

Liahona



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Send manuscripts and queries to *Liahona*, Rm. 2420,
50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220,
USA; or e-mail: liahona@ldschurch.org.

The *Liahona* (a Book of Mormon term meaning "compass"
or "director") is published in Albanian, Armenian, Bislama,
Bulgarian, Cambodian, Cebuano, Chinese, Croatian,
Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Fijian, Finnish,
French, German, Greek, Haitian, Hindi, Hungarian,
Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kiribati, Korean,
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The *Liahona* can be found in many languages on the
Internet at www.lds.org. For English, click on "Gospel
Library." For other languages, click on "Languages."

For Readers in the United States and Canada:
September 2007 Vol. 31 No. 9, LIAHONA (USPS 311-480)
English (ISSN 1080-9554) is published monthly by The
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North
Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150. USA subscription price
is \$10.00 per year; Canada, \$12.00 plus applicable taxes.
Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. Sixty days'
notice required for change of address. Include address label
from a recent issue; old and new address must be included.
Send USA and Canadian subscriptions to Salt Lake
Distribution Center at address below. Subscription help line:
1-800-537-5971. Credit card orders (Visa, MasterCard,
American Express) may be taken by phone. (Canada Post
Information: Publication Agreement #40017431)

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

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ON THE COVER

Front: Photograph by A. Angle.

Back: Photograph by John Luke.

THE FRIEND COVER

Illustration by Matt Smith.

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.

"Ordinary Men, Extraordinary Callings," p. 8: Ask

family members to describe a prophet. How does the world view prophets? Read aloud the descriptions of Elder Heber C. Kimball, Enoch, and Paul. Explain that Church leaders are ordinary people who were called of God. Using the

last five paragraphs, discuss how we can better follow our leaders. Make a gift (treat, picture, or card) to give to a local Church leader to show your gratitude.

"Seek Learning by

Faith," p. 16: Display several containers with various openings and capacities.

Try tossing coins or candy into the containers. Which containers are the most effective targets? Ask how each container can be likened to an individual's willingness to learn by the Spirit. Identify statements from



As you look for the Spanish CTR ring hidden in this issue, think of something good you can do for someone else.



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F8 Doing Good on the Sabbath Day

this article that describe effective learning. Make a goal to practice these principles.

“If a Bug Flies into Your Mouth,”

p. 32: Show an insect or a picture of an insect. Ask, “Would you eat this?” Discuss the author’s experience. Tell the story of Joseph of Egypt and how he “spit out” his temptation.

“Doing Good on the Sabbath Day,”

p. F8: Fold a sheet of paper to create eight squares. Discuss each idea from the article, and have family members draw a picture for each of the points. Ask family members

to add other Sabbath day activities on the other side of the paper. Use these ideas the next time you need a good Sabbath day activity.

“Miles and Miles of Smiles,”

p. F12: Cut a piece of brown paper into strips to represent pieces of wood. As you read the story, add a piece of “wood” for each act of charity listed to create a campfire. Explain that each stick of wood makes the campfire brighter. Invite family members to take the “wood” and write ways to serve during the coming week.

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Inspirational Thoughts

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

The Last Dispensation

“How wonderful it is that [God] has smiled with favor in this, the last dispensation, the dispensation of the fulness of times, when He has restored His work with all of its powers, with all of its glory and all of the truth and all of the authority of all previous dispensations in this great and final period of time. . . .

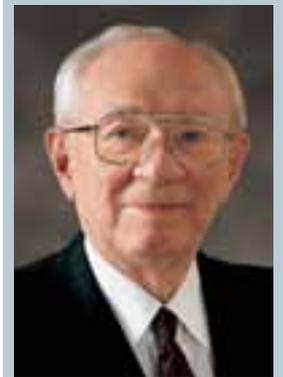
“I know that God our Eternal Father lives and loves us; that Jesus is His Beloved Son, our Redeemer, our Savior, our Lord, our Friend; that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet; that this Church is true; that it is Their work restored to the earth for our blessing and our happiness” (regional conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, May 4, 2003).

I Know the Gospel Is True

“Do I know [the gospel is] true? I want everybody in this hall tonight to realize that you each heard me say to you that I know that God our Eternal Father lives. I know that He lives. I know that He is a being of substance. I know that He is the great God of the universe. I know, however, that I am His child and that you are His children and that He will listen to and hear and answer our prayers.

“I know that Jesus is the Christ. He was the great instrument in the hands of God to create the earth. The Gospel of John says that nothing was made that was not made by Him [see John 1:3]. He was the Creator. He was the Jehovah of the Old Testament. He was the Christ child, who came and was born under humble circumstances. He was the Messiah, who walked a lonely road to His foreordained mission, healing the sick and raising the dead. He was the great Redeemer of the world, who died on Calvary’s hill and was resurrected the third day, ‘the firstfruits of them that slept’ (1 Corinthians 15:20). He it was who visited the Nephites on the American continent and taught them as He had taught in the Holy Land. And He it was who, with His Father, visited the boy Joseph and spoke to him concerning the Restoration of this work.

“I know that the priesthood is here upon the earth and is available to every man who lives worthy of it. I know that the ordinances of the temple are upon the earth, the great sealing ordinances under which we may be bound together as families for time and all eternity. I know that God will not forsake this work, but He will see that there is always someone through whom He can communicate



I know that God our Eternal Father lives and loves us; that Jesus is His Beloved Son, our Redeemer, our Savior, our Lord, our Friend; that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet; that this Church is true; that it is Their work restored to the earth for our blessing and our happiness.

Live the commandments of God so that you may come to the temple. Do those things which will make you eligible to serve in the house of the Lord. It has been built for you, my brothers and sisters.

His truths to the people” (meeting, Nairobi, Kenya, Aug. 4, 2005).

Modern Revelation

“How wonderful it is that we believe in modern revelation. I cannot get over the feeling that if revelation were needed anciently, when life was simple, that revelation is also needed today, when life is complex. There never was a time in the history of the earth when men needed revelation more than they need it now.

“I want to testify to you, my brothers and sisters, that the book of revelation is not closed. God directs this day and time and speaks as certainly today as He did in

the days of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob” (meeting, Madrid, Spain, May 29, 2004).

Put It to the Test

“I plead with you, my brothers and sisters, that if you have any doubt concerning any doctrine of this Church, that you put it to the test. Try it. Live the principle. Get on your knees and pray about it, and God will bless you with a knowledge of the truth of this work” (meeting, Paris, France, May 28, 2004).

Stand above Evil

“My dear young friends, never let anything stand in the way of your worthiness to enter the house of the Lord and there engage in a



PHOTOGRAPH OF MADRID SPAIN TEMPLE BY MARGARITA DIAZ LARA; HE IS RISEN BY DEL PARSON

great and marvelous service in behalf of those who have gone beyond.

“You face so much of evil. Stand above it. . . . I do not know that there was ever a time in the history of the world when there was greater evil in the world than there is today. I want to salute you, you young men and women of this Church who have stood strong in the face of evil. God bless you and give you strength to resist” (meeting, São Paulo, Brazil, Feb. 21, 2004).

The Very Purpose of This Work

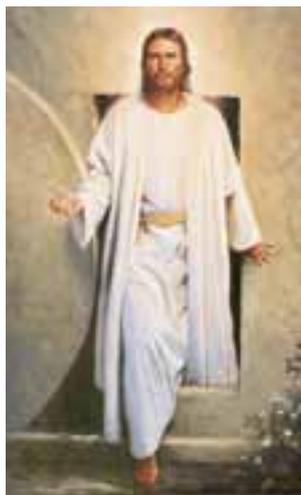
“I urge you, dear sisters, to attend the house of the Lord and to encourage your husbands to go with you. If, perchance, there may be some here who have never been or who have not been for a long time, I suggest with love in my heart that you do all that is necessary to qualify to do so. If you have not done so, you have missed, really, what this Church is all about. The very purpose of this work, as declared by the God of heaven, is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of men and women [see Moses 1:39]. Do you love your husband? Do you love your children and your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren? Then do not miss the opportunity to bind them to you in an eternal compact that time cannot destroy and death cannot break. This can be accomplished in no other way. . . .

“And if these blessings are available to [us] of this generation, would not a just God provide for a way to make them available to your forefathers who did not have such an opportunity?” (stake Relief Society meeting, Salt Lake City, Utah, Mar. 20, 2002).

Come to the Temple

“I wish to say to everyone here, come to the temple. Live worthy to come to the temple. Live the commandments of God so that you may come to the temple. Do those things which will make you eligible to serve in the house of the Lord. It has been built for you, my brothers and sisters, that you might have the opportunity of

coming here and receiving the wonderful blessings that can be had nowhere else in all the world, except in other temples, where you may be sealed together as husband and wife, where your children may be sealed to you, where you may work in behalf of your forebears, who have gone beyond. That great and marvelous and wonderfully unselfish work occurs in the house of the Lord. Come to the temple” (meeting, Aba, Nigeria, Aug. 6, 2005).



Live Worthy of the Priesthood

“God has given you [priesthood holders] something of power and divinity and reality and usefulness. He has blessed you with the very essence of His power, with the authority to speak in His sacred name and bring to pass His work to bless, to teach, to encourage, to help, to govern in the affairs of His kingdom—the power of the royal priesthood. There is nothing simple or nothing to be taken for granted concerning this. This is His divine power.

It is the power by which the earth was created and His work is carried forward. And He has deigned, as it were, to bestow upon you and me, out of His goodness and generosity, that power and authority. Oh, how we ought to strive to live worthy of it, to never do anything which would destroy our effectiveness as His sons in exercising this divine, sacred, and remarkable thing which we call the holy priesthood” (regional conference, Pleasant Grove, Utah, Jan. 19, 2003).

Blessings of Church Membership

“What a wonderful thing it is to belong to this Church. Have you ever stopped to think how empty your lives would be without it? How grateful we ought to be . . . for the tremendous blessings that come through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank you . . . for being faithful Latter-day Saints and for seeking to raise your children in light and truth, with a love for the Lord and His great and holy work” (stake conference, West Valley City, Utah, Nov. 10, 2002).

Divine Mission of Jesus Christ

“We are a great family bound together in a unity of love and faith. Our blessing is great, as a people and as individuals. We carry in our hearts a firm and unshakable conviction of the divine mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“He was the great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Creator who, under the direction of His Father, made all things and ‘without him was not any thing made that was made’ (John 1:3). He was the promised Messiah, who came with healing in His wings. He was the worker of miracles, the great healer, the Resurrection and the Life. His is the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved [see Acts 4:12]. . . .

“He came as a gift of His Eternal Father. ‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life’ (John 3:16).

“He condescended to leave His throne on high and come to earth to be born in a manger, in a conquered nation. He walked the dusty roads of that land, healing the sick, teaching the doctrine, blessing all who would accept Him. . . .

“On Calvary’s hill He gave His life for each of us. That is the greatest gift that any of us can ever receive. It is the gift of the Resurrection and eternal life.

“We honor His birth. But without His death, that birth would have been but one more birth. It was the Redemption which He worked out in the Garden of Gethsemane and upon the cross of Calvary which made His gift immortal, universal, and everlasting. His was a great Atonement for the sins of all mankind. He is the Resurrection and the Life, ‘the firstfruits of them that slept’ (1 Corinthians 15:20). Because of Him all men will be raised from the grave.

“We love Him. We honor Him. We thank Him. We worship Him. He has done for each of us and for all mankind that which none other could have done. God be thanked for the gift of His Beloved Son, our Savior, the Redeemer of the world, the Lamb without blemish, who was offered as a sacrifice for all mankind” (missionary devotional, Dec. 15, 2002).

The Blessings of the Atonement

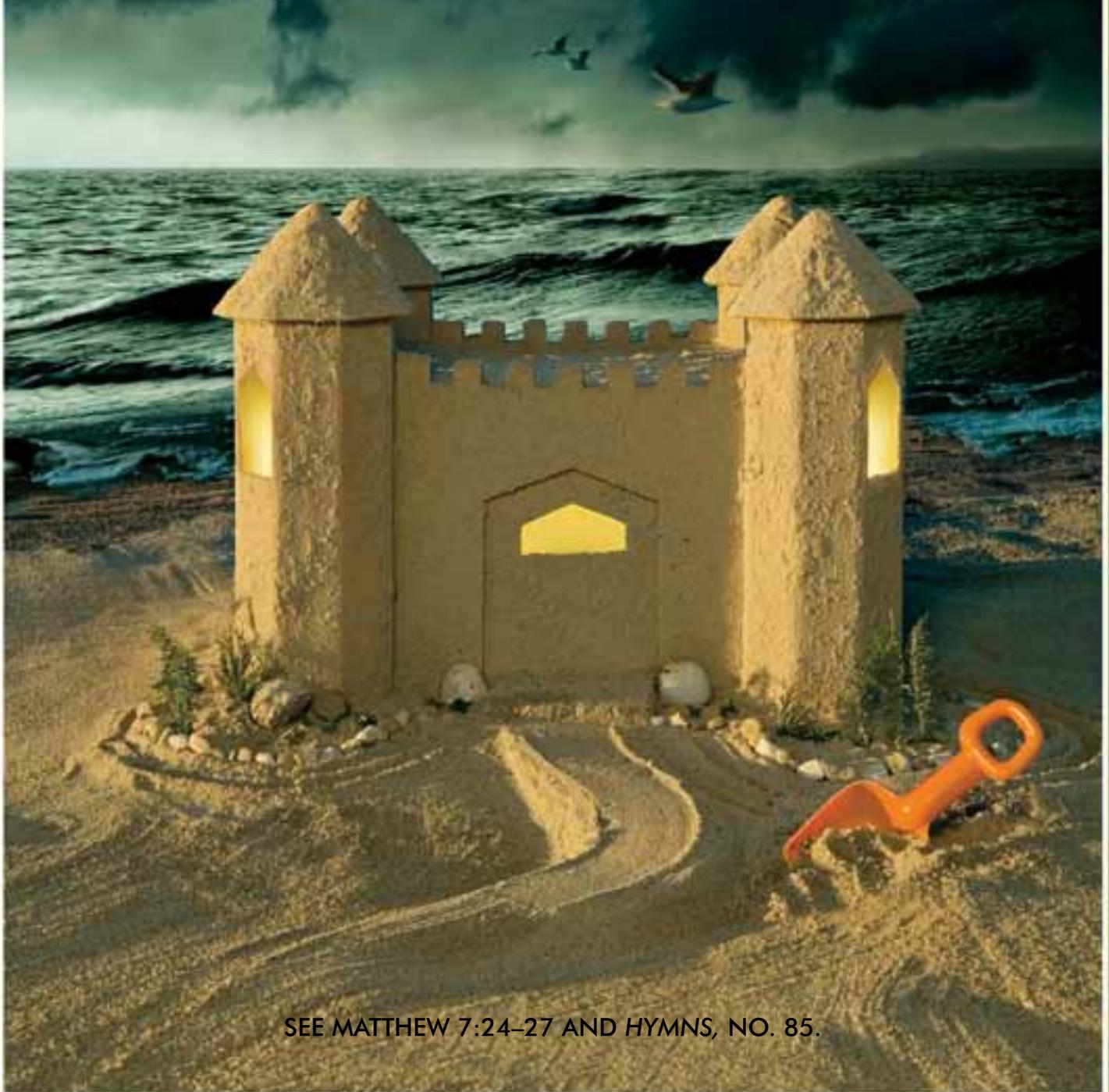
“[Jesus Christ’s] Atonement is the greatest event in human history. There is nothing to compare with it. It is the most fundamental part of our Father’s plan for the happiness of His children. Without it, mortal life would be a dead-end existence with neither hope nor future. The gift of our divine Redeemer brings an entirely new dimension to our lives. Because of our Savior’s sacrifice, instead of dismal oblivion, death becomes only a passage to a more glorious realm. The Resurrection becomes a reality for all. Eternal life becomes available to those who walk in obedience to His commandments” (Australia stake conference satellite broadcast, Feb. 12, 2005). ■

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. Show the article and a picture of President Hinckley. Explain that one of the prophet’s main roles is to teach and testify. Invite family members to take turns reading aloud a section that interests them. Testify of the importance of following the prophet.
2. Invite one family member to stand in a place where he or she can see things that no one else can. Ask that person to describe what he or she sees. Explain the role of a seer (see Mosiah 8:15–17). Read selections from the article. How do these statements from our prophet improve our spiritual vision?
3. Bring objects to represent sections in the article (the scriptures, a picture of a temple or of the Savior, and so on). Read the corresponding sections, and discuss how we can know these concepts came from our Heavenly Father. Testify that we can know the truth through the power of the Holy Ghost.

HOW FIRM IS YOUR FOUNDATION?



SEE MATTHEW 7:24-27 AND HYMNS, NO. 85.



Elijah was a man, yet he had such power with God that in answer to his prayers, the heavens withheld or gave rain and the earth gave forth fruit. Today the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, though men, are also prophets with power from on high.



Ordinary Men, Extraordinary Callings

BY ELDER BRUCE R. McCONKIE
(1915–85)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Are General Authorities human?" I suppose this is a question that is in many minds and has been from the very beginning. It arises, in the very nature of things, because of the high regard in which we hold the offices that these Brethren are called to fill.

I recall an incident from early Church history, from the days of persecutions and difficulties. Heber C. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, found himself in circumstances where he sought hospitality from a member of the Church, a widow woman. She offered him what she had—bread and milk—and provided a room with a bed for him. He went to retire. She thought: "Here's my opportunity. I would like to find out [and this is, in effect, the same old question: Are General Authorities human?] I would like to find out what an Apostle says when he prays to the Lord." So after the door was closed, she crept quietly up to it to listen. She heard Brother Kimball sit down on the bed. She heard each of his

shoes fall to the floor. She heard him lean back on the bed and then utter these words: "Oh Lord, bless Heber; he is so tired."

... This is a subject about which people often have incorrect concepts. Many people had this same question in their minds during the time of Joseph Smith. He said: "I was this morning introduced to a man from the east. After hearing my name, he remarked that I was nothing but a man, indicating by this expression, that he had supposed that a person to whom the Lord should see fit to reveal His will, must be something more than a man. He seemed to have forgotten the saying that fell from the lips of St. James, that [Elijah] was a man subject to like passions as we are, yet he had such power with God, that He, in answer to his prayers, shut the heavens that they gave no rain for the space of three years and six months; and again, in answer to his prayer, the heavens gave forth rain, and the earth gave forth fruit [see James 5:17–18]. Indeed, such is the darkness and ignorance of this generation, that they look upon it as incredible that a man should [speak] with his Maker."¹

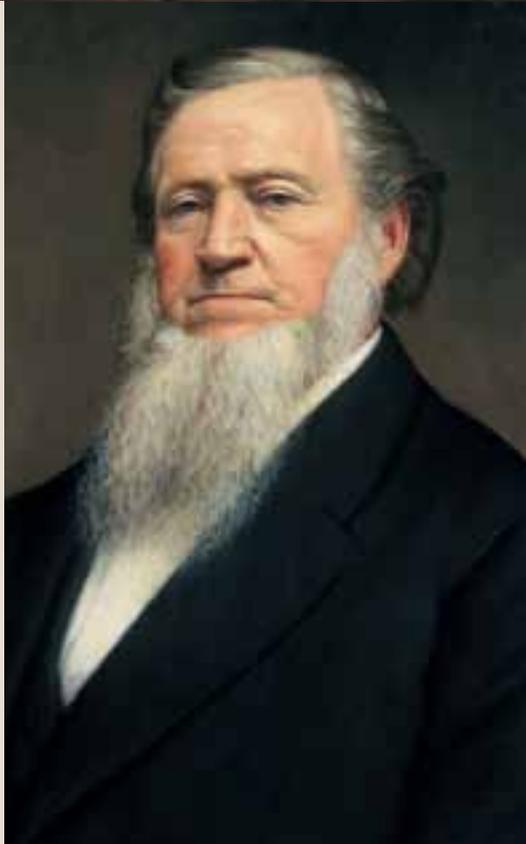
This is the view of the world generally:



Elder McConkie answered the question "Are General Authorities human?" by talking about the high regard we have for their callings.



Joseph Smith met a person who supposed that a prophet must be something more than a man. But Joseph Smith, like Brigham Young and the other prophets who followed, knew that even though he was inspired, he was also mortal.



“If there is such a thing as a prophet, he is so ennobled and exalted that he is different from the general run of men.” They may think of John the Baptist out in the desert eating locust and wild honey or of someone like Enoch of whom the people said, “A wild man has come among us” [see Moses 6:38].

There is somewhat this same concept in the Church today. We think of the dignity and glory and greatness of the office. Then some of that feeling spills over and is applied to the individual who holds the office.

There might be a way to put this subject in better perspective. Instead of asking, “Are the General Authorities human?” let me ask you, “Is your bishop human?” What would the answer be? Or if I say to you, “Are the missionaries human?” would the answer be yes or no? It depends entirely on what we are talking about. Certainly they are human in the sense that every foible and frailty and difficulty common to the human race attends all of them and all of us. But on the other hand, the General Authorities and the bishops and the missionaries—and this extends out and includes every member of the Church—ought not to be human in the sense of worldliness or carnal pursuits. None of us should be “human” if by that is meant living as carnal men live.

When we come into the Church, we say that we forsake the world. We are supposed to overcome the world. The Book of Mormon language is that we put off the natural man and become a saint through the Atonement of Christ the Lord (see Mosiah 3:19). Well, if we, all of us, lived up to our potential and raised ourselves to the standards that we ought to have, then none of us would be human in the worldly or the

carnal sense. Yet with it all we would be so in the sense that we are mortal and all that's related to it.

Under the heading "General Authorities" in my book *Mormon Doctrine*, I wrote: "Some General Authorities are empowered to do one thing and some another. All are subject to the strict discipline the Lord always imposes upon his saints and those who preside over them. The positions they occupy are high and exalted, but the individuals who hold these offices are humble men like their brethren in the Church. So well qualified and trained are the members of the Church that there are many brethren who could—if called, sustained, and set apart—serve effectively in nearly every important position in the Church."²

Further along in the book under the heading of "Prophets" is another statement: "With all their inspiration and greatness, prophets are yet mortal men with imperfections common to mankind in general. They have their opinions and prejudices and are left to work out their problems without inspiration in many instances. Joseph Smith recorded that he 'visited with a brother and sister from Michigan, who thought that "a prophet is always a prophet"; but I told them that a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such."³

Thus the opinions and views, even of a prophet, may contain error, unless those opinions and views were inspired by the Spirit. Inspired scripture or statements should be accepted as such. We have this problem, however. Paul was one of the greatest theologian-prophets of all the ages, but he had some opinions that weren't in complete accord with the Lord's feelings, and he wrote some of them down in his epistles. But being wise and discreet, he

labeled them as such. He said, "This is what I think." When he got through telling that, he said, "Now this is what the Lord thinks." Paul's views, his private opinions, were not as perfect as they might have been.

Prophets are men, and when they act by the Spirit of inspiration, what they say is the voice of God; but still they are mortal and they are entitled to and do have private opinions. Because of the great wisdom and judgment of

these men, their views may be as good as mortal men can have, but unless they are inspired, unless they are in accordance with the revelations, they are subject to error on the same basis as the views of anyone else in the Church.

We need not wonder vainly if the General Authorities are speaking by the Spirit of inspiration or not—we can discover for certain. I remind you that one of Joseph Smith's famous statements is to this effect: "The Lord will not reveal anything to Joseph that he will not reveal to the Twelve or to the least and last member of the Church as soon as he is able to bear it."⁴

That's perfect. That's the same doctrine that Paul taught. Paul said, "Ye may all prophesy." He said, "Covet to prophesy" (1 Corinthians 14:31, 39). The whole membership of the Church, the whole body of the Church is supposed to receive revelation. It's not reserved for a select few, the missionaries, or the bishops. We ought to get revelation. We all ought to be as the apostles and prophets. ■

From an article printed in the January 1973 New Era; punctuation and capitalization modernized.

NOTES

1. *History of the Church*, 2:302.
2. *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 309.
3. *Mormon Doctrine*, 608.
4. See *History of the Church*, 3:380.



The whole membership of the Church is supposed to receive revelation. It's not reserved for a select few, the missionaries, or the bishops. We ought to get revelation.



PULLING TOGETHER

Stretching for their Olympic dreams has helped the Palermo twins, Lucía and Mariano, realize they cannot reach their ultimate goal alone. Above: Lucía and a teammate compete in a race before the 2004 Athens Olympics.

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

Excitement thundered through Mariano Palermo's veins as he and his teammate rowed past the 1,000-meter mark in first place. They were halfway to his dream of winning the 2003 Argentine national rowing championship in men's pairs and a shot at participating in qualifiers for the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece.

They had settled into a great rhythm—their strong strokes catching the water in perfect harmony and propelling them ahead of the competition.

However, a few hundred meters later, Mariano's excitement chilled when fatigue began to slow his teammate's pace.

Mariano eyed the second-place boat not far behind. Would the lead they had built up be enough to get them to the finish line first?

"We Are Very United"

Mariano's twin sister, Lucía, had her own doubles race to concentrate on a little later that day, but she made sure she was there to watch her brother compete. She was thrilled when his team leaped out to such a quick lead. But her heart sank when she saw their pace drop off.

The Palermo twins have always been very close. Being the same age and involved in many of the same activities, they have always spent a lot of time together.

"Mutual, seminary, school," Lucía lists. "Now that we're older, it's a little different, but we still train together."

The twins, members of the Pacheco Ward, Buenos Aires Argentina Litoral Stake, are also united by other interests. They both enjoy working with their hands—Lucía doing handicrafts or sewing



and Mariano working on cars.

“I love to cook,” Lucía adds.

“And I like to eat, so we’re a good team,” laughs Mariano. “I like to cook with her. I’m not very good at it, but it’s fun.”

While the two get along really well—“We can talk about anything,” says Lucía—Mariano says most people don’t realize they’re twins. The two don’t look alike.

“And we don’t know what the other is thinking,” Lucía says, joking about how twins are sometimes portrayed. “But we’re very affected by what happens to the other, whether in school or in competition. We are very united. It’s a beautiful thing.”

Life Is a Team Event

When Mariano felt his teammate’s pace slowing, he knew it didn’t matter how strong he felt. If Mariano pulled his oar harder or faster than his teammate did, the unbalanced effort would send the boat off course.

He matched his teammate’s pace and watched as the competitors started gaining on them.

As twins, Mariano and Lucía share many things. Among them is a fierce drive to train hard and give their best individual effort to reach their goals. But in team rowing, individual effort alone won’t get you across the finish line first. The twins have learned that if you aren’t in sync with your teammates, you won’t win.

“The effectiveness of the boat depends on unity,” Mariano says. “We’ve got to be thinking the same, whether it’s a team of two, four, or eight.”

“If we’re not working together—” begins Lucía.

“Precisely,” Mariano interjects.

“—the boat won’t work,” she finishes.

It’s a principle the two understand not only as rowers but as twins and as members of the Church.

“When the team is focused on the same objective, it’s much easier to obtain,” Mariano says. “It’s the same with our family. We have the same goal to be together forever. That helps a ton.”

The two understand that working together is essential



to life on earth. We cannot return to our Heavenly Father's presence on our own (see Romans 3:23).

Fortunately, the Savior was willing to put Himself in our boat through the Atonement (see Alma 7:11–12), providing the way to the finish line, where our Heavenly Father is.

But as in rowing, in order to win the prize we must be willing to give up anything that would keep us from rowing in harmony with the Lord. *Atonement* means to be reconciled or restored to harmony. Achieving harmony requires being willing to give up all our sins (see Alma 22:18), put off worldly desires, and do the Lord's will (see Mosiah 3:19).

That's not always easy, but the Savior knows the "race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1), and He knows exactly what we need in order to return to our Father's presence.

If we choose not to follow Him, preferring to do things our own way, we are out of sync and in danger of slowing our progress or even putting ourselves out of the race.

We Achieve More Together

In life as well as in athletics, some would rather set their own pace, believing that individuality is the way to true freedom. They choose to row through life alone, not realizing that with Jesus Christ, they could achieve so much more (see Mark 10:27).

In the rowing world, it is well-known that "a team working together can go much faster than an individual," Lucía explains.

On the standard 2,000-meter course, a good time for a single male rower at his best pace is under seven minutes (the world record is 6:35.40). On a team of eight, however, that same rower, even though he may

Just as it took teamwork in addition to individual effort to win the awards they have, the Palermo twins know they must trust in the Savior and be diligent in the gospel to obtain their ultimate goal of returning to Heavenly Father.

not only in rowing but in reaching our ultimate goal to become like Jesus Christ and return to our Heavenly Father's presence. The Lord said, "Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

Once we've learned that life is not a singles competition but a team event, each of us faces a very important spiritual decision.

Whom Do I Follow?

As the second-place team pulled alongside Mariano's boat, it took real discipline for him not to give in to the temptation to row as hard as possible. The finish line was so close. But Mariano knew that rowing at his own pace could be disastrous. At best it would only slow them down; at worst it would send them off course and possibly out of the race.

This choice to follow someone else's pace rather than our own in order to reach our goal is an important principle when applied

be matched with slower individual rowers, could go even faster. The world record for a team of eight is 5:19.85.

Just as it would be difficult for a single rower to beat a unified team, without the Savior, we cannot obtain our eternal goals.

You Win Some; You Lose Some

Mariano and his teammate refused to give up. But shortly before the finish line, they were passed, leaving them in second place.

Lucía was at the boat ramp when Mariano pulled his boat out after the race. She had her own race coming up to think about, but when she saw his disappointed tears, she broke down herself.

“I knew how hard he had worked,” she says. “I couldn’t bear seeing him so disappointed. I had never seen him like that.”

Together, the twins sorrowed in Mariano’s disappointment. Finally, Lucía’s coach separated them, worried that she wouldn’t be able to focus on her own race. But when the time came, Lucía and her teammate won

their pairs race and later the South American championships, earning the right to compete in the 2004 Olympics.

And just as they had shared sorrow in Mariano’s disappointment, they rejoiced together in Lucía’s success.

“I was so excited when she won the opportunity to compete in the Olympics,” Mariano says. “She earned it.”

With Christ We Can All Win

At the Olympics, Lucía and her teammate ended up ranked 17th. Like Mariano’s results, her finish wasn’t exactly all she had dreamed about. Still, their goals remain high. In the short-term, they want to qualify for an Olympic medal. In the long run, they want to qualify for eternal life.

Both goals will require sacrifice and a willingness to work as one with someone else.

But while the world rewards only one winner (see 1 Corinthians 9:24), no matter how united each team is, the prize the Lord offers can be obtained by all who qualify.

Nephi said that “many of us, *if not all*, may be saved in his kingdom” (2 Nephi 33:12; emphasis added), but we must first “be reconciled unto Christ” (2 Nephi 33:9) by sacrificing our worldly desires in order to follow Him.

The Palermo twins are united in the hope that their faith and sacrifices will be enough to win the one race that matters most of all. ■





Seek Learning by Faith

BY ELDER DAVID A. BEDNAR
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

We are admonished repeatedly in the scriptures to preach the truths of the gospel by the power of the Spirit (see D&C 50:14). I believe most parents and teachers in the Church are aware of this principle and generally strive appropriately to apply it. As important as this principle is, however, it is only one element of a much larger spiritual pattern. We are also frequently taught to seek learning by faith (see D&C 88:118). *Preaching by the Spirit* and *learning by faith* are companion principles that we should strive to understand and apply concurrently and consistently.

I suspect we emphasize and know much more about a teacher teaching by the Spirit than we do about a learner learning by faith. Clearly, the principles and processes of both teaching and learning are spiritually essential. However, as we look to the future and anticipate the ever more confused and turbulent world in which we will live, I believe it will be essential for all of us to increase our capacity to seek learning by faith. In our personal lives, in our families, and in the Church, we can and will receive the blessings of spiritual strength,

direction, and protection as we seek by faith to obtain and apply spiritual knowledge.

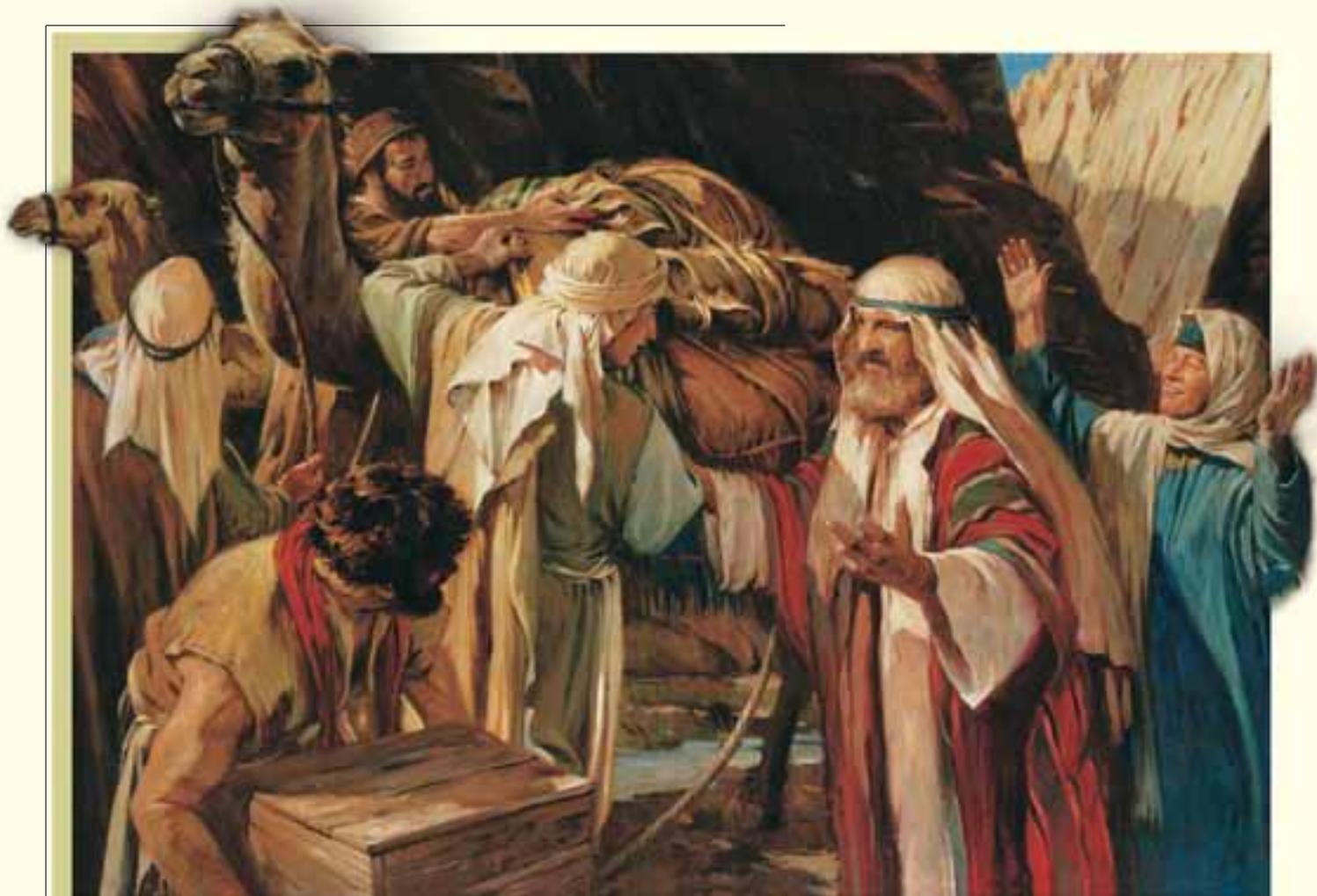
Nephi teaches us, “When a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth [the message] unto the hearts of the children of men” (2 Nephi 33:1). Please notice how the power of the Spirit carries the message *unto* but not necessarily *into* the heart. A teacher can explain, demonstrate, persuade, and testify, and do so with great spiritual power and effectiveness. Ultimately, however, the content of a message and the witness of the Holy Ghost penetrate into the heart only if a receiver allows them to enter. Learning by faith opens the pathway *into* the heart.

The Principle of Action: Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

The Apostle Paul defined *faith* as “the substance of things hoped for [and] the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Alma declared that faith is not a perfect knowledge; rather, if we have faith, we “hope for things which are not seen [but] are true” (Alma 32:21). Additionally, we learn in the *Lectures on Faith* that faith is “the first principle in revealed religion, and the foundation of all



As we look to the future and anticipate the ever more confused and turbulent world in which we will live, I believe it will be essential for all of us to increase our capacity to seek learning by faith.



Nephi relied upon future-facing spiritual assurance as he returned to Jerusalem to obtain the plates of brass—“not knowing beforehand the things which [he] should do. Nevertheless [he] went forth.”

righteousness” and that it is also “the principle of action in all intelligent beings.”¹

These teachings highlight three basic elements of faith: (1) faith as the *assurance* of things hoped for that are true, (2) faith as the *evidence* of things not seen, and (3) faith as the principle of *action* in all intelligent beings. I describe these three components of faith in the Savior as simultaneously facing the future, looking to the past, and initiating action in the present.

Faith as the assurance of things hoped for looks to the future. This assurance is founded upon a correct understanding about, and trust in, God and enables us to “press forward” (2 Nephi 31:20) into uncertain and often challenging situations in the service of the Savior.

For example, Nephi relied upon precisely this type of future-facing spiritual assurance

as he returned to Jerusalem to obtain the plates of brass—“not knowing beforehand the things which [he] should do. Nevertheless [he] went forth” (1 Nephi 4:6–7).

Faith in Christ is inextricably tied to, and results in, hope in Christ for our redemption and exaltation. And assurance and hope make it possible for us to walk to the edge of the light and take a few steps into the darkness—expecting and trusting the light to move and illuminate the way.² The combination of assurance and hope initiates action in the present.

Faith as the evidence of things not seen looks to the past and confirms our trust in God and our confidence in the truthfulness of things not seen. We stepped into the darkness with assurance and hope, and we received evidence and confirmation as the light in fact moved and provided the illumination we

needed. The witness we obtained after the trial of our faith (see Ether 12:6) is evidence that enlarges and strengthens our assurance.

Assurance, action, and evidence influence each other in an ongoing process. This helix is like a coil, and as it spirals upward it expands and widens. These three elements of faith—assurance, action, and evidence—are not separate and discrete; rather, they are interrelated and continuous and cycle upward. And the faith that fuels this ongoing process develops, evolves, and changes. As we again turn and face forward toward an uncertain future, assurance leads to action and produces evidence, which further increases assurance. Our confidence waxes stronger, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.

We find a powerful example of the interaction among assurance, action, and evidence as the children of Israel transported the ark of the covenant under the leadership of Joshua (see Joshua 3:7–17). Recall how the Israelites came to the river Jordan and were promised the waters would part, and they would be able to cross over on dry ground. Interestingly, the waters did not part as the children of Israel stood on the banks of the river waiting for something to happen; rather, the soles of their feet were wet before the water parted. The faith of the Israelites was manifested in the fact that they walked into the water *before* it parted. They walked into the river Jordan with a future-facing assurance of things hoped for. As the Israelites moved forward, the water parted, and as they crossed over on dry land, they looked back and beheld the evidence of things not seen. In this episode, faith as assurance led to action and produced the evidence of things not seen that were true.

True faith is focused in and on the Lord Jesus Christ and always leads to action. Faith as the principle of action is highlighted in many scriptures with which we are all familiar:

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so *faith without works is dead* also” (James 2:26; emphasis added).

“But be ye *doers of the word*, and not hearers only” (James 1:22; emphasis added).

“Awake and arouse your faculties, even to an *experiment*

upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith” (Alma 32:27; emphasis added).

And it is faith as the principle of action that is so central to the process of learning and applying spiritual truth.

Learning by Faith: To Act and Not to Be Acted Upon

How is faith as the principle of action in all intelligent beings related to gospel learning? And what does it mean to seek learning by faith?

In the grand division of all of God’s creations, there are things to act and things to be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:13–14). As sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father, we have been blessed with the gift of agency—the capacity and power of independent action. Endowed with agency, we are agents, and we primarily are to act and not only to be acted upon—especially as we seek to obtain and apply spiritual knowledge.

Learning by faith and from experience are two of the central features of the Father’s plan of happiness. The Savior preserved moral agency through the Atonement and made it possible for us to act and to learn by faith. Lucifer’s rebellion against the plan sought to destroy the agency of man, and his intent was that we as learners would only be acted upon.

Consider the question posed by Heavenly Father to Adam in the Garden of Eden: “Where art thou?” (Genesis 3:9). The Father knew where Adam was hiding, but He nonetheless asked the question. Why? A wise and loving Father enabled His child to act in the learning process and not merely be acted upon. There was no one-way lecture to a disobedient child, as perhaps many of us might be inclined to deliver. Rather, the Father helped Adam as a learner to act as an agent and appropriately exercise his agency.

Recall how Nephi desired to know about the things his father, Lehi, had seen in the vision of the tree of life. Interestingly, the Spirit of the Lord begins the tutorial with Nephi by asking the following question: “Behold, what desirest thou?” (1 Nephi 11:2). Clearly the Spirit knew what Nephi desired. So why ask the question? The Holy Ghost was helping Nephi to act in the learning

process and not simply be acted upon. Notice in 1 Nephi 11–14 how the Spirit both asked questions and encouraged Nephi to “look” as active elements in the learning process.

From these examples we recognize that as learners, you and I are to act and be doers of the word and not simply hearers who are only acted upon. Are you and I agents who act and seek learning by faith, or are we waiting to be taught and acted upon? Are the children, youth, and adults we serve acting and seeking to learn by faith, or are they waiting to be taught and acted upon? Are you and I encouraging and helping those we serve to seek learning by faith? We are all to be anxiously engaged in asking, seeking, and knocking (see 3 Nephi 14:7).

A learner exercising agency by acting in accordance with correct principles opens his or her heart to the Holy Ghost and invites His teaching, testifying power, and confirming witness. Learning by faith requires spiritual, mental, and physical exertion and not just passive reception. It is in the sincerity and consistency of our faith-inspired action that we indicate to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, our willingness to learn and receive instruction from the Holy Ghost. Thus, learning by faith involves the exercise of moral agency to act upon the assurance of things hoped for and invites the evidence of things not seen from the only true teacher, the Spirit of the Lord.

Consider how missionaries help investigators to learn by faith. Making and keeping spiritual commitments, such as studying and praying about the Book of Mormon, attending Church meetings, and keeping the commandments, require an investigator to exercise faith and to act. One of the fundamental roles of a missionary is to help an investigator make and honor commitments—to act and learn by faith. Teaching, exhorting, and explaining, as important as they are, can never convey to an investigator a witness of the truthfulness of the restored gospel. Only as an investigator’s faith initiates action and opens the pathway to the heart can the Holy Ghost deliver a confirming witness. Missionaries obviously must learn to teach by the power of the Spirit. Of equal importance, however, is the responsibility

missionaries have to help investigators learn by faith.

The learning I am describing reaches far beyond mere cognitive comprehension and the retaining and recalling of information. The type of learning to which I am referring causes us to put off the natural man (see Mosiah 3:19), to change our hearts (see Mosiah 5:2), to be converted unto the Lord, and to never fall away (see Alma 23:6). Learning by faith requires both “the heart and a willing mind” (D&C 64:34). Learning by faith is the result of the Holy Ghost carrying the power of the word of God both unto and into the heart. Learning by faith cannot be transferred from an instructor to a student through a lecture, a demonstration, or an experiential exercise; rather, a student must exercise faith and act in order to obtain the knowledge for himself or herself.

The young boy Joseph Smith instinctively understood what it meant to seek learning by faith. One of the most well-known episodes in the life of Joseph Smith was his reading of verses about prayer and faith in the book of James in the New Testament (see James 1:5–6). This text inspired Joseph to retire to a grove of trees near his home to pray and to seek for spiritual knowledge. Note the questions Joseph had formulated in his mind and felt in his heart—and which he took into the grove. He clearly had prepared himself to “ask in faith” (James 1:6) and to act.

“In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it? . . .

“My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right . . . and which I should join” (Joseph Smith—History 1:10, 18).

Notice that Joseph’s questions focused not just on what he needed to know but also on what he needed to do. And his very first question centered on action and what was to be *done!* His prayer was not simply which church is right.

His question was which church should he join. Joseph went to the grove to learn by faith. He was determined to act.

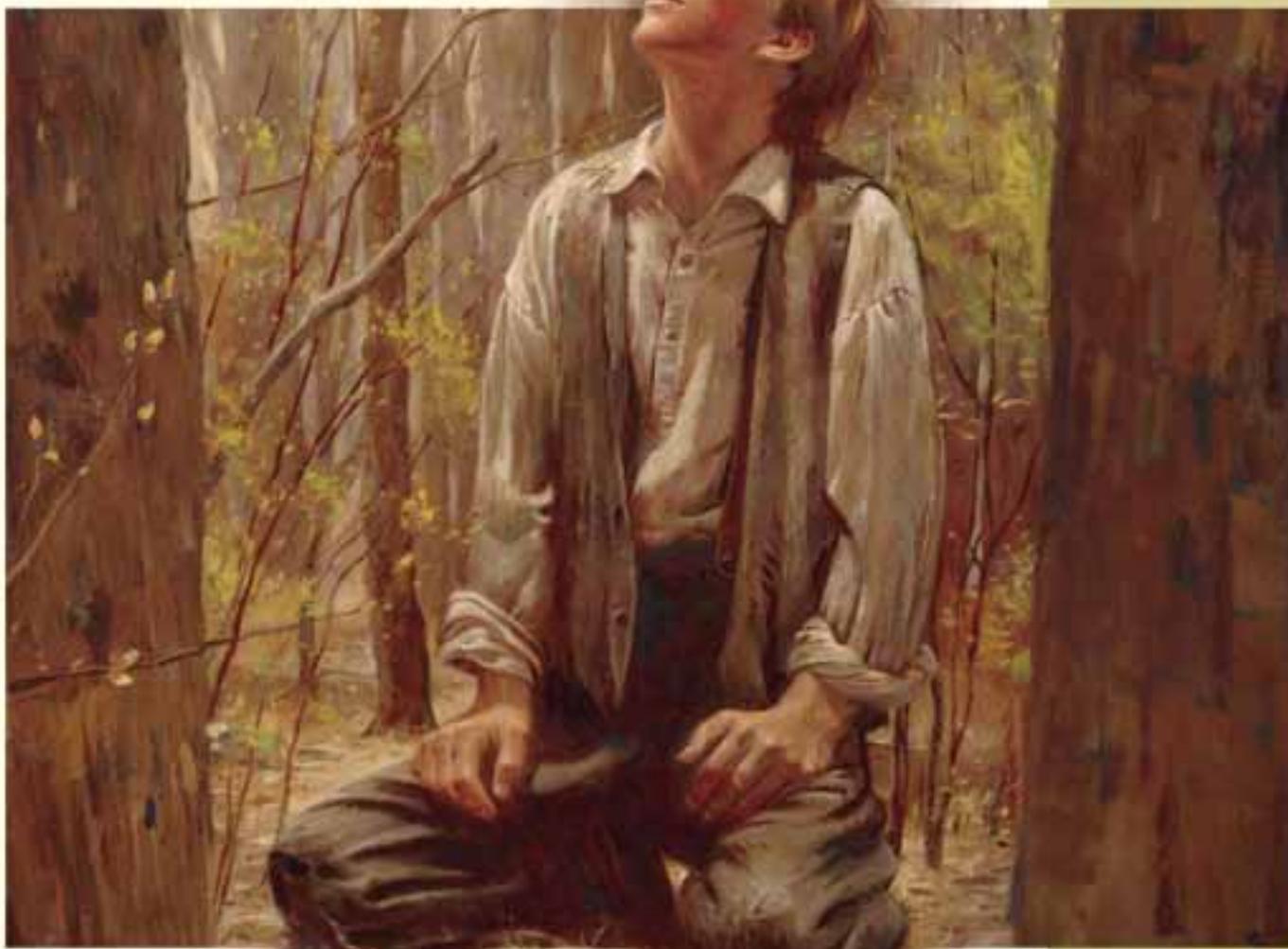
Ultimately, the responsibility to learn by faith and apply spiritual truth rests upon each of us individually. This is an increasingly serious and important responsibility in the world in which we do now and will yet live. What, how, and when we learn is supported by—but is not dependent upon—an instructor, a method of presentation, or a specific topic or lesson format.

Truly, one of the great challenges of mortality is to seek learning by faith. The Prophet

Joseph Smith best summarizes the learning process and outcomes I am attempting to describe. In response to a request by the Twelve Apostles for instruction, Joseph taught, “The best way to obtain truth and wisdom is not to ask it from books, but to go to God in prayer, and obtain divine teaching.”³

And on another occasion, the Prophet Joseph explained that “reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to *them*, can never give *us* a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God.”⁴

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THE DESIRES OF MY HEART, BY WALTER BANE, COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART



President
Boyd K.
Packer

taught: "A testimony is to be found in the bearing of it! . . . As you give that which you have, there is a replacement, with increase!"

Implications for Teachers

The truths about learning by faith have profound implications for parents and teachers. Let us consider three of these implications.

Implication 1. The Holy Ghost is a teacher from the Father.

The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead, and He is *the* teacher and witness of all truth. Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "The office of the Holy Ghost in His ministrations among men is described in scripture. He is a teacher sent from the Father; and unto those who are entitled to His tuition He will reveal all things necessary for the soul's advancement."⁵

We should always remember that the Holy Ghost is the teacher who, through proper invitation, can enter into a learner's heart. Indeed, you and I have the responsibility to preach the

gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter, as a prerequisite for the learning by faith that can be achieved only by and through the Holy Ghost (see D&C 50:14). In this regard, you and I are much like the long, thin strands of glass used to create the fiber-optic cables through which light signals are transmitted over long distances. Just as the glass in these cables must be pure to conduct the light efficiently and effectively, so we should become and remain worthy conduits through whom the Spirit of the Lord can operate.

But we must be careful to remember in our service that we are conduits and channels; we are not the light. "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matthew 10:20). It is never about me, and it is never about you. In fact, anything you or I do as instructors that knowingly and intentionally draws attention to self—in the

messages we present, in the methods we use, or in our personal demeanor—is a form of priestcraft that inhibits the teaching effectiveness of the Holy Ghost. “Doth he preach it by the Spirit of truth or some other way? And if it be by some other way it is not of God” (D&C 50:17–18).

Implication 2. We are most effective as instructors when we encourage and facilitate learning by faith.

We are all familiar with the adage that giving a man a fish feeds him for one meal. Teaching the man to fish, on the other hand, feeds him for a lifetime. As parents and gospel instructors, you and I are not in the business of distributing fish; rather, our work is to help individuals learn to “fish” and to become spiritually self-reliant. This important objective is best accomplished as we encourage and facilitate learners acting in accordance with correct principles—as we help them to learn by doing. “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God” (John 7:17).

Notice this implication in practice in the counsel given to Junius F. Wells by President Brigham Young (1801–77) as Brother Wells was called in 1875 to organize the young men of the Church:

“At your meetings you should begin at the top of the roll and call upon as many members as there is time for to bear their testimonies and at the next meeting begin where you left off and call upon others, so that all shall take part and get into the practice of standing up and saying something. Many may think they haven’t any testimony to bear, but get them to stand up and they will find the Lord will give them utterance to many truths they had not thought of before. More people have obtained a testimony while standing up trying to bear it than down on their knees praying for it.”⁶

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has given similar counsel in our day:

“Oh, if I could teach you this one principle. *A testimony is to be found in the bearing of it!* Somewhere in your quest for spiritual knowledge, there is that ‘leap of faith,’ as the philosophers call it. It is the moment when you have gone to the edge of the light and stepped into the darkness to discover that the way is lighted ahead for just a

footstep or two. ‘The spirit of man,’ as the scripture says, indeed ‘is the candle of the Lord’ (Proverbs 20:27).

“It is one thing to receive a witness from what you have read or what another has said; and that is a necessary beginning. It is quite another to have the Spirit confirm to you in your bosom that what you have testified is true. Can you not see that it will be supplied as you share it? As you give that which you have, there is a replacement, with increase!”⁷

I have observed a common characteristic among the instructors who have had the greatest influence in my life. They have helped me to seek learning by faith. They refused to give me easy answers to hard questions. In fact, they did not give me any answers at all. Rather, they pointed the way and helped me take the steps to find my own answers. I certainly did not always appreciate this approach, but experience has enabled me to understand that an answer given by another person usually is not remembered for very long, if remembered at all. But an answer we discover or obtain through the exercise of faith, typically, is retained for a lifetime. The most important learnings of life are caught—not taught.

The spiritual understanding you and I have been blessed to receive, and which has been confirmed as true in our hearts, simply cannot be given to another person. The tuition of diligence and learning by faith must be paid to obtain and personally “own” such knowledge. Only in this way can what is known in the mind be transformed into what is felt in the heart. Only in this way can a person move beyond relying upon the spiritual knowledge and experience of others and claim those blessings for himself or herself. Only in this way can we be spiritually prepared for what is coming. We are to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118).

Implication 3. Our faith is strengthened as we help others seek learning by faith.

The Holy Ghost, who can “teach [us] all things, and bring all things to [our] remembrance” (John 14:26), is eager to help us learn as we act and exercise faith in Jesus Christ. Interestingly, this divine learning assistance is perhaps never more apparent than when we are teaching,

either at home or in Church assignments. As Paul made clear to the Romans, “Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?” (Romans 2:21).

Notice in the following verses from the Doctrine and Covenants how teaching diligently invites heavenly grace and instruction:

“And I give unto *you* a commandment that *you* shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

“Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend *you*, that *you* may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for *you* to understand” (D&C 88:77–78; emphasis added).

Consider that the blessings described in these scriptures are intended specifically for the teacher: “Teach . . . diligently and my grace shall attend you”—that you, the teacher, may be instructed!

The same principle is evident in verse 122 from the same section:

“Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not *all* be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let *all* listen unto his sayings, that when *all* have spoken that *all* may be edified of *all*, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (D&C 88:122; emphasis added).

As all speak and as all listen in a dignified and orderly way, all are edified. The individual and collective exercise of faith in the Savior invites instruction and strength from the Spirit of the Lord.

Seek Learning by Faith: A Recent Example

All of us were blessed by the challenge from President Gordon B. Hinckley in August 2005 to read the Book of Mormon by the end of that year. In extending the challenge, President Hinckley promised that faithfully observing this simple reading program would bring into our lives and into our homes “an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord, a strengthened resolution to walk in obedience to His commandments, and a

stronger testimony of the living reality of the Son of God.”⁸

Please note how this inspired challenge is a classic example of learning by faith. First, you and I were not commanded, coerced, or required to read. Rather, we were invited to exercise our agency as agents and act in accordance with correct principles. President Hinckley, as an inspired teacher, encouraged us to act and not just be acted upon. Each of us, ultimately, had to decide if and how we would respond to the challenge—and if we would endure to the end of the task.

Second, in proffering the invitation to read and to act, President Hinckley was encouraging each of us to seek learning by faith. No new study materials were distributed to members of the Church, and no additional lessons, classes, or programs were created by the Church. Each of us had our copy of the Book of Mormon, and a pathway into our heart opened wider through the exercise of our faith in the Savior as we responded to the First Presidency challenge.

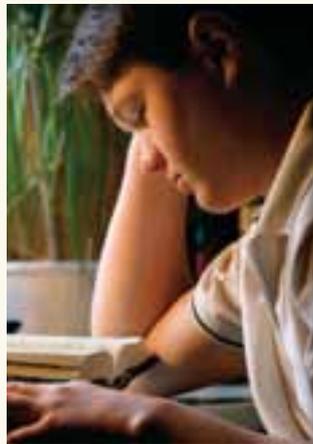
Thus, we were prepared to receive instruction from the only true teacher, the Holy Ghost.

The responsibility to seek learning by faith rests upon each of us individually, and this obligation will become increasingly important as the world in which we live grows more confused and troubled. Learning by faith is essential to our personal spiritual development and for the growth of the Church in these latter days. May each of us truly hunger and thirst after righteousness and be filled with the Holy Ghost (see 3 Nephi 12:6)—that we might seek learning by faith. ■

From a satellite broadcast address to Church Educational System educators given on February 3, 2006.

NOTES

1. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 1.
2. See Boyd K. Packer, “The Candle of the Lord,” *Tambuli*, July 1983, 27; *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 54.
3. *History of the Church*, 4:425.
4. *History of the Church*, 6:50.
5. *The Articles of Faith* (1924), 162.
6. In Junius F. Wells, “Historic Sketch of the YMMIA,” *Improvement Era*, June 1925, 715.
7. *Tambuli*, July 1983, 34; *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 54–55.
8. “A Testimony Vibrant and True,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Aug. 2005, 6.



Become an Instrument in the Hands of God by Being of One Heart and One Mind



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.

What Does It Mean to Be of One Heart and One Mind?

1 Corinthians 12:20, 27: “Now are they many members, yet but one body. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “The Lord said that except ye are one, ye are not mine. (See D&C 38:27.) This great unity is the hallmark of the true church of Christ. It is felt among our people throughout the world. As we are one, we are his. . . . We pray for one another that we may go on in unity and strength. If we do so, no power beneath the heavens can stop the onward progress of this great kingdom” (“Except Ye Are One,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 5).

President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency: “It is the mission of the Church of this last dispensation to develop another people

who shall live the gospel in its fullness. This people are to become ‘pure in heart,’ and they shall . . . be the Lord’s people. They shall walk with God because they shall be of one heart and one mind, and they shall dwell in righteousness, and there shall be no poor among them” (“Living Welfare Principles,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 93).

How Will Striving to Be of One Heart and One Mind Help Me Be a Better Instrument in the Hands of God?

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Presidency of the Seventy: “We must begin by becoming one within ourselves. We are dual beings of flesh and spirit, and we sometimes feel out of harmony or in conflict. . . . As we endeavor day by day and week by week to follow the path of Christ, our spirit asserts its pre-eminence, the battle within subsides, and temptations cease to trouble.

There is greater and greater harmony between the spiritual and the physical until our physical bodies are transformed . . .

to ‘instruments of righteousness unto God’ (see Romans 6:13)” (“That They May Be One in Us,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 71–72).

Kathleen H. Hughes, former first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency:

“[The Lord] requires ‘*the heart and a willing mind*’ (D&C 64:34; emphasis added). . . . The Lord asks us to open ourselves to Him, holding nothing back. He says to us, seek not ‘thine own life’; seek ‘my will, and to keep my commandments’ (Helaman 10:4). The newness of heart comes when we do and give all we can, then offer our heart and will to the Father” (“Out of Small Things,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 111).



Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Spiritual submissiveness means . . . community and communion as the mind and the heart become settled. We then spend much less time deciding, and much more time serving. . . . Yielding one’s heart to God signals the last stage in our spiritual development. Only then are we beginning to be fully useful to God! How can we sincerely pray to be an instrument in His hands if the instrument seeks to do the instructing?” (“Willing to Submit,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 71). ■

My Conversion to Eternal Marriage

I wanted to be married, but my unrealistic expectations led to a cycle of dating failures.

BY JAMES WELCH

Several years ago I realized that while I had a testimony of the gospel in general, there were some principles to which I was not yet fully converted. Although I had no problem with tithing or the Word of Wisdom for instance, I did struggle with the principle of eternal marriage—my eternal marriage.

A Cycle of Failure

It wasn't that I didn't want to be married; on the contrary, I did—desperately, or so I told myself. I dated locally and had some long-distance relationships. I dated constantly, even to the point of exhaustion. But I became an expert at identifying what I considered to be “flaws” in each of the women I dated. I always justified breaking off a relationship but usually not until I had strung her along for a year or two. Over time I worked myself into such a cycle of failure that I was practically paralyzed with regard to courtship.

I had served a mission. I attended the temple regularly, fasted and

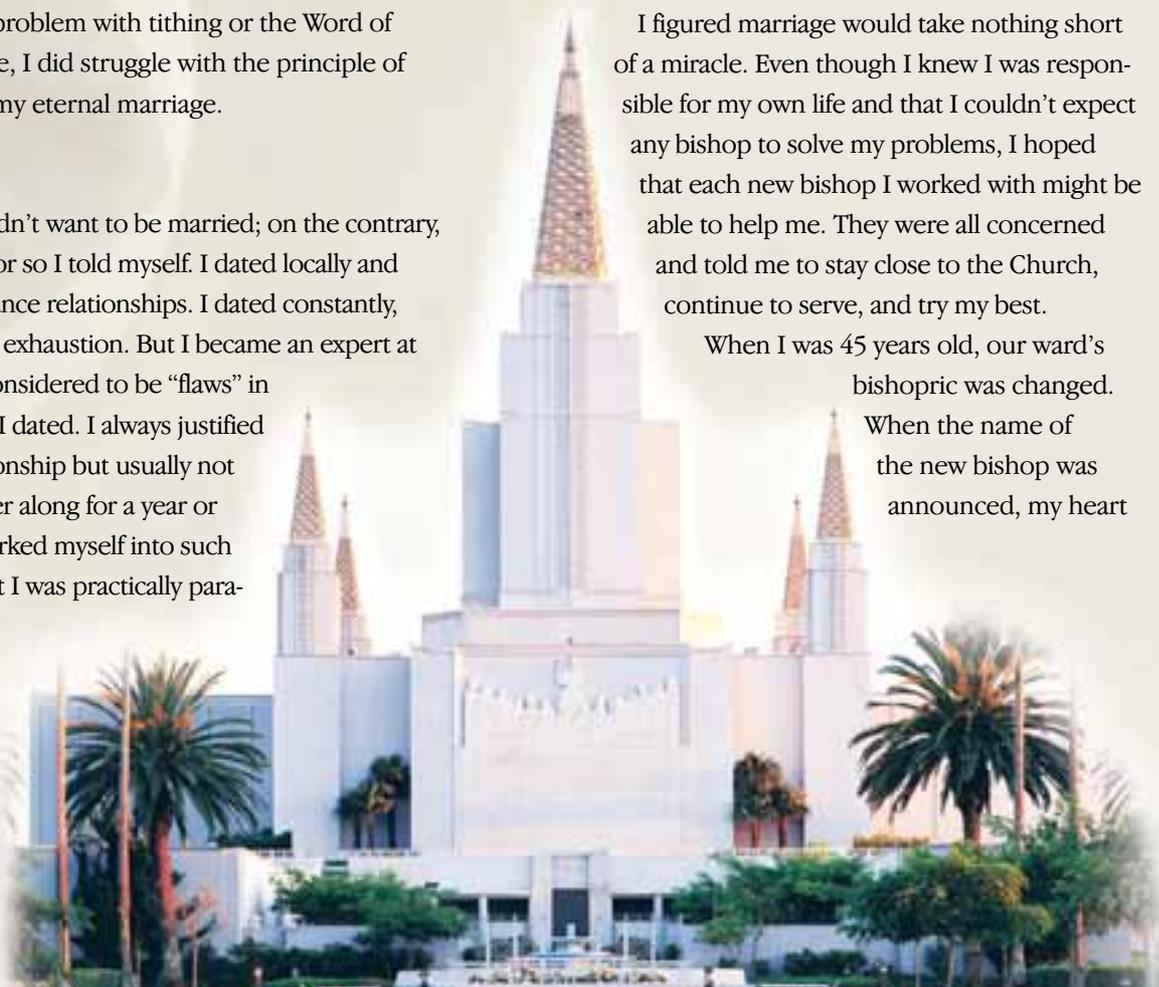
prayed for the Lord's guidance, and served faithfully in ward callings. I had strong family support. I counseled regularly with my bishops. I even spent a season working with an excellent Latter-day Saint psychologist. But I was miserable. I couldn't figure out how to get married.

People sympathetic to my plight told me that I just hadn't met “the right one” yet. Others told me, “You just have to take the plunge.” But I had too many doubts and irrational fears to allow me to do so.

I figured marriage would take nothing short of a miracle. Even though I knew I was responsible for my own life and that I couldn't expect any bishop to solve my problems, I hoped that each new bishop I worked with might be able to help me. They were all concerned and told me to stay close to the Church, continue to serve, and try my best.

When I was 45 years old, our ward's bishopric was changed.

When the name of the new bishop was announced, my heart





sank. The man who had been called was someone with whom I had nothing in common. I foolishly determined that I would have to wait for the next new bishop.

A Direct Conversation

One Sunday not long after, I was on my way to priesthood meeting when this bishop asked if I would come into his office right then for a temple recommend interview. In his office I began my well-rehearsed tale of woe: Nothing was going right for me. Every woman I had dated had some intolerable failing. And maybe I wasn't really cut out for marriage in this life anyway.

The bishop dismissed my complaints, looked me in the eye, and asked, "Do you want to be married or not?" I had to answer that I thought so but that I wasn't really sure anymore. He continued, "I want you to go home and decide if you really want to be

married. If the answer is no, then I'll feel sorry for you, but you can stop dating and quit beating yourself up over it. If the answer is yes, then come back, and we'll work on it."

At that moment, I received the undeniable impression that his counsel would help me.

I walked out of his office sobered. After church I went home, and with a brief but intense wrestle, I decided that the answer had to be yes. I did desire marriage, and I was willing to submit to the counsel of this bishop, whatever it was.

Making this decision was the turning point in my quest to be married. For decades I had been halfhearted in my efforts. Marriage had not really been a high priority for me, even if I had pretended it was. Only when it was convenient did I give marriage serious attention, but other things, such as my professional pursuits as a concert musician and a university professor, usually took precedence. What I

I have had a mighty change of heart regarding marriage, and it has made all the difference in my life. I married my wife, Deanne, in the Oakland California Temple on May 22, 1997.



James and Deanne Welch with their sons, Jameson and Nicholas. Brother Welch says of his family and marriage, “Ten years ago, I could not have imagined such fulfillment.”

needed to learn was how to approach the goal of marriage with the same commitment.

Instructions from My Bishop

When I returned to counsel with my bishop, he spoke as plainly as anyone had ever done. He was not interested in my litany of excuses. He simply said, “Let’s find the glitch—the place where relationships always fall apart for you—and then fix it.” At first I was taken aback, but then I found his directness refreshing. I knew I could trust him. It took some energy and courage to get out of the deep rut I was in, but I began to gain more confidence that I could do it.

His first direction to me was to start looking anew for a companion who had, in his words, faith, integrity, and goodwill—enduring qualities that really mattered—instead of merely some surface qualities I considered essential. (In my mind, she needed to be a blonde, a soprano, and a gourmet cook.) My charge was to cherish her with the same kind of love, to the degree that I could, that our Heavenly Father has for each of us.

My bishop also helped me discover the flaws in my quest for marriage. I conceded that they were not in the women I had dated, as I had maintained for so long. Rather, they were in my own erroneous thinking and unrealistic expectations. He laid out some new rules by which I was to date.

First of all, I had to prepare for change. I was very comfortable in my way of living, and even though I desired marriage in an abstract way, I felt it would upset my routine. I would have to start doing some things differently. I’d been doing it my way for more than 25 years, repeating the same mistakes, and obviously it hadn’t worked. Because I was 45, I had to understand that I didn’t have an unlimited amount of time to date.

Second, dating was not to be about entertainment but rather about identifying a companion who was also seriously interested in and prepared for marriage. This was to be a time for becoming acquainted not just with someone’s personality but also, more important, with her spirit.

My bishop also taught me I would be able to tell within a few dates whether a woman had the essential qualities I was looking for. If they weren’t present, it was time to move along. To break my pattern of unproductive

long-term dating, the bishop gave me a startling ultimatum: I was to follow any serious dating relationship through to marriage or rejection. After a reasonable period of time, I could not turn back unless the woman I was dating turned me down. Previously, my habit had been to walk away rather than commit. This time I would not be allowed to retreat as I had done so often before. In an uncharacteristically bold move, I agreed to the terms.

What I Learned

I started to recognize a few things. For one, I realized that what some call “chemistry” comes after honest and mature conversation, not before. This is one of the most common mistakes people make—they pursue a relationship only if they feel an immediate physical attraction. Some single people also prefer superficial topics to serious discussions and hard questions, avoiding the latter in the vain hope that once “true love” sets in, somehow all the real-life problems will disappear. Actually, it’s the other way around. If at the outset you practice honest communication and learn to answer the hard questions, then trust develops. This trust erases fear, which is usually the cause of cold feet, lack of commitment, and ultimately a shaky relationship.

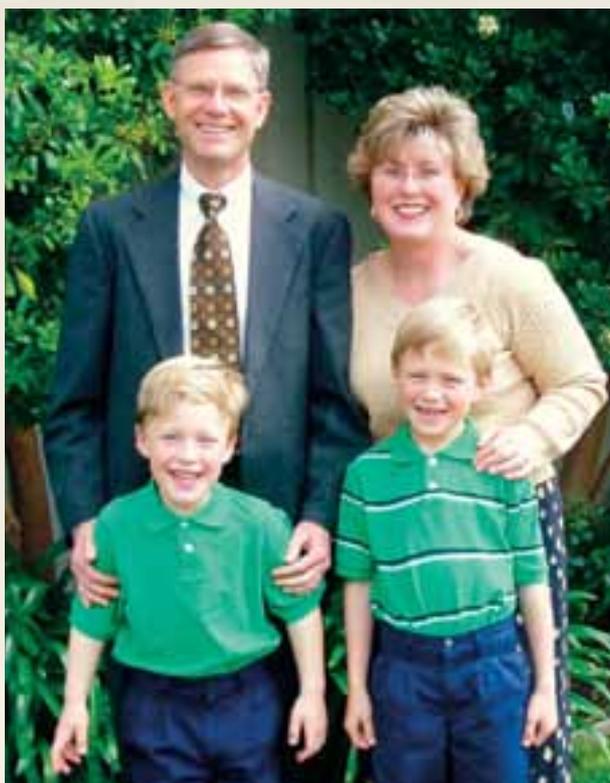
Most important, I learned that love is not about just me. It is primarily about caring for the other person. I had to work on humbling myself and relinquishing the arrogant attitude that maybe no woman was good enough for me.

My Real Conversion

It would be nice if I could say I married the very next woman I met. I dated a few women very briefly and had

one longer dating relationship in which I was ultimately turned down. But I exercised faith and followed my bishop’s instructions, even though I didn’t get immediate results.

The year after I adopted these changes in attitude and perspective, I took a second look at a woman I had known for years. We had actually dated before, but this time I saw her in a different light—as a prospective eternal companion who is delightful and beautiful in every way because she has the qualities that are enduring (and many bonus qualities as well). She was generous enough to give me another chance, and now she is my wife and the mother of our precious children. I love her deeply. Ten years ago, I could not have imagined such fulfillment.



What brought about this conversion? (And it was a real conversion—a turning in a different direction.) I believe the change came about because a bishop taught me how deeply Heavenly Father loves me and wants me to be happy and

have all the blessings He has already promised me. My bishop helped me rearrange the priorities in my life, which had become distorted. He spoke plainly and did not allow me to be distracted by the excuses I had given for so long.

Now I know what conversion feels like. I have had that mighty change of heart regarding this principle, and it has made all the difference in my life. I can trace the moment of my conversion to that day in my bishop’s office when it was revealed to me that if I would follow his counsel, I would be blessed.

Indeed I am. ■

THE NIGHT OF THE TEST

BY LEHI L. CRUZ

When I was in my final year of elementary school, all of the students went camping in Negros Occidental, Philippines, before our graduation. We pitched our tents at the campsite and had a good time exploring among the guava and mango trees. When night came, my parents came to check on me. They told me to be very careful, and then they left.

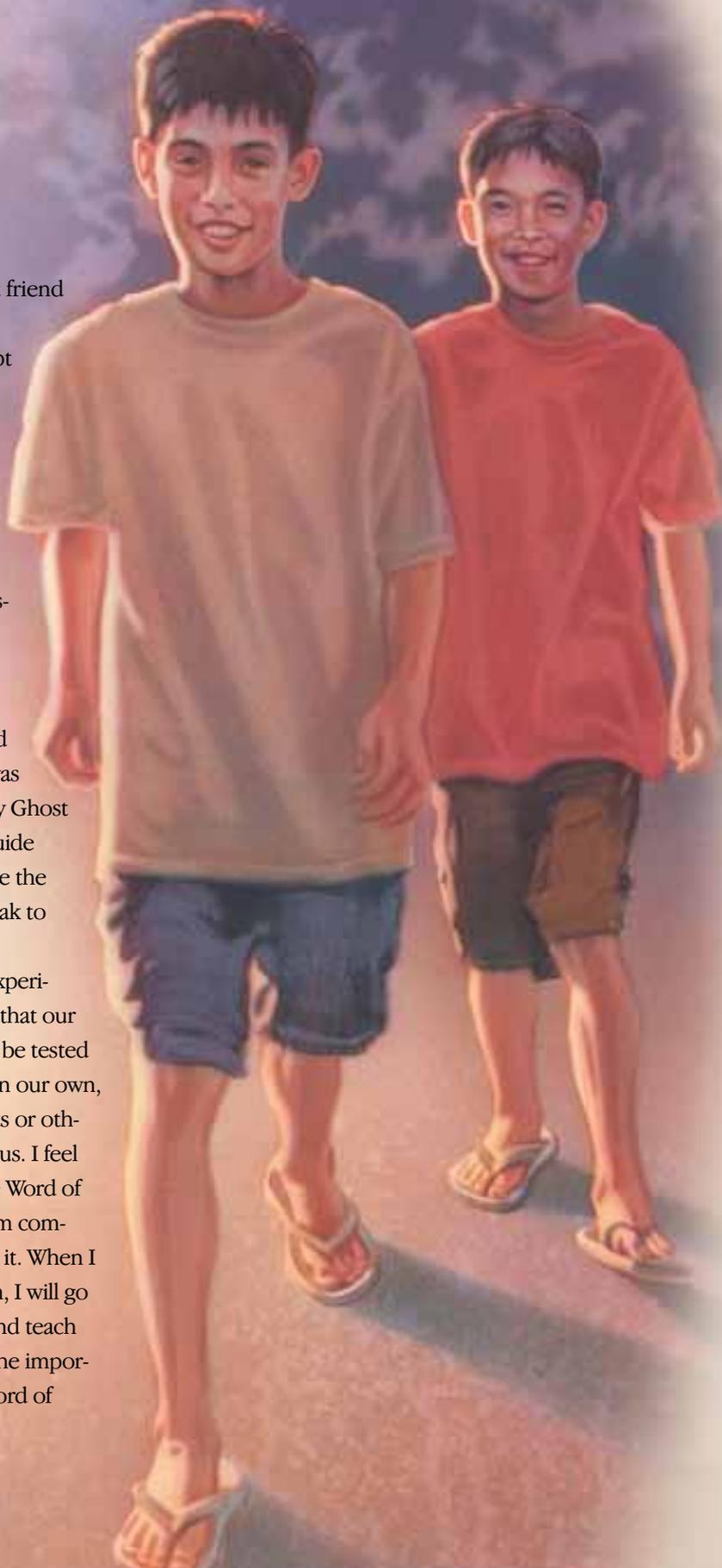
One of my classmates invited my friends and me to take a ride with him and his older cousin. His cousin drove us around, and we had fun until—to my surprise—my classmates brought out beer and cigarettes. We parked the car near the campsite, and they began to drink the beers and smoke in the car. They invited me to join them, but I refused.

I said I wouldn't join in because smoking would shorten my lifespan. I also said that it is against my beliefs, because I have been taught the Word of Wisdom. I told them that the Word of Wisdom is a law that teaches that we should keep our bodies clean, because they are temples of God. I told them we must avoid smoking; drinking alcohol, tea, and coffee; and taking

drugs. My best friend and I left the group and slept in our tent.

When I went home, I was happy to tell my dad that I had not joined my classmates but instead had taught them about the Word of Wisdom. I was happy the Holy Ghost was there to guide me and give me the courage to speak to my friends.

From this experience I learned that our obedience will be tested when we are on our own, without parents or others to support us. I feel grateful for the Word of Wisdom and am committed to obey it. When I am old enough, I will go on a mission and teach many people the importance of the Word of Wisdom. ■



RECOGNIZING THE SAVIOR

BY JADE SWARTZBERG

I was sitting at a table with some friends in our middle school cafeteria when the topic of Christ's Second Coming came up. My friends were not very religious, but they had been to church enough times to have heard of the prophesied event. They also knew that I went to church regularly and that I had a firm belief in the Savior.

We talked about it for a while, and in response to their questions I told them that no one knows exactly when Christ will come again. One of my friends turned to me and said quite seriously, "Jade, if the Second Coming happens soon and Jesus Christ comes, I may not recognize Him. Will you point Him out to me?"

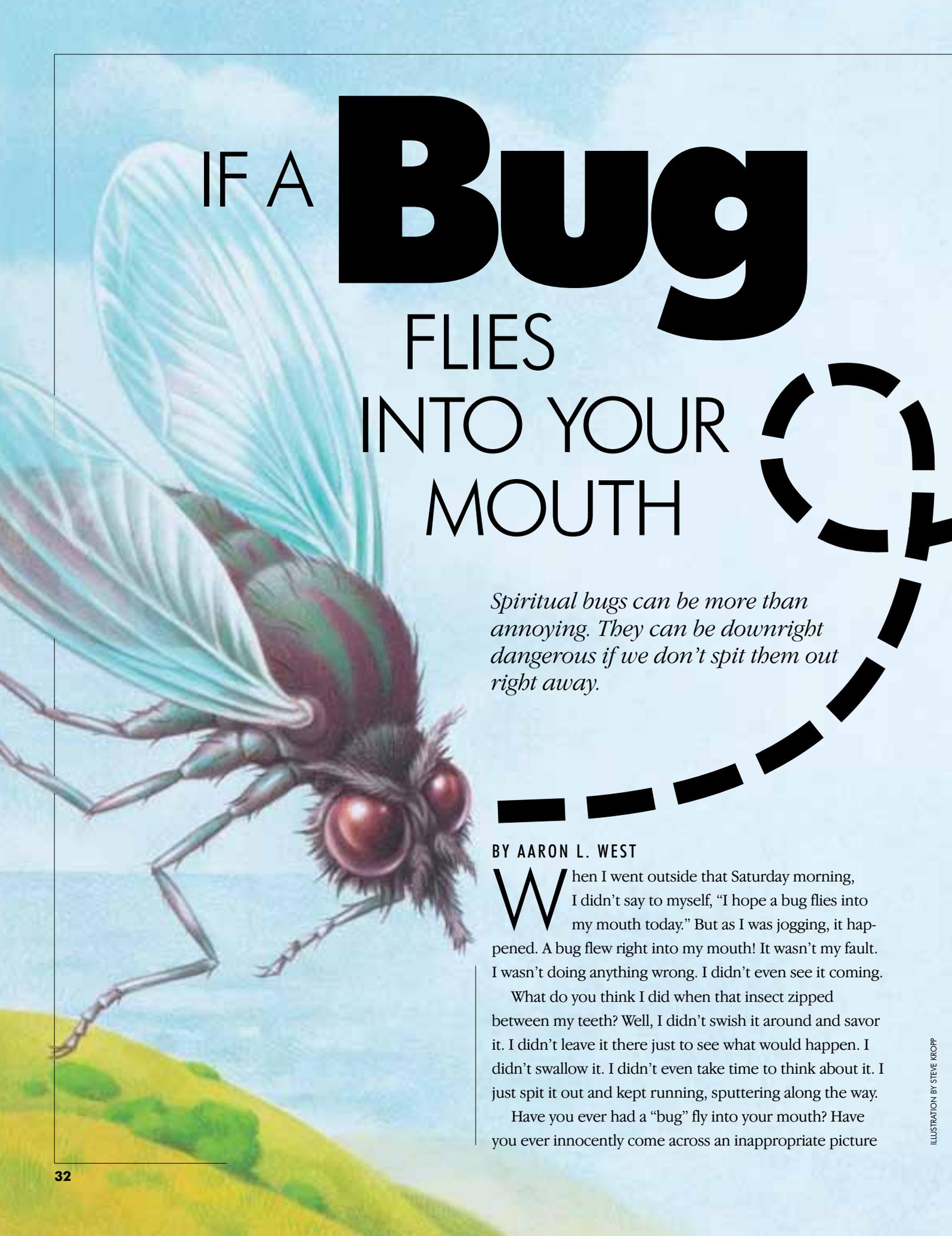
Of course I said I would, and we started talking about other things.

My friends have probably never thought about that conversation again, but I have thought of it many times. Based on what I said and did, my friends assumed that I knew the Savior. In fact they counted on me to know Him! But do I really? Could I answer yes to Alma's question, "Have ye received his image in your countenance" (Alma 5:14)?

That casual question asked by my friend has caused me to evaluate my relationship with the Savior

many times. For example, is my personal prayer and scripture study meaningful enough that it brings me closer to Him? I hope so. And I hope that one day when Christ does come, I can stand before Him with a pure heart and clean hands. Then not only will I be able to easily recognize Him, but He will be able to recognize me because I will have His image engraven upon my countenance (see Alma 5:19). ■





IF A Bug FLIES INTO YOUR MOUTH

Spiritual bugs can be more than annoying. They can be downright dangerous if we don't spit them out right away.

BY AARON L. WEST

When I went outside that Saturday morning, I didn't say to myself, "I hope a bug flies into my mouth today." But as I was jogging, it happened. A bug flew right into my mouth! It wasn't my fault. I wasn't doing anything wrong. I didn't even see it coming.

What do you think I did when that insect zipped between my teeth? Well, I didn't swish it around and savor it. I didn't leave it there just to see what would happen. I didn't swallow it. I didn't even take time to think about it. I just spit it out and kept running, sputtering along the way.

Have you ever had a "bug" fly into your mouth? Have you ever innocently come across an inappropriate picture

or song or word or idea? You probably have. Evil influences are all around us, and while we can do much to avoid them, we will probably be exposed to them through no fault of our own. These spiritual bugs are deadly—much more harmful to our spirits than that little insect was to my body.

What should you do if a spiritual bug flies into your mouth? You should give it the same treatment I gave

the bug that flew into mine: Spit it out!

Don't hesitate. Walk away. Run away if you have to. Turn off the TV. Turn off the radio. Turn off the computer. Throw that book or magazine in the garbage can where it belongs.

Exercise what President Brigham Young (1801–77) called “the mental force of faith.” He said: “By and by the world will be overturned according to the words of the prophet, and we will see the reign of righteousness enter in, and sin and iniquity will have to walk off. But the power and

principles of evil, if they can be called principles, will never yield one particle to the righteous march of the Savior, [unless] they are beaten back inch by inch, and we have got to

take the ground by force. Yes, by the mental force of faith, and by good works, the march forth of the Gospel will increase, spread, grow and prosper.”¹

President Young was speaking about our efforts to fill the world with the gospel, but his words also apply to our efforts to fill our lives with goodness. Force that evil thought or image out of your mind by singing a hymn, reciting a scripture, saying a prayer. “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

Remember what President Gordon B. Hinckley has

taught us over and over again about pornography:

“Of course you are tempted. It seems as if the whole world has become obsessed with sex. In a very beguiling and alluring way, it is thrown at you constantly. You are exposed to it on television, in magazines and books, in videos, even in music. Turn your back on it. Shun it. I know that is easy to say, and difficult to do. But each time that you do so, it will be so much the easier the next time.

What a wonderful thing it will be if someday you can stand before the Lord and say, ‘I am clean.’

“The Lord has given a commandment in our time that applies to each of us. He has said, ‘Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly.’ And with this He has given a promise, ‘Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God’ (D&C 121:45).

I believe He is saying that if we are clean in mind and body, the time will come when we can stand confidently before the Lord. . . . There will be a feeling of confidence and there will also be smiles of approval.”²

Remember: if a bug flies into your mouth, spit it out! ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 332–33.
2. “Be Ye Clean,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 4.



Renovating the Tab

By June 2006 all of the pipes of the organ except those seen here had been removed for cleaning, and the slope of the floor in the balcony was being increased so all visitors would have a good view of the rostrum. The floor had been covered and the pillars wrapped for protection. The restoration of the ceiling had been finished.

ernacle



While the Salt Lake Tabernacle was closed to the public for two years, workers carried out an extensive renovation on the 140-year-old building.

"I love this building," said President Gordon B. Hinckley at a press briefing on October 1, 2004. "I don't want anything done here which will destroy the historical aspect of this rare gem of architecture. . . . I want the old original Tabernacle, its weak joints bound together and . . . strengthened and its natural and wonderful beauty preserved."

Following are photographs of the renovation.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY A. ANGLE AND ROGER SEARS

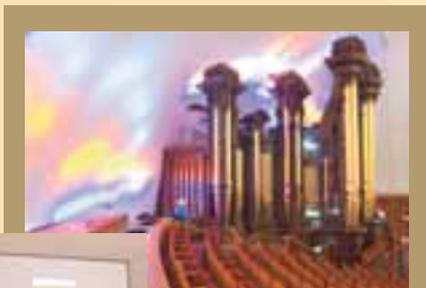


Above: Workers install solid white oak pews, which will replace most of the original soft pine ones. The original pews, painted by pioneer artisans to look like oak, were damaged and worn. Some will be permanently displayed.

Right: The rostrum has been equipped with a large stage lift in the center. This, in combination with self-contained rostrum wagons (right), can be configured into general conference mode, fireside mode, or orchestra platform mode. The wagons have audiovisual equipment, wiring, and ventilation built into them. They also have matching carpet, new millwork, and viewing screens on which General Authorities can watch conference proceedings.



One of two new staircases added to the balcony makes six exits from the upper floor.



Audiovisual upgrades include a variety of new lighting effects. The inset shows one of two screens mounted on either side of the organ pipes. When not needed, the screens can be retracted behind the choir seats. State-of-the-art audio equipment has been installed, yet the famous acoustical properties of the Tabernacle have been preserved.



A worker stands atop scaffolding that is several stories high as he works on the restoration of the ceiling. Fourteen layers of paint were removed to reach the original plaster. After repairs were made, workers applied plaster that matched the properties of the historic plaster in both its content and acoustic properties. Care was taken to preserve the waviness of the original ceiling.



A skilled artist touches up the faux finish on the face of the balcony. Most of the faux graining on the walls and pillars of the Tabernacle needed to be repaired or replaced.



Below: As part of the seismic improvements, the exterior piers were anchored deeper into the ground and strengthened with new steel and concrete footings. This anchoring is located below sidewalk level.

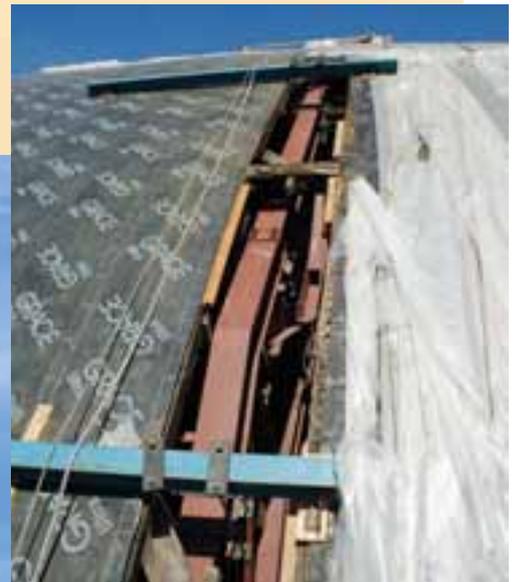


The organ pipes were cleaned, retuned, and reinstalled. The largest pipes (left) are made of wood and were too large to remove. The pipes were regilded.

Significant space under the Tabernade has been remodeled. Right top: The administrative offices of the Tabernade Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square now occupy the space previously occupied by the baptistry. Center: The women's changing room provides each choir member with her own cubicle to store her permanent wardrobe. The men have a similar space. Bottom: The music library houses all of the choir's sheet music. It also provides individual lockers for each of the approximately 350 choir members. Librarians compile binders containing the right music in the right part for a given show and place them in the individual lockers.



The new aluminum roof, shown here in December 2005. Below: On each end of the Tabernade, a wide steel truss—called a “sister truss”—was attached to the existing wooden truss to strengthen it. Below left: Workers apply plywood prior to adding the new roof.



Fast Enough

*I may not fast like everyone else,
but the sacrifice still brings blessings.*

BY RILEY M. LORIMER

When I was a child, fast Sunday was something of a burden. My little tummy rumbled all day long, and I could hardly wait for dinnertime when I could break my fast. By the summer before my sixth-grade year, I had started to gain a greater understanding of the principle of fasting, and just as I did, it happened—I got sick.

This wasn't your average cold and flu, either. My body was acting very strangely, and no one seemed to know why. After four months and visits to countless specialists, I finally got an answer. I was diagnosed with a rare disease that makes me thirsty all the time and very sensitive to dehydration. Because the disease is rare, the doctors couldn't tell me much about what day-to-day life was going to be like. I was simply given medicine in the hope that it would help.

So when the next fast Sunday came, I tried to fast from food and water, just as I had always done. Big mistake. Because of my disease, fasting from water even for a few hours makes me very ill, as I quickly found out.

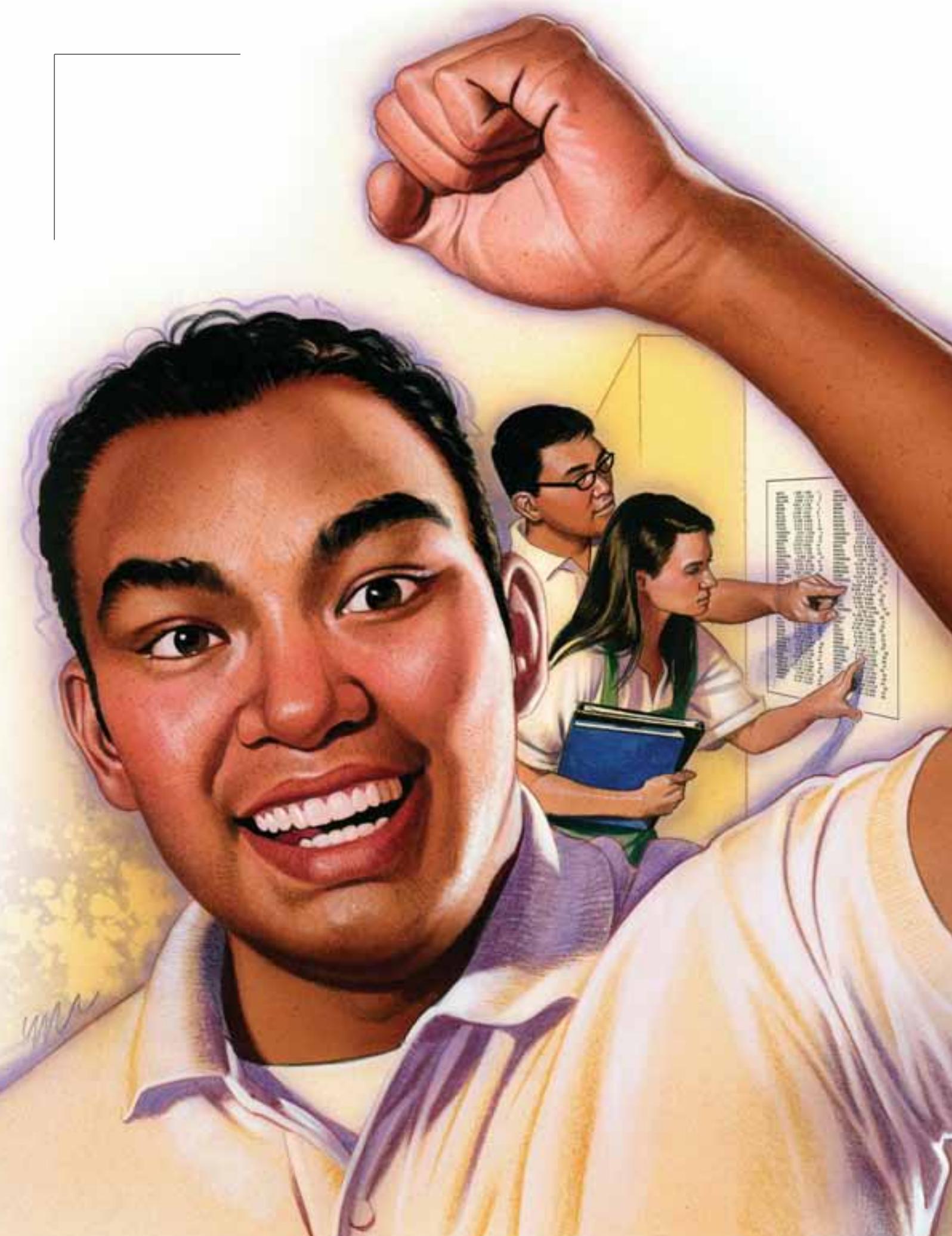
I was very upset by this. "If I drink when I'm fasting," I thought to myself, "it won't be a full fast! I won't be doing enough!" This thought troubled me for months. I studied scriptures about fasting and prayed about this problem a great deal. I also talked to my parents and Young Women leaders about it, but still I felt uneasy.

The answer came to me one fast Sunday morning as I read the story of the widow's mite in the New Testament (see Mark 12:41–44).

The widow's offering was small in the eyes of the world, but the Savior accepted it lovingly because He knew that it was all she had. I knew then that my fast was sufficient because it was the very best I could do. The Lord wasn't measuring my sacrifice against what others were giving, but against what *I* was capable of giving.

Since that day I have developed a firm testimony of fasting. I have learned that I must also study and pray while I fast so the Spirit can be with me. But most important, I have learned to always give my best, and that is enough. The Lord doesn't ask us to give more than we have strength for (see Mosiah 4:27). ■





FOR A BURNT OFFERING



When I was admitted to the university, I shouted for joy. How could I then sacrifice my education to serve a mission?

BY JOSEPH RAY BRILLANTES

And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife . . . I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her. . . . Then Abraham fell upon his face, and [rejoiced]" (Genesis 17:15–17; see Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 17:23).

I shouted for joy. My whole high school must have heard. Other students stared at me, wondering what had made me shout, but I could not contain my delight when I saw my name on the list of students admitted to the Philippines' premier university. I truly felt blessed.

"And thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him" (Genesis 17:19).

When people learned that I would be attending the university, they looked at me in awe. In moments of reflection, I couldn't help smiling. My future was set. I was very grateful to the Lord for helping me succeed in the qualifying examinations.

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did [test] Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: . . . Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him . . . for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:1–2).

"Heavenly Father, I can't go on a mission right now. There is so much for me here. Let me continue my studies. After I get my degree, I will go and proclaim Thy gospel.



And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, . . . Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou has not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

“I need to continue studying, Father. I need this for my future.

“Thou knowest that I have tried to persuade the department head to grant me a leave of absence for two years. She would not allow it. She told me I had to apply for an honorable dismissal from the university if I choose to go.

“Heavenly Father, I can’t go on a mission right now. I need this for my future.”

“And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together” (Genesis 22:6).

My heart was heavy as I approached the office door of the college secretary. He would tell me that I was out of my mind, that I would be sacrificing a promising future. How could I explain to him that the Lord had called me?

“And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son” (Genesis 22:9–10).

“I am here to see the college secretary.”

“It is about applying for an honorable dismissal.”

“No, I am in good academic standing.”

“No, I have not been involved in any criminal offense.”

“The reason? I have received a call from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to serve a full-time proselytizing mission. I need to give up my studies at the university to serve the Lord.”

“No, the mission cannot be postponed, and I will serve for two years.”

“I know that means I cannot return.”

“And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, . . . Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou has not withheld thy son, thine only son from me” (Genesis 22:11–12).

“What? I can apply for a leave of absence? My department head said that I had to leave the university because a leave of absence can be granted for only one year.”

“The university policy was recently changed? She must not have known that, nor did I.”

“Thank you very much.”

“And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven . . . and said, . . . in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Genesis 22:15–18).

After I served in the Philippines Ilagan Mission from 2000 to 2002, I resumed my studies at the University of the Philippines in Quezon City and then transferred to Brigham Young University–Hawaii. I look forward to marrying and raising a family in the gospel.

The Lord would have us sacrifice everything to Him. That does not mean we cannot receive the desires of our heart. Sometimes He just wants to see if we will put Him first. ■

Did You Know?

Journal Ideas

If you are having trouble coming up with topics to write about in your journal, start with these: “The first thing I can remember about my childhood is . . .” or “My best memory of school is . . .” or “A spiritual experience I had recently was . . .”

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said: “Get a notebook, my young folks, a journal that will last through all time, and maybe the angels may quote from it for eternity. Begin today and write in it your goings and comings, your deepest thoughts, your achievements and your failures, your associations and your triumphs, your impressions and your testimonies” (“The Angels May Quote from It,” *Tambuli*, June 1977, 17; *New Era*, Oct. 1975, 5).

Leadership Tip



President David O. McKay (1873–1970), the ninth President of the Church, spoke about several

traits that characterize a successful leader or teacher:

1. “Implicit faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ as the light of the world, and a sincere desire to serve him. This condition of the soul will make for companionship and guidance of the Holy Ghost.”

2. “Unfeigned love for the . . . members, guided by determination to deal justly and impartially with every member of the Church. Honor the . . . member, and the . . . member will honor you.”

3. “Thorough preparation. The successful leader knows his [or her] duties and responsibilities and also the members under his [or her] direction.”

4. “Cheerfulness—not forced but natural cheerfulness, springing spontaneously from a hopeful soul.” (In Conference Report, Oct. 1968, 144.)

In a Word

Spiritual death: Spiritual death is separation from God. There are two sources of spiritual death: the Fall and our own disobedience.

“All mankind, by the fall of Adam being cut off from the presence of the Lord, are considered as dead, both as to things temporal and to things spiritual” (Helaman 14:16). During our life on the earth, we are separated from God’s presence. Through the Atonement, Jesus Christ redeems everyone from this spiritual death. “The resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea, even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of



“Unless you are fully engaged in living the gospel—living it with all of your ‘heart, might, mind and strength’ (D&C 4:2)—you cannot generate enough spiritual light to push back the darkness.”
Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Out of Darkness into His Marvelous Light,” *Liahona*, July 2002, 78; *Ensign*, May 2002, 71.

the Lord” (Helaman 14:17).

Further spiritual death comes as a result of our sins making us unclean and unable to dwell in the presence of God (see Helaman 14:18). The Savior offers redemption from this spiritual death, but only when we exercise faith in Him, repent of our sins, and obey the principles and ordinances of the gospel (see Helaman 14:19). (See *True to the Faith* [2004], “Death, Spiritual,” 48.)

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW BEIER, POSED BY MODEL; PHOTOGRAPH OF PRESIDENT MCKAY BY BOYART STUDIO; BACKGROUND © STOCK IMAGES





Brother John's Fast Offering

By Greg Burgoyne

I couldn't believe my eyes. There he was, standing at the pulpit. I had never seen Brother John at church before, let alone heard him bear his testimony. A month later he came to church and bore his testimony again.

It all started one Sunday morning in priesthood executive committee meeting. I was serving as Young Men president. We had just read from the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, and the bishop was sitting quietly, pondering. Then he looked up and said, "I want our Aaronic Priesthood brethren to begin collecting fast offerings from less-active members." He asked us to involve the teachers and priests.

I was surprised. In Cape Town, South Africa, most members live far from each other. It takes about 35

minutes to drive from one side of our ward to the other. The young men had never collected fast offerings before because they couldn't walk to members' homes—the distance was too great, and we were concerned about their safety.

As a committee we came up with a plan as we discussed how we might overcome these obstacles. The elders quorum agreed to assign brethren to take the young men to several homes on the Saturday before each fast Sunday. We split the ward into areas and assigned each companionship to visit a few active families and a few less-active families. We realized that our plan would be a good opportunity for the brethren to get to know the youth and for the youth to receive counsel from the elders.

When we presented the plan to the young men, they were eager to try it. We reminded them to wear Sunday clothes and that this was part of their sacred responsibility to watch over the ward.

I was assigned to take my younger brother, Andrew. The following Saturday we visited everyone on our list, but most people weren't home. The last member we visited was Brother John, whom we didn't know well.

Andrew got out of the car, knocked on the door, and waited. He was just about to return to the car when the door opened. Andrew shook Brother John's hand and said, "Hello, my name is Andrew, and I'm from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Tomorrow is fast Sunday, and the bishop has asked us to visit members to receive any fast-offering donations they wish to make."

He handed Brother John an envelope. Brother John was surprised, but he walked inside with the envelope.

After a few minutes he emerged from the house with a smile. He politely thanked Andrew and handed the envelope to him. I got out of the car, and we three chatted for a while. As we were leaving, Brother John waved good-bye and said, "Make sure you come next month." Andrew was excited all the way back to the chapel, where we turned in our envelopes to a member of the bishopric.

The next month we made sure to visit Brother John. Again he was friendly. After a few months he began attending church on fast Sunday. Our Saturday visits reminded him of his Sunday meetings, and he would come the next day.

We were excited when Brother John became active in the Church. We felt a special bond with him. Words cannot express the joy that came to us because one soul had returned to the fold. Within a few months, he was attending regularly, and soon he was called to serve in the elders quorum presidency.

For us, the highlight of this experience came when Brother John was asked to speak in sacrament meeting about tithes and offerings. At the end of his talk he spoke about Andrew's first visit.

With moistened eyes he said: "Andrew, you will never know the impact you had on my life that Saturday morning when you came to my door with that blue envelope. You may have thought it was a waste of time, but blessings came into my

life because you provided me with an opportunity to pay my fast offering. Your service is one reason I am here today." ■

Lemonade and a Loaf of Bread

By Anabela De León

When I was six years old, my family moved to a new house in our hometown of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. On the day we moved in, we were tired and thirsty. My older brother took me into the kitchen to get me a glass of water, but the utilities had not been turned on yet.

We didn't know what to do. It was late, and we didn't know anyone. Just then, someone knocked on the door. It turned out to be a pleasant and smiling older lady. "Welcome to the neighborhood," she said. "I'm your neighbor, Tenchita. I thought you probably didn't have any water, so I brought you some lemonade and bread."

I was so happy to see the lemonade that I smiled a huge smile. A few days later, Tenchita invited us

to attend The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and gave us a copy of the Book of Mormon.

We soon took the missionary discussions, and three months later the elders challenged us to be baptized. My five older siblings accepted the challenge, but my parents didn't feel ready. They continued to attend church, however, and they and I were baptized and confirmed two years later, when I was eight.

I was young, but I could see the changes the gospel of Jesus Christ made in our family. Like all families, we had our problems, but communication and harmony increased in our home, and we trusted that solutions would come because of the teachings we received in the true Church. We

were grateful that Tenchita had introduced us to



the gospel, but she soon moved, and we didn't hear from her again.

Thirteen years later, my family was sealed in the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple, and I decided to serve a mission. In my first area in the Guatemala Guatemala City South Mission, we often visited members who were ill or less active. One day the bishop asked us to visit an elderly sister who was sick and couldn't leave her home. He told us that this sister's favorite drink was lemonade.

When my companion and I arrived at the house, the sister was ill in bed, but I recognized her immediately and gave her a big hug. Sister Tenchita didn't know me at first, but after we had talked for a while, her eyes shone in recognition. She smiled and said, "I brought you lemonade and bread."

I thanked her for also bringing me the gospel and making it possible for me to serve a mission.

Giving a glass of lemonade and a loaf of bread is easy and inexpensive, but giving them the way Sister Tenchita did—with affection and concern for our eternal welfare—truly made them valuable. She changed my life and the lives of members of my family. Likewise, we can all change people's lives by helping them find their way to the "living water" and the "bread of life" (John 4:10; 6:48).

Today my family and I don't share just lemonade and bread with our neighbors; we also share the true gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

You'll Take Good Care of Me

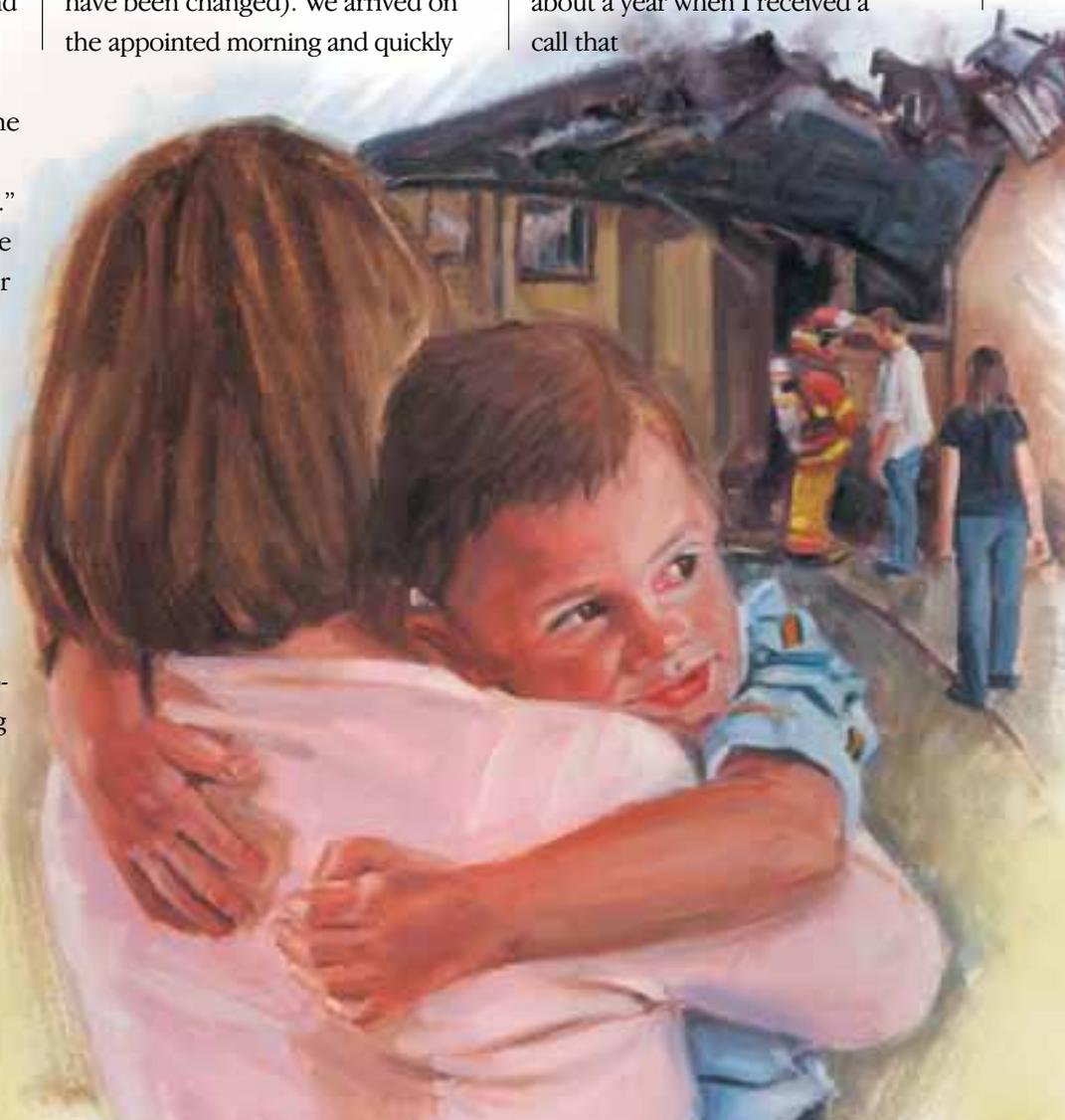
By Elaine Pearson

As I looked over my new visiting teaching assignment, I saw the name of a new member of our ward. I felt apprehensive about calling someone I didn't know, but my companion and I made an appointment to visit Jane (names have been changed). We arrived on the appointed morning and quickly

said a prayer before approaching the door. We found Jane and her three young sons waiting for us.

As we grew closer to Jane through our monthly visits, we also tried to get to know her sons. The two youngest would sit next to my companion and me, and we would read them books and play with them. But four-year-old Alex, the oldest of the three, was not so eager to warm up to his mother's frequent visitors. He was independent and hesitated to become friends with us.

I had been Jane's visiting teacher about a year when I received a call that



Jane's house was on fire! My husband and I felt prompted to grab crackers, bottled water, and toy cars and to hurry over to see if we could help. We found Jane standing on the sidewalk across from her smoldering home. Jane's husband had joined the firefighters to take stock of the damage while Jane comforted their three crying children, who were clinging to her knees.

When we spoke to her, she told us she was eager to join her husband. We took her two youngest children to our car. They were hungry and thirsty, and I was grateful for the inspiration of the Holy Ghost to bring food and water. They were soon content. But Alex, still sobbing, held tightly to his mother. Jane could not take him with her, and she felt torn between going to her husband and comforting her son.

I encouraged her to go and then leaned over and asked Alex if I could hold him while his mom went to find his dad. To my surprise, he agreed. When I scooped Alex into my arms, he rested his head on my shoulder, and I rubbed his back. While Jane went to find her husband, I whispered comforting words into Alex's ear. I could feel his sobs slow and his breathing relax.

As we stood on the sidewalk, Alex said softly to me, "You'll take good care of me 'cause you're my mom's teacher."

I quietly shed tears as I realized that Alex knew we were important in

his mother's life. He recognized that he could trust and rely on me to take care of him too 'cause I was his mom's teacher. ■

The Gift I Can't Remember

By Gary R. Wangsgard

One of the greatest gifts I ever received from my father is one I don't even remember.

He never talked about it. That was Dad's way. I learned about it many years later from my mother.

Both my mother and father had been raised as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but Dad's habit of smoking had kept them from being married in the temple. The loving bishop who performed my parents' civil ceremony encouraged them to set a goal to marry in the temple before their children came. They were still working on that goal when I joined the family.

By the time my second birthday was approaching, my parents still had not been to the temple. Mom really wanted to be sealed as a family before a second child came, but Dad was still using tobacco.

Sometimes I wish I could remember what happened on my second

birthday, because that's when I received the gift. My father came home from work that night in early November, and after setting aside his lunch bucket and taking off his coat, he picked me up. "Gary," he said, "I have a special birthday present for you." Mom said she was surprised because she knew Dad didn't have extra money to purchase a gift for me.

Reaching into his shirt pocket, Dad took out a partially used packet of cigarettes and handed them to me. Mom started to object, but Dad held up his hand as if to say, "This is between my son and me."

Quietly, he then said to me, "I have thought about this for several days. I have decided I don't want you, my son, to ever remember your father smoking. My gift to you today is that I am giving up my cigarettes, and I will never smoke again."

And that was the end of his tobacco habit. He must have struggled to quit smoking so abruptly. Although I don't remember it, that was his special gift to me. But it was more than that.

A few months later, with my mother pregnant with my brother, we made our way to the Logan Utah Temple, where we were sealed together as a forever family.

I am truly grateful for that gift given many years ago from my loving and caring father. ■



Touched by the Spirit

How loving is our Father in Heaven to provide us with all the things we need to be able to return to His presence. He has provided us with the *Liabona*, a very wonderful magazine, unique in its kind. Everyone who seeks the truth sincerely and humbly will be touched by the spirit it brings.

Every time I read the *Liabona*, I feel like I am mingling with my brothers and sisters around the world.

What a great blessing.

Victorino F. Dela Cruz Jr., Philippines

A Family Publication

We are grateful for the beautiful publication the *Liabona*, which we eagerly receive each month and make the most of as a family. In the July 2006 issue, for example, we enjoyed great articles that helped us prepare our son for baptism and confirmation. The high-quality photography catches the attention of our little girl, who does not yet know how to read but can understand visual messages. On a Sunday afternoon we played “Sunday Box: Pencil Spin” and had a very good time. Family bonds were strengthened.

Cazorla family, Spain

Especially Impressive

I have been reading the *Liabona* regularly for many years now. I always read it with respect and joy, and I am edified. I felt that Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf’s July 2006 article, “On the

Wings of Eagles,” was especially impressive and helpful.

Gernot Labr, Germany

Help with Home Teaching

I was grateful for the article by President Thomas S. Monson titled “The Master’s Blueprint,” in the January 2006 issue. It was very uplifting to my family, and it helped me with my home teaching.

Jaime Cruz, Nicaragua

The *Liabona***Increases****Our Faith**

We are very blessed because we have a guide and tool—the *Liabona*—that helps us survive in this dangerous life, wherein there are so many trials and temptations. The *Liabona* helps us increase and strengthen our faith.

I am now studying at a school where I am the only member of the Church. There are articles in the *Liabona* that relate to my personal challenges.

Mark Anthony Punongbayan, Philippines

A Christmas Gift

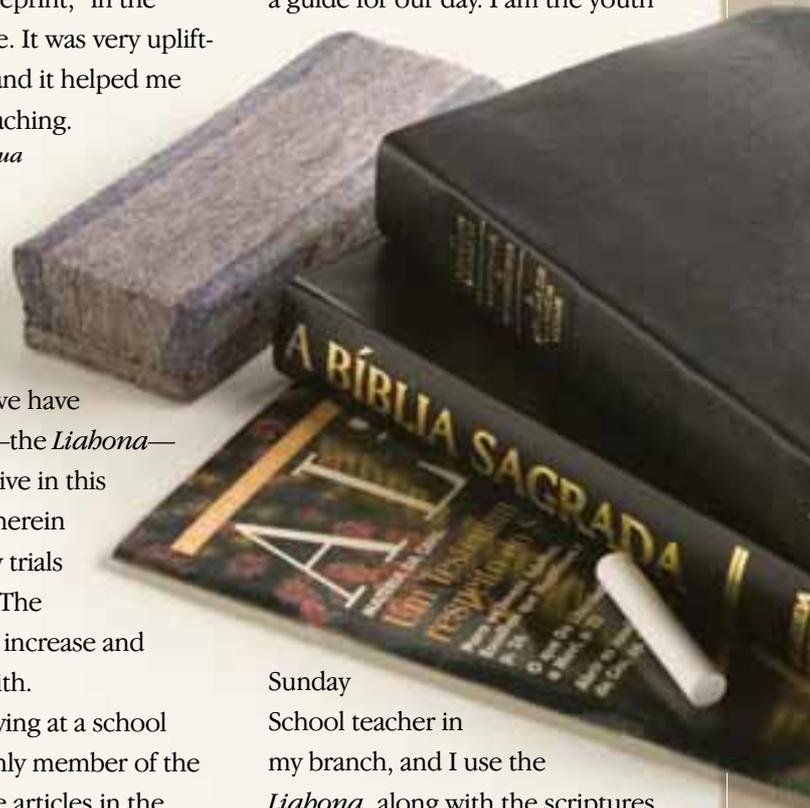
I sent a copy of the December 2006 *Liabona* to a friend, and after reading it, he felt great. He said, “I thank you for such a great offer. My life has changed, and I am ready to join this wonderful Church.” And I

was happy for helping bring a soul unto Christ.

Kwame Asante, Ghana

A Teaching Aid

My life as member of the Church is happier because the *Liabona* is a guide for our day. I am the youth



Sunday

School teacher in my branch, and I use the *Liabona*, along with the scriptures, in my lessons. My students and I have learned a lot. Congratulations on your excellent work.

Adeilson de Souza Nascimento, Brazil

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

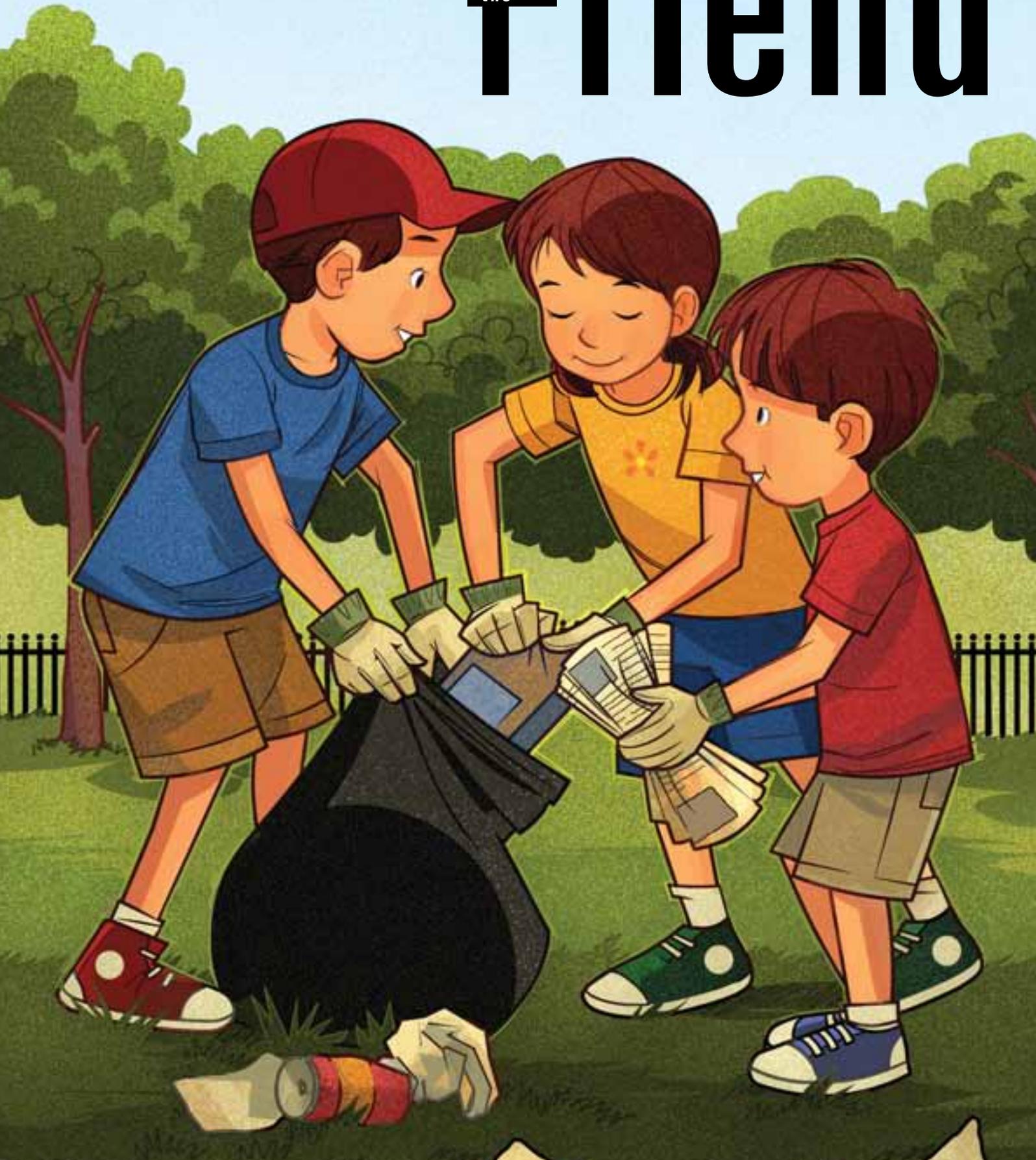
Liabona, Comment

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

the Friend



Sacred Ground

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON
First Counselor in the First Presidency

I recall the time when I was ordained a deacon. Our bishopric stressed the sacred responsibility which was ours to pass the sacrament. Emphasized were proper dress, a dignified bearing, and the importance of being clean inside and out. As we were taught the procedure in passing the sacrament, we were told how we should assist Louis McDonald, a brother in our ward who was afflicted with a palsied condition, that he might have the opportunity to partake of the sacred emblems.

How I remember being assigned to pass



**President Monson
recalls an act
of priesthood
service that
changed his life.**

the sacrament to the row where Brother McDonald sat. I was fearful and hesitant as I approached this wonderful brother, and then I saw his smile and the eager expression of gratitude that showed his desire to partake. Holding the tray in my left hand, I took a small piece of bread and pressed it to his lips. The water was later served in the same way. I felt I was on holy ground. And indeed I was. The privilege to pass the sacrament to Brother McDonald made better deacons of us all. ●

From an October 2005 general conference address.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

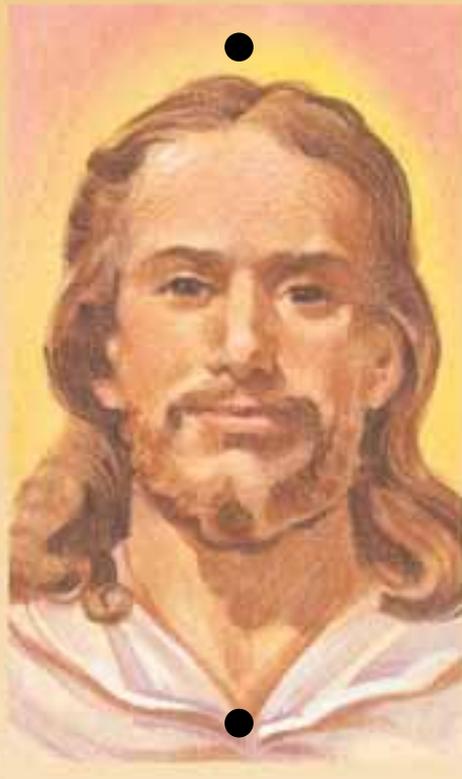
1. At first President Monson was fearful of passing the sacrament to Brother McDonald. Why? How did his feelings change? Why?

2. Why do you think President Monson felt he was on holy ground? How do you think Brother McDonald felt?

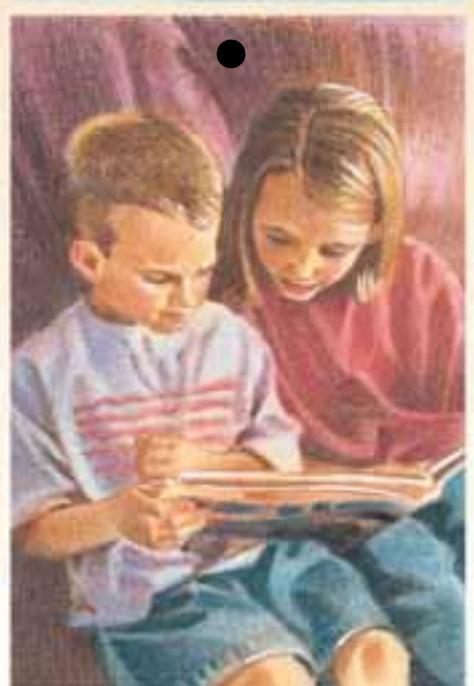
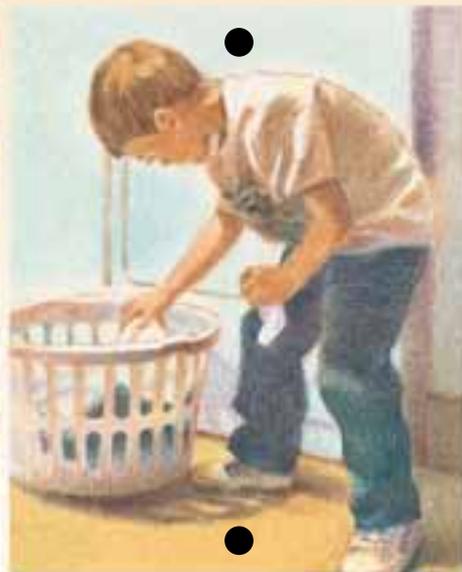
3. What have you learned about partaking of the sacrament? If you are preparing to receive the Aaronic Priesthood, what have you learned about passing the sacrament?

4. What else did you think about as you read this article?





“And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.”
Mosiah 2:17



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

The Master Served

“When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

BY ELIZABETH RICKS



Jesus loved serving others. He was the perfect example of service. He said, “I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:27). He knew that He came to earth to serve others, not to be served. Do you think it is odd that the Master served others? *Master* and *servant* are opposite words. You might think it is surprising that the greatest masters are those who serve.

During Jesus’s mortal life, He served the poor. He taught the gospel. He fed crowds of hungry people. He washed His disciples’ feet. He healed the sick and even raised the dead.

Jesus taught the importance of service. When He comes to earth again, He will say to the righteous: “I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matthew 25:35–36).

Jesus said the righteous will not remember doing any of those things for Him. Then He will tell them, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). When we serve each other, we are also serving Him.

You can serve the Lord by serving those around you. You do not have to do something big to serve others. A smile can gladden a friend’s heart. Speaking a kind word, helping a brother or sister, obeying your parents—all are ways you can serve. When we willingly serve, we become more like Christ, and our faith grows.



Activity

Mount page F4 on heavy paper. Cut out the eight pieces. Punch holes where indicated. Using yarn or string, tie a loop in the hole at the top of the picture of the Savior. Use another piece of string to connect the bottom of the picture of the Savior to the scripture. Using six more pieces of string, tie each picture of an act of service to the bottom of the picture above. Hang your mobile where it will remind you that when you are serving others, you are also serving Jesus Christ.

Sharing Time Ideas

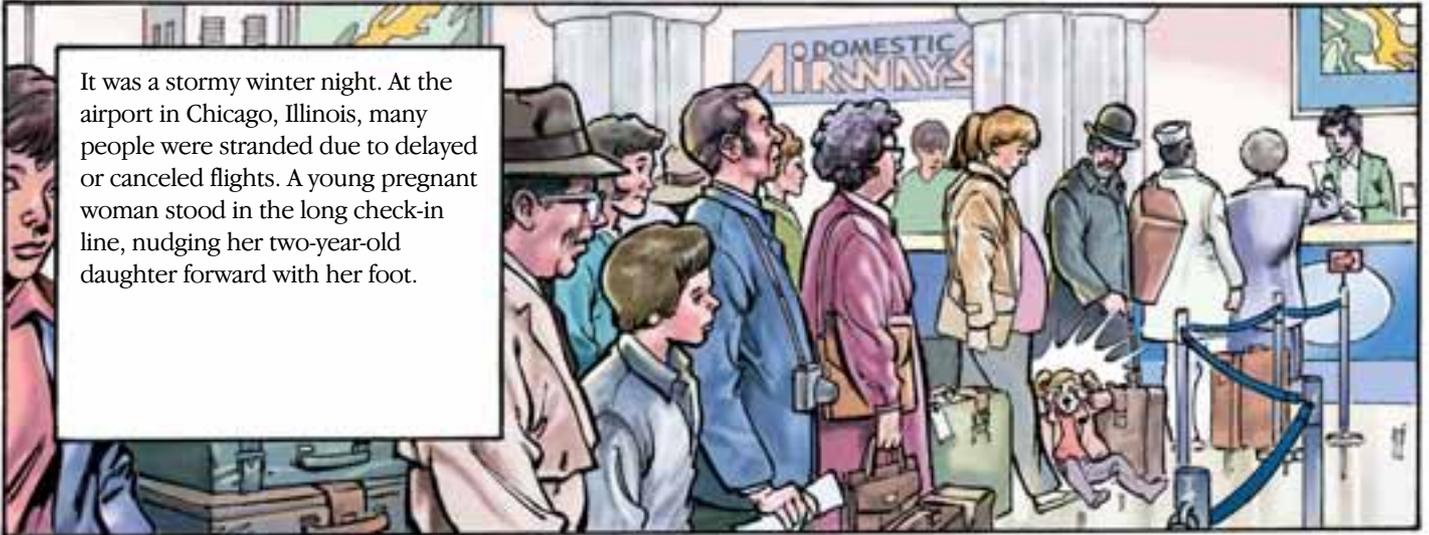
1. Tell the account of Nephi’s broken bow (see 1 Nephi 16:18–32) by using a quiver with arrows. You can draw a quiver and arrows on the chalkboard or make them out of paper. On each arrow, attach a question. For example, write “Whom did Nephi ask for direction in where to hunt?” (his father, Lehi) and “What did Nephi do with the food he obtained?” (shared it with his family). On each arrow, write a word that relates to the question, such as obedience or sharing. After all of the questions are answered, point to each arrow, and ask the children to liken the quality written on the arrow to their own families. Ask for specific examples such as “I could help my dad make lunch.” Share an experience of how a family member’s service has blessed you.

2. Enter the room wearing an apron and carrying a tray covered with a napkin. Tell the children you want to serve them. Have them look up Galatians 5:13–14. Help them underline, “By love serve one another,” and, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” On the tray, have different scripture references, pictures of service, or quotes from stories you will tell. You might have small cups with a scripture reference on the outside, a picture of service on a plate, or quotes taped to silverware. After the children have selected an item and looked at or read it, ask them to share what they learned. Tell stories of service. You could share stories from the Liahona. ●



FROM THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT SPENCER W. KIMBALL

A Simple Act of Service



It was a stormy winter night. At the airport in Chicago, Illinois, many people were stranded due to delayed or canceled flights. A young pregnant woman stood in the long check-in line, nudging her two-year-old daughter forward with her foot.

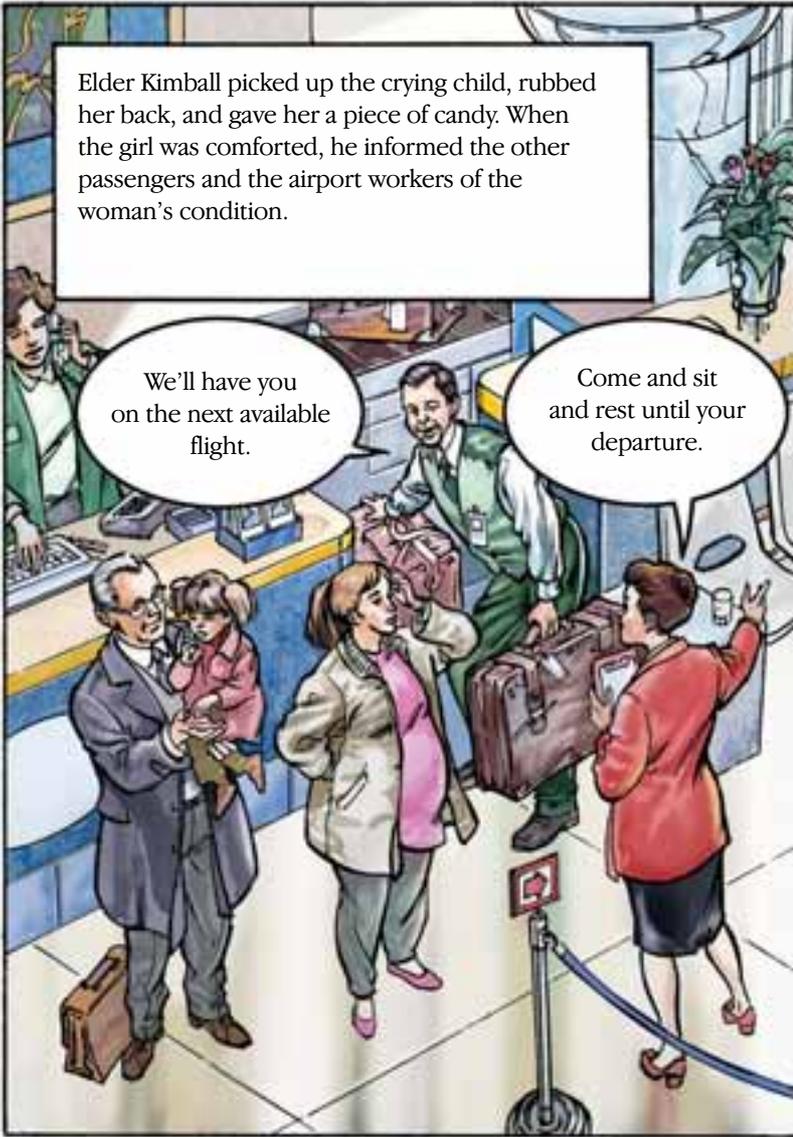
Many people made disapproving comments, but no one offered to help.



With a kind smile, Elder Kimball walked up to the woman.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAL VELLUTO AND EUGENIO MATTOZZI



Elder Kimball picked up the crying child, rubbed her back, and gave her a piece of candy. When the girl was comforted, he informed the other passengers and the airport workers of the woman's condition.

We'll have you on the next available flight.

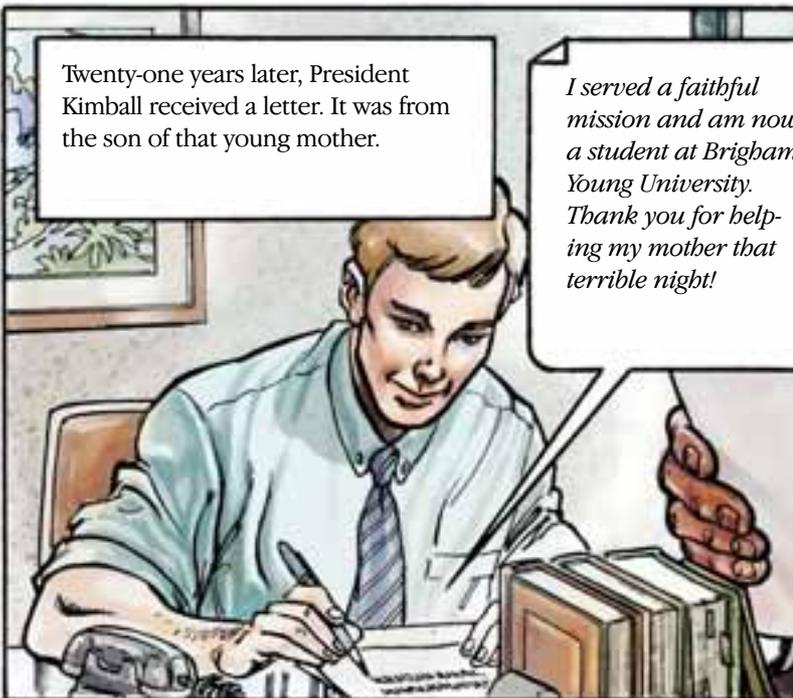
Come and sit and rest until your departure.



The woman's stress was lessened. Later, she saw a picture of Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

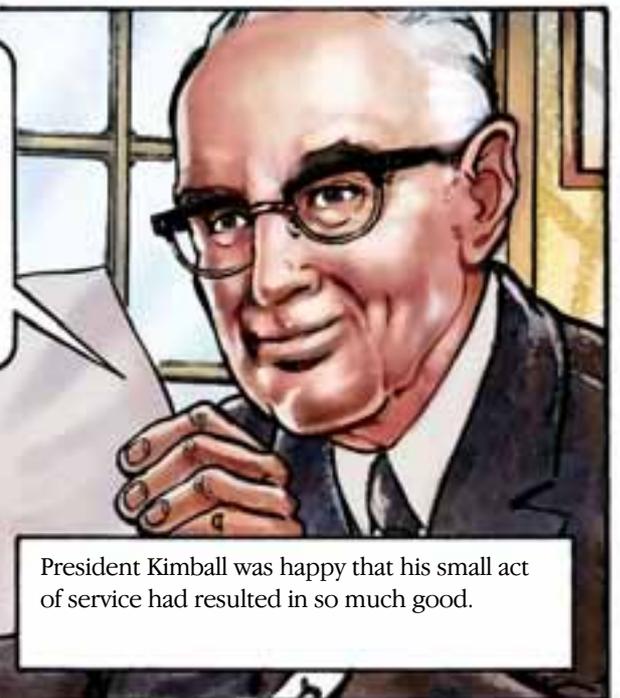
That's him! That's the man who helped me.

A few months after that, she gave birth to a healthy baby boy.



Twenty-one years later, President Kimball received a letter. It was from the son of that young mother.

I served a faithful mission and am now a student at Brigham Young University. Thank you for helping my mother that terrible night!



President Kimball was happy that his small act of service had resulted in so much good.

“Call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord” (Isaiah 58:13).

Doing Good on the Sabbath Day

BY JULIE WARDELL
Church Magazines

1. After Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ created the heavens and earth in six days, They rested on the seventh day.



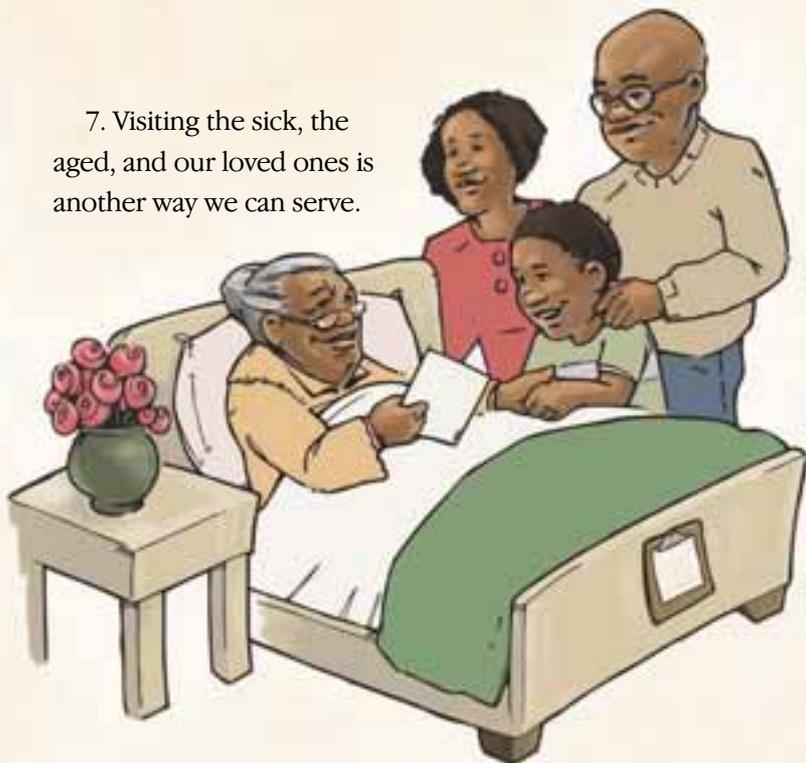
2. They blessed the seventh day to be a holy day. It is a day to rest from our daily work and think about Them. We can show how much we love Them by doing good things on the Sabbath day.



3. Attending church and taking the sacrament show Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ that we love Them and want to follow Their teachings. How we dress, behave, and listen to our teachers are important too.



7. Visiting the sick, the aged, and our loved ones is another way we can serve.



4. At home we should keep the Sabbath day holy. It is a day to be with our families.



5. We can listen to good music, play quiet games, or go for a walk with our family. Reading the scriptures, scripture stories, or *The Friend* is nice too.



6. The Sabbath is a good day to serve others. We might draw pictures or write letters to relatives, loved ones, missionaries, or people serving in the military.



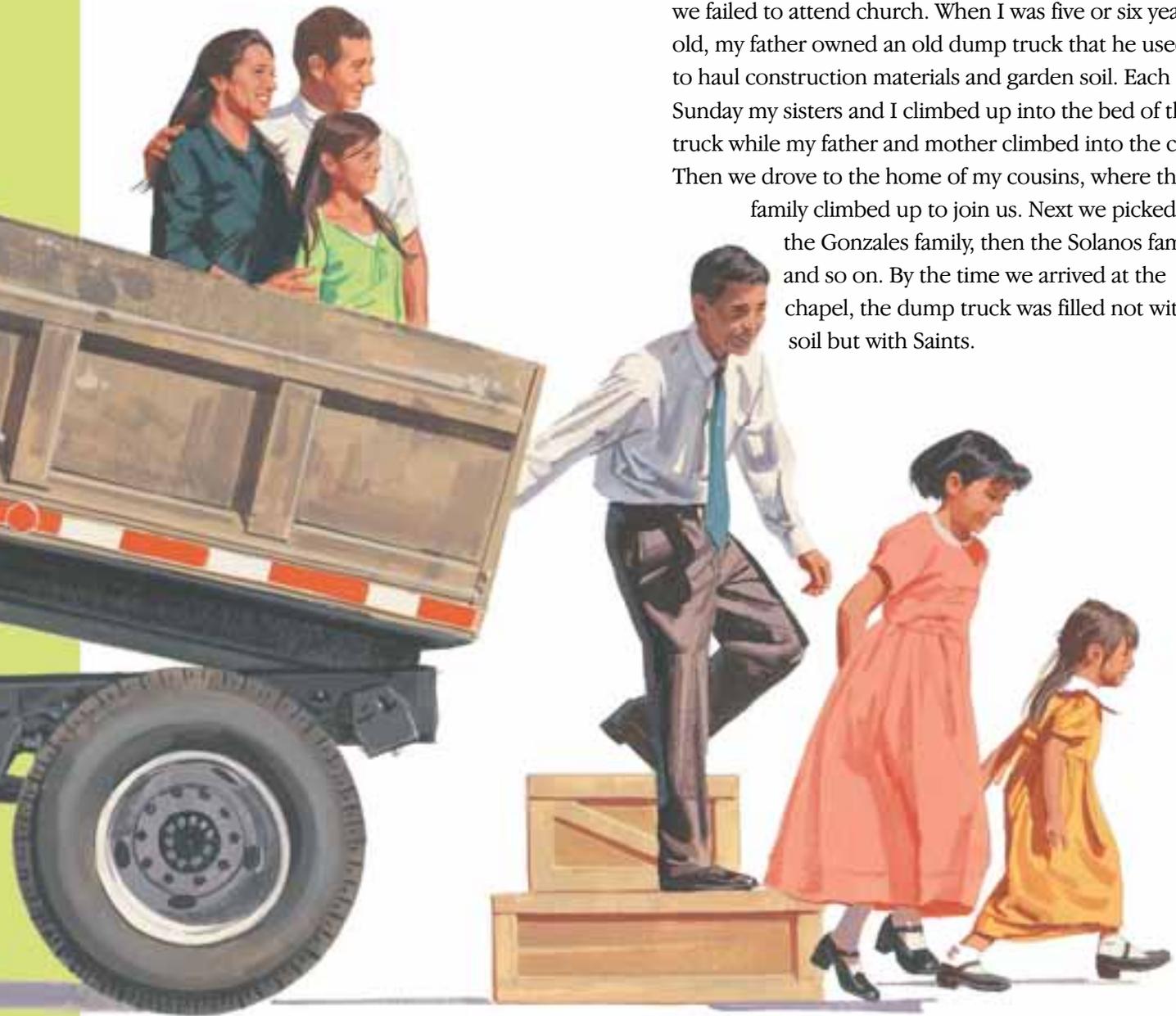
8. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have promised that if we keep the Sabbath day holy, we will be happier and receive many blessings in our lives. ●



A Truckload of Saints

“Thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day” (D&C 59:9).

I grew up in Monterrey, Mexico, in the state of Nuevo León. My parents were faithful Latter-day Saints, and I can’t remember a single time when we failed to attend church. When I was five or six years old, my father owned an old dump truck that he used to haul construction materials and garden soil. Each Sunday my sisters and I climbed up into the bed of that truck while my father and mother climbed into the cab. Then we drove to the home of my cousins, where their family climbed up to join us. Next we picked up the Gonzales family, then the Solanos family, and so on. By the time we arrived at the chapel, the dump truck was filled not with soil but with Saints.



Benjamín De Hoyos as a baby (middle row) with his family.



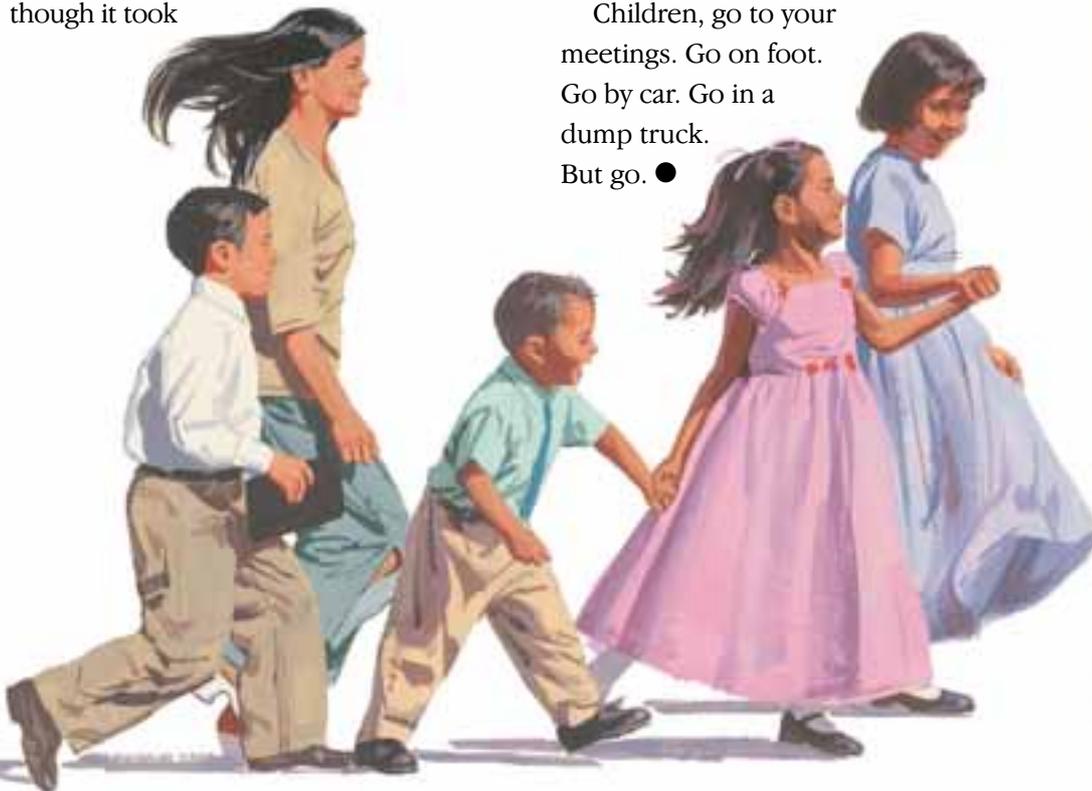
Some people who lived nearby thought it was most entertaining to watch more than 20 men, women, and children in white shirts and ties or Sunday dresses come pouring out of a dusty dump truck. Neighbors came outside each Sunday just to enjoy the spectacle. They laughed at us, but we weren't a bit embarrassed. We were happy to be going to church. We repeated that performance twice each Sunday all through the 1960s.

When the truck wasn't available, my family walked. Even if it was raining or cold or sizzling hot, we walked just the same, though it took

at least an hour going and an hour coming back. And in those days there were Church services in the morning and the afternoon. We always attended both.

When I returned to Monterrey after many years, every one of my fellow dump truck passengers was still active in the Church. That experience united us and made us strong. I still attend all my meetings. How can I do less now than I did then?

Children, go to your meetings. Go on foot. Go by car. Go in a dump truck. But go. ●



From an interview with Elder Benjamín De Hoyos of the Seventy, currently serving in the South America North Area; by Melvin Leavitt, Church Magazines



As a missionary.



Miles and Miles of Smiles

"Let all your things be done with charity" (1 Corinthians 16:14).

BY RAY GOLDRUP

Based on a true story

Marcus watched the crackling campfire as he listened to his father's lesson. "We should all follow Jesus Christ's example so we can be happy," Dad said to the family. They were sitting on logs around the fire. "It's very important for each of us to show charity toward others," he said.

"What's charity, Dad?" Marcus asked.

Dad added more wood to the campfire. "Charity is the pure love of Christ," he explained. "We cannot be saved in the kingdom of God without it."

Marcus looked confused. Dad looked around at their family and asked, "Can each of you think of an example of charity, to help Marcus better understand what it is?"

Mom turned a marshmallow over the fire on a stick. "When Mrs. Clanton fell and hurt her hip, I helped do chores around her house," she said.

Tanner told how last week he helped the deacons

quorum collect food and clothing for some of the city's poor and homeless.

Ashley had befriended a neighborhood girl whom other girls ignored.

"Dad helped fix Mr. Johnson's roof because Mr. Johnson is in a wheelchair," Mom said.

"Does taking care of Jo-Jo count?" Marcus asked. Jo-Jo was his hamster. "I feed him and change his water and give him a new sock for his bed." Marcus bit into a toasty marshmallow.

"Any act of kindness or service we do for someone—including Jo-Jo—is charity," Dad said.

"I want to do stuff for somebody bigger than Jo-Jo, like you and Mom and Tanner and Ashley do," Marcus said. "But I'm too little, I guess."

"You don't have to be big to help someone, do you, Marcus?" Dad asked. "Or to have your prayers answered?"

Marcus smiled. "No."

“Why don’t you ask Heavenly Father to help you find someone you can help, and when the time is right, you’ll know it.”

“How will I know it?” Marcus asked.

Ashley reached over and wiped a smear of marshmallow from the side of Marcus’s mouth. “You’ll feel it about as deep down inside you as that marshmallow you just ate,” she said.

Later that night, Marcus lay curled up in his sleeping bag. He listened to the tree branches rub against the outside of the tent. “Heavenly Father, please help me find someone I can help,” he prayed. “I’m just a little kid, but Dad said you don’t have to be big to be kind or helpful to others. I help Jo-Jo and my family by being kind and doing my chores, but I want to do something for somebody else. Jesus helped lots of people, and I want to be like Him.”

One Saturday afternoon two weeks later, Marcus worked alongside his mother in their flower garden. He noticed their next-door neighbor sitting alone in her front-porch swing. She looked sad. “Mom, what’s the matter with Mrs. Walton?” Marcus asked.

Mom straightened up from bending over the flowers and looked at their neighbor. “Mr. Walton died almost a year ago, and she misses him very much. Some days are hard for her, and it looks like this is one of those days.”

Marcus stood up and looked at Mrs. Walton across the low hedge that separated the two yards. He felt a feeling deep inside him. It got bigger and warmer just like the campfire did when his father added more wood to it. “Can I pick one of our big yellow flowers and give it to Mrs. Walton?” Marcus asked.

Mom smiled and nodded.

A few moments later Marcus stood in front of Mrs.



Marcus held out the flower to Mrs. Walton. "This is for you," he said.

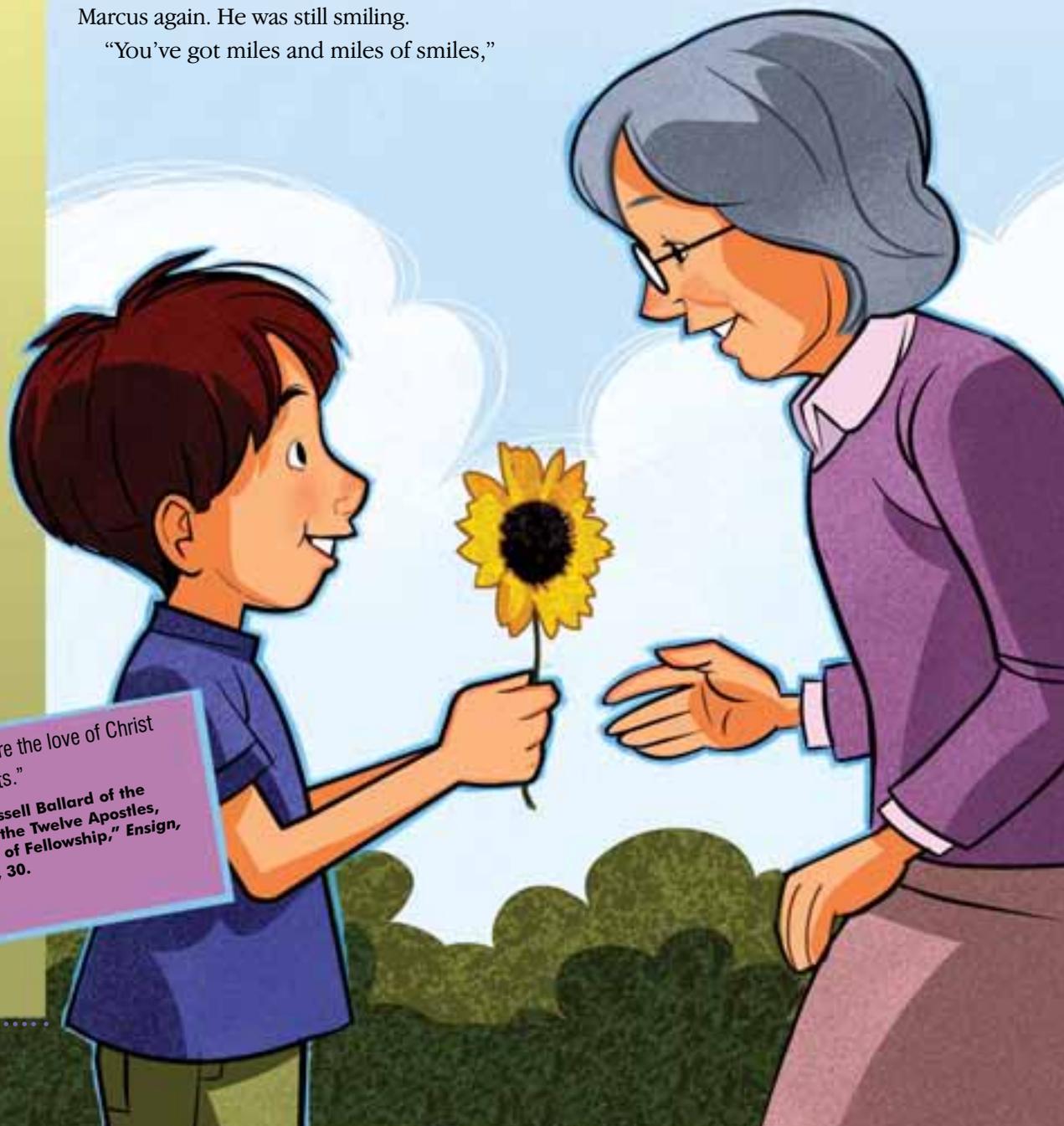
Walton. She looked surprised. Marcus held out the flower to her. "This is for you," he said.

She took the flower and then looked at Marcus. He climbed into the swing and sat beside her. He didn't say anything. He just smiled. Mrs. Walton patted Marcus's hand, and the two of them sat there together and listened to two red birds singing in her maple tree. Then Mrs. Walton looked at Marcus again. He was still smiling.

"You've got miles and miles of smiles,"

she said. "Did you know that?" Marcus kept smiling. "Your smiles came at a time when I most needed them. Thank you."

That night Marcus put clean bark shavings in his hamster's cage before going to bed. "Jo-Jo, today I worked with Mom in the flower garden, and I helped Mrs. Walton be happy. It made me feel happy too. I don't have to be big to help others. I can be like Jesus right now." ●



"We can share the love of Christ in simple acts."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Hand of Fellowship," *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 30.



Temple Cards

Magazines in 2003 and the April 2005 issue contained Temple Cards. Since that time, more temples have been dedicated.

Remove this page from the magazine, glue it to heavy paper, and cut out the cards. Add these cards to the cards that have already appeared in the magazine.



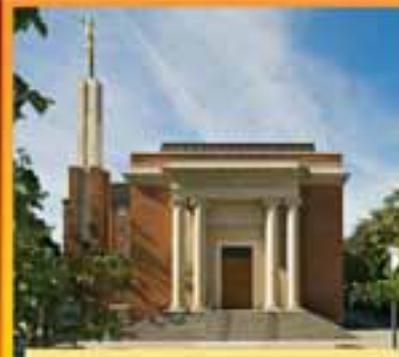
Redlands California Temple

Dedicated on September 14, 2003,
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



Accra Ghana Temple

Dedicated on January 11, 2004,
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



Copenhagen Denmark Temple

Dedicated on May 23, 2004,
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



Manhattan New York Temple

Dedicated on June 13, 2004,
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



San Antonio Texas Temple

Dedicated on May 22, 2005,
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



Aba Nigeria Temple

Dedicated on August 7, 2005,
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



Newport Beach California Temple

Dedicated on August 28, 2005,
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



Sacramento California Temple

Dedicated on September 3, 2006,
by President Gordon B. Hinckley



Helsinki Finland Temple

Dedicated on October 22, 2006,
by President Gordon B. Hinckley

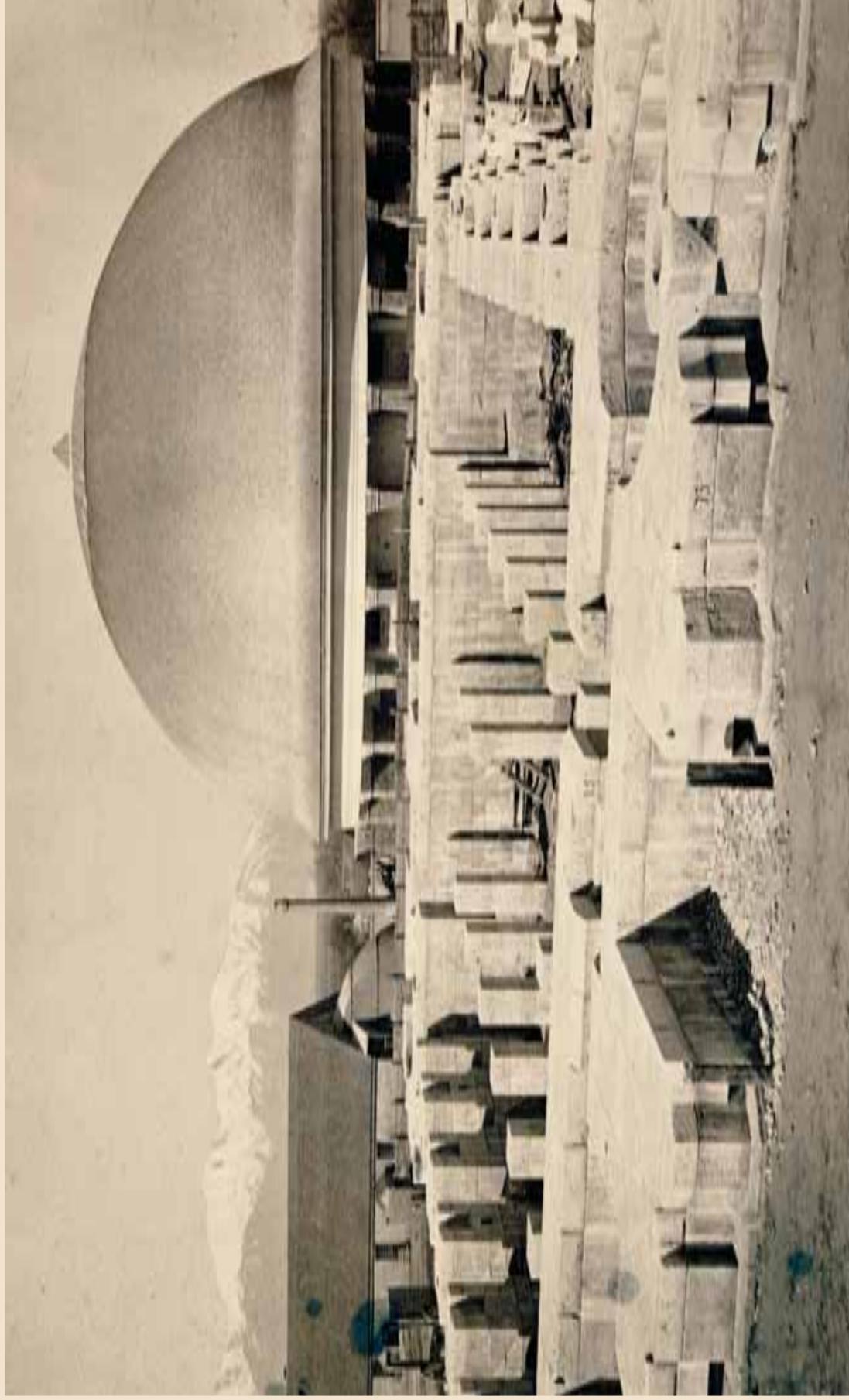
PHOTOGRAPH OF REDLANDS CALIFORNIA TEMPLE BY WELDON BREWSTER; ACCRA GHANA TEMPLE, MANHATTAN NEW YORK TEMPLE, AND ABA NIGERIA TEMPLE BY MATTHEW REER; COPENHAGEN DENMARK TEMPLE BY CRAIG DIMOND; SAN ANTONIO TEXAS TEMPLE, SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA TEMPLE, AND HELSINKI FINLAND TEMPLE BY JOHN LUKE; NEWPORT BEACH CALIFORNIA TEMPLE BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN

Note: To find the cards in the 2003 and 2005 issues or if you do not wish to remove this page from the magazine, go to www.lds.org. For English, click on "Gospel Library." For other languages, click on "Languages."



MY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST GROWS WHEN I SERVE OTHERS

“When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only
in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).



Photograph of Temple Square, about 1870, by C. R. Savage

The Tabernacle with its domed roof overlooks the foundation of the Salt Lake Temple. Still under construction in this photograph, the Tabernacle was one of the largest buildings of its kind in the world—150 feet (46 m) wide, 250 feet (76 m) long, and 80 feet (24 m) high.

On the left stands the old adobe tabernacle, which had been in use since its dedication on May 21, 1851.



These two great buildings here on Temple Square—the temple and the Tabernacle,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley at the press briefing beginning the renovation of the Salt Lake Tabernacle, “remind me of two venerable old parents—the temple, the father; the Tabernacle, the mother—parents of generations that have followed, still standing and shedding light and understanding and knowledge and love.” See “Renovating the Tabernacle,” p. 34.