
6. Visit the east side of the city.



School

A fourth-grader, Yondonjamts likes math and origami (folding paper into shapes). He is studying English and Mongolian in school. His favorite book is *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde. His mother says he is a good student who is very obedient. The school is just a five-minute walk from his home.

Family Home Evening

In family home evening, the family reads the scriptures, acts out plays, sings songs, does Church history quizzes, and eats treats. Yondonjamts enjoys reading in the Book of Mormon about Alma praying for his son to learn the truth and repent. Yondonjamts likes the fact that Alma the Younger did repent and change his life (see Mosiah 27:8–31).

Yondonjamts's school



Preparing for a Mission

Yondonjamts wants to serve a mission someday. He is preparing to be a missionary by praying, reading the scriptures, attending his Church meetings, and trying to be faithful and righteous. He is also taking piano lessons. Because the weather in Mongolia is very cold in the winter, a mission in Hawaii appeals to him.

Where in the World Is Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia?

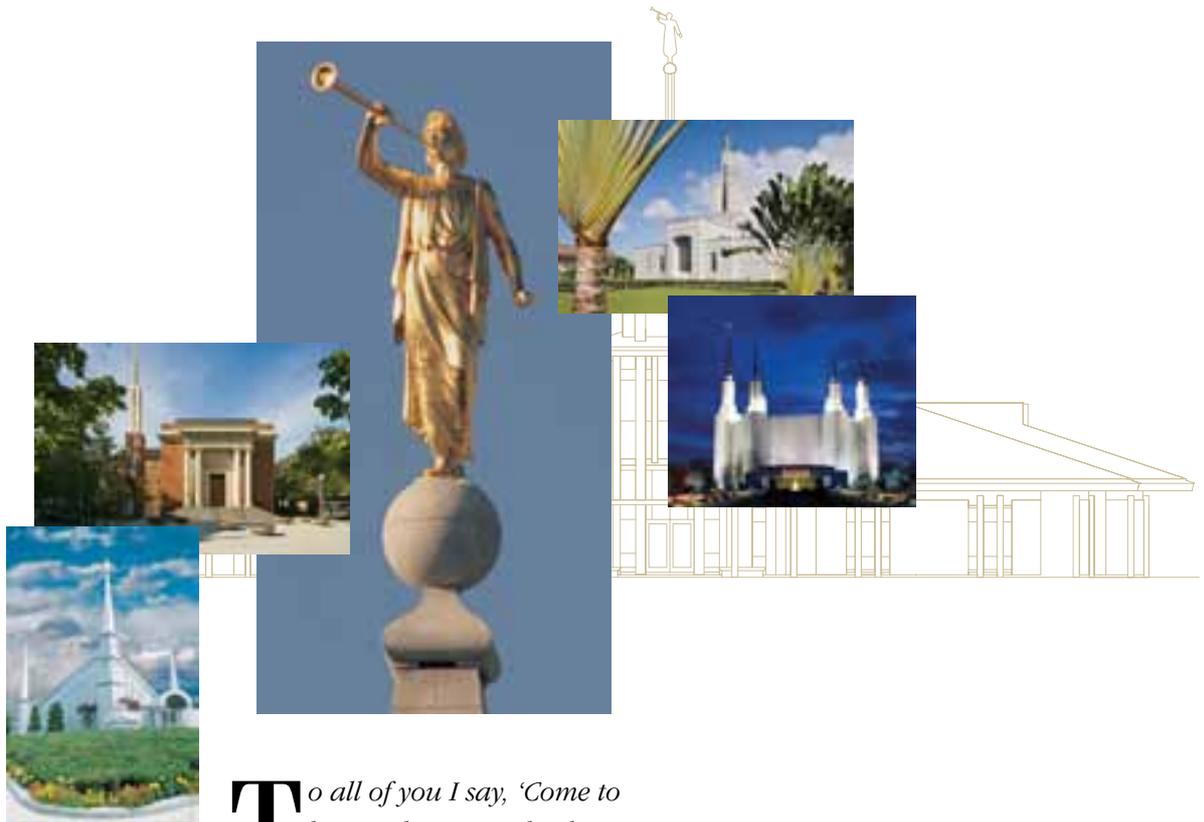
Mongolia is a mountainous country located between China and Russia. Ulaanbaatar is the capital.



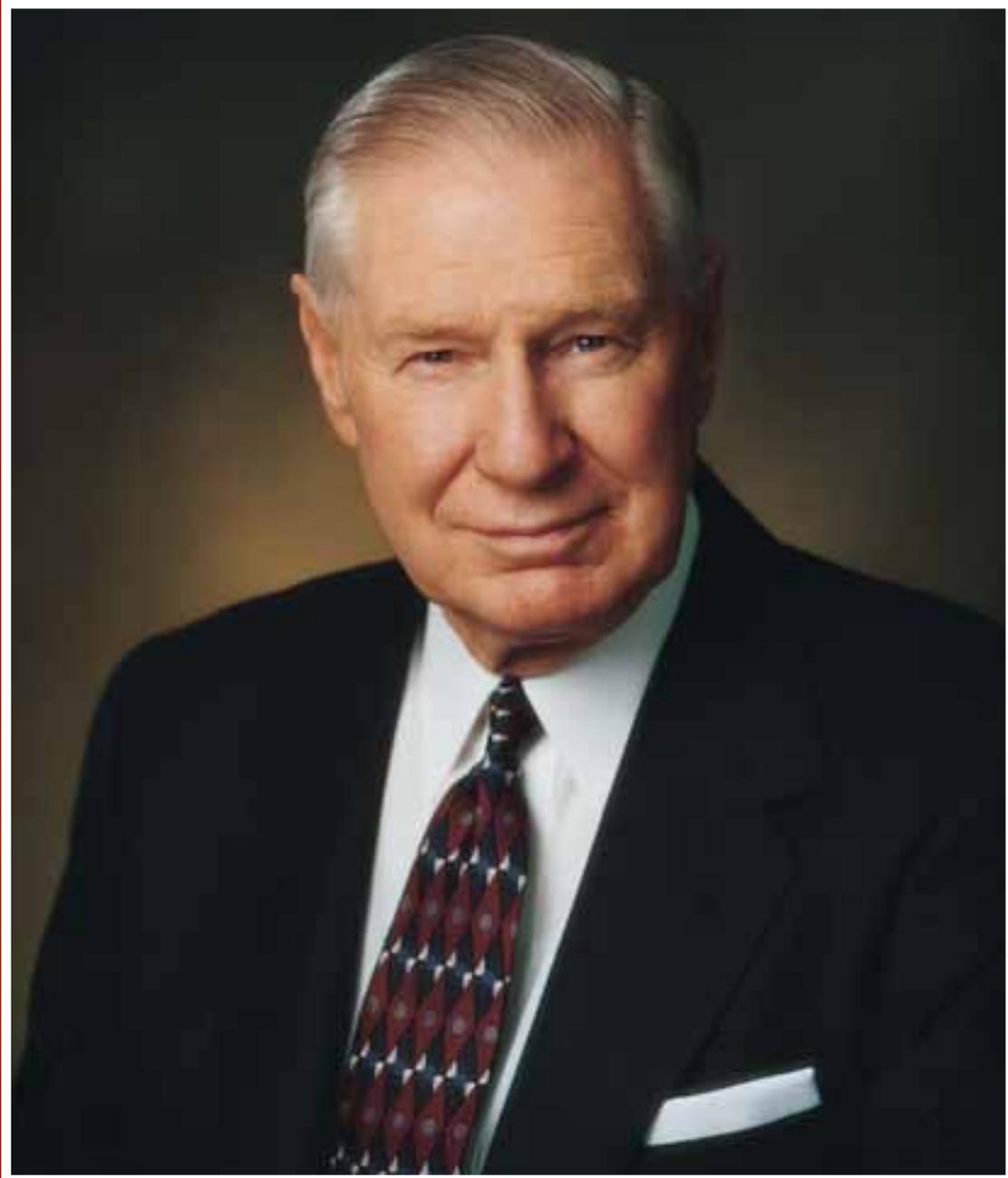
Primary

It takes the family about 20 minutes to travel by bus to attend the Bayanzurkh Branch. In Primary, Yondonjamts likes singing and listening to the music. He enjoys sharing time too. ●





To all of you I say, ‘Come to the temple.’ It may be that you look forward to the once-in-a-lifetime privilege of going there to receive your own endowment, to receive your own blessings, and to enter into your own covenants with the Lord. It may be that you have been there once or twice already. It may be that you go frequently. It may even be that you are an officiator. Whatever the circumstances may be, come to the temple.” See President Boyd K. Packer, “Come to the Temple,” p. 14.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BUSATH PHOTOGRAPHY

PRESIDENT
JAMES E. FAUST
Beloved Shepherd

JULY 31, 1920—AUGUST 10, 2007



Above: Young James Faust (right) with his brothers Rex (left) and Dan. Right: James E. Faust as a missionary.



James E. Faust always remembered the bleating of his frightened lamb. As a small boy he forgot to put his pet in the barn one night when a storm arose.

“I knew that I should help my pet, but I wanted to stay safe, warm, and dry in my bed. I didn’t get up as I should have done,” he recalled during a priesthood session of general conference. “The next morning I went out to find my lamb dead. A dog had also heard its bleating cry and killed it.”

“My heart was broken,” he said. He realized that he had not been a good shepherd. His father’s loving rebuke hurt him even more: “Son, couldn’t I trust you to take care of just one lamb?”¹

That day James resolved that he would try his best to never neglect his stewardship should he have the opportunity again to be a shepherd. As a full-time missionary in Brazil, devoted husband and father, successful lawyer, political leader, member of the

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Second Counselor in the First Presidency, he remembered his resolution. To the end of his ministry, which closed on August 10, 2007, when he died of causes incident to age, President Faust remained devoted to the Lord’s admonition: “Feed my lambs” (John 21:15).

Family and Faith

James Esdras Faust was born in Delta, Utah, on July 31, 1920, one of five sons of George A. and Amy Finlinson Faust. The family later moved to Salt Lake City, where George worked as an attorney and district court judge. At home and on the farms of his grandparents in central Utah, young James enjoyed the love and support of a Christ-centered family and honed the virtues of honesty, hard work, and service.

“No man ever had a better father than did I,”² he said. Of his mother he recalled, “She was a deeply spiritual, saintly woman who fully exemplified Christlike living.”³

As an adult President Faust strove to honor and emulate his parents, always giving priority to family and Church. “There is no greater responsibility than that of being a husband and a father,”⁴ he taught. Of the Church and its mission, he declared, “Nothing in the world is equal to this work.”⁵

After high school, where he excelled in football and track, he was called to serve in the Brazil Mission from 1939 to 1942. While he was in Brazil, his love for God’s children and their welfare blossomed. “I was born with partial color-blindness,” he said. “I have learned to love all of the people in the countries where I have been as a missionary, soldier, or General Authority, regardless of the color of their skins. I hope to be a disciple . . . especially for the



Above: James Faust (fourth from left) running track as a student. Right: With his parents, Amy and George Faust, and his son James.

humble, the downtrodden, the poor, the afflicted, the needy, and the poor in spirit. I am mindful that if we forget these, we can in no way be [the Lord's] disciples."⁶

Six weeks after returning from his mission, President Faust joined the U.S. Army Air Corps. While on leave in 1943 he married Ruth Wright, whom he had known since high school, in the Salt Lake Temple. While away during World War II, he wrote her a letter every day.⁷ Of the Fausts' relationship, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "Theirs is an absolute model of a beautiful marriage."⁸

His deep devotion to Ruth and their 5 children, 25 grandchildren, and 27 great-grandchildren and her unflinching support for him were apparent to all who knew them.

"With all my heart I want my children to know that I cannot succeed in this calling unless I also succeed as their father, and that they will always be paramount in my life,"⁹ he said after being called as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1972.

After he was sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles six years later, his first thought was to find Ruth,¹⁰ who he said was "as much a part of me as my heart and soul."¹¹

A Moral Compass

Shortly after applying to officers' candidate school in 1942, President Faust was summoned before a board of inquiry. Nearly all of the questions the board asked him centered on his standards and beliefs. Did he smoke? Did he drink? Did he pray? Though fearful of giving offense, President Faust answered each question without equivocation. Then he was asked whether the moral code should be relaxed during times of war.

"I recognized that here was a chance perhaps to make some points and look broad-minded," he said. "I suspected that the men who were asking me this question did not live by the standards that I had been taught. The thought flashed through my mind that perhaps I could say that I had my own beliefs,

MILESTONES IN THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST

July 31, 1920

Born in Delta, Utah, to George A. and Amy Finlinson Faust

1937–39

Attended the University of Utah in Salt Lake City

1939–42

Served a mission in Brazil

Apr. 21, 1943

Married Ruth Wright in the Salt Lake Temple

1942–45

Served during World War II in the U.S. Army Air Corps, honorably discharged as a first lieutenant

1948

Graduated from the University of Utah with bachelor's and Juris Doctor degrees; began practicing law in Salt Lake City



May 8, 1949

Sustained as bishop of the Big Cottonwood Ward

1949–51

Served in the Utah House of Representatives

Mar. 18, 1956

Sustained as Cottonwood Stake president

May 31, 1962

Elected president of the Utah State Bar

1962

Appointed by U.S. president John F. Kennedy to the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Racial Unrest

Dec. 14, 1968

Called as a regional representative

Jan. 1970

Appointed to the *Deseret News* board of directors

Oct. 6, 1972

Sustained as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Oct. 1, 1976

Sustained to the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy



Top left: Ruth Wright Faust. Above: Elder and Sister Faust, about 1980. Right: A wedding photo, 1943.



but I did not wish to impose them on others. But there seemed to flash before my mind the faces of the many people to whom I had taught the law of chastity as a missionary. In the end I simply said, 'I do not believe there is a double standard of morality.' ”¹²

To his surprise, he passed the inquiry and was selected for officers' candidate school.

“In all my long years of life I have tried not to hide who I am and what I believe,” he said at the last general conference he attended. “I cannot recall a single instance when it hurt my career or I lost valued friends by humbly

acknowledging that I was a member of this Church.”¹³

Honesty, which President Faust called “a moral compass,” served him well during his 24-year practice as an attorney. His integrity—coupled with a reputation for being fair, making wise decisions, and showing compassion and concern for others—distinguished him among his colleagues and led to opportunities for professional, civic, and community



PHOTOGRAPH BY NEWMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

service. He served in the Utah legislature from 1949 to 1951, as president of the Utah Bar Association from 1962 to 1963, on U.S. president John F. Kennedy’s Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Racial Unrest, and as a member of the Utah Constitutional Revision Commission.

President Faust’s unique blend of empathy and ability also helped him to serve effectively as a bishop, high councilor, stake president, regional representative, Assistant to the Twelve, Seventy, and Apostle. “In each of these callings,” observed Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “he demonstrated that a good leader is always a good listener.”¹⁴

Building Bridges

Though unassuming and quick to deflect credit, President Faust made many significant



PHOTOGRAPH BY ELDON K. UNSCHOTEN

contributions to the Church throughout decades of service. As a member of the Church’s Public Affairs Committee, he brought his legal expertise to play on several political issues that had moral implications, including proposed pari-mutuel betting in Utah. He also advocated changing the Church’s logo to emphasize Jesus Christ. In addition, he helped shepherd the Church’s decision to retain the services of a worldwide public relations firm that has helped the Church spread its message, correct misconceptions, and improve media relations.

He also worked to build bridges with members and leaders of other faiths. In those efforts he was slow to be offended but quick to show patience, kindness, and understanding.

At one community event he and Sister Faust attended, a leader of another faith criticized the Church. Sister Faust recalled, “I became steamier and steamier as he went on, but Jim just listened patiently. Afterwards, he went up to this man and said, ‘Now, Reverend, if you feel that way, we must be doing something wrong. I’d like for us to have lunch together so that you can let me know what your concerns are.’ They did, and

Above: Elder Faust (far left) as a new member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, about 1979. Left: President and Sister Faust with their children.



Left: At a 1995 press conference the new Church leadership is introduced: President Thomas S. Monson (left), First Counselor in the First Presidency; President Gordon B. Hinckley; President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency; and President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Below: The First Presidency at the Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple.

June 1977

Called to preside over the International Mission

Sept. 30, 1978

Sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Mar. 12, 1995

Set apart as Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Apr. 27, 1998

Received a Brazilian national citizenship award—an honor given to only a few world leaders

2000

Dedicated seven temples: Oaxaca Mexico, Tuxtla Gutiérrez Mexico, Medford Oregon, Memphis Tennessee, Nashville Tennessee, San José Costa Rica, and Oklahoma City Oklahoma

Aug. 10, 2007

Died in Salt Lake City, Utah, at age 87

the two have been good friends ever since.”¹⁵

In the 1980s President Faust worked closely with President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, then president of Brigham Young University, to turn their vision of BYU’s Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies into reality. President Faust and President Hunter waded through intense negotiations and prolonged opposition in leasing land and overseeing construction of the center.

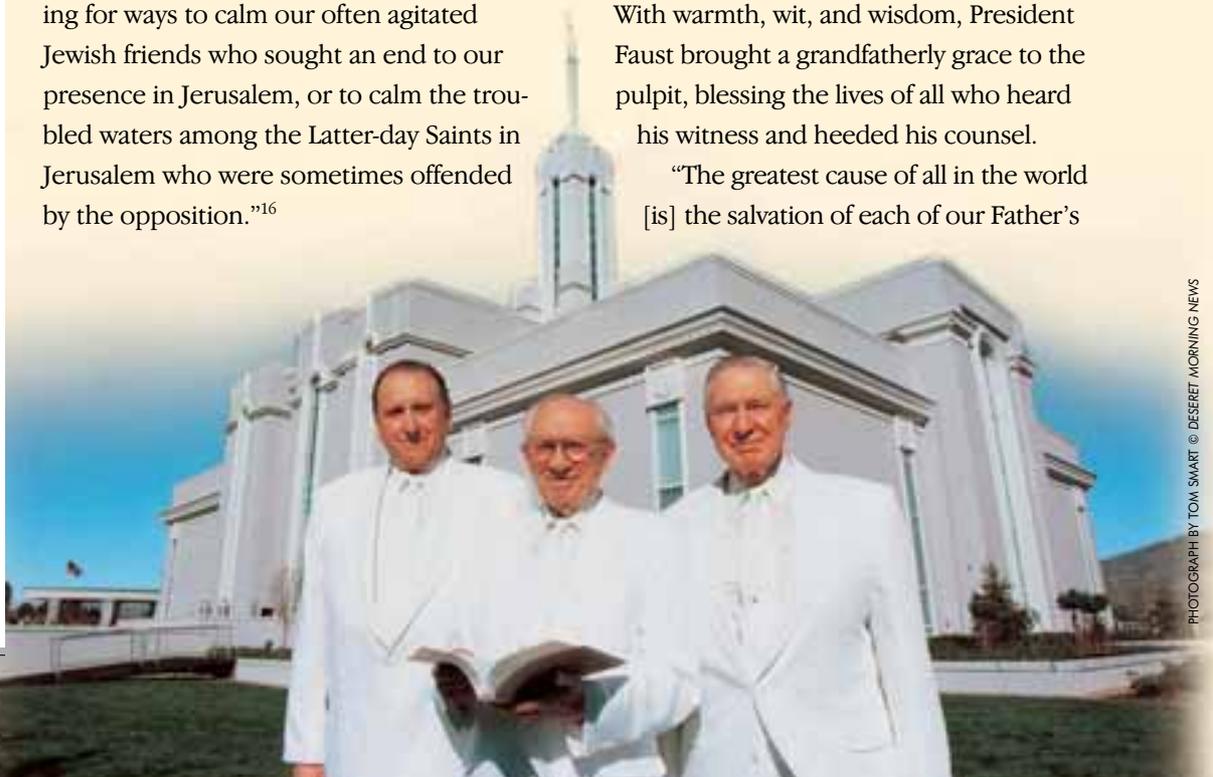
One eyewitness to the process said, “Elder Faust was truly a man of peace, always looking for ways to calm our often agitated Jewish friends who sought an end to our presence in Jerusalem, or to calm the troubled waters among the Latter-day Saints in Jerusalem who were sometimes offended by the opposition.”¹⁶

Reaching Out

Whether laboring in Brazil as the Area Supervisor for South America from 1975 to 1977, presiding over the International Mission in 1977 as a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, ministering to Church members as an Apostle since 1978, or serving as Second Counselor to President Gordon B. Hinckley since 1995, President Faust always strove to reach out in a spirit of kindness and brotherhood.

His conference addresses often reflected the Savior’s two great injunctions: to love and serve God and to love and serve His children. With warmth, wit, and wisdom, President Faust brought a grandfatherly grace to the pulpit, blessing the lives of all who heard his witness and heeded his counsel.

“The greatest cause of all in the world [is] the salvation of each of our Father’s



children,”¹⁷ he said. “The greatest fulfillment in life comes by rendering service to others.”¹⁸

In his August 2007 First Presidency Message, President Faust said he hoped “to offer opportunities for development and happiness for all members, whether married or single.” Recalling the parable of the good shepherd, he added, “Seeking out the one who needs our help involves reaching out in many ways.”¹⁹

In his last general conference address, he testified of the healing power of forgiveness. “For all of us who forgive ‘those who trespass against us’ [Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:13], even those who have committed serious crimes, the Atonement brings a measure of peace and comfort,” he said. “Let us remember that we need to forgive to be forgiven. . . . With all my heart and soul, I believe in the healing power that can come to us as we follow the counsel of the Savior to ‘forgive all men’ [D&C 64:10].”²⁰

Testimony

During his ministry President Faust often bore testimony of the Book of Mormon, the Restoration, the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the keys and authority held by Presidents of the Church. “It is President Hinckley’s voice we need to hear today, his counsel we need to follow,” he declared, “so that the best things can happen to us.”²¹

President Faust also bore a fervent testimony of the Savior, writing the words to the song “This Is the Christ” and testifying: “Those of us who hold the holy apostleship always wish to fulfill our responsibility by testifying of the divinity of the Savior. I feel compelled to do so. I have had a testimony all of my life. Recently, however, there has come



PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW REIER

FUNERAL TRIBUTES FROM THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

“His wisdom was deep and profound. It came of long experience in many fields. He brought with him the mind of a lawyer and the compassion of a Church leader. . . . His faith in the truth of the restored gospel was unflagging. There was no doubt in his mind concerning the prophetic calling of Joseph Smith. He had no doubt about the validity of the Book of Mormon. . . .

“His passing has been one of peace and love and light. Peace be to his memory. All of us are the richer for our association with him.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“He was a man of experience, a man of wisdom, a man of love. He was a man of faith, a man of prayer, but most of all he was a man of God. There was no chink in his armor; there was no guile in his soul; there was no flaw in his character.

“President Faust loved the Lord with all his heart and soul and served Him with all his might to the very end of his mortal life. . . . He was a teacher of truth. He left behind a heritage of honor and a legacy of love. God bless his memory.”

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency



Above: A younger James Faust speaks in the Tabernacle, about 1970. Right: President Faust addresses general conference, April 2007.



PHOTOGRAPH BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN

into my soul an overpowering witness of the divinity of this holy work. This sure witness is more certain than ever before in my life.”²²

President Faust never forgot the frightened lamb of his boyhood. And he never forgot his resolve as a steward to the fold. By endeavoring to emulate the Good Shepherd, of whom he had an “unshakable”²³ testimony, he led a life that became his best sermon—the sermon of a beloved shepherd. ■

NOTES

1. “Responsibilities of Shepherds,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 46.
2. “To Become One of the Fishers,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1973, 81.
3. In Wm. Grant Bangerter, “Elder James E. Faust,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1986, 7.
4. *Ensign*, May 1995, 46.
5. “Finding the Abundant Life,” *Liabona*, Nov. 2000, 5; *Ensign*, July 2000, 4.
6. “Response to the Call,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 20.
7. See Neal A. Maxwell, “President James E. Faust: ‘Pure Gold,’ ”

- Liabona*, Oct. 1995, 21; *Ensign*, Aug. 1995, 16.
8. In James P. Bell, *In the Strength of the Lord: The Life and Teachings of James E. Faust* (1999), 229.
9. *Ensign*, Jan. 1973, 81.
10. See “Elder James E. Faust of the Quorum of the Twelve,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 95.
11. *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 20.
12. “Honesty—a Moral Compass,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 42; see also “Stand up and Be Counted,” *Tambuli*, Oct. 1982, 22–23.
13. “Message to My Grandsons,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2007, 56.
14. *Liabona*, Oct. 1995, 21; *Ensign*, Aug. 1995, 15.
15. *In the Strength of the Lord*, 178.
16. David Galbraith, in *In the Strength of the Lord*, 207.
17. “Go Bring Them in from the Plains,” *Liabona*, Nov. 1997, 7; *Ensign*, July 1997, 7.
18. “What’s in It for Me?” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 22.
19. “Welcoming Every Single One,” *Liabona*, Aug. 2007, 3, 5; *Ensign*, Aug. 2007, 5, 7.
20. “The Healing Power of Forgiveness,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2007, 69.
21. “It Can’t Happen to Me,” *Liabona*, July 2002, 54; *Ensign*, May 2002, 48.
22. “The Weightier Matters of the Law: Judgment, Mercy, and Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 59.
23. Thomas S. Monson, in *Liabona*, Oct. 1995, 19; *Ensign*, Aug. 1995, 14.