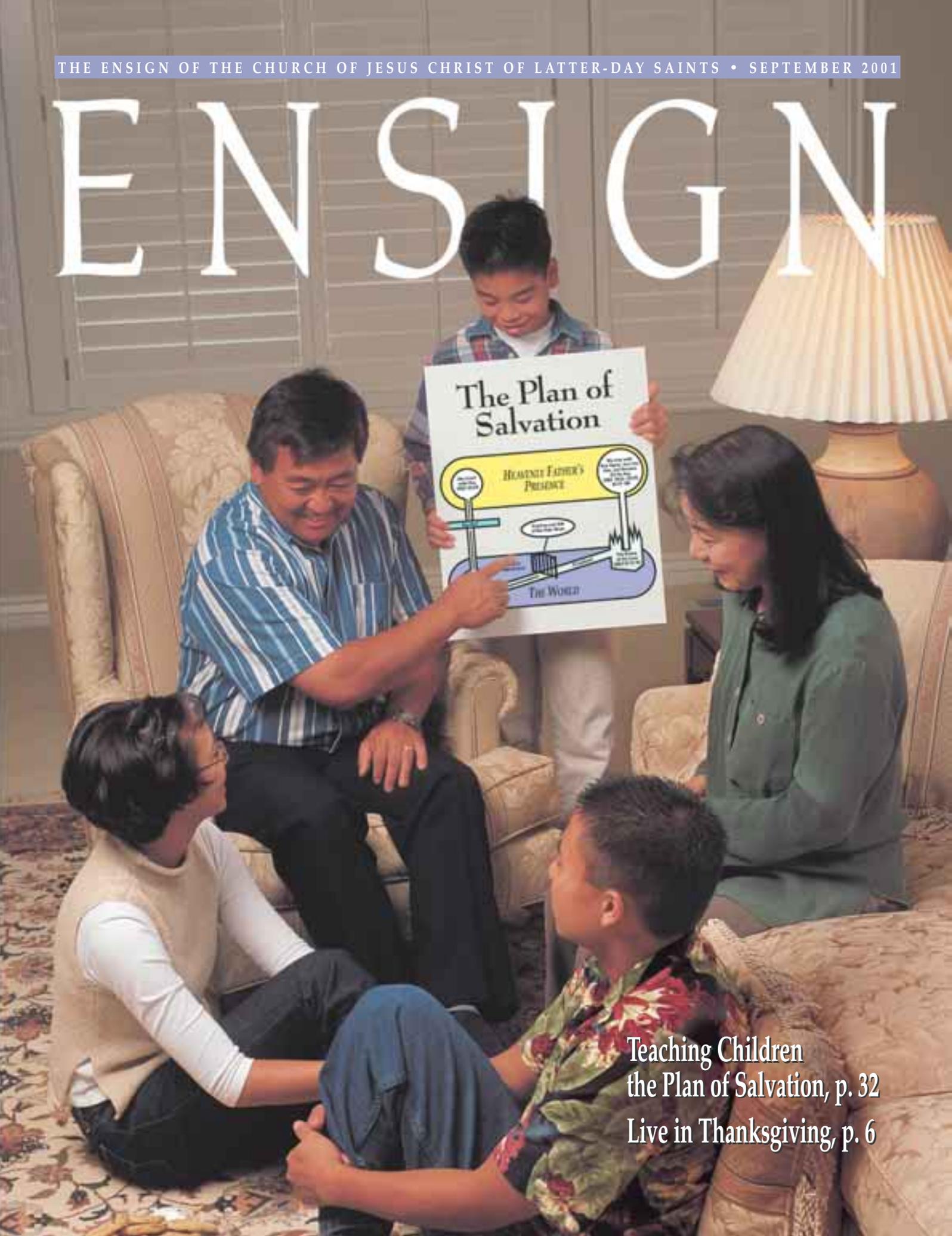


ENSIGN



Teaching Children
the Plan of Salvation, p. 32
Live in Thanksgiving, p. 6

Going As a Lamb, by Liz Lemon Swindle



Having said good-bye to his family before leaving for Carthage, the Prophet Joseph Smith remarked to those accompanying him, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men" (D&C 135:4).

ENSIGN

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 9

ON THE COVERS: *Front:* Photo by Steve Bunderson. *Back:* Photo by Welden C. Andersen. *Inside front:* Going As a Lamb, by Liz Lemon Swindle, oil on canvas, 1995. Courtesy of Repartee Gallery. *Inside back:* St. Catherine's Dock, England, by Al Rounds, watercolor, 17" x 27", 1999.

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Living with Our Convictions



BY PRESIDENT
GORDON B. HINCKLEY

As members of the Church, we have become as a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid (see 3 Ne. 12:14). Whether we like it or not, each of us is set apart from the world. We are partakers of the truth, and with that comes a responsibility. Our responsibilities are personal because testimony is a personal thing.

In this dispensation, when the Lord declared this to be “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30), we were immediately put in a position from which we cannot shrink and which we each must face with humility and courage. Every true member of the Lord’s Church who lives and breathes the spirit of the gospel of the Master knows something of that feeling as he or she associates with others. But once having gained a testimony, we are to live with it. We are to live with our conscience. We are to live with our God.

It is not only converts who sometimes pass through difficult struggles and who may know discouragement and heartache as they explain their Church membership to family and friends. In a general sense, this is the experience of all who seek to hold to the iron rod as they walk through the mists of the world. It was ever thus. The price of discipleship is personal courage. The price of adherence to conscience is personal courage.

COURAGE IN ALL DISPENSATIONS

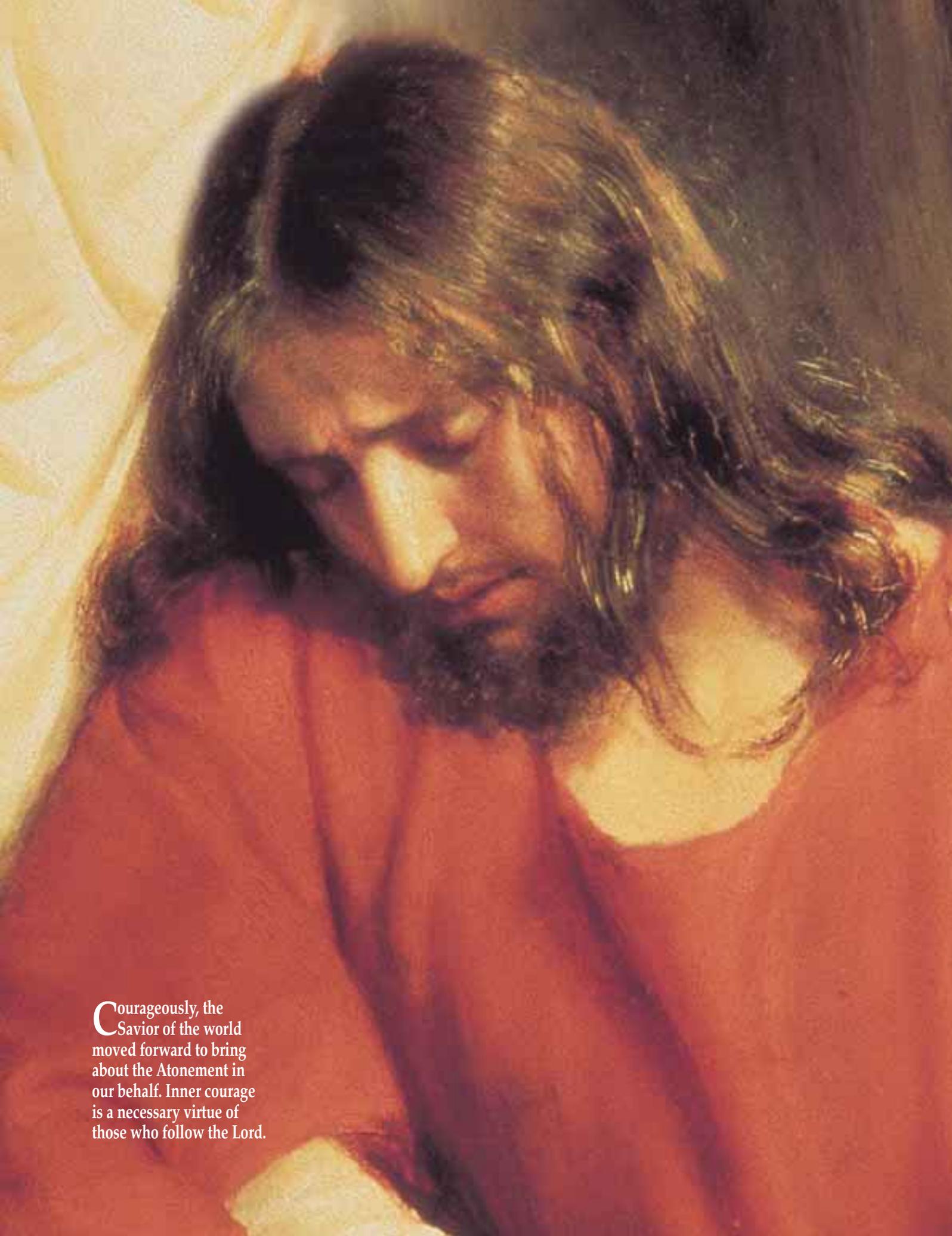
There is no more poignant picture in all history than that of Jesus in Gethsemane and upon the cross,

alone: the Redeemer of mankind, the Savior of the world, bringing to pass the Atonement.

I remember being with President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) in the Garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem. We could sense, if only in a very small degree, the terrible struggle that took place there, a struggle so intense, as Jesus wrestled alone in the spirit, that blood came from every pore (see Luke 22:44; D&C 19:18). We recalled the betrayal by one who had been called to a position of trust. We recalled that evil men laid brutal hands upon the Son of God. We recalled that lonely figure on the cross, crying out in anguish, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). Yet, courageously, the Savior of the world moved forward to bring about the Atonement in our behalf.

Inner courage is a necessary virtue of those who follow the Lord. When the tyranny of religious oppression was smothering Europe in the 16th century, there arose a man here and there who stood up courageously. I believe that the Reformers were inspired of God to lay the foundation for a time when “another angel” would “fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6). It was in Germany with personal courage to act alone that Martin Luther proclaimed his 95 theses. That which he and his associates and followers endured is a matter of history. As they led the way to a more enlightened age, they walked almost alone amid the scoffing of others.

The great Prophet of this dispensation was likewise a man of courageous convictions. The 14-year-old boy who came out of the woods was soon persecuted by some, and he was hated throughout his life. There are few more heart-moving pictures than that of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s walking his



Courageously, the Savior of the world moved forward to bring about the Atonement in our behalf. Inner courage is a necessary virtue of those who follow the Lord.

courageous way with only a handful of faithful followers. He gave his life for his testimony of the truth.

In every dispensation the followers of the Lord have known of the courage it takes to choose to serve God rather than to serve the opinions of the crowd.

A CONVERT'S COURAGE

I think of a friend whom I knew when I was a missionary in London many years ago. He came to our door through the rain one night. I answered his knock and invited him in.

He said, as I remember, "I have to talk to someone. I'm all alone."

I asked what the problem was.

He said, "When I joined the Church, my father told me to get out of his house and never come back. A few months later my athletic club dropped me from membership. Last month my boss fired me because I am a member of this Church. And last night the girl I love said she would never marry me because I'm a Mormon."

I said, "If this has cost you so much, why don't you leave the Church and go back to your father's home, to your club, to the job that meant so much to you, and marry the girl you think you love?"

He said nothing for what seemed a long time. Then, putting his head in his hands, he sobbed as if his heart would break. Finally he looked up through his tears and said, "I couldn't do that. I know this is true,

and if it were to cost me my life, I could not give it up."

He picked up his wet hat and walked to the door and went out into the rain. As I watched him, I thought of the power of conscience, the loneliness of faith, and the strength and power of personal testimony.

COURAGE AND COMMITMENT

I should like to say to members of the Church, particularly to young men and women of the Church, that I hope you may come to know inner personal courage as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For this is the requirement of the Lord as we journey through our mortal probation, as we show to Him and to ourselves that we indeed "love the Lord [our] God with all [our] heart, and with all [our] soul, and with all [our] mind" and that we "love [our] neighbour as [ourselves]" (Matt. 22:37, 39).

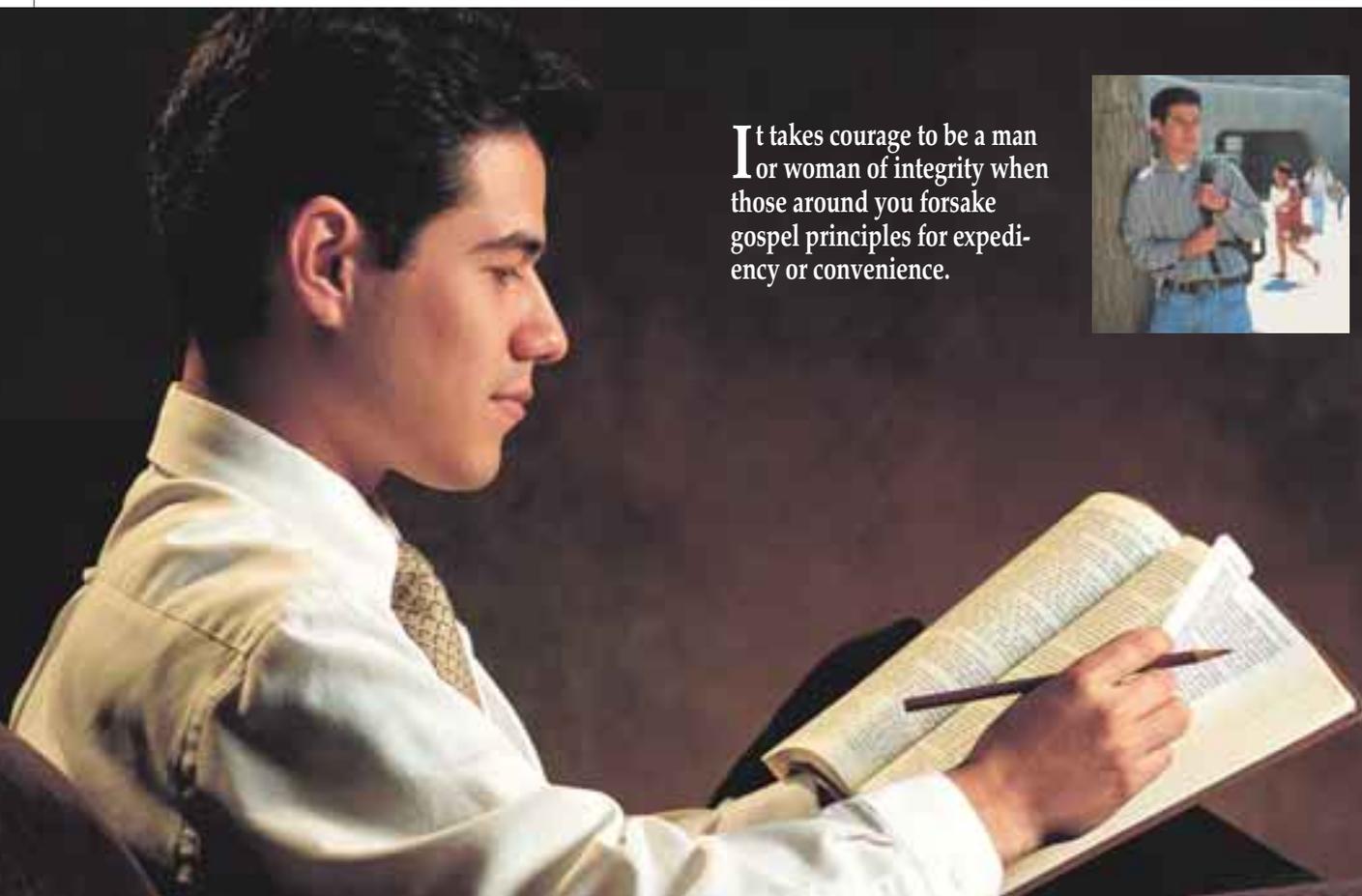
It takes resolution to be virtuous when those around you scoff at virtue.

It takes commitment to abstain from harmful substances when those around you scoff at sobriety and at being free from drugs.

It takes courage to be a man or woman of integrity when those around you forsake gospel principles for expediency or convenience.

It takes love in our hearts to speak in peaceful testimony of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ to those who would mock Him and belittle and demean Him.

It takes courage to be a man or woman of integrity when those around you forsake gospel principles for expediency or convenience.



There will be times that demand courage for each of us because disciples of the Lord are to live with their consciences. Disciples of the Lord are to live with their principles. Disciples of the Lord are to live with their convictions. Each of us is to live with his or her testimony. Unless we do, we will be miserable and dreadfully alone.



WE ARE NOT ALONE

Yet while there may be thorns and disappointments, while there may be heartache, even heartbreak, there can be peace and comfort and strength from the Lord for those who follow Him. For it is the Lord Himself who has said:

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

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt. 11:28–29).

It is the Lord who has said that if we keep the commandments “the Holy Ghost shall be [our] constant companion” (D&C 121:46) to buoy us up, to teach us, lead us, comfort us, and sustain us. To obtain this companionship, we need to ask for it, to live for it, to be loyal to the Lord.

I think Mormon knew very well from his own experience the truth of his words that the “Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God” (Moro. 8:26). Though we may sometimes be alone while among those of the world, we need not be lonely, for the Lord has given us the Holy Ghost to be our companion to walk with us.

In addition, the Lord has given us others with whom we may associate and thereby build up our spirits and strengthen our courage—disciples of like mind, of like heart, of like spirit. As the Apostle Paul said, we no longer need be “strangers . . . , but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19). To the Thessalonians, he wrote of sustaining one another:

“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another. . . .

“And we beseech you . . . to know them which labour among you . . . ;

“And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake” (1 Thes. 5:11–13).

Though discipleship with the Lord requires times of standing humbly and courageously apart, the Lord will not forsake us. He also gives us the association of others who can edify and strengthen us as we go

The Lord has given us others with whom we may associate and thereby build up our spirits and strengthen our courage.

about our work of blessing others in the world. And if we are prayerful and loyal to Him and His commandments, the Lord’s promise can be applicable to us: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88).

This is a promise from the Lord. I believe it. I bear testimony to you of its truth. May the Lord bless all who step out of the darkness of the world into the light of the everlasting gospel. May He bless us all to walk humbly and courageously and to know in our hearts that peace which comes from

squaring one’s life with principle—the “peace . . . which passeth all understanding” (Philip. 4:7).

Let us rejoice in the knowledge that although we are to stand with courage as we travel through mortality and even through our trials, God will not leave us without His guidance and sustaining power.

May we go forward with our righteous convictions. May we walk in truth and in faith and in love. For if we will do so, we will be upheld and strengthened by the Lord: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). □

Gospel topics: courage, conversion, discipleship, example

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

Some Points of Emphasis

You may wish to make these points in your discussions:

1. Each member of the Church should take personal responsibility to be as a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid (see 3 Ne. 12:14).
2. There can be peace and strength from the Lord for those who live true to their consciences and gospel principles.
3. We have been given the association of the Holy Ghost and fellow members who can edify and strengthen us as we live true to the Savior’s teachings.

Discussion Helps

1. Share an experience when inner personal courage was required to live or explain a teaching of the gospel. You may also want to invite family members to do the same.
2. Are there some scriptures, quotations, or stories in this article that the family might read aloud and discuss?
3. Would this discussion be better after a previsit chat with the head of the household? Is there a message from the bishop or quorum leader?

Living in thanksgiving daily is a habit that will enrich our lives and the lives of those we love.



BY ELDER JOSEPH B. WIRTHLIN
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Think for a moment, if you will, of someone you know who is truly happy. We've all met those who seem to radiate happiness. They seem to smile more than others; they laugh more than others—just being around them makes us happier as well.

Now think of someone you know who isn't happy at all. Perhaps they seem 10 years older than they are, drained of energy—perhaps they are angry or bitter or depressed.

What is the difference between them? What are the characteristics that differentiate the happy from the miserable? Is there something that unhappy people can do to be happier? I believe there is.

Let me tell you a story to illustrate this observation.

A long time ago in a faraway village lived a man who everyone did their very best to avoid. He was the type of person who believed that there was only one competent person in the world, and that one person was himself. Consequently, he was never satisfied with anything. His shoes never fit right. His shirt never felt comfortable. When his food wasn't too cold, it was too salty, and when it wasn't too hot, it was too bland.

If a field wasn't sowed by himself, it was not sowed well. If he didn't close the door, the door was not closed properly.

In short, he made a career of frowning, lecturing, criticizing, and mumbling about the incompetencies of every other person in the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, the man was married, which made matters all the worse. No matter what his wife did, in his eyes it was wrong. No matter what the unfortunate woman cooked, sewed, or cleaned—or even when she milked the cow—it was never satisfactory, and he let her know it.

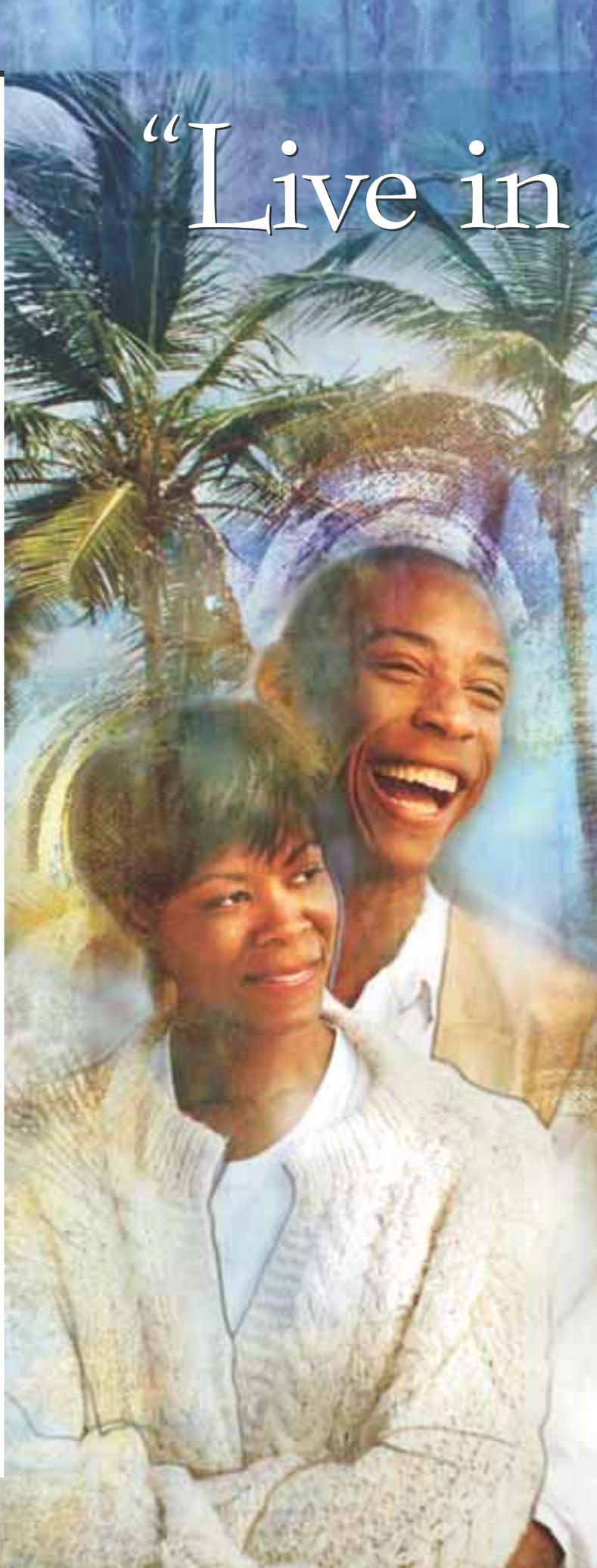
She tried very hard to be a good wife, but it seemed the harder she tried, the less she pleased him. Finally, one evening she could take no more.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," she told him. "Tomorrow I will do your chores and you will do mine."

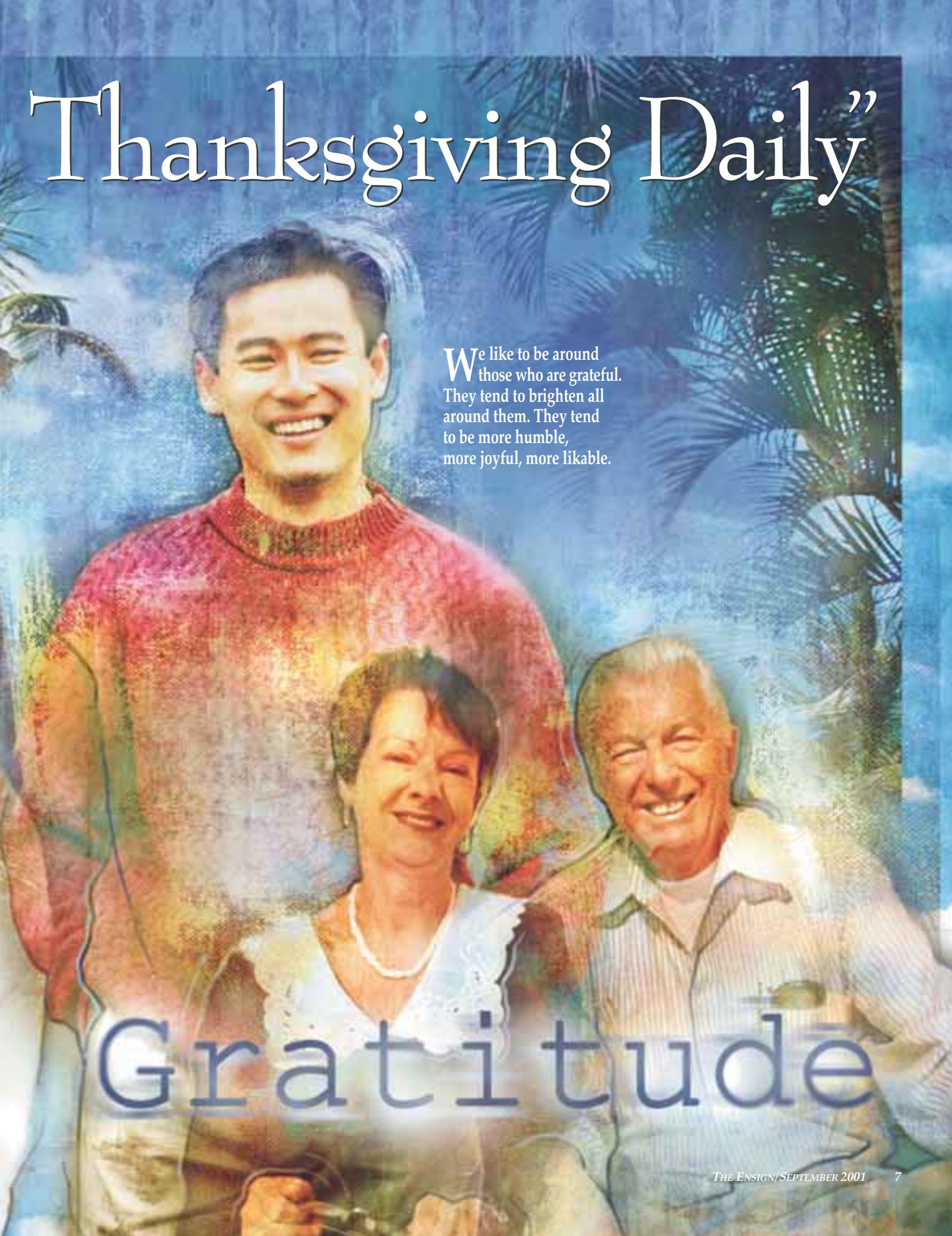
"But you can't do my chores," the man replied. "You don't know the first thing about sowing, hoeing, and irrigating."

But the woman was adamant. And on top of that, she was filled with a righteous anger that frankly astonished and frightened the man to the point where he didn't dare disagree.

"Live in



Thanksgiving Daily”



We like to be around those who are grateful. They tend to brighten all around them. They tend to be more humble, more joyful, more likable.

Gratitude

So the next morning the wife went off to the fields and the man began the domestic chores. After thinking about it, he had actually convinced himself he was looking forward to it. Once and for all, he would demonstrate to his wife how things should be done.

Unfortunately, not everything went according to plan. In fact, nearly everything the man touched turned into disaster. He spilled the milk, let the pig get into the house, lost the cow, burned the dinner, and ultimately set the house on fire, narrowly escaping with his own life.

When his wife returned, she discovered her husband sitting on a pile of ashes, smoke still rising from his clothes. But the woman wasn't the type to rub things in. She helped him up, wiped the soot from his beard, fixed him a little something to eat, and then prepared a bed of straw for them to sleep on.

From that day forward, the man never complained about anyone or anything else for as long as he lived.

What do you suppose this story teaches us?

For one thing, it teaches that those who complain make their own and others' lives miserable. The story also teaches humility. It reminds us that "pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). It teaches us not to judge others

until we walk in their shoes for a while.

In addition, the story illustrates a quality that the Roman orator Cicero claimed was "not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others" (Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Pro Plancio*, 54 B.C.). It is a quality I have found in every happy person I know. It is a quality that instantly makes a person more likable and more at peace. Where there is an abundance of this virtue, there is happiness. Where there is an absence of this virtue, there is often sadness, resentment, and futility.

The virtue I am speaking of is gratitude.

In our story, it was the absence of gratitude that made the man miserable. His inability to appreciate others caused him to be critical of their efforts. Not only did he not empathize with them, he could not allow himself to acknowledge their contributions.

The disasters that confronted him surely made him humble, but, more particularly, they made him appreciate and be grateful for his wife.

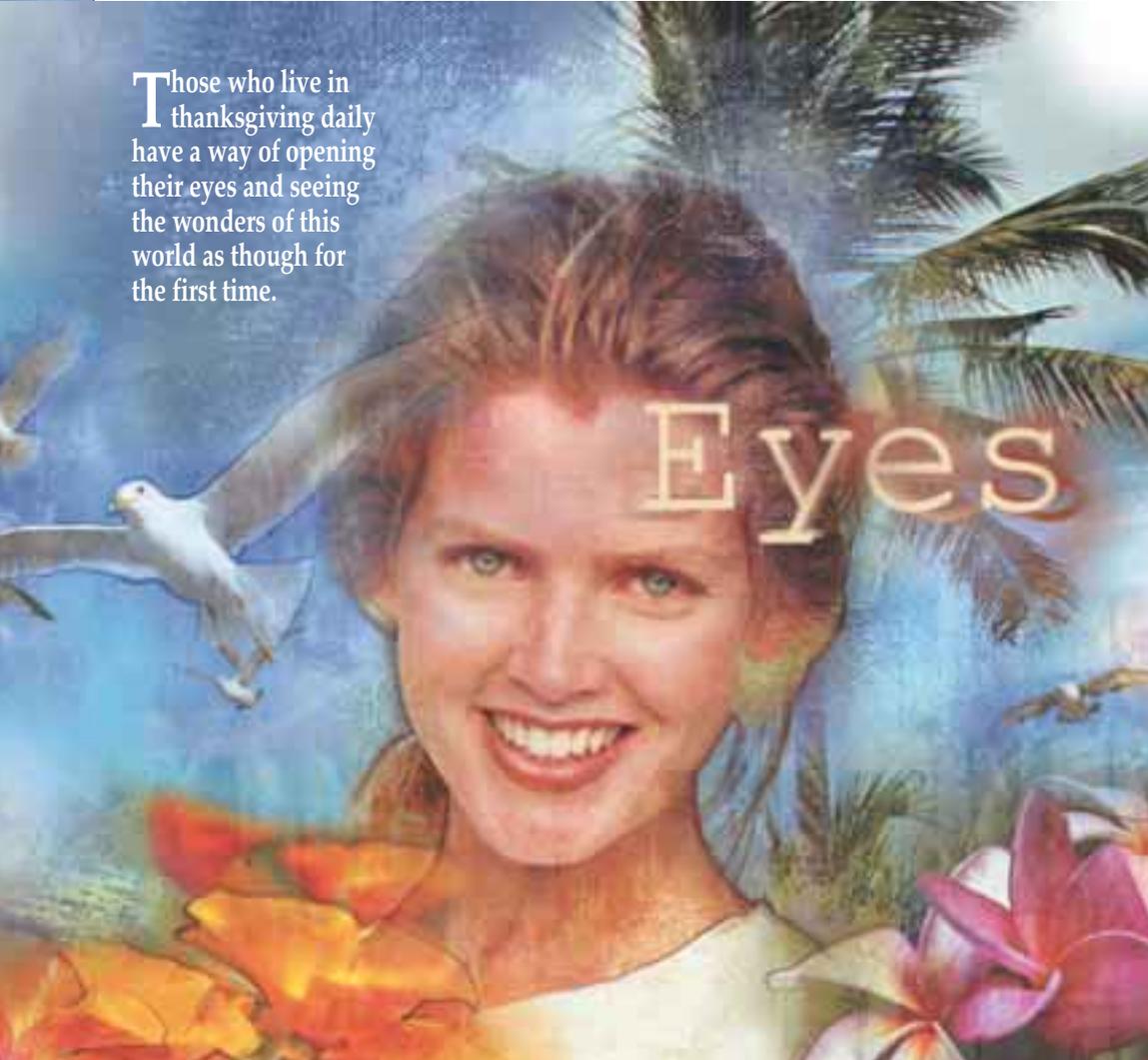
Gratitude is a mark of a noble soul and a refined character. We like to be around those who are grateful. They tend to brighten all around them. They make others feel better about themselves. They tend to be more humble, more joyful, more likable.

You might be surprised to know that gratitude is a

commandment of the Father. "Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things" (D&C 59:7), the Lord has commanded in these latter days. Even further, He has admonished that "in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments" (D&C 59:21).

In the Book of Mormon we learn that we should "live in thanksgiving daily" (Alma 34:38). Isn't that a wonderful thought to live in thanksgiving daily? Can you imagine how your life would improve if you lived in thanksgiving daily? Can you imagine how your life

Those who live in thanksgiving daily have a way of opening their eyes and seeing the wonders of this world as though for the first time.

A woman with reddish-brown hair is smiling warmly. The word "Eyes" is written in a large, golden, serif font across her eyes. The background is a soft-focus scene with palm trees, a white bird in flight, and autumn leaves in shades of orange and red.

would improve if others did the same? Do you think the world would be a happier place? less stressful? less angry? more spiritual?

President Joseph F. Smith proclaimed: "The grateful man sees so much in the world to be thankful for, and with him the good outweighs the evil. Love overpowers jealousy, and light drives darkness out of his life. Pride destroys our gratitude and sets up selfishness in its place. How much happier we are in the presence of a grateful and loving soul, and how careful we should be to cultivate, through the medium of a prayerful life, a thankful attitude toward God and man!" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 263).

Earlier I asked you to think of someone you knew who was truly happy. Think of the person again, if you will, and grade on this principle: Does he or she live in thanksgiving daily?

Now think of someone you know who is unhappy or resentful. Does this person live in thanksgiving daily?

It is difficult to even imagine a resentful person who is grateful or a grateful person who is resentful. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said:

"Absence of gratitude is the mark of the narrow, uneducated mind. It bespeaks a lack of knowledge and the ignorance of self-sufficiency. It expresses itself in ugly egotism and frequently in wanton mischief. . . .

"Where there is appreciation, there is courtesy, there is concern for the rights and property of others. Without it there is arrogance and evil" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1964, 117).

I believe that many people are unhappy because they have not learned to be grateful. Some carry the burden of bitterness and resentfulness for many years. Some pass their days as though suffering a deep sadness they cannot name. Others are unhappy because life didn't turn out the way they thought it would.

"If only I had money," some might say to themselves, "then I could be happy."

"If only I were better-looking."

"If only I were smarter."

"If only I had a new car, a college degree, a job, a wife, hair that wasn't so frizzy." (Or, in my case, if only I had more hair or I were 12 inches taller.)

If we only look around us, there are a thousand reasons for us not to be happy, and it is simplicity itself to blame our unhappiness on the things we lack in life. It doesn't take any talent at all to find them. The problem is, the more we focus on the things we don't have, the more unhappy and more resentful we become.

Over the course of my years, I have met thousands of people. I have dined with the prosperous as well as the poverty-stricken. I have conversed with the mighty and with the meek. I have walked with the famous and the feeble. I have run with outstanding athletes and those who are not athletically inclined.

One thing I can tell you with certainty is this: You cannot predict happiness by the amount of money, fame, or power a person has. External conditions do not necessarily make a person happy. The Brethren who have had assignments in poorer countries report that despite the abject poverty, the people are very happy. The fact is that the external things so valued by the world are often the cause of a great deal of misery in the world.

Those who live in thanksgiving daily, however, are usually among the world's happiest people. And they make others happy as well.

Years ago Elder J. Golden Kimball (1853–1938) of the Seventy was traveling with one of the presiding Brethren in southern Utah. In those days meetings often didn't have a time limit; they went on as long as the speaker wanted to speak. For those of you looking for something to be grateful for, perhaps I've just given you one idea.

One fast Sunday they had been preaching nearly all day. Everyone was hungry, especially Elder Kimball, who felt that he "was pretty nearly dead."

Finally, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, the presiding Apostle turned and said, "Now, Brother Kimball, get up

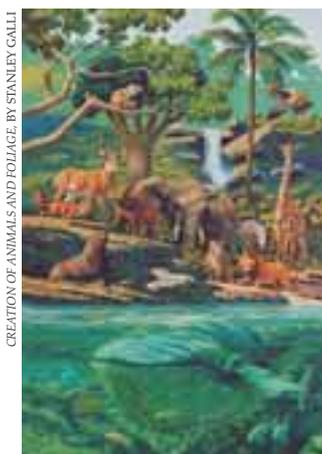
and tell them about the *Era*."

The *Improvement Era* magazine had just been launched, and the Brethren wanted to encourage subscriptions. Elder Kimball approached the pulpit and then, after a short pause, said, "All you men that will take the *Era* if we will let you go home, raise your right hand." There was not a single man who did not raise his hand that day to subscribe to the *Era* (see J. Golden Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1932, 78).

You see, the power of gratitude is immense.

Rulon Gardner grew up in the small town of Afton, Wyoming. He is one of nine children. His mother and father are faithful members of the Church and instilled proper values in their children.

But because Rulon was so large, his classmates teased him. The taunts and name-calling troubled young Rulon, but he never became angry or resentful. He could have withdrawn and become bitter. Like so many others, he could have counted all the things that were going wrong and simply given up.



CREATION OF ANIMALS AND FOLIAGE BY STANLEY GALLI

I encourage you to look around you. Enjoy every sight, every smell, every taste, every sound.

You can cleanse your heart. You don't have to harbor thoughts and feelings that drag you down and destroy your spirit.

Heart

Instead, he used the insults as motivation. He determined he would use his size to his advantage. He would make something of himself.

"I would go out, as a kid," Rulon said, "and I could barely pick up a bale of hay. By the time my senior year came around, I was grabbing four bales of hay at a time, each 100 pounds. Just grabbing them and walking with them and seeing how physically strong I could be" (quoted in Alan Robinson, "Wrestler's Magic Moment," Associated Press, Sydney, Australia, 28 Sept. 2000).

He milked cows twice a day, often in subzero temperatures. He lifted frozen bales of hay to feed the cows. At times he would carry a newborn calf into the safety of a warm barn. He got up early in the morning, did his chores, then went to school. After school he either went to wrestling or football practice, then back to the farm to do more chores.

Rulon found that his size wasn't a disadvantage for him as an athlete—in fact, it was an asset. Wrestling particularly came easy to him, and he became the Wyoming state champion. After graduating from high school, he decided that perhaps he might be good enough to compete in the Olympic Games.

In Atlanta in 1996, due to a miscommunication, he arrived at the weigh-in 22 seconds too late and missed his chance to compete. Again Rulon could

have despaired. He could have cursed his luck. He could have become embittered and resentful.

But do you know what he did? He worked harder. Instead of burying himself in self-pity, he began speaking at youth firesides about his experience. "I missed the Olympic Games by 22 seconds," he told his eager listeners. "Don't you let anything keep you from your goals."

After four years of hard work, Rulon Gardner wanted to compete in the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia. The only trouble was, he couldn't afford the trip. That's when the members of his home-

town rallied to his side. They held bake sales and potluck dinners and raised enough money to allow Rulon and his family to make the trip to Sydney.

This time he did not miss the weigh-in. He advanced through the preliminary rounds until he reached the final obstacle to his gaining a gold medal.

That obstacle was a man the world called the Siberian Bear, Alexander Karelin. This Russian bear is considered by most as the greatest Greco-Roman wrestler in the history of the sport. Not only had he not lost a single match in 13 years, but no one had scored a point on him in more than a decade. Karelin had won the gold medal in three previous Olympic Games and was the heavy favorite to win an unprecedented fourth gold medal.

But at the end of the gold-medal match, it was the farm boy from Afton, Wyoming, who stood triumphant in what many consider the greatest upset of the summer Olympic Games.

"The reason I think I won," Rulon said, "is because I work harder than anyone else, train harder. And every day I live my life, I do everything I need to do to put my life in order" (quoted in Robinson, "Wrestler's Magic Moment").

Waving an American flag, a grateful Rulon Gardner thanked his family, his God, and his

hometown of Afton, Wyoming, for their helping to make the moment possible.

Winning the gold medal in such a stunning way made Rulon an instant celebrity. Sometimes this sort of attention changes people. Sometimes people become more calloused. Sometimes they forget those they owe the most to. But not Rulon Gardner.

Later, while Rulon was a guest on an evening talk show, the host invited him to watch some highlights from his Olympic victory. Without warning, the picture changed to a live shot from Afton, Wyoming. It seemed that the entire population of the town had assembled in the high school gymnasium. They cheered and shouted and held up signs that said, "Rulon's got milk!" and "My uncle rocks!"

As this man—one of the strongest men in the world—looked into the television monitor at the faces of the people he loved, tears of gratitude came to his eyes.

In a letter written to his stake president, Rulon Gardner said: "The Lord has given me the chance to work for all my dreams. I feel the Church has helped me to focus and live my life in the ways that have helped me to train and become an Olympic champ. . . . I am blessed . . . to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (letter to President Val J. Call, Afton Wyoming Stake, 20 Oct. 2000).

Rulon Gardner knows what it means to be grateful.

Gratitude turns a meal into a feast and drudgery into delight. It softens our grief and heightens our pleasure. It turns the simple and common into the memorable and transcendent. It forges bonds of love and fosters loyalty and admiration.

Living in thanksgiving daily is a habit that will enrich our lives and the lives of those we love. But how do we make this part of who we are? May I suggest three things that will help as we strive to live in thanksgiving daily?

First, we must open our eyes.

I agree with Robert Louis Stevenson, who wrote, "The man who forgets to be thankful has fallen asleep in life" (*Quotationary*, electronic quotation dictionary). Unfortunately, because the beauties of life are so abundant, sometimes we take them for granted.

Our minds have a marvelous capacity to notice the unusual. However, the opposite is true as well: The more often we see the things around us—even the beautiful and wonderful things—the more they become invisible to us.

That is why we often take for granted the beauty

of this world: the flowers, the trees, the birds, the clouds—even those we love.

Because we see things so often, we see them less and less.

Those who live in thanksgiving daily, however, have a way of opening their eyes and seeing the wonders and beauties of this world as though seeing them for the first time.

I encourage you to look around you. Notice the people you care about. Notice the fragrance of the flowers and the song of the birds. Notice and give thanks for the blue of the sky, the color of the leaves, and the white of the clouds. Enjoy every sight, every smell, every taste, every sound.

When we open our eyes and give thanks for the bountiful beauty of this life, we live in thanksgiving daily.

The second thing we can do is open our hearts.

We must let go of the negative emotions that bind our hearts and instead fill our souls with love, faith, and thanksgiving.

Anger, resentment, and bitterness stunt our spiritual growth. Would you bathe in impure water? Then why do we bathe our spirits with negative and bitter thoughts and feelings?

You can cleanse your heart. You don't have to harbor thoughts and feelings that drag you down and destroy your spirit.

You can repent of uncleanness. That is the miracle of Christ's atoning sacrifice. You can become clean. You can cleanse your heart of impurity.

Begin the process today. Repent of those things you should repent of. Drink deeply of the living waters of the gospel. These latter days are a time of great spiritual thirst. Many in the world are searching, often intensely, for a source of refreshment that will quench their yearning for meaning and direction in their lives. The Lord provides the living water that can quench the burning thirst of those whose lives are parched by a drought of truth.

Pray with all your heart. Consider the love your Heavenly Father has for all His children. Open your heart to His cleansing word. Feast on the words of holy writ. Cherish the messages of modern-day prophets and apostles. Forgive others who have offended you. Don't waste another moment feeling self-pity. Every day drain from your heart the feelings of resentment, rage, and defeat that do nothing but discourage and destroy. Fill your heart with those things that ennoble, encourage, and inspire.



NEPHI WRITING ON THE GOLD PLATES, BY PAUL MANN

Nephi's path had been difficult, but he did not allow himself to linger in negativity.

The great Book of Mormon prophet Nephi certainly had reason to be resentful. Hated by his brothers, bound and beaten and nearly murdered, he had plenty to be bitter about. After his father died, Nephi must have felt completely alone. He surely felt threatened. He surely felt discouraged. He surely felt troubled. But when it came time for him to communicate his feelings, what did he write?

“Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard” (2 Ne. 4:16).

Yes, his path had been difficult. Yes, his heart groaned because of mistakes he had made, but he did not allow himself to linger in negativity. Instead, he told himself:

“Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul.

“Do not anger again because of mine enemies. Do not slacken my strength because of mine afflictions.

“Rejoice, O my heart, and cry unto the Lord, and say: O Lord, I will praise thee forever; yea, my soul will rejoice in thee” (2 Ne. 4:28–30).

The third thing we can do to live in thanksgiving daily is open our arms.

One of the best ways we show our gratitude

is by blessing the lives of those around us. The great King Benjamin taught his people:

“If you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess, to that God who has created you, and has kept and preserved you, and has caused that ye should rejoice. . . .

“ . . . If ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants” (Mosiah 2:20–21).

And how do we render thanks unto God? King Benjamin told us that as well: “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).

We can live in thanksgiving daily by opening our arms to those around us. When was the last time you told someone you love how much they mean to you? When was the last time you expressed your gratitude to someone who has always been there for you, someone who has sacrificed for you, someone whose heart has always been filled with hopes and dreams for you?

When was the last time you unselfishly reached out to help another in need? Every time we cheer another’s heart, every

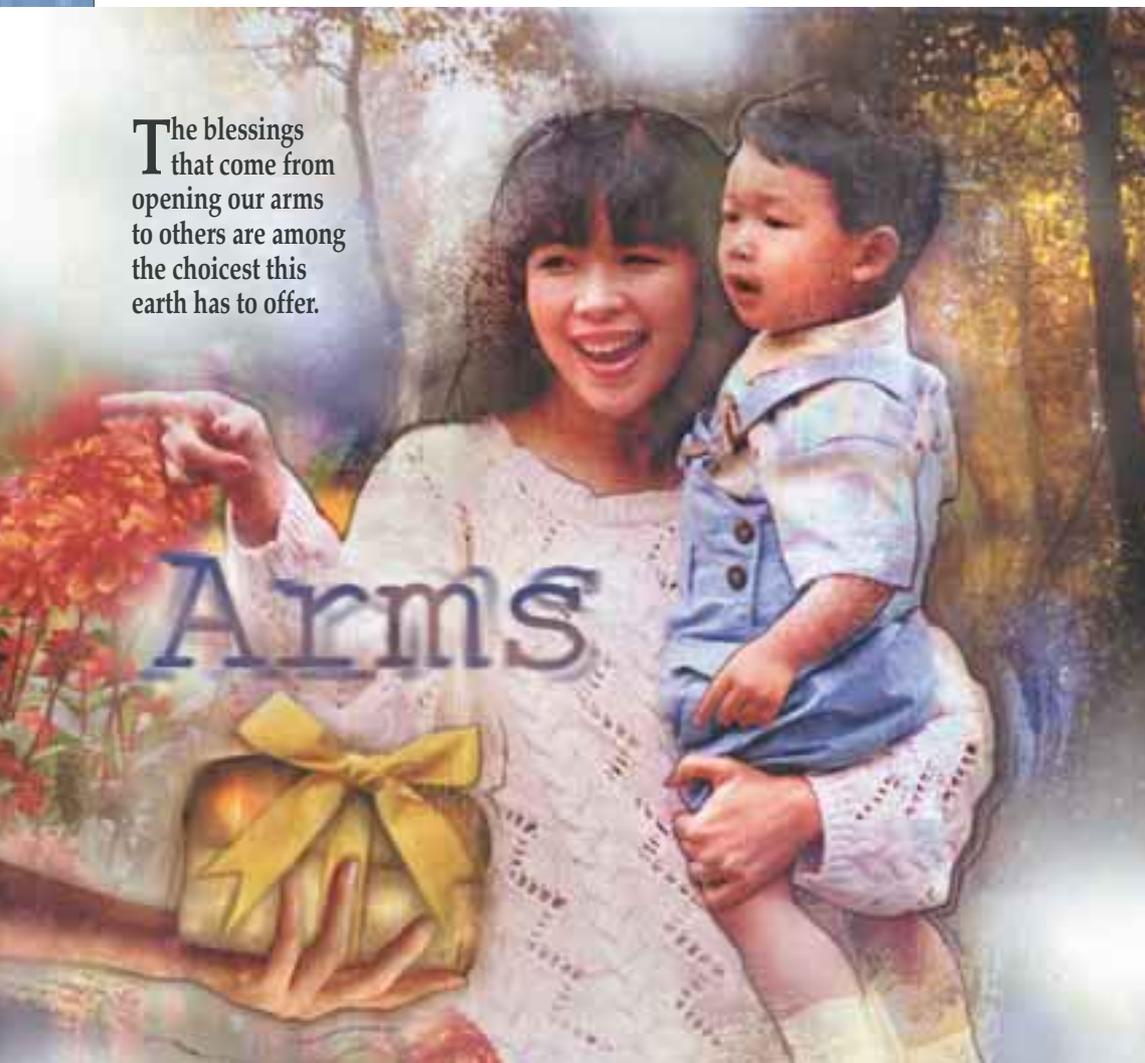
time we ease another’s burden, every time we lift a weary hand, we show our gratitude to that God to whom we owe all that we have and all that we are.

Not long ago a mother and father from the Republic of Georgia faced a terrifying reality. The doctors told them their baby had a heart condition, and unless he had surgery he would die. Because they did not have adequate facilities in Georgia, the mother and father walked across their country and all the way to Yerevan, Armenia, seeking medical help.

The Armenian doctors examined the child and agreed that the baby needed heart surgery. They knew

The blessings that come from opening our arms to others are among the choicest this earth has to offer.

Arms



how to perform the surgery and they had the necessary facilities, but they couldn't perform the operation because they didn't have the right tubing. As much as they wanted to help, there was nothing they could do. They told the couple to take their baby home to die.

As you know, the Church—through its humanitarian service arm—sends millions of pounds of food, clothing, and medical and educational materials throughout the world each year. As it so happened, Elder Robert H. Sangster and his wife, Sister Sandra Sangster, were serving a humanitarian mission in Armenia, and they had just received a container of medical supplies.

You may have already guessed that tucked away in this container of medical supplies was a box of precisely the kind of tubing needed for this child's operation.

When the doctors discovered the tubing, they rushed the baby into surgery and performed the operation.

That's a wonderful story and one that repeats itself daily as a result of the tremendous humanitarian help that is given to many nations in the world. The great welfare effort given by the Church benefits members and nonmembers during times of need. It reaches out to care for others. But what happened later makes it an even better story. One day, soon after the operation, Elder and Sister Sangster heard a knock at their door. When they opened it, this loving mother and father fell to their knees and wept as they thanked the Sangsters and their church for supplying the precious tubing that had saved the life of their child.

The blessings that come from opening our arms to others are among the choicest this earth has to offer.

As we strive to open our eyes, hearts, and arms, our step will become a little lighter, our smile will become a little brighter, and the darkness that sometimes broods over our lives will become a little lighter. Don't be discouraged if you haven't been an especially grateful person. Rejoice and think of what an impression you will make on those who thought they knew you. Think of how delightfully surprised they will be.

Be grateful. Every day is a new canvas—a new opportunity. Our beloved President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: "My plea is that we stop seeking out the storms and enjoy more fully the sunlight. I am suggesting that as we go through life, we 'accentuate the positive.' I am asking that we look a little deeper for the good, that we still our voices of insult and sarcasm, that we more generously compliment and endorse virtue and effort" (*Standing for Something* [2000], 101).

Choice blessings await those who live in thanksgiving daily. "He who receiveth all things with thankfulness," the Lord has promised, "shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more" (D&C 78:19).

Don't wait to start. Open your eyes, open your hearts, and open your arms. I promise that as you do so, you will feel greater joy and happiness. Your life will have a new level of meaning. You will forge relationships that will transcend this life and endure through the eternities.

I am grateful for this experience of mortality. I am grateful for the gospel and for the life and testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I am grateful for my wonderful wife, my dear children and grandchildren. I am grateful for the support and love shown to me by countless friends and members of the Church throughout the world. I am grateful for life and even more grateful for the glorious promise of eternal life to come.

Not everyone can be a star quarterback; not everyone can be the CEO of a Fortune 500 company; not everyone can win a gold medal at the Olympics; but everyone—

everyone—can live in thanksgiving daily.

As a special witness, I bear solemn testimony that Jesus is the living Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. He asks that we believe in Him, that we learn of Him, that we strive to follow His teachings, and that we adhere to the teachings of our prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley. He inspires him in the direction needed for this life and life eternal.

May we follow our Savior in all we do is my humble prayer. □

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on 31 October 2000.

Gospel topics: gratitude, happiness, service



PAINTING BY GARY L. KAPP

King Benjamin taught, "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Most Ensign articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following questions are for that purpose or for personal reflection:

1. How can living in thanksgiving daily help us be happy?
2. What are some things we can be thankful for but which we sometimes overlook or take for granted?
3. How can letting go of negative feelings increase our ability to live in thanksgiving daily?

“Ye Are the Temple of God”



BY ELDER DAVID A. BEDNAR
Area Authority Seventy

In family home evening lessons, Primary and Sunday School classes, and Young Women and priesthood classes, we have all learned about the fundamental purposes of our mortal existence. If you or I were asked the question “Why are we here on the earth?” I believe each and every one of us would give basically the same answer: “To receive a physical body, to live by faith rather than sight, and to be tested.” As the proclamation on the family explains, we as spirit sons and daughters of our Eternal Father “accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize [our] divine destiny as . . . heir[s] of eternal life” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). These answers are profound in both their power and in their simplicity.

I invite you to consider with me one particular element of these answers. Have we ever really considered why having a physical body is so important? Now, I know we can all say the right words when answering the question about why we are here on the earth, but do we really understand why a body is so central to the Father’s plan of happiness? Do we perhaps recite this answer so frequently and routinely that we fail to recognize its true importance? I would like for us to dig a bit deeper into this eternally important question about why a body is so important. Ultimately the answer affects everything we do: what we think, how we act, where we go, what we eat, what we drink, and what we wear and how we look.



*The choices
we make about
the use of our
personal physical
temples will affect
us throughout
eternity.*

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught with great clarity about the importance of our physical bodies:

“We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body. The devil has no body, and herein is his punishment. He is pleased when he can obtain the tabernacle of man, and when cast out by the Savior he asked to go into a herd of swine, showing that he would prefer a swine’s body to having none.

“All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not. The devil has no power over us only as we permit him. The moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 181).

Now, I do not claim to know the complete answer to the question of why a physical body is so important. But let me share with you a few basic reasons why a body is essential to our spiritual development and our eternal progression.

Reason no. 1. Obtaining a tabernacle of flesh is an essential step in the process of becoming like our Heavenly Father. Our physical bodies make possible a breadth, depth, and intensity of experience that simply could not be obtained in our premortal estate. As President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught, “Our physical body is the instrument of our spirit” (*Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled* [1991], 211). Thus, our relationships with other people, our capacity to recognize and respond to truth, and our ability to obey the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ are amplified through our physical bodies. In this classroom of mortality we experience tenderness, kindness, happiness, sorrow, disappointment, pain, and even the challenges of physical limitations in ways that prepare us for eternity. Simply stated, there are lessons we must learn and experiences we must have, as the scriptures describe, “according to the flesh” (1 Ne. 19:6; Alma 7:12–13).

Reason no. 2. Our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son are, by nature, creators. As the sons and daughters of God, we have the potential to become like Them. The Father and the Son have entrusted us with a portion of Their creative power and provided specific guidelines for the proper use of that sacred ability to create life and establish an eternal family. How we feel about and use that sacred power in this life will

determine in large measure whether additional creative power will be ours in the life to come.

Reason no. 3. As we attempt to answer the question about why we are here on the earth, we usually consider receiving a physical body and being tested as two related but separate parts of the answer. However, an essential part of the test of mortality is having and properly using a physical body. Please consider carefully the following statement by President Brigham Young (1801–77):

“The spirit is pure, and under the special control and influence of the Lord, but the body is of the earth, and is subject to the power of the Devil, and is under the mighty influence of that fallen nature that is of the earth. If the spirit yields to the body, the Devil then has power to overcome the body and spirit of that man, and he loses both.

“Recollect, brethren and sisters, every one of you, that when evil is suggested to you, when it arises in your hearts, it is through the temporal organization. When you are tempted, buffeted, and step out of the way inadvertently; when you are overtaken in a fault, or commit an overt act unthinkingly; when you are full of evil passion, and wish to yield to it, then stop and let the spirit, which God has put into your tabernacles, take the lead. If you do that, I will promise that you

will overcome all evil, and obtain eternal lives. But many, very many, let the spirit yield to the body, and are overcome and destroyed” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 70).

In 2 Nephi 2:26–29 we read:

“And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given.

“Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.

“And now, my sons, I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments; and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit;



The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom.”

“And not choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom.”

I suggest that you thoroughly study and prayerfully ponder the statement of Brigham Young and these verses from 2 Nephi. Neither passage asserts that the physical body is inherently evil. Rather, they teach that we live in a fallen world. The very elements out of which our bodies were created are by nature fallen and ever subject to the pull of sin, corruption, and death. Thus, the Fall of Adam and its consequences affect us most directly through our physical bodies. And yet as President Young stated, we are dual creatures, for at the same time that we inhabit a physical body that is subject to the Fall, we also have a spirit that represents the eternal part of us. We are the spirit sons and daughters of God and have inherited divine qualities from Him. The precise nature of the test of mortality, then, can be summarized in the following questions: Will my body rule over my spirit, or will my spirit rule over my body? Will I yield to the enticings of the natural man or to the eternal man? That, brothers and sisters, is the test. We are here on the earth to develop godlike qualities and to learn to bridle all of the passions of the flesh (see Alma 38:12).

OUR BODIES ARE NOT OUR OWN

I now want to try and explain a principle that is fundamental to our knowledge about and understanding of the importance of a physical body. The principle is this: Our bodies are not our own. First Corinthians 6:19–20 states:

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost

We all recognize physical benefits of adhering to the Word of Wisdom. But the primary blessing that comes from obeying it is spiritual, not necessarily physical.

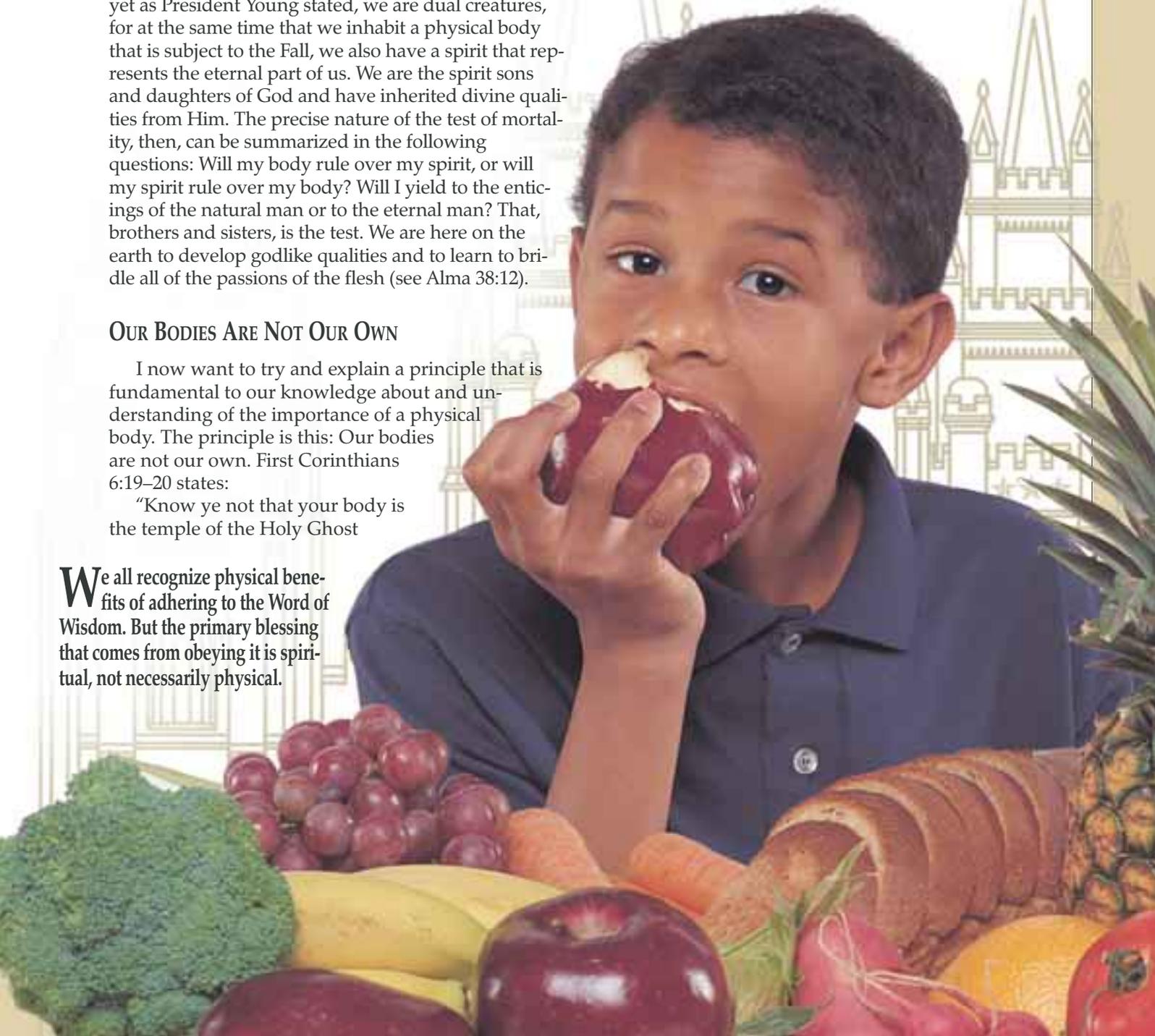
which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

King Benjamin also taught with great clarity the truth that our bodies ultimately are not our own. In Mosiah 2:23–25 he describes how we are blessed through service and indebted to our God:

“And now, in the first place, he hath created you, and granted unto you your lives, for which ye are indebted unto him.

“And secondly, he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you; for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you; and therefore he hath paid you.



And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be, forever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast?

“And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who created you.”

Both our agency and our physical body, through which we exercise that agency in mortality, are truly “bought with a price” through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We are called to be, as the Apostle Peter wrote, “a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Pet. 2:9). To be sure, we should be peculiar in the sense that we are distinctive, set apart from, and uncontrolled by the world. In addition, we are peculiar in a more powerful sense. As the Greek word implies, we are peculiar in that we are a purchased people.

Interestingly, I have heard many people, both outside and inside the Church, declare, “It’s my body and I can do to it what I want.” The correct doctrinal response to such a statement is quite simple. No, your body is not your own; it is on loan from God. As we read in 1 Corinthians 3:16–17:

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

The choices we make about the use of our personal temples will affect us throughout all eternity.

Because the physical body is so central to the Father’s plan of happiness and our spiritual development, we should not be surprised that Lucifer seeks to thwart our progression by enticing us to use our bodies improperly. It is to me one of the ultimate ironies of eternity that the adversary, who is miserable because he has no physical body and therefore cannot progress, seeks to make us miserable “like unto himself” (2 Ne. 2:27) through the improper use of our bodies. The very tool he does not have and cannot use thus is the primary instrument through which he attempts to lure us to spiritual destruction.

Our physical bodies indeed are temples of God. Consequently, you and I must carefully consider what we take *into* our temple, what we put *on* our temple, what we do *to* our temple, and what we do *with* our temple. And we can learn a number of important lessons by comparing the Church’s temples to our physical bodies as temples.

WHAT WE TAKE INTO OUR TEMPLE

A member of the Church who desires to enter a dedicated temple must be worthy to do so. The requirement of worthiness for all who enter the house of the Lord preserves the sacred nature of these special buildings and permits the ongoing presence of the Lord’s Spirit.

Now, please consider the importance of worthiness to enter the house of the Lord as you review the following counsel from President Boyd K. Packer:

“Our physical body is the instrument of our spirit. In that marvelous revelation the Word of Wisdom we are told how to keep our bodies free from impurities which might dull, even destroy, those delicate physical senses which have to do with spiritual communication.

“The Word of Wisdom is a key to individual revelation. It was given as ‘a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints’ (D&C 89:3).

“The promise is that those who obey will receive ‘great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures’ (v. 19). If we abuse our body with habit-forming substances, or misuse prescription drugs, we draw curtains which close off the light of spiritual communication” (*Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled*, 211).

The primary blessing that comes from obedience to the Word of Wisdom is spiritual in nature, not necessarily physical. Certainly, we all recognize the physical benefits of adhering to the lifestyle and dietary guidelines contained in the Word of Wisdom. But please notice how President Packer emphasized the link between what we take into our bodies and our ability to receive spiritual communication. The Word of Wisdom is about readiness and receptiveness to receive revelation. And secondarily the Word of Wisdom also produces physical benefits. Just as only worthy persons are permitted to enter into the house of the Lord, so we should likewise be careful to take into our bodies only those things that will positively affect us both spiritually and physically.

WHAT WE PUT ON OUR TEMPLE

The Church’s temples are recognized throughout the world for their beauty. The buildings themselves are made of the finest materials and constructed with true craftsmanship. And the areas immediately surrounding a temple are always neat and well



We can learn a number of important lessons by comparing the Church’s temples to our physical bodies as temples.

maintained. Please consider the impact of the appearance of a temple and its grounds as you review the following counsel from President Harold B. Lee:

“Do not underestimate the important symbolic and actual effect of appearance. Persons who are well groomed and modestly dressed invite the companionship of the Spirit of our Father in Heaven and are able to exercise a wholesome influence upon those around them. Persons who are unkempt and careless about their appearance, or adopt the visual symbols of those who often oppose our ideals, expose themselves and persons around them to influences that are degrading and dissonant. Outward appearance is often a reflection of inward tendencies” (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 220).

Just as the Church’s temples portray light and an inner beauty through their outward appearance, so we must be thoughtful and careful about how we dress and what we put on our personal temples. Full-time missionaries have a distinctive style of dress that differentiates them from the world and is intended, in part, to be an outward manifestation of their discipleship. It would never be appropriate for the appearance or the demeanor of these special messengers to in any way detract from the sacred message they are called to deliver. Full-time members should be no less distinctive. Like it or not, other people make judgments about the restored gospel by what they see or feel in you and me. One of the most tragic lines in scripture was spoken by Alma to his errant son, Corianton: “Behold, O my son, how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites; for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words” (Alma 39:11).

WHAT WE DO TO OUR TEMPLE

Imagine the reaction you or I might have if we saw defacing graffiti on the exterior of one of our Church’s temples. The very thought of finding such inappropriate markings on a temple is offensive to all of us.

Brothers and sisters, we must be particularly careful as the fads and fashions of the world entice us to mark or to

pierce or to otherwise deface or disfigure our personal temples. Consider the following counsel from President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985):

“How far, we wonder, will men and women go to pay ovations to the god of style? Will men wear rings in their noses when style dictates? Will young people still fall prey to their god of style, which they worship?” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 380).

That comment by President Kimball was made nearly 30 years ago, and I wonder what he would think if he were alive today. We now live in a world where people routinely do wear rings and other items in their noses, in their tongues, in their navels, and in their eyebrows because that is the current style (see Gordon B. Hinckley, “Your Greatest Challenge, Mother,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 99).



President Harold B. Lee said, “Do not underestimate the important symbolic and actual effect of appearance.”

It is interesting to me that these trends of the world frequently promote a false individuality that is nothing more than a superficial and curious outward conformity. True individuality is the product of spirituality and is not a function of trinkets or ornaments attached to or hanging from parts of our body. The spiritual basis of individuality is never more evident to me than when I worship in the house of the Lord and everyone is dressed in similar white clothing, looking essentially the same. In that setting, no fads or fashion statements are necessary. The unity and outward sameness of appearance in the temple permits the individual spirit to shine through. That, brothers and sisters, is the only type of individuality that really matters. Remember, our bodies are not our own; they are on loan from God. Indeed, they are temples, and the Spirit of the Lord should dwell therein and shine through. And, may I quickly add, it is harder for the Spirit to shine in and through our physical bodies when we are dozy and dull from foolishly going to bed at 1:30 A.M. or 2:30 A.M. or later night after night after night (see D&C 88:124).

WHAT WE DO WITH OUR TEMPLE

The temples of our Church are built and dedicated to accomplish righteous purposes. Sacred ordinances, including the endowment and eternal marriage, are available only in the Lord's house. You and I are fortunate to live at a time when temple construction has rapidly accelerated around the world; many members who previously had great difficulty receiving temple blessings can now do so much nearer to their own homes and communities.

Please consider the sacred ordinances offered and righteous purposes accomplished in the Church's temples as we review the following teachings by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"One of the 'plain and precious' truths restored in this dispensation is that 'the spirit and the body are the soul of man' (D&C 88:15) and that when the spirit and body are separated, men and women 'cannot receive a fulness of joy' (D&C 93:34). That is the reason why obtaining a body is so fundamentally important in the first place, why sin of any kind is such a serious matter (namely because it is sin that ultimately brings both physical and spiritual death), and why the resurrection of the body is so central to the great triumph of Christ's Atonement.

"The body is an essential part of the soul. This distinctive and very important Latter-day Saint doctrine underscores why sexual sin is so serious. We declare that one who uses the God-given body of another without divine sanction abuses the very soul of that individual, abuses the central purpose and processes of life, 'the very key' (in Conference Report, Apr. 1972, 139; or Ensign, July 1972, 113) to life, as President Boyd K. Packer once called it. In exploiting the body of another—which means exploiting his or her soul—one desecrates the Atonement of Christ, which saved that soul and which makes possible the gift of eternal life. And when one mocks the Son of Righteousness, one

steps into a realm of heat hotter and holier than the noonday sun. You cannot do so and not be burned.

*"Please, never say: 'Who does it hurt? Why not a little freedom? I can transgress now and repent later.' Please don't be so foolish and so cruel. You cannot with impunity 'crucify Christ afresh' (see Heb. 6:6). 'Flee fornication,' Paul cries (1 Cor. 6:18), and flee 'anything like unto it,' the Doctrine and Covenants adds (D&C 59:6; emphasis added). Why? Well, for one reason because of the incalculable suffering in both body and spirit endured by the Savior of the world so that we *could* flee (see D&C 19:15–20). We owe Him something for that. Indeed, we owe Him everything for that. 'Ye are not your*

own,' Paul says. 'Ye [have been] bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's' (1 Cor. 6:19–20; emphasis added; see also vv. 13–18). In sexual transgression the soul is at stake—the body and the spirit" ("Personal Purity," Ensign, Nov. 1998, 76).

Brothers and sisters, both the Church's temples and our personal temples must be used to accomplish the righteous purposes for which they were created. Our physical body is a marvelous blessing and a timeless trust. The most sacred of all our divine powers is to become a co-creator with Heavenly Father in providing physical bodies for His spirit sons and daughters and in establishing a righteous and Christ-centered family. Nothing is more holy; nothing deserves more reverence; nothing is more central to the plan of happiness. And our very souls are at stake.

I hope we now better understand why "to receive a physical body" is the first element of the answer to the important question "Why are we here on earth?" The doctrines Lucifer works most diligently to distort and attack are the ones that really matter the most to us



The Father and the Son have entrusted us with a portion of Their creative power and provided specific guidelines for the proper use of that sacred ability to create life and establish an eternal family.

individually, to our families, and to the world. The great plan of happiness requires that each of us obtain a physical body and makes possible a forever family. Consider the popular philosophy that many voices in our modern world would persuade us to believe: "Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin" (2 Ne. 28:8). Such an ideology is a lie inspired by the great deceiver. Where is the adversary presently directing his most direct and diabolical attacks? Upon our beliefs about and uses of the physical body and upon the family. Remember, Satan does not have a body and he cannot have a family. He desires that all of us would become miserable like unto himself. And he relentlessly works to distort the two doctrines he hates the most.

I conclude with the following statement by Elder Melvin J. Ballard (1873–1939), a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"The body that has been given to us was for the purpose of allowing the spirit to exalt itself to a nobler condition. The lightning that is seen flashing from cloud to cloud, from mountain top to mountain top, is an electrical force that may tear down buildings, set fire to property, and destroy life. Conduct electricity through the dynamo wire, and motor, and behold its wonderful results working for the service of man, accomplishing something under the control of a physical instrument, it thus becomes a power for good. So with steam, if allowed to evaporate freely it does little good, but restrain it in the boiler, send it through the engine, and under its power you may travel across the continent or sail from shore to shore. And so, too, with

Both the Church's temples and our personal temples must be used to accomplish the righteous purposes for which they were created.

this highest, most potent of all spiritual forces, the intelligence that is in man; enshrine it in a spiritual body, that it may have the experiences of spiritual life; and then give it a physical body, that it may enter into and obtain the joy and experiences of physical life, and you have enlarged its powers immeasurably" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1912, 107).

I testify we are sons and daughters of a loving Heavenly Father. His plan for our eternal progression is perfect. I witness that the Only Begotten Son of the Father offered Himself as the infinite atoning sacrifice required by the plan. I know the Savior lives, and He directs the affairs of His living Church through living apostles and prophets. □

From a devotional address given at Ricks College on 11 January 2000.

Elder David A. Bednar, president of BYU—Idaho, is an Area Authority Seventy serving in the Idaho Area.

Gospel topics: physical body, plan of salvation

More on this topic: See Boyd K. Packer, "Ye Are the Temple of God," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 72–74; John S. Tanner, "The Body as a Blessing," *Ensign*, July 1993, 7–11; Russell M. Nelson, "The Magnificence of Man," *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, 64–69.

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LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Most *Ensign* articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following are for that purpose or for personal reflection:

1. What is the purpose of receiving a physical body?
2. How should this knowledge affect the way we treat our bodies?
3. How is it that our bodies are not our own?

When we partake of the sacrament with a sincere heart, with real intent, forsaking our sins, and renewing our commitment to God, the Lord provides a way whereby sins can be forgiven.

SACRAMENT MEETING AND THE SACRAMENT





BY ELDER VAUGHN J. FEATHERSTONE
Of the Seventy

Throughout the Church each week, members gather for the opportunity to partake of the sacrament. This is a deep and meaningful privilege, an expression of God's love for His children that provides a way whereby we can be cleansed of our sins. Among those who gather may be people who are suffering deeply, perhaps due to wayward children, financial stress, debilitating illness, death, depression, loneliness, despair, sin, or sorrow. It is important, therefore, that sacrament meetings accomplish their purpose. What we do in them may be more important to someone there than we would ever know. Sacrament meeting is often the primary means for rescuing the troubled soul.

A SACRAMENT MEETING

Imagine a person has come to sacrament meeting feeling desperate, lonely, and hurting. He or she comes a few minutes early, being greeted in the foyer by loving members. He enters the chapel, where there is a spirit of reverence. The organist is playing worshipful music, having arrived early and selected from the hymnbook several pieces as prelude music. The organist might well have prayed, "Heavenly Father, help me to choose hymns that will soothe the troubled heart."

The person sits quietly for 10 minutes and listens to the music. He can feel its soothing influence in his soul.

The bishopric is on the stand six or seven minutes prior to the meeting. The meeting starts on time. The congregation joins in singing a spiritually uplifting hymn. A thoughtful prayer is given on behalf of ward members and others, and it contains expressions of gratitude, love, and pleading for the needs of the members and others.

A sacrament hymn is sung, and again the Holy Spirit rests upon the congregation. The sacrament is blessed and passed with great dignity, and the congregation partakes, renewing their covenants made at baptism.

Youth and adult speakers address subjects that can bind the broken heart, lift the downtrodden, and provide rest for the weary and hope for the despairing. A choir sings a hymn, or some other kind of sacred music provides an additional spiritual experience for those who have gathered.

The concluding remarks are made, followed by a beautiful closing hymn from the hymnbook. A closing prayer of thanksgiving and supplication on behalf of ward members is given, after which appropriate postlude music is played.

Greatly encouraged, the person leaves this meeting

feeling he can make it for one more week. Expressions of love are shared in the foyer or hall in reasonable tones so that the chapel may remain a reverent and holy place.

Our sacrament meetings should be the very perfection of our expression of reverence for God. When this happens, all are blessed and those with serious problems and afflictions feel the healing influence of the “balm of Gilead” (see Bible Dictionary, “Balm,” 618). Fellowship is appropriate and critically needed by many, including those we might never suspect.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENT

It is essential that we understand the doctrine of the sacrament in order to gain the deepest, most meaningful spiritual experience during sacrament meeting.

The sacrament is the ordinance of the Church that ties most directly to the Atonement. Some time before the Savior personally introduced this ordinance to the Nephites, He told them the law of the sacrifice of animals was fulfilled and that what He required instead was the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit (see 3 Ne. 9:19–20).

The law requiring the sacrifice of animals was given after Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden and, as the Bible Dictionary states, included “offering the firstlings of their flocks in a similitude of the sacrifice that would be made of the Only Begotten Son of God (Moses 5:4–8). Thereafter, whenever there were true believers on the earth, with priesthood authority, sacrifices were offered in that manner and for that purpose” (“Sacrifices,” 765–66).

From Adam and Eve down through the ages, this law of sacrifice was continued until the death of Jesus Christ, which ended the shedding of blood as a gospel ordinance. An understanding of the ancient law of sacrifice can help us find more meaning in and better appreciate the Atonement as we ponder during the sacrament service.

Under the law there were three kinds of sacrifice: (1) sin offerings, (2) burnt offerings, and (3) peace offerings. The Bible Dictionary states that the fundamental idea of the sin offerings “was atonement, expiation. They implied that there was a sin, or some uncleanness akin to a sin, that needed atoning for before fellowship with Jehovah could be obtained. . . .

“*Trespass or guilt offerings* were a particular kind of sin offerings.

“The *burnt offering* got its Hebrew name from the idea of the smoke of the sacrifice ascending to heaven” (“Sacrifices,” 766). It was placed on the altar and completely burned, symbolizing complete surrender and

total devotion to God and parallels the process of justification and sanctification, a process of “retaining a remission of [our] sins” (Alma 4:14).

“As the obligation to surrender [to God] was constant on the part of Israel, a burnt offering, called the continual burnt offering, was offered twice daily, morning and evening. . . .

“*Peace offerings*, as the name indicates, presupposed that the sacrificer was at peace with God; they were offered for the further realization and enjoyment of that peace. . . .

“... When the three offerings were offered together, the sin always preceded the burnt, and the burnt [preceded] the peace offerings. Thus the order of the symbolizing sacrifices was the order of the atonement, sanctification, and fellowship with the Lord” (“Sacrifices,” 766–67).

The prophet Nephi taught his people almost 600 years before the coming of Christ that “ye must keep the performances and ordinances of God until the law shall be fulfilled which was given to Moses” (2 Ne. 25:30). He also prophesied that “after Christ shall have risen from the dead he shall show himself unto you, my children, and my beloved brethren; and the words which he shall speak unto you shall be the law which ye shall do” (2 Ne. 26:1).

During His initial visit to the Western Hemisphere, the resurrected Savior introduced the ordinance of the sacrament to the Nephites:

“He took of the bread and brake and blessed it; and he gave unto the disciples and commanded that they should eat. . . .

“And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread and blessed it and given it unto you. . . .

“And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you” (3 Ne. 18:3, 6–7).

During another visit to the Nephites just one day later, the Savior taught, “He that eateth this bread eateth of my body to his soul; and he that drinketh of this wine drinketh of my blood to his soul; and his soul shall never hunger nor thirst, but shall be filled” (3 Ne. 20:8).

PARTAKING OF THE SACRAMENT

It is essential that we renew our covenants by partaking of the sacrament. When we do this with a sincere heart, with real intent, forsaking our sins, and renewing our commitment to God, the Lord provides a way



An understanding of the ancient law of sacrifice helps us find richer meaning in the Atonement.

whereby sins can be forgiven from week to week. Simply eating the bread and drinking the water will not bring that forgiveness. We must prepare and then partake with a broken heart and contrite spirit. The spiritual preparation we make to partake of the sacrament is essential to receiving a remission of our sins.

To those who have unresolved, major transgressions, who profane God and His Holy Son, who trample His words, who are godless, who reject Him, who do not sustain His servants, or who have no desire to repent, the Lord has said, "Whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul" (3 Ne. 18:29).

CONCLUSION

The Atonement is the foundational doctrine of all things, including the sacrament. The law of sacrifice was a similitude of the Atonement. During sacrament meetings we may offer a sin offering of our own, so to speak, by repenting and coming to Christ. We may offer a burnt offering by surrendering ourselves to Him and always remembering Him. And we may offer a peace offering as we express our gratitude for His bounteous blessings. Our sacrifice is not a literal sacrifice of animals but is a sacrifice of time, money, talents, and a broken heart and a contrite spirit. The Atonement lifts us to a level of opportunity to become joint heirs with Christ and to be exalted with the blessings of "eternal lives" (D&C 132:24).

The hymns are filled with the doctrine of the sacrament. Here is one example:

*Rev'rently and meekly now,
Let thy head most humbly bow.
Think of me, thou ransomed one;
Think what I for thee have done.
With my blood that dripped like rain,
Sweat in agony of pain,
With my body on the tree
I have ransomed even thee.
In this bread now blest for thee,
Emblems of my body see;
In this water or this wine,
Emblem of my blood divine.
Oh, remember what was done
That the sinner might be won.
On the cross of Calvary
I have suffered death for thee.*

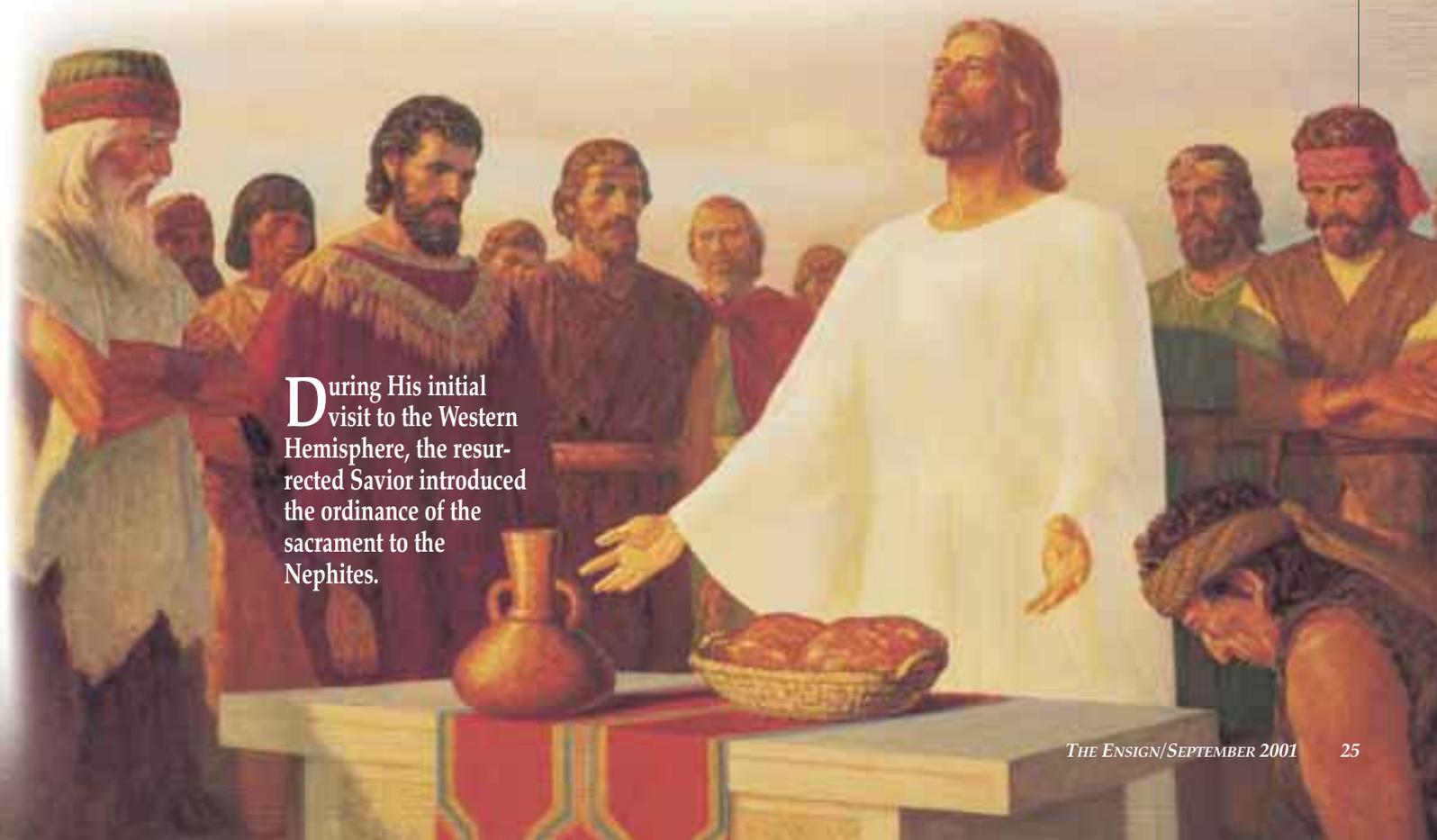
("Reverently and Meekly Now," *Hymns*, no. 185)

Yes, the privilege of partaking of the sacrament is a profound expression of the Lord's love for us. Once we understand how precious a privilege it is and what a blessing sacrament meeting can be, we would not choose to miss regularly. □

Gospel topics: sacrament, Jesus Christ, Atonement, forgiveness

More on this topic: See L. Tom Perry, "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," *Ensign*, May 1996, 53–59; W. Mack Lawrence, "Sunday Worship Service," *Ensign*, May 1991, 30–31; David B. Haight, "The Sacrament," *Ensign*, May 1983, 12–14.

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During His initial visit to the Western Hemisphere, the resurrected Savior introduced the ordinance of the sacrament to the Nephites.

Loving My Wayward Child

NAME WITHHELD

Years ago when I was a young mother, my heart was broken when my husband left the Church, then left me. I pulled close to my two little girls and centered our lives in the gospel.

I prayed for my children daily and involved them in wholesome activities. Home teachers and bishops assured me that these little ones would be mine in the eternities and would appreciate my sacrifices for them as a single mother. I took comfort in the fact that because my children were born in the covenant, they would be heirs to special blessings. Three years after the divorce, I married a strong, faithful Latter-day Saint, and I felt sure that all would be well.

But soon we began having severe problems with my younger daughter. She had been happy and full of energy as a young child, but she became demanding, defiant, and belligerent as an adolescent. She began smoking, drinking, and experimenting with drugs and was disciplined for shoplifting. She used vulgar language and became sexually active. She challenged all authority and eventually dropped out of high school.

DESPERATE TIMES

This was as difficult a challenge as any I had previously faced. My husband and I desired for her to feel whole and loved and accepted of the Lord. How we wished she would repent, obtain a testimony, and feel peace in her life. We wanted her to be responsible, respectful, and respectable. I became despondent and inconsolable—I couldn't bear the thought of "losing" another loved one.

We fasted and prayed, pleading with Father in Heaven not to allow this child to be lost or to be influenced by her father's apostasy. My husband and I counseled with each other and sought advice from our bishop. We put her name on temple prayer



rolls. My patient husband was a great help and consolation to me, but largely ineffective with my daughter because she refused to accept him as an authority figure. I asked for and received numerous priesthood blessings. I spent hours attempting to talk with her. I read the scriptures and authoritative books on dealing with difficult children. I asked for advice, consulted with friends and family, and pled with youth leaders for help and influence.

I wondered, *Where is the joy in family life? When will these problems cease?* We feared almost every

Through the Spirit of the Lord, I realized the best way I could help my daughter was to make changes in my own life.



contemporary nightmare: teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, drug-addiction, death in a drunken accident. Finding no resolution to the problem, I lost all confidence in my ability to parent. I felt desperate, sorrowful, frantic, angry, and helpless. A forever family in my case was just not possible, I thought.

MAKING MY OWN CHANGES

Then, after several years of frustration, I began to realize that although my daughter was astray, I needed to make changes in my *own* life. Although I tried to help her, I was acting out of terror, not out of faith. The way of the Lord is not frightened frenzy. The Lord Jesus Christ brings hope, not despair. Satan is the author of discouragement and unhappiness. I was listening to the wrong voice.

I decided I needed to go back to the basics of the gospel and build a stronger, more solid spirituality. I wondered when was the last time, for instance, I had offered prayers of gratitude. Had I completely forgotten my many blessings? Had I actively looked for the good qualities of my struggling daughter? Did I appreciate the obedient members of my family, or had I forgotten their faithfulness? Where was the acknowledgment of joyful moments in my day? Was I stirred by a beautiful sunset? Did I enjoy a soft rainstorm or appreciate the purity of freshly fallen snow?

I was ashamed. I had become so negative and unhappy that my thoughts and actions did not reflect my testimony of Jesus Christ. My countenance didn't show my love for and hope in the Savior.

I chose to change. I particularly wanted to concentrate on filling my soul with good and positive thoughts and feelings. I read uplifting books and stopped watching content-empty television programs. I became diligent with a personal exercise program, which provided relief from stress and lifted my spirits.

But by far my most important personal modification was to alter my routine of scripture study. Because I'm freshest in the morning, I began reading the scriptures early. Sometimes I'd read just a few verses, other times a few chapters. I even kept my scriptures near me to read as I was dressing and getting ready for the day. As I drove in my car during the day, I turned off the radio and used the time to ponder and meditate upon what I'd read that morning. The spiritual experiences I had right there in my car more than made up for any temporary frustrations caused by not listening to the traffic report.

RECEIVING PERSONAL REVELATION

Amazing things began to happen. Impressions popped into my mind: I received ideas of how to

handle day-to-day obligations, how to prepare for Church assignments, and, most importantly, I received inspiration for interacting with my precious daughter. What an experience it is to receive personal revelation from the Holy Ghost!

One day I felt the strong feeling that my conversations with my daughter should turn to the positive things we had in common. Sure enough, our shared interests in music, art, and old movies provided us with non-threatening topics of conversation. This was a helpful first step in repairing our damaged relationship.

Another morning, I felt a strong impression that would continue to enter my mind over the next few months: *Force is not the answer*. I offered a tearful, silent prayer and asked Heavenly Father to forgive me for forgetting that agency is an inherent part of His plan. I was reminded that it is not appropriate to attempt to make someone do something, even if that thing is righteous. That had once been Satan's design.

So I continued to change, but it didn't happen overnight. Change was difficult, and I had to do a lot of it. I had setbacks, but I kept trying. As parents, we still had to set standards for what was acceptable in our home, but this daughter responded better because I was more confident and logical, and less emotional.

The continuing spiritual impressions we received were a great blessing. Line upon line we were taught by the Spirit what to do and when to do it. When we followed, we were blessed. When we struggled, we were gently reminded.

FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

On one occasion, it was brought to my remembrance that true conversion comes through the Lord. So I began to pray differently on this daughter's behalf, asking that she would be blessed with a change of heart instead of merely asking that she would do what I told her to do. And I looked for appropriate teaching moments to talk with her about the Savior. She agreed, for instance, that a violent, harsh world needs more of His loving, gentle ways.



As my gratitude for the Atonement of Jesus Christ increased, so did my faith in His ability to touch my daughter's life.

Christ's Atonement. And as my gratitude increased, so did my faith in His ability to touch my daughter's life.

I diligently tried to be more Christlike—more patient, more loving, more kind. I developed a firm conviction that He will keep entreating her and trying to bring her back. He loves her even more than I do! My role now is to be close to her and to strive to become the best example of the Savior I can be for the rest of my life.

BRIGHT HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Today this daughter is still not active in the Church, but she has a good life. She obtained a high school equivalency and some college education. She recently married a good man, and she is a responsible and capable worker in a good career. She loves her family and extended family, and she and I have a great relationship. I have a bright hope that she will someday return to the teachings of her childhood.

I have learned that we have the right to inspiration in our own lives and can find inspiration if we seek it and live worthy of it. I firmly believe the Holy Ghost can help us as we prepare ourselves to hear His promptings and act on them.

I also know that if someday I receive eternal life, the experiences I've had with this daughter will have helped to bring me to the One who can provide it. Without her, I might not have learned what it truly means to rely on the Atonement, to seek the Holy Ghost for guidance, to search my own soul, to be grateful for what I have, and to hope for the future. □

Gospel topics: parenting, inspiration, Atonement, love, prayer

MORNING MANNA

(Mosiah 7:19)

BY MARY MARGARET HAWKINS

*Early I arise to seek my morning manna
Before the sun outlines the day's temporal claims and
Melts my intent.*

*Precious sustenance has rained before my day from
Heaven and lies generously scattered in tissue wafers
Free for the gathering.*

*Laying open the sacred books, I sift the living words.
Silently I grind and beat and bake them into
Fragrant, warm cakes—*

*Color of bdellium, tasting of honey and fresh oil.
Gratefully I consume the day's sweet ration
Offered to preserve*

*Me in my wilderness wanderings. Why should I weep
For the feasts of Egypt or mourn for the rich meats
Of Babylon?*

*I desire only this simple morning miracle
Of living bread. It will satisfy until I sit
And sup in Canaan.*

"BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT"

(Matthew 5:48)

BY MICHELLE HAMBY

*My hands
Do not
Carry the calluses of carpentry,
The symbols of salvation,
The power of creation.*

*My feet
Have not
Been bathed in tears,
Walked the path alone,
Supported the sins of humanity.*

*My mouth
Does not
Speak the purity of truth,
The forgiveness of souls,
The knowledge of eternity.*

*My heart
Was not
Stilled, then beat again,
Broken to make mankind whole,
Is not filled with the surety of my own self.*

Perfect is to carry through.

*I cannot redeem the sinner.
But I can love him even in his guilt.*

*I cannot raise the dead.
But I can sit with the dying.*

*I cannot heal the wounded.
But I can listen to their cries.*

*I cannot make whole body or spirit.
But I can hold them in their brokenness.*

*And in my flaws—
I act as proxy
Hands, feet, mouth, heart—
I can be
Even as He is.*

Peace on



BY ELDER ROBERT E. WELLS
*Emeritus Member of the First Quorum
of the Seventy*

When Christ was born to this world, angels proclaimed, “On earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). Yet in the 2,000 years since that proclamation, there has been little peace in the world. There is an uneasy peace between some nations and great unrest within other nations. Just as Christ’s Atonement has saved us from both physical and spiritual death, the peace of which the Savior of mankind spoke is also both physical and spiritual.

The Savior referred to spiritual peace in the Sermon on the Mount when he gave us the beautiful beatitude about peace and peacemakers. His entire sermon is a blueprint for us to use in our personal path toward perfection, as well as a pattern of the many attributes and qualities we must develop in our eternal quest to approach the perfection and peace Jesus personifies.

I like to think of when the sermon was first taught. In my mind’s eye, I see a scene of peaceful beauty: I envision an afternoon in early spring. The sky is softening toward dusk, with not even a breeze. White, wispy cirrus clouds stand almost motionless in the clear blue sky. And below, on the coast of the Sea of Galilee, soft waves lap against moored fishing boats. A group of people assembles on the side of the hill. Eager listeners sit on the grass or stand amidst the rocks and early spring flowers. All are hushed and thoughtful as every face is lifted up, every eye looking toward the Lord, and every ear listening as the Savior tells them what they need to do in order to have peace in their lives.

Tenderly Christ speaks: “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matt. 5:9). Another Bible translator quotes the Savior, saying, “Happy are those who make peace” (*The New Testament in Modern English*, trans. J. B. Phillips, [1958], 9). Either way, we focus on the strong verb *make*, as in “make peace” or “peacemakers.” To follow Christ and bring forth the blessings of heaven, we must actively make peace in the world, in

the community, in the neighborhood, and above all, in the home we live in.

In the meridian of time, many expected Christ to take a political stand against Roman rule and offer peace to the oppressed people. Christ did indeed offer peace, but it was not external or political; rather, the peace Christ taught was internal and personal.

I would like to share an incident which took place during the Vietnam War. There were some who were convinced that the United States was engaged in a noble and justifiable war. However, public opinion was changing, and there was opposition which argued that the United States should pull out of Vietnam.

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) was the President of the Church at the time. While at an area conference in another country, he was interviewed by reporters from the international news services. One reporter asked President Lee, “What is your church’s position on the Vietnam War?” Some recognized the question as a trap—one which could not be answered without a very real risk of being misunderstood or misinterpreted. If the prophet answered, “We are against the war,” the international media could state, “How strange—a religious leader who is against the position of the country he is obliged to sustain in his own church’s Articles of Faith.”

On the other hand, if President Lee answered, “We are in favor of the war,” the media could say, “How strange—a religious leader in favor of war.” Either way, the answer could result in serious misunderstandings both inside and outside the Church.

President Lee, with great inspiration and wisdom, answered as would a man who knows the Savior: “We, together with the whole Christian world, abhor war. But the Savior said, ‘In me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation’” (John 16:33). President Lee then explained, “The Savior was not talking about the peace that can be achieved between nations, by military force or by negotiation in the halls of parliaments. Rather, he was speaking of the peace we can each have in our own lives when we live the commandments and come unto Christ with broken hearts and contrite spirits” (see “Be a Friend,

Earth

Our closeness to the Lord will, in great measure, determine the peace and comfort and renewed strength that we feel as we invite the Spirit into our lives.



a Servant, a Son of the Savior," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 70).

A famous prayer of St. Francis of Assisi suggests that we can be instruments in the hands of the Savior for bringing personal peace to others. This is the essence of the true "maker of peace."

The prayer reads:

*Lord, make me an instrument of
Thy peace.*

*Where there is hate, may I bring love;
Where offense, may I bring pardon; . . .
Faith, where once there was doubt;
Hope, for despair;
Light, where was darkness;
Joy to replace sadness.*

To be a maker of peace, it helps if we understand what brings peace. Paul says that it is the Spirit: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Gal. 5:22). Our closeness to the Lord will, in great measure, determine the peace and comfort and renewed strength that we feel as we invite the Spirit into

our lives. In spite of all the problems in the world today, peace can come to the hearts of each of us as we follow the Savior. □

*Gospel topics:
peace, faith*

TEACHING OUR CHILDREN *the Plan of Salvation*



BY ROBERT ENGLAND LEE

Parents can present Heavenly Father's "great plan of happiness" in simple yet powerful ways.

Not long ago, I drove several young men and their leaders to the beginning of a great trail. They were headed for a 50-mile hike. As we neared the drop-off point, leaders began reminding the youth of details about their journey. Each young man was studying the map and seemed sobered by the dramatic changes in elevation along the trail. One of the leaders talked about his firsthand knowledge of the adventure and the dangers that lay ahead. He assured the boys that the plan for the trip had been carefully prepared, and that no matter what they would face—fatigue, pain, rodents, rain, and so forth—they would enjoy the experience.

One of the boys was my son. I had a father's concern, but I was grateful that there were faithful leaders, loyal friends, and, above all, a plan. It had been taught to the boys and reviewed before the trip began. It would be reviewed and followed along the way. Understanding the overall plan, seeing how each leg of the journey helped the group reach its goal, and having trustworthy, wise, and experienced guides inspired my confidence that the hike would be successfully completed.

As I consider the confidence those boys had, I also consider the confusion and frustration faced by many who are journeying through life without a secure knowledge of the plan of life. They struggle without a sense of eternal purpose. Prophets of God have always sought to explain the purpose of life by teaching the plan of salvation, also known as "the great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8). Through inspiration, parents can understand and teach this road map of eternity. They can use it to guide their paths and their children's paths through mortality.



Through inspiration, parents can understand and teach the road map of eternity. They can use it to guide their paths and their children's paths through mortality.

THE PLAN

The following is a basic outline of the plan:

We worship God as the almighty ruler of heaven and earth. He is our Father in Heaven. We lived with Him as spirits before we were born. We are His children and belong to His eternal family (see Heb. 12:9). He loves us and wants us to achieve true, eternal happiness (see Rom. 8:16–17). To enable us to become like Him, our Father in Heaven prepared a plan that allows us to come to earth and receive a physical body. This life is a time of testing to see if we will keep His commandments (see Abr. 3:24–25). Having no memory of our premortal life, we must act by faith (see 2 Cor. 5:6–7). He gives us commandments, ordinances, and covenants to point the way we should go to fulfill our eternal potential (see Moses 5:58–59). We will be held accountable for our decisions and actions (see D&C 101:78). We experience difficulties, trials, and temptations. By overcoming them through faith in His Beloved Son we develop many of the characteristics of our Heavenly Father (see Heb. 12:10–11).

The sins we commit make us unworthy to dwell in the presence of God (see 1 Ne. 15:34). But because He loves His children, our Heavenly Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us. Jesus fulfilled the will of the Father and voluntarily suffered and gave His life to pay for our sins. Through His Resurrection, He overcame physical death so that we can again obtain a physical body after our death. His suffering, death, and Resurrection are called the Atonement (see LDS Bible Dictionary, "Atonement," 617). To enjoy here in mortality and hereafter all the blessings that come from Christ's sacrifice, we are to accept Him and live according to His example and teachings (see A of F 1:3).

When we die, our spirit leaves our physical body, but the spirit is still alive and goes to the spirit world (see Alma 40:11–13). There we await the Resurrection and Judgment. In the spirit world the gospel is taught to all who died without hearing or accepting Jesus Christ and His gospel (see D&C 138:32–34).

When we are resurrected, our physical bodies and spirits are reunited, never to be separated again (see Alma 11:43, 45). The degree of glory we experience depends on our faithfulness to Heavenly Father's teachings. If we have been faithful and worthy, we will be with our Father in celestial glory. Those who qualify to be exalted in the highest degree of this glory receive a fulness of joy (see D&C 132:19–20). There are lesser degrees of glory for those who have been less valiant in obeying His teachings (see D&C 76:96–98).

The challenge of identifying the doctrines of the plan of salvation can be resolved by helping others see an overview or framework of the plan of salvation as the Lord has given us to understand.



PRESENTING AN OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

Most of us have been taught the doctrines of the plan of salvation, yet we appreciate help in putting the various doctrines into a meaningful overview as we try to explain the plan to others.

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has suggested: "From time to time, I would . . . give an overview of the plan of salvation. I would try to do it a little different each time. You could use different scriptures. You could emphasize different things, but always remembering that the point of it is more than intellectual. It's not just to know who God the Father is and who Jesus Christ is and who the Holy Ghost is. It's to feel *that* is reality and that those individuals—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—are real, that they know [us], and they love [us] and they are attentive to [us]" ("Teaching Missionaries the Plan of Salvation," Mission Presidents' Seminar, 22 June 2000; emphasis added).

What are some helpful ways to present an overview of the plan to our children? The following are charts, activities, and scripture discussion ideas with which this may be done.

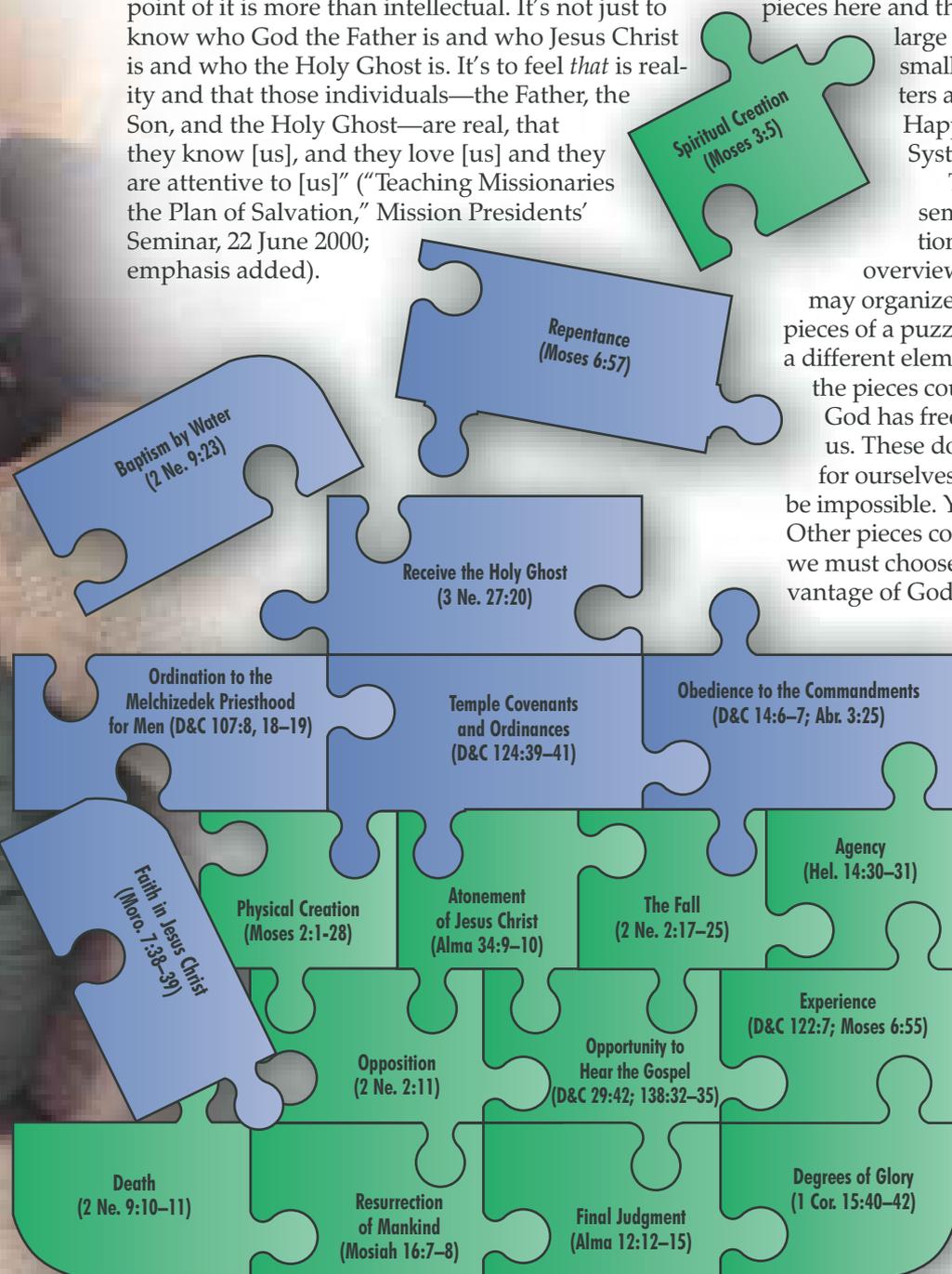
1. PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has explained:

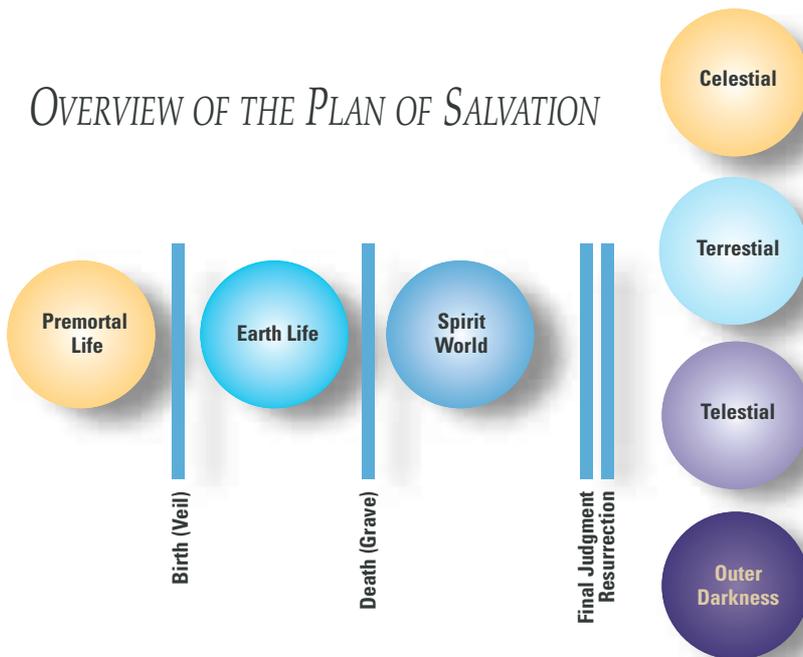
"Individual doctrines of the gospel are not fully explained in one place in the scriptures, nor presented in order or sequence. They must be assembled from pieces here and there. They are sometimes found in large segments, but mostly they are in small bits scattered through the chapters and verses" ("The Great Plan of Happiness," 1993 Church Educational System [CES] Symposium, 1).

The challenge of identifying and assembling doctrines of the plan of salvation may be resolved by providing an overview or framework on which a person may organize the various doctrines, such as the pieces of a puzzle. Each piece could be labeled with a different element of the plan of salvation. Some of the pieces could represent parts of the plan that God has freely and unconditionally provided for us. These doctrines identify what we cannot do for ourselves and without which salvation would be impossible. You could assemble these pieces first. Other pieces could represent parts of the plan that we must choose to accept in order to take full advantage of God's precious gifts. You could assemble these pieces last. Once the puzzle has been put together, a short scripture reference, such as the ones on the puzzle pieces, may be read and discussed as an extension of the activity. The importance of each piece to the overall plan could be discussed by asking what would happen if any piece of the plan were missing.

When we understand even a simple overview such as this puzzle, we may approach the journey of life with greater confidence. "People retain much more," says President Packer, "when they know how all the pieces fit together, and the light of learning shines more brightly" ("The Great Plan of Happiness," 2).



OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION



plan of salvation. Scriptural passages can become more relevant when the ideas in them are placed into the context of a model of the plan of salvation and the learner is invited to ponder how that doctrine fits into the plan. Doing so may be the difference between *reading* the scriptures and *searching* them. For example, after studying in Moroni 2 about conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost, a parent could ask, “On what part of the bridge would you put this chapter?” and “Why would you put it there?” Discussing answers to these questions can help clarify how the words we read in the scriptures relate to the actions of our daily lives.

2. LINES AND CIRCLES

A series of three horizontally drawn circles, representing premortal, earth, and spirit world life, with four vertically drawn circles to the right, representing postmortal degrees of glory, is often used to present an overview of the plan of salvation. Lines between the circles, representing birth, death, and judgment and resurrection, may also be drawn. Each circle and line is labeled with the name of a part of the plan.

It may be helpful when teaching with this drawing to talk about the locations (the circles) and transitions (the lines) we all experience. Causes and reasons for each transition can also be discussed. For example, instead of simply observing, “After we die, we will be resurrected,” a parent could say, “Because of the Fall everyone dies. After death, because of Christ, we will all be resurrected.”

3. THE BRIDGE

This drawing also illustrates the relationship between what God has done for us as well as what we must do to fulfill the plan of salvation. Here the plan may be compared to a bridge with three pillars that spans a wide gulf. The bridge provides a path on which we may walk to gain eternal life. The drawing is an illustration of the truth taught by the prophet Nephi: “We know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all that we can do” (2 Ne. 25:23).

4. RELATING SCRIPTURE DISCUSSIONS TO OVERVIEWS OF THE PLAN

Sometimes it can be difficult to see the relationship between doctrines on the pages of scripture and the

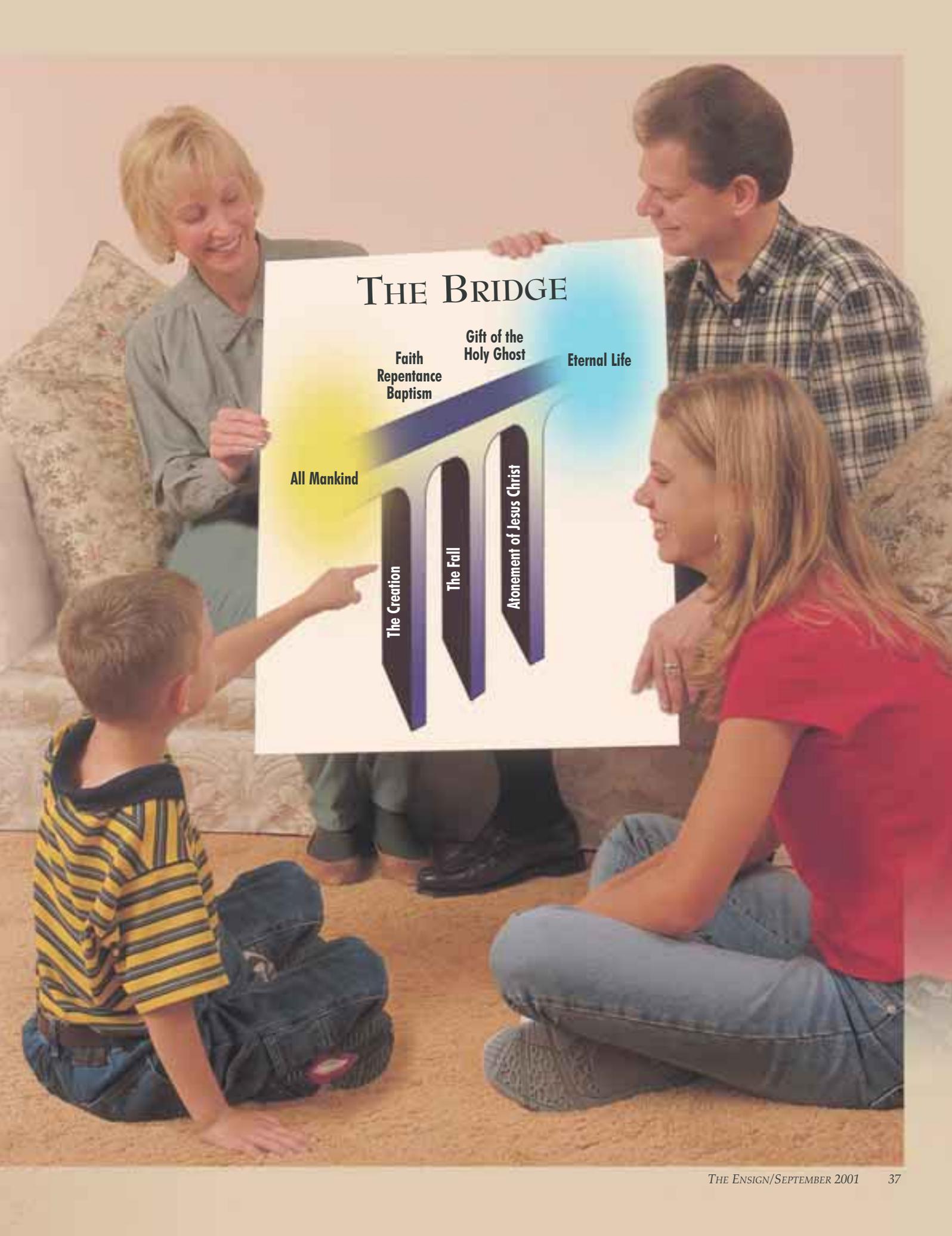
5. HEAVENLY FATHER’S PRESENCE

One of the strengths of the representation on page 38 is the inclusion of the imagery of the “strait and narrow path” (see 2 Ne. 31:17–20). Note that the path that leads from Heavenly Father’s presence to spiritual death is downward, but the direction of life’s path continues forward. There is a gate across the path that leads to the house of the Lord. This suggests that there is more to returning to the presence of God than simply going through the gate. We must follow along the path if we are to progress and return to His presence.

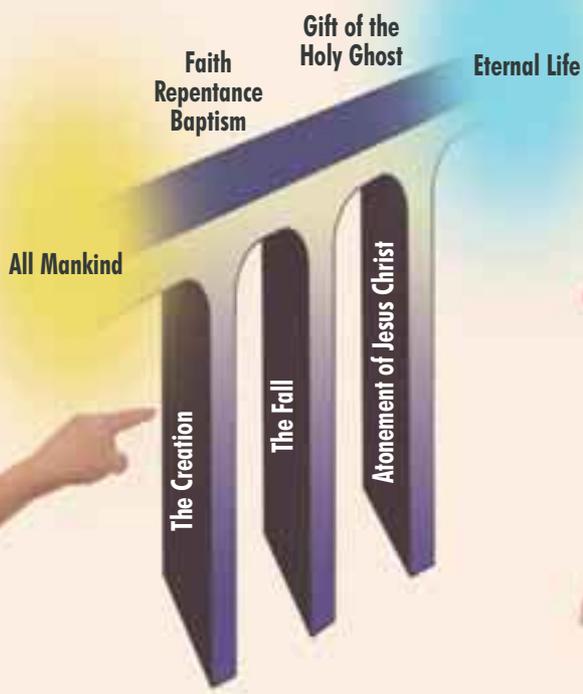
6. ROOM TO ROOM

You can use your home or another building to take those you teach on a “journey” through the plan. One room could be designated as the “premortals world,” another room could represent “earth life,” a third room could represent the “spirit world,” and the last room could represent the “celestial kingdom,” which might be where treats are located at the lesson’s end! You could talk about how we go through the doors of birth, death, and resurrection. Death could be explained as part of the plan—going from one room to the next. It might be useful to point out before anyone moves from room to room that someone had to plan and build the house we are all in. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are the

The plan may be compared to a bridge with three pillars that spans a wide gulf. The bridge provides a path on which we may walk to gain eternal life.



THE BRIDGE



CELESTIAL KINGDOM



You can use your home or another building to take those you teach on a “journey” through the plan. The last room could represent the “celestial kingdom,” where treats might be located at the lesson’s end!

architects and builders of the plan of salvation (see also Christine Wright, “Walking Through the Plan of Salvation,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, 72).

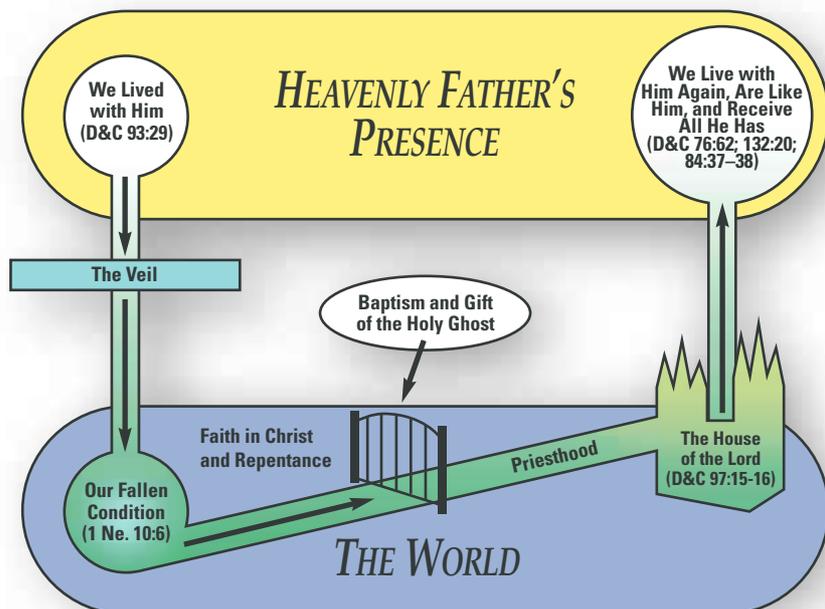
CREATING YOUR OWN OVERVIEWS

After studying these or other models of the plan of salvation, you will be able to discuss the strengths of each overview. One model might emphasize the importance of ordinances, while another might focus more on major transitional experiences, such as birth or death. Some models focus more deeply on the Savior’s Atonement. Wise parents might invite family members to create their own models or charts, based on sound doctrines found in the scriptures and the words of the prophets.

THE TRAIL

I picked up my van load of boys a week later. They were dirty and tired, and some had scrapes and bumps. But without exception, they were glad they had the experience. They had experienced

bruises, rodents, rain (almost perpetually), and many other things. The valleys and hills had presented inclines so steep they appeared impossible to ascend. Yet they spoke of their experience with enthusiasm and wonder. They had endured to the end and reveled in the joy of accomplishing something that seemed beyond the limits of their natural abilities. They had been well prepared and had followed their plan. Loving leaders had guided them along the way.



Teaching, understanding, and following the “great plan of happiness” is a key to journeying safely through mortality. “The plan is worthy of repetition over and over again,” explains President Packer. “Then the purpose of life, the reality of the Redeemer, and the reason for commandments will stay with [those you teach]. Their gospel study, their life experiences, will add to an ever-growing witness of the Christ, of the Atonement, of the restoration of the gospel” (“The Great Plan of Happiness,” 3). □

Robert England Lee is a member of the Cary Second Ward, Raleigh, North Carolina Stake.

Gospel topics: plan of salvation, teaching, happiness

More on this topic: See M. Russell Ballard, “Answers to Life’s Questions,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 22–24; Dallin H. Oaks, “The Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 72–75.

Visit www.lds.org or see Church magazines on CD.

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

Most *Ensign* articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following questions are for that purpose or for personal reflection:

1. If you have used several overviews to help teach the plan of salvation, ask family members which parts of the presentation they would like to better understand.
2. Ask your family members which statements from our Church leaders on the plan of salvation impress them the most and why.
3. Ask family members what hard things about life are better understood and endured, or what decisions can be made more wisely, when we know and trust in the plan of salvation.

THE MARVELOUS PLAN

The following are some teachings by current members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on the plan of salvation:

About the Plan

“One of the great blessings flowing from amplifying latter-day revelations is the crucial, doctrinal framework known as the marvelous plan of salvation, the plan of happiness, or the plan of mercy” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 1984, 21).

“You elected to have this earth experience as part of His plan for you. The prophets call it ‘the plan of mercy,’ ‘the eternal plan of deliverance,’ ‘the plan of salvation,’ and yes, ‘the great plan of happiness.’ You were taught this plan before you came to earth and there rejoiced in the privilege of participating in it” (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 73).

“You can think of the plan of salvation as a set of eyes that allow you to see what the natural eye does not see” (Henry B. Eyring, Mission Presidents’ Seminar, June 2000, 2).

Studying and Teaching the Plan

“Youth must be taught to expand their minds and to think in spiritual terms. They must know that there was no beginning and there will be no end. Then they will begin to understand the plan of redemption” (Boyd K. Packer, 1993 CES Symposium, 6).

“Truly, of all the errors mortals could make, God’s plan of salvation is the wrong thing to be wrong about! No error could be more enormous or more everlasting in its consequences! No wonder this Church and its people go to such great lengths and expense to share the fulness of the gospel concerning this plan. No wonder the Lord wants this plan taught plainly and repetitively. And why not? It is God’s plan—not ours!” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 1984, 22).

“We must give adequate attention to the doctrines of happiness—real happiness, infinite and eternal. They should be the objective of everything we teach in the Church and of everything we do” (M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, May 1995, 24).

“Learn the doctrinal foundation of the great plan of happiness by studying the scriptures, pondering their content, and praying to understand them. Carefully study and use the proclamation of the First Presidency and the Twelve on the family” (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 75).

Blessings from Understanding and Following the Plan

“Until you have a broad perspective of the eternal nature of this great drama [plan], you won’t make much sense out of the inequities in life” (Boyd K. Packer, CES Fireside, 7 May 1995, 3).

“So much more than a matter of abstract theology, this great plan can

focus daily life. Its truths are crucial to how we see ourselves, others, life, the Lord, and even the universe. Or how we view a baby. Or death. Or the praise and honors of the world. This plan constitutes the mother lode of meaning and can cradle us, conceptually, amid any concern” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 1984, 22).

“When we understand the plan of salvation, we also understand the purpose and effect of the commandments God has given his children” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 73).

“The plan of happiness is available to all of his children. If the world would embrace and live it, peace, joy, and plenty would abound on the earth. Much of the suffering we know today would be eliminated if people throughout the world would understand and live the gospel” (M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, May 1995, 23).

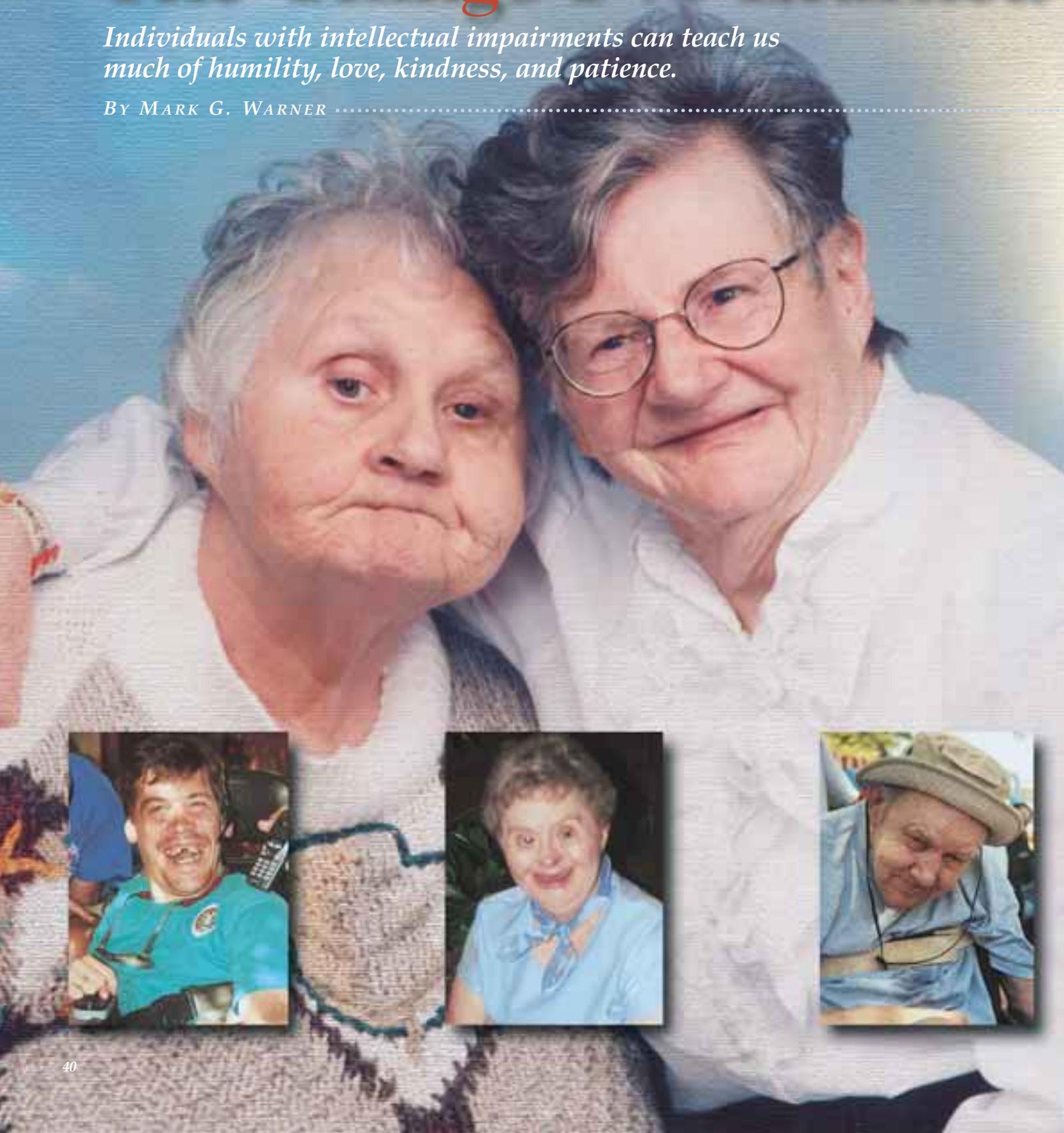
“Some of us at one time or another let the pressures of life or the false teachings of men cloud our vision, but when we see with clarity, the difference between the plan of God and that of Satan is unmistakable” (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 11).

“The more closely you personally adhere to His plan for you on earth, the greater will be your happiness, fulfillment, and progress; the more qualified you will be to receive the rewards He has promised for obedience” (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 75). □

The Things I've Learned

Individuals with intellectual impairments can teach us much of humility, love, kindness, and patience.

BY MARK G. WARNER



from

To You

For the past two years I have served in a branch presidency at a care center for intellectually impaired adults. As I have interacted with branch members, I have learned priceless lessons from them—lessons of humility, love, kindness, patience. I recently shared with them some of these thoughts, and it was a moving experience for me.

You have often heard that we who are your leaders, teachers, and trainers learn more from you than you do from us. You who maybe cannot speak or walk or perhaps even hold your head up, you who do not have a car, a job, or a high school diploma have taught us volumes. I will forever be grateful for what you teach me. Let me mention just a few of those things:

You teach of humility. You are “in the world but not of the world.” You have almost no worldly possessions, and you care little for worldly things. You allow others to feed you, clean you, and help you, and you do it without judgment. You are humble and teachable, and you teach me what it means to accept what you have without envy or pride. I love you for teaching me about true humility.

You teach of love and acceptance. Your love knows no boundaries and has no handicap. You don’t care how much money others make or what position they hold or what disability they may have. You love without conditions, and I love you for that and for all that you do.

You teach of kindness. You treat those around you with tenderness and love and charity. I love it when you hold my hand or blow me kisses or wave or write me letters or say thank you. I love to be with you because you are kind to me.

You teach of patience. You live in a world of waiting: you wait to be fed, to be cleaned, to get your medications, to get dressed, to get in and out of bed, to roll over, to come to church, and so on. You do it with patience, and you show love for those who help you. I love you because you teach me how to cultivate patience in my life.

You teach of happiness and joy. I love to see the sparkle in your eyes, and I love how you like to have fun. I love how Rodney teases me and calls

me a jackrabbit and how Troy can’t wait to go for a ride in the car. I love how Joye loves chocolate cake and how Derek smiles. I love to see you all smile and laugh, for this is how many of you communicate. For some, it is the only indication the rest of us have that you understand and can respond to things around you. You brighten my day, and I love you for that.

You teach of how to listen to the Spirit of the Lord. I read a story the other day about a man who attended church with a congregation who did not speak his language. He listened to the testimonies they bore, and he bore his own testimony in his native tongue. When asked why he attended church with this congregation, his reply was that even though he didn’t understand the words, he could feel as good as anybody!

That is how I feel when I am with you. Although I don’t understand many of the words you try to speak, I am keenly aware that you understand and feel the Spirit of the Lord. As I look at you, I feel the love our Father in Heaven and the Savior must have for you, and I catch small glimpses of your greatness. I love you for helping me to listen to the Spirit as I serve in our branch.

You teach of our divine nature. When Elda sings “I Am a Child of God” (*Hymns*, no. 301), there is no doubt in my mind that we are His children and that He loves us all, regardless of our circumstances. I’ve learned to appreciate how our disabilities—and we all have them—can teach us many lessons. I’ve learned to value our differences, for they spawn opportunities for service, teaching, charity, kindness, and love. I love you because you teach me how to cherish life and whatever it may bring.

You teach of our Savior. I’ve learned that you are closer to perfection than I will probably ever be in my lifetime. When I look at you, I see many of the attributes of our Savior. You teach me how to be more like Him. You are God’s chosen. You are my teachers, and I love you. □

Mark G. Warner is a member of the Heritage Eighth Branch, West Jordan Utah Heritage Stake.

Gospel topics: disabilities, humility, love, happiness

TONGA



A LAND OF BELIEVING

BY LARENE PORTER GAUNT
Associate Editor

The gospel of Jesus Christ has grown strong here where devotion to God, love for family, and faith are already part of the country's culture.

It is late Saturday afternoon on the island of Vava'u. Samisoni and Meleane Uasila'a, who have raised 20 children in addition to their own 12, are preparing for the Sabbath. The setting sun shines through the freshly washed white shirts hanging on the clothesline and reflects off the lush green foliage surrounding the house. A child sweeps the steps as others clean up the yard. Pigs and chickens scramble out of the way. Inside, Sister Uasila'a and her daughters prepare *lu* for Sunday dinner. Each wraps a taro leaf around meat mixed with coconut milk, then rewraps it in a banana leaf to be cooked slowly overnight in an *'umu*, an outdoor "oven" of heated rocks covered by banana leaves. Brother Uasila'a, a stake patriarch and the principal of the Church's Saineha High School, and some of his sons work in the "bush" (their taro field). They toss weeds and debris into a smoldering fire. The sun is setting. Yellow light streams through the gently rising smoke, silhouetting one of the boys tending the fire with a long hoe.

Similar scenes of preparation are repeated in tens of thousands of Tongan homes each week, for keeping the Sabbath holy is a law in Tonga. Christianity began to take root here with the August 1831 baptism by Wesleyan missionaries of Tautafa'ahau, who became King George Tupou I. Tradition says that he committed the islands of Tonga to God by scooping up a handful of soil and lifting it heavenward in prayer. Today Tongans reverence the Sabbath—willingly. Nearly all stores or businesses are closed. No taxis or buses run. Everything is quiet.

Elder Pita Hopoate, an Area Authority Seventy and director of Church schools in Tonga, says: "King Tautafa'ahau Tupou IV emphasizes keeping the Sabbath holy, so Tongans go to church on Sunday. Then they come home and eat their best meal of the week."

However, parallels between aspects of the Tongan culture and the gospel do not end with Sabbath observance. "Family comes first to us," says Elder Hopoate. "Mother, father, children, grandparents, uncles, aunties, cousins, nieces, and nephews are all called family, not relatives. The Church emphasizes family, and this is one reason the Church is growing."

And The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is growing here in the "friendly islands." Of the 106,000 people in Tonga, more than 46,000 are Latter-day Saints—just over 40 percent—the highest percentage

Clockwise: View of some of the islands of Tonga from the air; a young Tongan Latter-day Saint sister; Salesi and Saane Fifita of Te'ekiu Ward, Nuku'alofa West Stake, with some of their family.

GAA

PEOPLE



of Latter-day Saints in any country in the world. This comes as no surprise to many.

"When Tongans become Latter-day Saints, the gospel just refines their already good values," says Helen Latu, a teacher at the Church's Liahona High School. "For them, it's like a double dose of the gospel."

Mele Taumoepeau, principal of Liahona High School, agrees. "We live our lives mostly on faith," she says. "The very fabric of our society is godlike."

'ALOFANGA AND ANA MOLI

'Alofanga ('Alo) Moli's life has been refined as a result of the gospel. As a young boy on Vava'u, he was unable to attend school regularly because of severe headaches and nosebleeds. Though not a member of the Church, he fell in love with Ana, who was. 'Alo was baptized in December 1957 and a short time later was called to serve as a labor missionary, helping to construct meetinghouses. But health problems still plagued him. Once as he lay stricken he was blessed that if he served the Lord, these ailments would never return—a priesthood blessing that was fulfilled.

'Alo's training and education increased as he magnified his Church callings. In 1960 he and Ana married. In 1962 they served a two-year mission together. Brother Moli was called as a branch president in each place they served.

After their mission, the Molis and their two baby daughters moved to the island of 'Eua to farm with Ana's brother. 'Alo served as counselor to the district president. "Our mission prepared us for the callings we received," he says. "Later I served as branch president for 11 years. The rest of our 14 children were born here."

This gospel training carried over into his personal life. "After Hurricane Isaac hit in 1982, crops were ruined, and I needed work," says Brother Moli. "An unexpected opportunity came for me to manage a general store for three years. My experience as branch president helped me know what to do. No one believed I could do it because I had not gone to school, but the Holy Ghost had taught me."

Now the Molis and their children and grandchildren live in Liahona. 'Alo serves as a temple sealer, Ana as a temple worker. "Though I have only been a farmer on a tiny Pacific island," says 'Alo, "I stand before the world as a witness of the truthfulness of the gospel and the reality of Jesus Christ."

"I WANT TO SERVE"

The first Latter-day Saint missionaries arrived in Nuku'alofa in 1891 and started the Tongan District of the Samoan Mission. The first Tongan Mission was created in 1916, but in 1922 a law prohibited all but a few Americans from getting visas. To meet this challenge, the mission president called Tongans to serve as missionaries in their own country. After two decades, Tonga built up a large core of faithful Melchizedek Priesthood leaders. In 1940, when American Church leaders left Tonga because of World War II, strong local leadership was already in place. And an important missionary tool came on 7 June 1946, when the Book of Mormon was published in Tongan.

Today, serving a mission is an established tradition among

*Clockwise: Harbor at Vava'u;
Samisoni and Meleane Uasila'a;
'Alofanga and Ana Moli.*



young Tongans. President Kelikupa Kivalu oversees the Tonga Nuku'alofa Mission, which is one of the most successful local missionary programs in the Church. President Kivalu says, "The mission here averages 160 missionaries at any given time, and it's rare when they are not all Tongans. They often know each other and the people they teach. They know the culture and the language. Members know them, feed them, and house them."

In September 1968 the first stake in Tonga was created. Church membership was just over 10,000, and the mission had 10 districts and 50 branches. Since that time, Tongan leaders, including the mission president and the temple president, have been almost exclusively local members.

Among those early local leaders was Tonga Paletu'a. Laughter still comes easily to this 78-year-old man, who was the first Tongan to serve in each of the following callings: mission president, regional representative, temple president, and patriarch. He and his wife, Lu'isa Hehea Kona'i, like many other Tongan couples, have provided strong leadership. Scrapbooks and hundreds of pictures of past decades of service fill one end of their living room. The other end is uncluttered and serene. Here Brother Paletu'a gives patriarchal blessings, continuing his life of service.

THE INFLUENCE OF LIAHONA HIGH SCHOOL

Church schools have been an essential part of the establishment of the restored Church since the turn of the century. However, the construction of Liahona High between 1949 and 1952 by dozens of young Tongan labor missionaries was a milestone. Both the school and the labor missionary program served as catalysts for Church growth. Currently eight Church schools exist throughout the Tongan islands.

"The Church is the heart of Liahona High School," says Mele Taumoepau, principal since 1996, "and, in Tonga, Liahona High School is at the heart of the Church. It plays a pivotal role here. Thousands, totaling several generations, have graduated from here in its 52 years of existence. Its influence extends to New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii, and the United States, where many alumni live.

Indeed Liahona High School is a real Liahona in every sense of the word—a light giving our students direction."

Ninety-nine percent of the students at Liahona High School are members of the Church. In the 1950s, Sione Tualau Latu was among the few who were not. Like most students not of our faith who attend, Sione gained a testimony and was baptized. He remembers, "I came from a poor family with nine children who lived on a small island. My father died before I was born, and I wanted to do something to help. I decided to try and go to the Church College [now BYU—Hawaii], but I knew I would have to pass a difficult government exam. I was afraid. I had been taught that if you fast and pray, the Lord will give you the answer. So I began to look for a place to pray in private. On my way home from school, I passed a taro field with its tall, broad-leafed plants. I thought, *If Joseph Smith can pray in a grove of trees and get an answer to his prayers, then I can pray here and get an answer to my prayers.* I began to fast and returned to the taro patch. I made sure nobody was around, and then I knelt down underneath the broad taro leaves. I prayed for what seemed like a long time. I felt so close to my Heavenly Father. When I got up, my shirt was wet with tears."

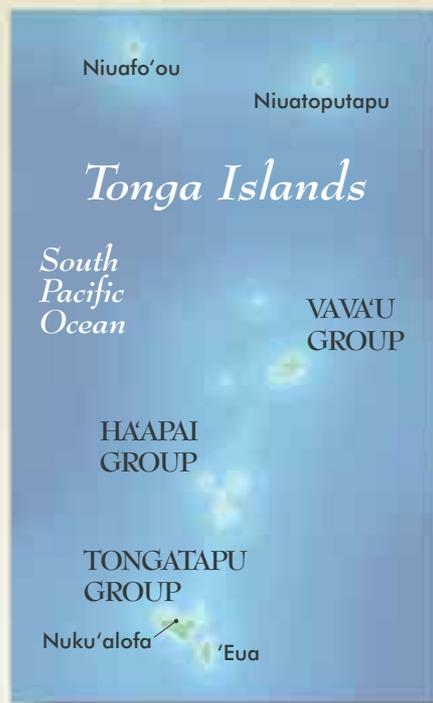
Sione Latu passed the test and got a scholarship. "I knew these things came to me in answer to my prayer under the taro plant. I knelt down and thanked the Lord and promised Him I would come back and help my family and my country."

Brother Latu did come back and has served his people as a longtime Church leader and a gifted businessman. He is well suited for his calling as director of public affairs for the Church, where he enjoys a good rapport with leaders in the Church, community, and government. He sees the growing positive effect that the high percentage of Latter-day Saints has on the nation of Tonga.

For example, one community leader, who was a member of a television panel on Tongan youth set up by Brother Latu, said he admired Church missionaries because at a critical time in their lives, these young people turned their time to studying the scriptures and learning the ways of Jesus Christ.

PUTTING FAMILY FIRST

"Here children have respect for their parents," says Lani Hopoate. "It's our culture, our tradition.



You always try to behave yourself. Family pressure is real, but it's a good pressure. You live in a village, everybody knows you. People watch over each other. You even have a chaperone when you date."

Suliasi Vea Kaufusi, head of temporal affairs for the Church in Tonga, agrees. "Tongans tend to think of their family before they think of themselves. When my father died while I was at the Church College, I came home to help my mother provide for my 12 brothers and sisters. That's typical here. Sometimes adult children leave Tonga to get better jobs and then send part of their salary back to their family. In fact, that is an important source of income for many families. But even when Tongans leave, they still feel a strong connection to Tonga because of their sense of family and community. My own brothers and sisters now live in Tonga, New Zealand, Hawaii, Utah, and California, but we are all close."

Of course, there are times when a family suffers pain as the result of divorce. Being part of a large extended family and a loving ward helps these families heal. Gospel teachings help them remain faithful. Says one sister, whose husband left her and their seven children six years ago, "Though my husband was not a Latter-day Saint, the children and I always had family home evening, family prayers, and scripture study, including learning scriptures by heart. After he left, I found work in a bakery, and my older children found jobs too. Family and ward members helped us also." In this family, the three oldest sons have all served missions and married in the temple, as has the oldest daughter. The younger children are still at home. "The priesthood of my sons and our testimonies of the gospel have sustained our family," says this sister.

NUKU'ALOFA TONGA TEMPLE

On this island with few large buildings, the gleaming white temple with its stained glass window is a landmark. Dedicated on 9 August 1983, the temple is open six days a week and stays open all night on the last Friday of every month—busy with members performing temple ordinances for their ancestors. Here, where family has always been important, Tongans have great interest in their ancestry. Graves are not only decorated with flowers, but many are decorated with a full-sized handmade quilt held in place by a wooden frame that remains until it naturally deteriorates. These quilts are often of intricate patchwork design and contain the name of the loved one. They are a reflection of the love and respect Tongans have for their deceased

ancestors. In fact, many Tongans mourn for one year after the death of a loved one. Women wear black and often wrap a handwoven funeral mat around their body over their clothing and tie it at the waist.

In the past, Tongans recorded the names, dates, and places of their ancestors on long rolls of tapa cloth (rough paper made from pounded bark). Many families know their family history back hundreds of years. In modern times, many families who are Church members have transferred this information onto paper or typed it into a computer in preparation for performing the temple ordinances.

Everyone benefits. "Having a temple here brings a special feeling to all of Tonga," says temple president Sione Fineanganofa.



Flowers flourish in this tropical climate.

BLESSINGS OF BELIEVING

Testimonies abound in Tonga of the power of the priesthood as a means of bringing comfort or healing to those in distress. When 44-year-old Sione Siaki of Tongatapu fell ill with fever and pain, most were fearful he would die. The hospital in Tonga was full, but a nurse brought medication to his home. Day after day he suffered, for more than a month. "I was just lying there waiting to die," says Brother Siaki. "Then our Relief Society president suggested a ward fast. She talked with our bishop, and twice our ward of 300 members fasted for me. Before the fasts, I couldn't move. Two weeks after the second fast, I sat up and gradually got better. Now I am a temple worker. When I am in the temple, it comes straight into my mind that maybe this is why I was saved."

Mele, the daughter of 'Ahongalu and 'Ana Fulivai of Vava'u, was another who was healed. Nine years ago, Mele collapsed with an unknown illness. From March to December she lay in the hospital with fever, seizures, and hallucinations. Her mother stayed with her during the day. At night her father, who had worked all day operating heavy machinery, came to the hospital and sat by her bed. Mele would relax as she held her father's hand all night long, drawing comfort in the knowledge that he held the priesthood.

Mele has recovered gradually, with only occasional problems. Says Ana, "We have learned to trust in the Lord. He has blessed us in ways we did not expect."

ENJOYING PEACE AND PLENTY

Says Sister Taumoepeau, "I appreciate how peaceful it is here, how safe. What we don't have in monetary terms is more than made up for in the

love we share and the faith that prevails. We may not have all the worldly things, but we are surely blessed with things of the Spirit."

Tongans are also blessed with an abundance of food, which they freely share with others. It is, in fact, a token of love. Here wealth is measured by what one gives away, so generosity also extends to other areas of life and the gospel. At the home of Salesi and Saane Fifita in Tongatapu, 14 children, extended family, and friends gather around three tables set outside on handwoven mats. A long tapa cloth is lovingly draped over a nearby fence. Two whole roasted pigs are surrounded by platters of fresh lobster, crab, taro, squash, a 19-inch fish, a bowl of oysters, sushi, *lu*, and bowls of fresh watermelon and pineapple. Brother Fifita, a member of the high council, oversees the farming of 70 acres of crops such as squash, watermelon, and sweet potatoes for commercial sale. With a son on a mission and three children married in the temple, the Fifitas credit their blessings to living the gospel, especially to paying tithing and fast offerings.

The Fifitas are not alone in their gratitude for the bounty of food and family unity they enjoy. Here "prosperity" is available to all. It is found in the blue and green waters that yield crab, lobster, oysters, and fish in abundance. It is found in the fertile brown soil of these volcanic isles that freely produces coconuts, tapioca, squash, taro, and yams. And peace is found within the arms of family, where there is always someone to listen and give comfort.

ESTABLISHING THE COVENANT

It's Monday evening in Vava'u. Across the bush it is dark, but in town a warm light glows from the windows of many homes. Through the night air

come the strains of "I Am a Child of God" from one of several family home evenings being held. From the home of Tukia and Linda Havea comes the giggling of children mixed with the words and music of "Popcorn Popping on the Apricot Tree."

"Music is the language wherein we teach the principles of the gospel to our children and unite them," says Linda. "They sing and at times do not know the meaning, but it stays with them, and eventually they will understand."

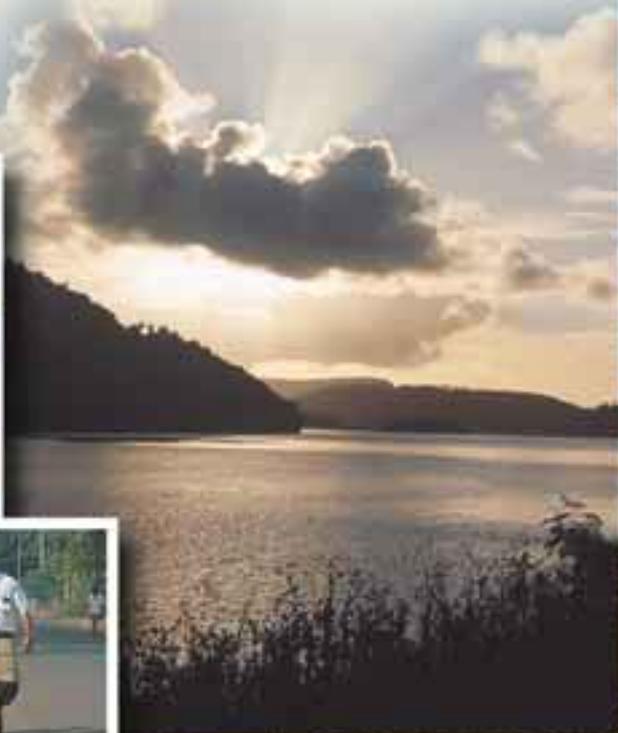
Across town, the Uasila'a family is also holding their family home evening. As usual, several friends of their children have joined them as they sing "How Great Thou Art" and then discuss whom to invite to their next family home evening for the missionary discussions.

In home after home, there are believing people— Latter-day Saints as well as those of other faiths. All enjoy the promise given in Leviticus: "Ye shall keep my sabbaths. . . . Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. . . . And ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land. . . . For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you" (Lev. 26:2, 4–6, 9).

In Tonga, these blessings are poured out upon the land and upon these believing people. □

Gospel topics: family, Sabbath, missionary work, temple work, healing

Clockwise: Sione Tu'alau and Helen Kaleoaloha Kaneakua Latu, with several of their children and grandchildren; sunset on Tongatapu; missionaries are a common sight in Tonga.



HELPING EACH OTHER

Succeed in Family History

BY GARRETT H. GARFF

Through one-on-one help and a creative way of giving young mothers time to do research, members in the Wasilla Alaska Stake progress together in their family history efforts.

Enthusiasm for family history work runs high in the Wasilla Alaska Stake. That enthusiasm was especially evident in January 1999, when the Anchorage Alaska Temple, located about 40 miles to the south, was dedicated. Stake president Jerry A. Hann could see just how much family history research the members of his stake had done because they had submitted thousands of names for temple ordinances.

Members in the Wasilla area continue to move forward in the work of redeeming their dead, and much of their success can be traced to a fundamental principle—the willingness to help each other. An example of this is the one-on-one help they receive from family history consultants and from the staff of the stake Family History Center. The spirit of assisting one another is also found as young mothers take turns watching each other's children so other moms can do research at the center.



Left to right: Gary Lehnhausen, high counselor in charge of the stake's family history efforts; Nancy Lincoln, stake Family History Center director; and Jerry A. Hann, stake president.

then, she explains, "I packed it all away and just left it. I didn't know what to do with it—till I met Linda."

Linda Cox is a family history consultant in the Palmer Second Ward, and she was glad to help when she learned that the Ackermans could use her assistance. She went to the Ackermans' home and showed them how to enter family history information on their computer so it could be

submitted to the temple.

Soon Sister Ackerman had the names of 65 of her ancestors ready to submit. She says that none of her ancestors' temple work would have been completed without Sister Cox's help.

Sister Cox believes other members should not hesitate to ask for such one-on-one help if they need it. "That's the biggest barrier," she observes. "People who would like help say to me, 'Oh, you're too busy. You don't have time to do this.' But I fit it into my schedule."

SUCCESS AFTER 30 YEARS

For more than 30 years following her conversion to the Church in 1964, Michelle Ackerman gathered as much information about her ancestors as she could. But

THE COMPUTER CHALLENGE

Fortunately, the Ackermans have a good working knowledge of computers. Others, such as Dorothea Best of the Wasilla First Ward, do not yet have such



Left: Ward family history consultant Linda Cox (back) helped Michelle Ackerman and her husband, Robert, to prepare names for temple submission. Above: The stake Family History Center in Wasilla offers patrons not only useful research tools but also a staff who like to help.



Top: Judy Anderson (right) helped new member Judy Foley learn how to do family history work. Center: Nylah Jimenez (front), who helped start the Moms and Genealogy activity, has also enjoyed giving one-on-one assistance to others, such as Jackie Fielding Jones (back).



Below, right: Mothers in the Wasilla Alaska Stake take turns watching children in the nursery while other participants do research in the stake Family History Center. Below: Vicki Wilcox found that this activity created for mothers an environment of learning and sisterhood.



computer skills but still have a desire to do research and have the temple ordinances done for their ancestors.

Judy Anderson, a stake Family History Center staff member, does not want members like Sister Best to be left behind. Using information that Sister Best had researched, Sister Anderson helped her do the computer work necessary for submitting some 100 names to the temple.

William S. and Pauleen Floyd of the Wasilla First Ward have also received computer help from Sister Anderson. "When you get to our age, which is toward the end of our journey through life," says Brother Floyd, "it's pretty hard to comprehend these computers." Sister Anderson's personal attention has given the couple a good start in learning how to use the electronic tools that can be such an integral part of family history work.

For the Floyds, who are relatively new to family history work, Sister Anderson's help has gone beyond technical matters. She has introduced them to the thrill of discovery. "It's just marvelous," says Sister Floyd, "getting started in genealogy and learning these names. Even my husband, who wasn't interested in family history before, is getting excited. And the main thing is that you start feeling a connection to your family."

Judy Foley of the Wasilla First Ward, a new member, is someone else who did not have experience working with computers or family history. Thanks to Sister Anderson's one-on-one attention, however, Sister Foley has been able to submit information to perform baptisms for some of her deceased family members, including a daughter who died in 1994. Now Sister Foley has been called to the staff of the stake Family History Center, where she can help others as she has been helped.

FINDING A WAY FOR YOUNG MOTHERS TO PARTICIPATE

To succeed in accomplishing worthy gospel goals, sometimes nothing will do but pure determination—along with some creativity. Nylah Jimenez of the Wasilla First Ward was determined to participate in



CONSECRATING A PORTION OF OUR TIME



"It has been my experience that some of the happiest people

I know are those who are engaged in family history and temple work. Let us demonstrate our willingness to follow the prophet by consecrating a portion of our time and energy to the Lord's redemptive work, and let us do it in a spirit of love. As we do so, not only will we bless the lives of those who have gone before us, but we will bless our own lives and the lives of our family members as well."

Mary Ellen Smoot, Relief Society general president, "Family History: A Work of Love," *Ensign*, Mar. 1999, 18.

family history work, even when being a young mother seemed to put a major limit on what she could do. "I knew I wanted to do this work," she recalls. "I wasn't going to be deterred just because I had little ones."

Searching for a solution, Sister Jimenez realized she wasn't alone. Other mothers in the stake also desired to do family history research but were unsure how to handle baby-sitting. After consulting each other, and with approval from stake priesthood leaders, they decided to have a special day each week at the stake center for mothers interested in doing family history. The weekly activity came to be called "Moms and Genealogy."

Every Wednesday morning at 10, mothers who have signed up to participate bring their children—kindergarten age and younger—to the stake center. On a rotating schedule, one of the mothers takes a turn watching the children in the nursery, while the other sisters do research in the Family History Center. It is understood that from 10:00 A.M. until 2:00 P.M. on that day, these mothers have priority use of the facilities. On occasion, when a few fathers have joined in, the activity has been called "Parents and Genealogy."

Stake Family History Center director Nancy Lincoln observes that, given their circumstances, many of the mothers who have participated in Moms and Genealogy would not have been able to get involved in family history work at that time if they had not had this organized opportunity.

RESEARCH PROGRESS AND OTHER BLESSINGS

Through Moms and Genealogy, sisters in the Wasilla stake have been able to develop friendships and help each other make progress in their research. Recalling her experience, Vicki Wilcox of the Wasilla Third Ward says: "I learned to love the other sisters. We developed a good rapport with each other. We knew what the others were working on because we were here every Wednesday, and so we would talk things out. We bounced ideas off each other. I came in as a beginning genealogist, but I didn't have to come in afraid that I couldn't do it, because there were so many people who knew how. I could learn quickly in a nonthreatening environment."

Sister Jimenez remembers a spiritual experience she had while helping another sister during their

participation in Moms and Genealogy. After looking over some records and information, Sister Jimenez encouraged the sister to find some additional family information at home. "She said, 'I don't think I have very much.' And every week for about three weeks I said, 'I think there's a letter somewhere. You need to find that letter.' I kept insisting and insisting. I had such a strong feeling. And one day she brought the letter. She was so excited. We opened it up, and here was all the information she needed. And there was such a strong spirit there and such a strong feeling. We got all the work ready, and she has since done the temple work."

Many of the mothers have seen benefits in the lives of their children too. Susanne Stewart of the Wasilla Third Ward, who participated some years ago, says that some of her children's ongoing friendships can be traced back to the time they were in the Moms and Genealogy nursery.

"Having Moms and Genealogy was good for my children," concludes Sister Wilcox. "They were able to see their mother getting into family history. And I think that that probably goes a long way to planting a seed for their own interest."

"A NICE CHALLENGE TO HAVE"

As many members of the Wasilla stake have come to know, success in family history work can sometimes bring its own unusual challenges. "In this stake, there are people who do so much of their own family history work that it almost overwhelms the temple," says Gary Lehnhausen, the high councilor currently in charge of family history activities for the stake. On Sundays, members of his high priests group who are planning to attend the temple are often asked to take names that others have prepared so that temple work can be performed in their behalf. "It's a nice challenge to have to deal with," he observes, "having so many names that you have to coordinate ahead of time to get them taken care of."

This coordination of efforts is yet another indication of the members' willingness to help one another in the great work of redeeming the dead. Because of their willingness to help, they also share the blessing of rejoicing in one another's successes. □

Garrett H. Garff is a member of the Jordan Oaks First Ward, West Jordan Utah Jordan Oaks Stake.

Gospel topics: family history, temple work, service, cooperation, motherhood

BY PEG FUGAL

After our three eldest sons grew up and moved out of our home, and our youngest became busy with all the activities of high school, I found myself feeling lonely. In spite of staying busy with my family, business, and Church work, I still felt something was missing. My transition to becoming an “empty-nester” was painful.

Then I learned about Matthew. He was a four-year-old with freckles, curly red hair, and a hesitant smile. His family had moved onto our street and into our ward a few years before. Although I had often spoken to them, I had never really gotten to know them—until Matthew was diagnosed with diabetes.

Late one night his father called and asked my husband, Sherm, who was a member of the bishopric, to give Matthew a blessing. The next morning Sherm told me that Matthew had been rushed to the hospital to be treated for diabetic shock. Then he asked me to help Matthew’s family with whatever they needed that week. I took the charge seriously.

I called the house regularly to talk to the other children, stopped by whenever I could, and ran various errands for them. I took in dinner one night and arranged for others to do the same. I visited Matthew in the hospital. When he was released, I fussed over him at home. But mostly I watched helplessly as Matthew and his family struggled to make the necessary adjustments in their lifestyle. I wanted to help, but I didn’t know what more to do.

One day I opened my front door and found Matthew’s mom crying. I listened while she poured

out her heart. Matthew’s diabetes had taken its toll on the entire family. The Halloween holiday was approaching, and she could envision his disappointment as he went door-to-door with other children to collect sugary sweets that he alone could not eat. Being different from the other children was going to be hard on four-year-old Matthew. I realized then what I could do.

During the upcoming days, I bought some non-candy treats and tracked down sugar-free candy. Then I found some small orange gift bags and Halloween stickers and prepared 26 notes of explanation to accompany the bags. A couple of days before Halloween, I packed, decorated, and labeled the special gift bags for Matthew. I found myself enjoying the work involved, and I especially looked forward to seeing his reaction.

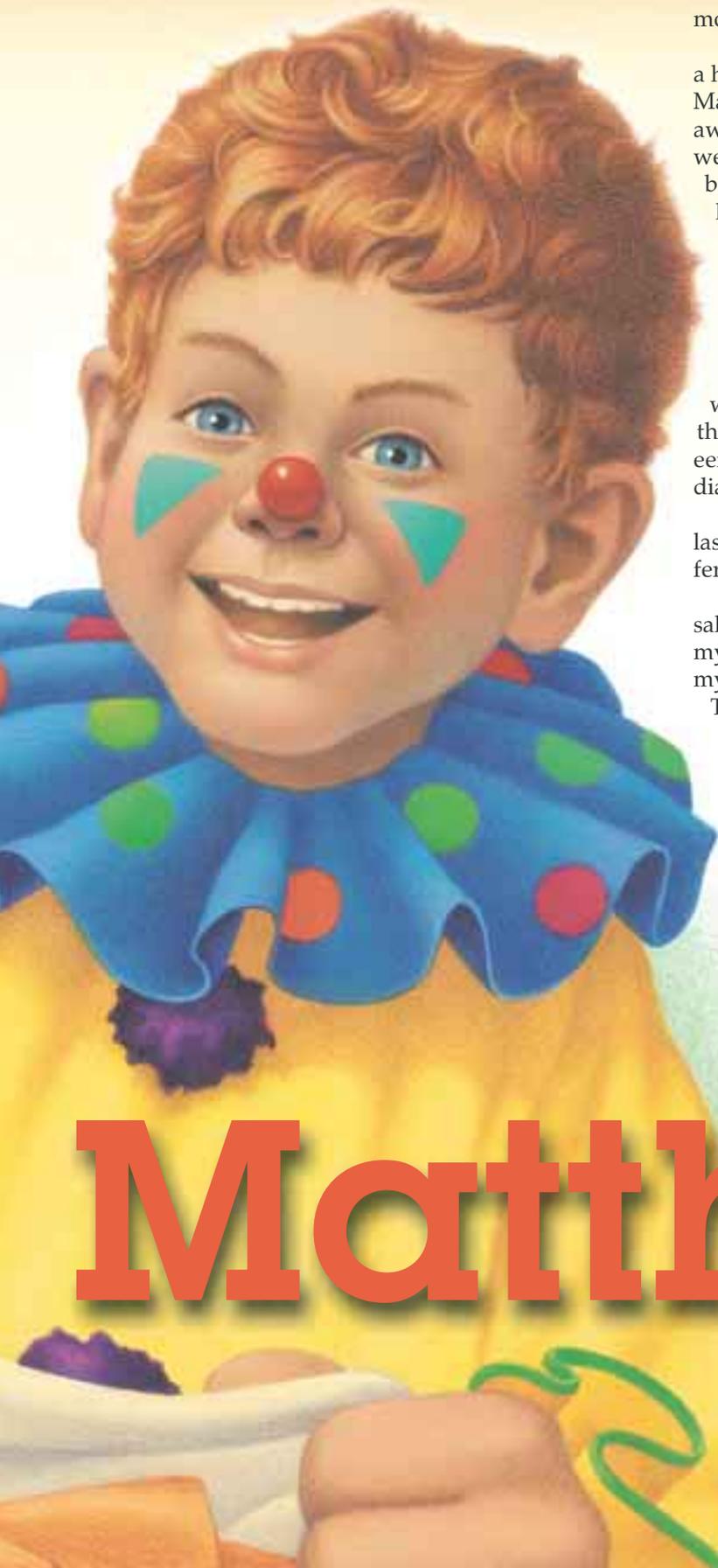
The morning of Halloween I called the Primary president and asked her to come over. As she curiously surveyed the jumble of treats in my living room, I explained Matthew’s situation and asked for her help to distribute the gift bags. She readily agreed and I handed her 11 treat bags with 11 notes of explanation for delivery to the houses on her street. My visiting teacher went to the eight houses on her street, and my youngest son went to the seven on ours.

On Halloween evening I answered the door dozens of times; I exclaimed over each costume, handed out treats, and waited for Matthew. When he finally arrived, he was dragging a shopping sack two-thirds his size that was brimming with little orange gift bags. I added mine and hoped he was happy.

The next day I received a hand-scribbled thank-you

I felt like something was missing in my life—until I learned that a little boy named Matthew needed help.

SWEET SERVICE FOR



LOSE YOURSELF IN SERVICE



“Forget yourself and find someone who needs your service, and you will discover the secret to a happy, fulfilled life.”

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), “This Is a Day of Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, May 1979, 34.

card from Matthew and a letter from his mother that read:

“Yesterday was a hard day for Matthew. He was aware that things were going to be different for him. My husband took him trick-or-treating, so I

didn’t get to see the expression on Matthew’s face as he collected his special Halloween treats, but I could imagine it. The difference in his mood from when he left to when he returned was like night and day. He was so excited. He enjoyed every treat, and he shared them with his brother (who forgot all about his Halloween candy). It was as if he were finally able to accept his diabetes—and be happy at the same time.”

Tears trickled down my face as I read and re-read the last line. I experienced joy as I felt I had made a real difference in someone’s life.

The Savior taught, “Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Matt. 16:25). I realized that when I lost myself in my project for Matthew, I thought less about my own troubles and more about the needs of others.

Through service to someone in need, I found the fulfillment I had been looking for. □

Peg Fugal is a member of the Highland Ninth Ward, Utah Highland East Stake.

Gospel topics: service, joy, selflessness

Matthew

SEAG ING

BY FRED E. WOODS

Between 1840 and 1890, about 90,000 Latter-day Saints immigrated to America on more than 500 known voyages.

I left the home of my birth to gather. . . I was alone," wrote Priscilla Stains of her 1844 voyage across the Atlantic Ocean on the ship *Fanny*. "It was a dreary winter day on which I went to Liverpool. The company with which I was to sail was all strangers to me. When I arrived at Liverpool and saw the ocean that would soon roll between me and all I loved, my heart almost failed me. But I had laid my idols all upon the altar. There was no turning back. I remembered the words of the Savior: 'He that leaveth not father and mother, brother and sister, for my sake, is not worthy of me,' and I believed his promise to those who forsook all for his sake; so I thus alone set out for the reward of everlasting life, trusting in God."¹

This inspiring account reflects the spirit of thousands of converts who crossed the oceans to gather to Zion in the 19th century. While the story of Latter-day Saints crossing the plains is well known, the story for those who crossed the oceans is often neglected. It might be said that we "miss the boat," however, if we overlook this significant part of Church history, which provides a more complete picture of the gathering experience.

"THE GATHERING OF MINE ELECT"

Today Latter-day Saints are counseled to build Zion in their own lands, but in the early days of the restored Church the members were directed to leave their homes and gather to a central place. The call to gather was received in September 1830—less than six months after the organization of the Church:

"And ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect; for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts;

"Wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father that they shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land" (D&C 29:7–8).

The call was extended worldwide after Moses bestowed "the keys of the gathering of Israel from the

four parts of the earth" (D&C 110:11) upon the heads of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple on 3 April 1836. The following year Elder Heber C. Kimball, Elder Orson Hyde, and five other elders opened up the preaching of the gospel to England, yet they were warned by the Prophet Joseph to "remain silent concerning the gathering. . . until such time as the work was fully established."² Less than three years later, the needed foothold was gained, and Latter-day Saints began to journey to Zion.

FROM LIVERPOOL

By 1840, Liverpool, England, was the most active international port of emigration in the world. This was due to its prime location for rail connections in the British Isles and its excellent navigable channels in the Mersey River.³ The British Mission office was also located there.

More than 80 percent of Latter-day Saints who gathered to America in the 19th century embarked from Liverpool. Most of these were converts from Great Britain, while the next largest group consisted of those from Scandinavia, many of whom began the first portion of their sea travels from Copenhagen, Denmark.

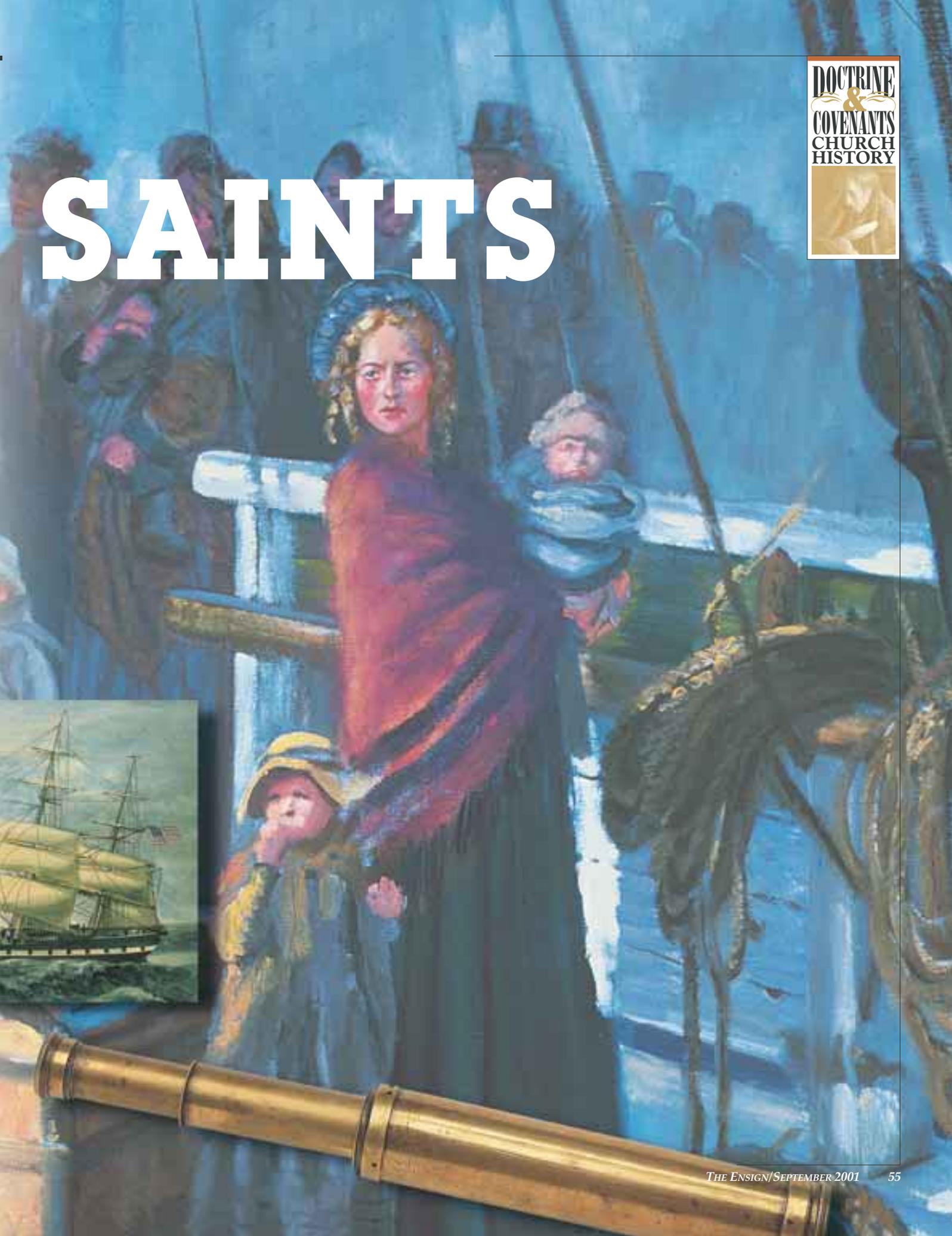
Commencing with the first group who gathered in Liverpool before embarking



Latter-day Saint converts from the British Isles and Scandinavia boarded ships like the one shown above to sail to Zion.

ABOVE LEFT: SHIP'S HELM PHOTO © ARTVILLE; BELOW: EMIGRANT SHIP BY C.A. CHRISTENSEN, COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART; RIGHT: SAINT; BOARD SHIP TO ZION, BY GLEN S. HOPKINSON; TELESCOPE PHOTO BY JOHN LUKE

SAINTS



Mary Ann Weston Maughan recalled one raging storm lulled by the Lord's power: "Soon after our mast [broke], a young man in our company . . . raised his right hand to heaven and in the name of Jesus Christ rebuked the wind and the waves."



on the *Britannia* in June of 1840, the Saints were assisted by elders who worked at the Liverpool mission office. Hugh Moon recalled that as he stepped aboard the *Britannia*, "we found Elders Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball aboard. They had stretched a curtain across our cabin and commenced blessing the company. They bid us walk in."⁴

Such blessings by Church leaders were augmented by counsel. In April 1841 the Twelve published an epistle that contained the following advice:

"We have found that there are so many 'pick-pockets,' and so many that will take every possible advantage of strangers, in Liverpool, that we have appointed Elder Amos Fielding, as the agent of the church, to superintend the fitting out of the Saints from Liverpool to America. Whatever information the Saints may want about the preparations for a voyage, they are advised to call on Elder Fielding, at Liverpool, as their first movement, when they arrive there as emigrants. There are some brethren who have felt themselves competent to do their own business in these matters, and rather despising the counsel of their friends, have been robbed and cheated out of nearly all they had. A word of caution to the wise is sufficient. It is also a great saving to go in companies, instead of going individually. First, a company can charter a vessel, so as to make the passage much cheaper than otherwise. Secondly, provisions can be purchased at wholesale for a company much cheaper

than otherwise. Thirdly, this will avoid bad company on the passage. Fourthly, when a company arrives in New Orleans they can charter a steam-boat so as to reduce the passage nearly one-half. This measure will save some hundreds of pounds on each ship load. Fifthly, a man of experience can go as leader of each company, who will know how to avoid rogues and knaves."⁵

In addition to such counsel, elders (mostly returning missionaries) were appointed at Liverpool to preside over the seagoing Saints. Wards were organized, and Church leaders made certain that while on board ship members adhered to daily and weekly schedules, which included daily prayers and designated Church meetings, and made sure that general good order and proper hygiene were maintained.⁶

"LET'S GET UP"

Such organization, however, did not mean that Latter-day Saint immigrants did not encounter challenges along the way. One common difficulty in the early sailing years was overcrowding and the stench of seasickness caused by sickly steerage passengers (steerage being the large area below deck used for low-cost accommodations). William Clayton, who crossed the Atlantic in 1840 aboard the *North America*, stated, "Such sickness, vomiting, groaning and bad smells I never witnessed before and added to this the closeness of the b[e]rths almost

suffocated us for want of air.”⁷ Most recovered after a few days out to sea, but others required continual assistance throughout the voyage. They were assisted by family and other willing Latter-day Saint passengers.

Ebenezer Farnes, who aided the sick on the 1862 voyage of the *William Tapscott*, wrote: “The first day out of the harbor all the emigrants were seasick, and I was called on to help give out water and provisions, which I did until we landed in New York. The trip on the ocean was a red letter day in my life. The first day out was rather rough and the second day rougher, and all the people were seasick. After the fourth day out things on board ship went smooth and some of the people came on deck, others lay in their berths afraid they would die, and others afraid they wouldn’t die.”⁸

Zebulon Jacobs, a passenger on the 1868 voyage of the *Minnesota*, was appointed to help the sea-weary Saints. Brother Jacobs was diligent in his duty to minister to the sick, but he noted how one elderly sister presented a bit of a problem:

“One old lady by the name of [Elizabeth] Ainsworth could not get out of bed, she was so sick. Several days passed. I visited her regular to see how she was getting along. Finally decided she must get out. Went to work. ‘Come now get up!’ ‘I can’t.’ ‘Yes, you can. Get up or I will pull your ears.’ ‘You pull my ears, you pull my ears. What do you mean?’ ‘I mean

just what I say. If you don’t get up I will pull your ears, besides take this shoe to you.’ She replied, ‘You sauce box, get away from here.’ I replied I would not, at the same time caught hold of the bedclothes and commenced to pull. She commenced to scream. I pulled and she pulled. Finally she let go and gathered a shoe and let fly. I dodged. Another followed with the same result. Next came a tin cup [and a] dish plate. Finally she gathered a piece of board and jumped out after me. I ran and she ran until she saw how her clothing was arranged and started back to the bunk, me after her. ‘Don’t you get in there,’ I cried. ‘If you do, I’ll pull you out by the heels.’ Another race started amid screams of laughter from about 30 people. She went back about as mad as people generally get. So did I. When I could get near enough with safety, told her to dress and

I would assist her on deck. She looked surprised and at the same time realized what I was doing for her. She dressed. I carried her up the companionway to the deck, placed her on the sunny side of the vessel, where she remained all the afternoon and was left to go below at night. It done all who saw me good, for they tried to get up. Whenever they saw me coming they would say, ‘Here comes Brother Jacobs. Let’s get up.’”⁹

However, there were those who, due to illness caused by dysentery, measles, and other diseases, never did get up from their beds of affliction. They were eventually consigned to a watery grave. This was done by putting the deceased in a canvas bag and attaching weights to the body (to avoid sharks) and sliding it on a board into the ocean. Such scenes were painful for loved ones to behold.¹⁰

In contrast, many were restored to health as the elders stood by both willing and able to bless the sick.

REBUKING THE WINDS

Several accounts testify of the power of the priesthood in harnessing the angry deep. Mary Ann Weston Maughan, who crossed the Atlantic in 1841, recalled one raging storm which was lulled by the Lord’s power:

“When near the banks of Newfoundland we had a dreadful storm. Our main mast broke off deck and the jib boom also broke, and as it came around on deck struck a sailor on his head nearly



Above: One common difficulty in the early sailing years was overcrowding, especially in the steerage area, the low-cost accommodations below deck.



killing him. . . . Soon after our mast [broke], a young man in our company took off his shoes and went on deck going to the fore part of the ship. He raised his right hand to heaven and in the name of Jesus Christ rebuked the wind and the waves and prophesied that the storm should abate and the good ship *Harmony* would carry her load of Saints in safety to their destination and this came true, for all landed safe in [Quebec].”¹¹

Isaiah M. Coombs relates a similar miracle of power over the elements on board the ship *Montana* in 1876. He wrote the following journal entry on 23 January 1876:

“At six o’clock this morning Brother Eccles came to my room and acknowledged that he was really uneasy. Just then I heard one of the stewards exclaim, ‘. . . If that

wave strikes us we can never recover from it.’ I got up, dressed myself, and staggered into the saloon [dining room] just as the ship was shaking this huge wave from its decks. The sights and sounds outside were truly fearful. I went back into my room and, kneeling down, asked the Lord to give me power to rebuke the winds and waves that the ship might go safe into port for my sake and for the sake of the few Saints aboard. I then came back into the saloon

and sat down. I had not been there long before Brother Eccles came running in to tell me that a huge wave that had just struck the ship had [smashed] in a window in the captain’s room and that he was hurt and nearly drowned. I allowed Brother Eccles to help me up the hatchway to the captain’s room. Found our good captain drenched to the skin but not otherwise injured. His room was covered a foot deep with saltwater, and the carpenter was replacing the windows while some boys and men were dipping up the water by the bucketful and throwing it out on deck. I went to the door that leads out onto the main deck and which had been tied partly open for the purpose of ventilation and looked out on the wildest and most fearful sight that my eyes have ever beheld. The wind was blowing fearfully and the waves were absolutely mountains high and sweeping the deck from stem to stern with relentless fury. It truly seemed as if we were about to be swallowed up in the depths of the ocean. I stood there at that door looking out at the fearful sight, and raising my heart to God

for strength, I, in the name of Jesus Christ and by the authority of the holy priesthood, rebuked the winds and waves and commanded them to subside that our ship with its precious freight of souls might go safe into port, and called on God to seal the rebuke in heaven as I had on earth. My prayer was answered almost immediately. In less than half an hour the wind died away, the waves lessened, and the blessed sun was shining upon us. The infidel would say it would have been so anyway. I say give God the glory. Oh, praise God!

“I went to the breakfast table for the first time and ate a small piece of steak and then going to my room wept for joy.”¹²

Such experiences were part of the miraculous story

of Heavenly Father’s preservation of the seagoing Saints. It is an impressive point that in the 19th century all Latter-day Saint voyages crossing the Atlantic, and all but one crossing over the Pacific, ended with their ships arriving safely.¹³ This is in sharp contrast to the fact that at least 59 vessels without Church immigrants sank between the years 1847 and 1853.

This kind of record in spite of storms left a memorable impression on passengers, captains, and crews who were not members of the Church.

One such experience occurred when a severe Atlantic storm struck during the 1851 voyage of the Yankee ship *Olympus*:

“Captain Horace A. Wilson sent his second mate to Elder William Howell, president of the emigrant company. ‘You go to the captain of the Mormons,’ the master ordered, ‘and tell him from Captain Wilson that if the God of the Mormons can do anything to save this ship and the people, they had better be calling on him to do so, for we are now sinking at the rate of a foot an hour; and if the storm continues we shall all be at the bottom of the ocean before daylight.’

“Lying in his bunk, Elder Howell sent a message telling Captain Wilson: ‘Our God will protect us.’ Elder Howell summoned twelve men to join him in prayer. According to Wilson G. Nowers, as they were praying, the motion of the ship changed. The pitching and rolling eased, and the storm ‘suddenly abated.’ The Saints and Captain Wilson attributed their deliverance to Providence.



From 1841 until 1854, when cholera and yellow fever became a problem, the primary port of arrival for Latter-day Saints was New Orleans (shown above).



So many desired to be baptized in 1851 on the ship *Olympus* that a platform was suspended from ropes and lowered over the side of the ship into the ocean.

"After repairs were made, the skipper gave the Latter-day Saints permission to hold religious services for the entire ship. Members responded enthusiastically and preached to everyone who would listen. At first, a baptismal font was improvised from a large barrel, which could be entered via a ladder on deck; some time later, a platform was suspended from ropes and lowered into the ocean, where more baptisms were performed. During the 54-day passage, 50 converts were baptized, including one before sailing and one after arrival at New Orleans."¹⁴

CAPTAINS FELT SAFE WITH CHURCH MEMBERS ON BOARD

John S. Stucki, who was the company leader of a group of 70 Saints during the 1888 voyage of the *Nevada*, observed the following: "The captains of the different ships like to have our people [the Latter-day Saints] cross the ocean with them, because they [the Saints] are better behaved than some other people for one thing, and because they [the mariners] feel there is more safety in having Mormon people with them in crossing the ocean. So . . . the different ship companies are all anxious to get our people to cross the ocean with them. So I think that our captain favored our people to get their good will.

"It seems that even the captains of the ships had begun to find out that there is some supreme power watching over the Latter-day Saints, which should add

to and strengthen any one's testimony."¹⁵

DEPORTMENT AND HYGIENE

Seafaring captains definitely noticed the order and hygiene among the Saints. Latter-day Saint immigrant John Jaques, who journeyed aboard the *Horizon* in 1856, wrote of their captain: "More than once did I hear him remark on the superior morality, order, and cleanliness which our people exhibited, when compared with ordinary emigrants. I knew this before, but still it is pleasing to me to hear Captains, as well as others, frankly acknowledge the truth about us. He was rather surprised that he had 850 people on board, and did not hear an oath from them."¹⁶

James Thompson, who immigrated aboard the *Lucy Thompson* the same year, wrote: "Before we were long on board we were found to be the most clean in our habits. We kept our berths clean, washing them frequently. [Those not of our faith] were annoyed, as the officers only gave them half allowance of water till they went and did likewise. Towards the end of the voyage the officers seldom visited us, as they considered it unnecessary."¹⁷

The Saints made time for singing and dancing. Fanny Fry Simons, who immigrated in 1859, recalled



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that aboard the *William Tapscott* there was “dancing and music every evening, with a very few exceptions.”¹⁸ John McAllister, who was a Latter-day Saint passenger aboard the *Manchester* in 1862, recorded: “Saints on deck dancing, singing, knitting, sewing, etc. Violins and concertinas in full blast.”¹⁹

Such social activities helped ease the memories of departing from family and friends, weeks of seasickness, and especially burying loved ones at sea.

PORT OF ENTRY

Most immigrating Saints made it safely to American shores. Between 1841 and 1854 the primary port of arrival was New Orleans. However, plans changed due to dreadful effects of yellow fever and cholera, as President Brigham Young noted in a letter dated 2 August 1854 to Elder Franklin D. Richards, who was then the presiding Church officer and emigration agent in Liverpool: “You are aware of the sickness liable to assail our unacclimated brethren on the Mississippi river, hence I wish you to ship no more to New Orleans, but ship to Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, giving preference in the order named.”²⁰

Although several voyages were made with Latter-day Saint immigrants to Philadelphia and Boston in the mid-19th century, New York became the preferred port of entry. It served as the primary U.S. port of arrival for Latter-day Saint immigrants from 1855 to 1890. It was here that the immigration depot known as Castle Garden was located.

As there had been Church leaders to assist the Saints who embarked from Liverpool, and elders to provide direction and protection at sea, so there were Latter-day Saint agents to receive the immigrants in New Orleans and in New York. The Saints were then transferred to steamboats and rail cars to continue their journey west. They knew, however, before they began their land migration that they had crossed the longest portion of their journey—the mighty deep. As they reached Zion’s shores, some perhaps recalled this psalm reminiscent of their ocean experience:

“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

“These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.

“For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

“They mount up to the heaven, they go down again

to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.

“They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits’ end.

“Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

“He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

“Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

“Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” (Ps. 107:23–31). □

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Gospel topics: pioneers, faith, courage, obedience



The immigration depot in New York known as Castle Garden (shown above) became the primary port of arrival for Latter-day Saint immigrants from 1855 to 1890.

NOTES

Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been standardized in some quotations in this article.

1. In Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormonism* (1877), 288.

2. *History of the Church*, 2:492.

3. See Conway B. Sonne, *Saints on the Seas: A Maritime History of Mormon Migration, 1830–1890* (1983), 33.

4. “The Book of the Life of Hugh Moon,” Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter cited as Church Archives), 2.

5. “An Epistle of the Twelve,” *Millennial Star*, Apr. 1841, 311.

6. For more details on life aboard Mormon emigration ships, see David H. Pratt and Paul F. Smart, “Life on Board

a Mormon Emigrant Ship,” in Proceedings of the 1980 World Conference on Records, Church Archives, 5:1–34.

7. *Manchester Mormons: The Journal of William Clayton, 1840–1842*, ed. James B. Allen and Thomas G. Alexander (1974), 173.

8. Reminiscences of Ebenezer Farnes, Church Archives, 2.

9. Reminiscences and diaries of Zebulon Jacobs, 30 June 1868, Church Archives.

10. It is estimated that between the years 1846 and 1869, approximately 670 Latter-day Saint immigrants died while crossing the oceans to gather to Zion. See “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, July 1998, 40–44.

11. Journal and autobiography of Mary Ann Weston Maughan, Church Archives, 16.

12. Diary of Isaiah M. Coombs, 23 Jan. 1876, Church Archives, 40–43.

13. The vessel *Julia Ann* wrecked in 1855. Twenty-eight of 56 passengers were Latter-day Saints. Of the 28 Saints, five drowned, while those who survived spent two months on an uninhabited island until they were eventually rescued. See Sonne, *Saints on the Seas*, 139. For more information on this wreck and rescue, see John Devitry-Smith, “The Wreck of the *Julia Ann*,” *BYU Studies*, spring 1989, 5–29; “Was It Not a Revelation from God?” *Ensign*, Oct. 1997, 10.

14. Conway B. Sonne, “Under Sail to Zion,” *Ensign*, July 1991, 13.

15. *Family History Journal of John S. Stucki* (1932), 131.

16. Letter of John Jaques to Orson Pratt, *Millennial Star*, 30 Aug. 1856, 556.

17. Quoted in “The Lucy Thompson,” *Millennial Star*, 27 Sept. 1856, 623.

18. “The Journal of Fanny Fry Simons,” in *An Enduring Legacy*, 12 vols. (1978–89), 6:187.

19. Journal of John Daniel Thompson McAllister, vol. 4, 15 May 1862, Church Archives, 6.

20. Letter of Brigham Young to Franklin D. Richards, *Millennial Star*, 28 Oct. 1854, 684.



Let It End with Me

*After an abusive
upbringing, I was
determined to stop
the cycle of humili-
ation and violence.*

NAME WITHHELD

When I was a child, our home was a battleground, rarely safe, rarely peaceful. Our family's daily interpersonal communication consisted mostly of ridicule, sarcasm, and criticism. Approval and warm feelings for each other were nonexistent, as were words of courtesy and apology. We did not listen or have discussions. Instead, we became proficient in arguing, fighting, name-calling, accusing, and faultfinding.

Looking back, I see that our family appeared healthy on the outside. Our parents served in Church callings, and we children were well-behaved and knowledgeable. The rest of

the world saw accomplished scholars, talented musicians, and capable artists. They did not know that each of us felt isolated and worthless. They could not see the shame and embarrassment our parents felt because we were not perfect. I never even considered telling anyone about our treatment at home, even when my mother dislocated my jaw by hitting me.

In our home, family prayers, family home evenings, and Church activity coexisted with physical violence and emotional battering. Upon arriving home from church, it was common for everyone from oldest to youngest to receive a sound thrashing. How could a family live such a paradox?

CHANGES BEGIN

Despite my difficult upbringing, I had a testimony and made it my goal to rear a righteous family in the gospel. As a young wife and mother, I diligently did everything I knew to reach my goal, but it was difficult. Something was missing. I often found myself feeling impatient and critical toward my husband and children. It seemed I could never remember in time to stop my harsh words or refrain from striking a child. I felt guilty and unhappy with myself.

As my married life continued, I increasingly sought out positive influences. My sweet, patient mother-in-law became my role model, and I tried hard to emulate her. I read the scriptures daily, and, as I became more acquainted with them, my desire to be like the Savior grew stronger. Occasionally I would experience the sweet feelings of the Holy Spirit. I yearned to feel its influence constantly, but I couldn't. The contrast between

It feels marvelous to know that one of the blessings of my repentance, and of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, is to have a home that is safe and peaceful.



HEALING FROM ABUSE



"If you feel there is only a thin thread of hope, believe me, it is not a thread. It

can be the unbreakable connecting link to the Lord which puts a life preserver around you. He will heal you as you cease to fear and place your trust in him by striving to live his teachings.

"Please, don't suffer more. Ask now for the Lord to help you. Decide now to talk to your bishop. Don't view all that you experience in life through lenses darkened by the scars of abuse. There is so much in life that is beautiful. Open the windows of your heart and let the love of the Savior in. And should ugly thoughts of past abuse come back, remember his love and his healing power. Your depression will be converted to peace and assurance. You will close an ugly chapter and open volumes of happiness."

Elder Richard G. Scott, "Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse," *Ensign*, May 1992, 33.

being with and being without the Spirit became more obvious to me.

One Sunday in Relief Society, the lesson was about becoming more Christlike. My desire to become better had become intense. When our teacher gave us personal questionnaires designed to get us thinking about how we could become more Christlike, I took it home, determined to complete it. The first two columns were easy to fill out—a list of the things I wanted to change in myself and then a list of specific courses of action to make those changes. But when I tried to tackle the last column, the struggle began. I had to list my strengths and good points, and I honestly could not think of any. Tears flowed and frustration mounted as guilt surrounded me. I prayed urgently for help, and finally I talked to my husband. He reminded me of some of my strengths, but I could hardly hear his encouraging words as the battle raged inside me. Conflicts about myself tormented me. It was several days before I could face that handout again. Yet in spite of my insecurities and fears, I was determined to be open and honest, no matter how much it hurt. As I struggled to think of my strengths, the realization that I was Heavenly Father's child suddenly surfaced and calmed my pain and tears. I realized that as a child of God

I must have inherited some positive characteristics from Him. My pencil began to haltingly fill out that final column, and with the Lord's help I finished it. It was a major victory for me!

GROWTH THROUGH CHARITY, OBEDIENCE, HUMILITY

As the years unfolded, my husband was my guide as he constantly encouraged, taught, and loved me. We worked together to create order and promote harmony in our home. I was a willing but slow student because many of the gospel's teachings were foreign to my experience. For example, I had to learn to recognize and accept kindness before I could become kind inside. In the scriptures I read that "the Lord

God hath given a commandment that all men should have charity, which charity is love. And except they should have charity they were nothing" (2 Ne. 26:30). As I thought about having the pure love of Christ in my heart and life, I realized that obtaining charity is a journey and that I was finally, consciously, embarking upon it.

I believe that my desire to be obedient to the Lord was one of my greatest gifts as I went through my soul-wrenching changes. Though my understanding was limited at first, I feel like I was blessed simply because I was trying so hard. It seemed that as soon as I learned one lesson, other lessons came as quickly as I could handle them. I knew I couldn't do it myself and humbly admitted that to the Lord and begged for His help. His tender mercies showered me. Help came in unexpected ways, and I began to recognize the Lord's hand in all things. Hungrily I partook of scriptures, books, tapes, lectures, classes, and anything else I could find that gave me positive information and assistance. When I went for some professional therapy, I made some major behavioral leaps.

Gradually I was able to replace old attitudes and habits. I began to love myself. Peace came even through my struggles. Slowly, as I became more loving and gentle, I could feel everyone in our home following my example. As my self-

control has improved, I find that I am enjoying being a mother and feeling the Holy Spirit in our home. It feels marvelous to know that one of the blessings of my repentance, and of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, is to have a home that is safe and peaceful. And now as a parent, I can say that our home is not a battleground. □

Gospel topics: abuse, repentance, parenting

More on this topic: See Gordon B. Hinckley, "Our Solemn Responsibilities," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 49; Thomas S. Monson, "Precious Children—A Gift from God," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 67; Maxine Murdock, "Hope and Healing," *Ensign*, Jan. 1993, 62; David S. Ricks, "I Have a Question" on honoring dishonorable parents, *Ensign*, Aug. 1995, 72; Scott W. Parker, "Dad's Lessons," *Ensign*, Aug. 1997, 50.

I Needed a Blessing

By Brandon J. Miller

It was the rainy season in the Philippines and had been raining all day. Rain often brought unwanted creatures into our house—usually spiders, rats, and such.

As my companion and I arrived home after a day of proselyting, we noticed a light on at our neighbors' house and we thought we would visit them. We decided to stop at our house and pick up some photographs of our families to show them.

We kept the pictures on the bottom shelf of a book shelf between our beds. As I reached for mine, I suddenly felt a pain in my right hand. Looking down, I saw that a snake had just bitten me.

I called to my companion, Elder Regis, and he ran to see what the problem was. I showed him the blood on my hand and said I'd been bitten by a snake. A neighbor ran in because of the commotion and helped us look for the snake. We found it when it struck from under the bed at a board Elder Regis was holding. The neighbor cried out, "That's a Philippine cobra!"

Elder Regis killed the snake. I realized I was getting dizzy, so we rushed to Bishop Rotor's house because he had some experience treating snakebites. He hurriedly began to do what he could to help me.

My chest was becoming heavy, and it was hard to breathe. A darkness seemed to cloud my thoughts, and I began to lose consciousness. Then I had a distinct impression that if I wanted to finish my mission on earth, I needed a blessing.

After being bitten by a deadly cobra, I stayed conscious long enough to ask the bishop, "Will you give me a blessing?"



I stayed conscious long enough to say, "Will you give me a blessing?"

The bishop answered, "Yes, just let me finish this first." It was hard for me to stay alert, but the impression came again, extremely strong, that I needed a blessing now. I could not wait. This time I said in a commanding voice, "Give me a blessing!"

I don't remember the words of the blessing my companion and Bishop Rotor gave me. But I put all my trust in the Lord and His priesthood. During the prayer I began to come to my senses, and I vomited repeatedly. As I heard the final words of the blessing, the vomiting stopped. I was aware of my surroundings and felt a warm feeling of comfort and love fill my body. I knew my Father in Heaven loved me and that I would be OK.

My zone leader, Elder Howarth, brought to the bishop's home a doctor who was investigating the Church. By this time about two hours had passed. We left for a hospital located about an hour away from where I was serving.

On the way the doctor asked me to tell him what happened. Elder Howarth said, "Doctor, shouldn't we speed up?" The doctor's answer was, "Why? He should already be dead. He is a lucky man." The Philippine cobra is the deadliest snake in the Philippines.

If people say God is not a God of miracles anymore, they don't understand this gospel or His love for us, His children. I know my life was spared and I suffered no lasting effects because of the power of God's word: "And by the power of his word did they cause prisons to tumble to the earth," wrote Moroni, "yea, even the fiery furnace could not

harm them, neither wild beasts nor poisonous serpents, because of the power of his word" (Morm. 8:24). □

Brandon J. Miller is a member of the Iona Second Ward, Iona Idaho Stake.

Gospel topics: priesthood blessings, missionary work

New Dreams for Old

By María Patricia Rojas V.

After finishing my studies in technical administration, I worked with a young executive who later became my husband. What a marvelous time of my life it was! But it was not to last. One month after our wedding, my husband and I were traveling from Bogotá, Colombia, where we lived, to Duitama, where my parents lived, when we were involved in a serious automobile accident. The accident took my husband's life and left me with amnesia. I couldn't remember anything of the past six years, couldn't walk, and couldn't move my left arm.

After months of physical therapy, I was finally able to walk again and move my arm somewhat. Gradually, my memory returned to the point that six years after the accident I could recall the events of my life except for two years: the one preceding the accident and the one following it. Still, my previous capabilities were much diminished. I had trouble converting my thoughts into words, and I found it difficult to repeat something after hearing it. Because I easily forgot details, some people took

advantage of my lapses.

Eventually, the doctors felt they had done all they could. I tried to appear happy and enthusiastic, but I often felt frustrated and angry. What was I to do with my life?

When I was at my lowest point, I read in the scriptures where the Lord promises that we will not be tried above that which we are able to bear (see 1 Cor. 10:13; D&C 64:20). I prayed that this promise would be true for me too.

I finally returned to the company where I had worked before the accident. Since I was incapable of handling my old job, I worked at filing and similar jobs, but even these tasks proved difficult. Nevertheless, I didn't give up. I fought to complete my six-month contract. As I did, a marvelous feeling of hope illuminated my spirit, inspiring me to keep trying to improve my capabilities.

By staying close to the Lord, I reestablished confidence in myself and could feel the influence of the Holy Ghost in my life. This influence soon led me to consider serving a mission. I know some people thought my desire foolish, but when I spoke with the branch president, he gave me the courage I needed to continue. To prepare myself, I decided I needed to read the Book of Mormon in its entirety—something I had not yet accomplished in my 12 years as a member.

However, my poor memory posed a real challenge. After starting 1 Nephi at least 10 times and not being able to remember a thing I had read, I knew I needed a different approach. I prayed to find a solution, and soon a method entered my mind: I would write a synopsis of each chapter as I read it.

I bought a notebook and read the first chapter of 1 Nephi. Since I had only a vague idea of what I had just read, I had to read the chapter again. Only then was I able to summarize in my notebook the main ideas in that chapter.

Prayerfully, I moved on. After completing 1 Nephi, I found I no longer had to read each chapter twice; once was enough to write a good synopsis. I read the entire Book of Mormon this way. When I finished, I was left with a strong spiritual witness that the book is true, and I could also testify that the Lord strengthens us if we turn to Him.

I next completed the missionary health form, answering each question honestly, even though the answers could frustrate my desire to be a missionary. How great was my joy when I received a call to serve in the Colombia Cali Mission! There I discovered the truth of another of the Lord's promises, found in 1 Nephi 3:7: "The Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

After I returned from my mission, I came to live with my parents on a farm where we grow products to sell. I have also developed a talent for knitting, which allows me to earn money and leaves me time for spiritual growth. I live a happy and productive life.

I would have preferred not to have had the accident, but I recognize the tremendous growth I've experienced because of it. I've learned that we may lose our dreams and hopes, even our loved ones, and our talents, riches, and strength might disappear, but the Lord will always

support us. He gives us new dreams to replace those we have lost. In spite of all the difficulties we encounter, the Lord can help us move forward. He compensates—and He always keeps His promises. □

María Patricia Rojas V. is a member of the Barbosa Branch, Duitama Colombia District.

Gospel topics: adversity, faith, endurance, gratitude, service, missionary work

A Tough Arizona Cowboy

By Allan L. Noble

Everyone knew that Dallas Stock, a rodeo cowboy, was tough. What they didn't know was how that toughness would be tested.

For some years Dallas had not been active in the Church, but through the loving influence of his patient wife, Ginny, and their five children, along with the inspired efforts of ward leaders and friends, Dallas eventually had a change of heart. As his bishop, I rejoiced to see him progress to the point that he wanted to take Ginny and their children to the temple. He took the steps necessary to prepare himself, and they set a date to go to the house of the Lord and be sealed as a family.

One week before that date, Dallas was working on the stake welfare ranch, loading bulls into trucks for transportation to market. A temperamental bull was not cooperating, and to protect himself Dallas jumped behind a gate he thought was locked properly. Instead, as the bull hit the gate, it swung around, and the bull smashed Dallas between the

gate and a fence three times in a matter of seconds. His arm and several ribs were broken, and he was badly bruised.

The accident was reported to me that evening, so I went to visit Dallas. He was sitting in his chair in severe pain, with his arm in a cast and his ribs taped. As we talked I suggested that perhaps his trip to the temple should be postponed. His response was, "Bishop, I am going to the temple next Wednesday."

A few days later it was Sunday, and no one expected to see Dallas at church. But he was there, conducting Sunday School as a member of the Sunday School presidency. It was a painful ordeal for him, but his devotion was an inspiration to ward members.

Wednesday came, and Dallas, Ginny, their family, and many ward members attended the temple as planned. With a son on one side and a son-in-law on the other, Dallas went through the endowment session. Each time he moved, the ward members in the room could almost sense the pain Dallas must have been feeling.

After Ginny and Dallas were sealed to each other and to their children in the sealing room, the ward members, with tears in their eyes, lined up to congratulate them. I started to hug Dallas but then said, "Oh, I don't want to hurt you."

"Bishop," Dallas replied, "I don't hurt at all. I can tell you I haven't hurt all day."

"Surely that can't be," I said. "It looked so painful."

"It was hard to get up and down," he explained, "but it didn't hurt. It hasn't hurt at all."

As I left the temple that day I was overcome by everything that had taken place. How grateful I was that Dallas had been blessed

as he made every effort to get to the temple with his family. That day we witnessed not only the strength of an Arizona cowboy but also the emergence of a spiritual giant. □

Allan L. Noble is a member of the Garden Lakes Ward, Phoenix Arizona West Maricopa Stake.

Gospel topics: activation, faith, devotion, commitment, temples

Just Spencer and Me

By Bonnie Sprinkel Bell

As a single mother of a toddler, I had little motivation to hold family home evening. It seemed like a great deal of work to plan a home evening for just Spencer and me.

One Sunday the lesson in Relief Society was about preparing our children to serve missions.

Being a convert, I wanted nothing more than to have Spencer someday go on a mission. Even though he was only 18 months old, I knew if he was going to serve a mission when he was older, I should lay the foundation for his service now.

So I left Relief Society that day determined to begin holding family home evening with my little son. It would be a lot of work and require ingenuity, but I had hope for great rewards down the road.

As I moved forward, I felt that Heavenly Father blessed me. I was amazed and grateful to find that

Dallas's arm and ribs were broken when a bull smashed him between a swinging gate and a fence. Would his upcoming temple trip have to be postponed?



ideas popped into my head at the oddest moments. While removing mascara with a cotton ball, I realized cotton balls would make a nice little sheep to go along with a lesson about Jesus as the Good Shepherd. While pouring juice into a tall paper cup, it occurred to me that the cup could be a great stand for paper figures of Joseph and his many-colored coat that Spencer and I would be painting during family home evening.

Because I have little musical talent, for our opening and closing songs I turned to tapes of Church music. Spencer became the person in charge of our music, which meant that he selected one of the tapes and loaded it into the tape player.

By the second week Spencer was excited about family home evening. He would eagerly run for the Church music tapes. He looked

forward to our simple stories and art projects. He loved helping Mommy prepare the treats.

Rewards I thought were many years down the road began to come immediately. Each Monday evening, no matter how hectic and horrible the day had been, the sweetest spirit entered our home. Spencer anticipated family home evening with an eagerness I never thought possible for one so young. He also seemed to fall asleep more quickly and contentedly on these nights than on others. My prayers were filled with gratitude for the help I received in finding ideas suitable for my little son.

Several months later, we started to visit a young girl from our ward named Shelah who had muscular dystrophy and was on an extended hospital stay. One week as I planned family home

evening, I thought it would be a good idea to visit Shelah and hold family night in her room so she could join in. Shelah's parents had divorced, and I thought she might enjoy participating with us.

The first Monday we held family home evening in Shelah's hospital room a group from the ward stopped by to visit and joined in the lesson. It was an enjoyable experience, and we returned the following week and held family night in the common area of the hospital. Several patients became curious about what we were doing. We let others join us, and our group grew.

Blessings continued to come as we diligently held family home evening. Spencer became familiar with scripture stories, latter-day prophets, and the blessings of prayer. He also became sensitive to people who were sick or lonely.

When I began to hold regular family home evenings, I thought only of the blessings that would come later in life. Now I realize that following the counsel of latter-day prophets regarding family night opened the portals of heaven, allowing sweet blessings to fall upon my family right from the start. □

Bonnie Sprinkel Bell is a member of the Manassas Second Ward, Centreville Virginia Stake.

Gospel topics: family home evening, single members, obedience

As a single mother of a toddler, I thought there was little point in holding family home evening. I was wrong.



Building Unity through Family History

The purpose of mortal families,” says Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “is to bring children into the world, to teach them what is right, and to prepare all family members for exaltation in eternal family relationships” (“Weightier Matters,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 13). Our families are strengthened as we become one in purpose with our Heavenly Father, seeking the exaltation of all family members—past, present, and future.

THE MISSION OF ELIJAH

In 1836 the prophet Elijah appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple. He came to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” (Mal. 4:6; see also D&C 2), and he restored the keys of the sealing power, which enables families to be eternally linked and bound together. Elijah’s coming has increased concern for and inspiration to do family history work (see D&C 110:13–16).

The Holy Ghost will guide us as we prayerfully seek to participate in family history. Contributions include receiving our temple endowments, being sealed as couples and as families, researching family history data and stories of previous

generations, submitting names for temple work, attending the temple as regularly as possible, teaching children and other family members about temple and family history work, participating in family organizations, and compiling personal and family histories.

JOURNALS AND PERSONAL HISTORIES

Family history work can strengthen the ties we feel with our ancestors and with living family members. Family bonds can even be strengthened with posterity yet to be born. Sometimes this bond develops as we keep a journal and write a personal history. Just as the writings of our ancestors may teach and inspire us, our words may have the power to fortify future generations when we make a record of God’s dealings in our own lives.

During a troubling time, one sister was inspired by reading how her great-grandmother was healed through a priesthood blessing.

One sister writes: “At age 21 I was stricken with a devastating mental illness that, I was told by doctors, would be a lifelong problem. Through priesthood blessings, I was promised I would be healed according to my faith. However, maintaining faith became my greatest challenge. During a particularly troubling time, my mother gave me the personal history of my great-grandmother.

“As a young girl in Switzerland, she was afflicted with a painful and incurable illness. As she lay ill, she read pamphlets left by missionaries. She read about the priesthood and about men who could heal the sick as Jesus had done.”

After joining the Church, her great-grandmother received many priesthood blessings and prayed with faith to be healed. Following one priesthood blessing, she recorded the following: “I want to tell . . . all my grandchildren . . . that there are not words in any language to describe the feeling that came over me when I was healed. I really could feel it from the top of my head to my feet, and from that time on I was healed.”

Those words spoke powerfully to this sister’s spirit. “This was my own great-grandmother talking to me through her journal,” she says. “My faith was strengthened, and I knew in the Lord’s time I, too, would be healed.”

As we labor to forge eternal family links in these and other ways, our families will be blessed with a unifying power that will span generations and reach into eternity. □

Gospel topics: family history, temples, journals



ILLUSTRATED BY SHERI LYNN BOYER DOTY

Creating a Family Flag

To help establish family unity and loyalty, our Relief Society teacher suggested we create a family flag and motto. Our family decided we also wanted a family song and newspaper. Here are some ways we brainstormed together to accomplish our goal.

1. *Choose the flag's colors.* The colors might be symbolic and represent your family. For weeks our family voted on our flag's colors, finally narrowing it to blue and gold to

represent loyalty and excellence.

2. *Select symbols for the flag.* Our family decided that the flag should have a heart at its center. Several of our children wanted the flag to have gold stars as well—one for each child. Everyone helped make these decisions, and the group effort strengthened and united us.

3. *Choose a family motto and song.* "Give your best" was voted as our family motto. Our daughter Carolee, who is talented at the keyboard, composed a melody she called "Go, Give It Your Best." We added lyrics, and other family members accompanied the tune with instruments they played.

4. *Create a family newspaper.*

One of our children suggested we start a family newspaper. We brainstormed a name for it at family home evening. Following a lesson on sharing, our daughter suggested we call it *Sharing*. The newspaper became a regular family project but usually made it to "press" only once a year. Our children's drawings became the newspaper's "photos." Later we used real photos. Over several decades, the issues we accumulated have become a wonderful source of family history.

For many years, we raised our family flag daily on a flagpole in front of our Idaho home. Now, as each child leaves home for school, a mission, or married life, we give them a small replica of the family flag. We also make banners for our grandchildren and are delighted when our married children create their own family flags and their own family newspapers.

These family activities, like strands of thread, have woven our hearts more closely together and tied us tightly to memories that reinforce and sustain us.

—Susan Billings Mitchell, Valley Park Third Ward, Taylorsville Utah Valley Park Stake

Teaching Teens Responsibility

Sometimes teenagers find it difficult to make the transition into adulthood. In addition to making plans for a mission and to be temple worthy and prepare for temple marriage, teens need to prepare for adult responsibilities. The following are suggestions for parents to help teens prepare for adulthood:

1. *Encourage realistic educational goals.* Teenagers may be uncertain

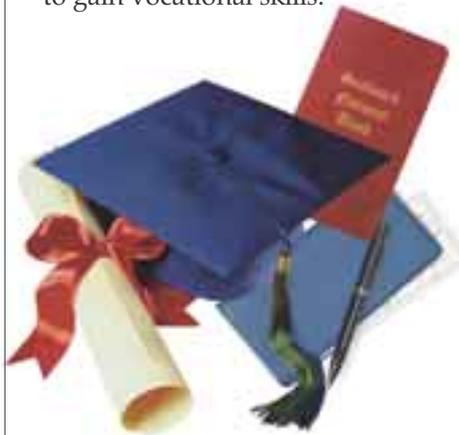




of career paths, but most have developed a talent, an interest, or a personal preference for one academic area over another. This is a first step toward recognizing and committing to future educational and career objectives. Encourage teens to set broad, long-term goals that include obtaining a college degree or a vocational program certificate or seeking advancement in current employment. Teaching teens to prayerfully consider their goals will also help them feel a sense of direction as they make these difficult decisions.

2. *Encourage exploration of educational opportunities.* Through research and exploration, teenagers can select a program and an educational institution that meets their needs. Some college majors require that certain requirements be met during high school. Helping your teen choose a suitable program in high school will likely improve their chances for better educational opportunities in the future. If four-year institutions seem intimidating to your teen, consider a junior college or vocational trade school. At times, the application process may seem overwhelming, but school officials and guidance counselors are eager to help.

3. *Instill a strong work ethic.* Teenagers can seek opportunities to gain vocational skills.



Learning about Our Leaders

Before every October and April general conference, our family hangs up pictures of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for a special family home evening lesson. Our children have enjoyed the challenge of learning the names of each of the Brethren as we have taught a variety of lessons relating to the prophet, revelation, and leadership. Pictures of other Church leaders can



also be used for this activity.

I have felt a special spirit as I have contemplated the pictures on the wall during these times. I know my children have also felt this, and I share their excitement when we see these Church leaders speak during conference. Preparing for conference in our weekly Monday lessons has helped our children anticipate this joyous event, and it has helped the leaders of the Church become a greater part of our lives.—**Judy Ann Morrise, West Hills Ward, Beaverton Oregon Stake**

For some, a part-time job during high school is the first employment experience. Through this experience teenagers can learn the importance of performing quality work. Doing a job well involves sustained effort, good communication, and time-management skills. In doing so, teenagers learn the value of personal accomplishment.

4. *Encourage financial independence through added responsibility.* Many teenagers can shoulder the responsibility of a personal bank account, grasp the basics of budgeting, and understand basic tax preparation. Some adults wish they had been exposed to these

skills earlier instead of spending years learning by trial and error. Allowing a teenager to take part in these processes may help them gain a better appreciation for how money should be managed.

5. *Focus on long-term successes.* Teenagers often feel a tremendous amount of pressure to succeed and find their niche in society after high school graduation. The process of finding that niche can be competitive, discouraging, and disheartening. Parents should continually support their teenagers and help them see their potential to do well.—**Mary R. Bastian, Manhattan Second Ward, Salina Kansas Stake**

PHOTO BY STUART JOHNSON, DESERET NEWS



At the Provo Missionary Training Center, President Gordon B. Hinckley addresses new mission presidents and their wives as members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and other Church leaders look on.

Church Leaders Instruct New Mission Presidents

I have no doubt that every day, somewhere in the world, there is a remarkable miracle of conversion taking place, perhaps many of them," President Gordon B. Hinckley said as he concluded this year's new mission presidents' seminar held at the Provo Missionary Training Center on 26–28 June.

"You will become acquainted with such [conversion] stories during the years that you preside. . . .

"This is a Church of miracles. I know it. I have seen so many of them."

President Hinckley and other members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles instructed 108 new mission presidents and their wives who were called from 12 nations and will serve in 39 countries. In July these new leaders joined the ranks of 334 mission presidents worldwide who currently serve over some 60,000 missionaries.

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor

in the First Presidency, gave the opening address at the seminar. In assuring the new presidents that their abilities would be enhanced as they served, President Monson cited principles taught by President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973): "First, whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies; second, when you are on the Lord's errand, you are entitled to the Lord's help; and third, the Lord shapes the back to bear the

burdens placed upon it."

President Monson ended with a promise: "Put aside any fears you may have, and the Lord will bless you. As you serve, you will learn who He is, how close He is, and that this is His Church. The Lord blesses those who put their trust in Him."

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, also spoke during the seminar, emphasizing the importance of involving

members in missionary efforts.

"For full-time missionaries to be fully successful, they need to have the support of the members of the stakes," President Faust explained. "One of the fruits of missionaries working together with members is that spirituality increases for both the members *and* the missionary."

President Faust gave several suggestions for involving members in missionary work. He included the need for bishops to support missionary efforts, effective work by missionaries with ward mission leaders and the bishop, obedient and hardworking missionaries, youth participation, and fellowshipping of new converts.

During the three-day seminar, instruction was also provided by President Boyd K. Packer and Elders L. Tom Perry, Dallin H. Oaks, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Robert D. Hales, and Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. □

President Hinckley Celebrates 91st Birthday

President Gordon B. Hinckley quietly celebrated his 91st birthday in June with family members and a few associates. On his birthday, 23 June, he enjoyed a family gathering. On the previous day a small birthday reception was held with First Presidency members and their wives and several other General Authorities in the Church Administration Building. □



Members of the First Presidency and their wives celebrate President Hinckley's birthday in the Church Administration Building.

PHOTO BY CRAIG DIMOND

Tabernacle Choir Tours Southern U.S. States: They “Brought Us Close to Heaven”

In June the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, accompanied by three Tabernacle organists and 21 members of the Orchestra at Temple Square, made its first tour specifically to the southern United States. Three chartered airplanes, 2 luggage trucks, 1 equipment truck, and 10 buses carried the group to its 11 performances in 8 cities and 5 states.

Besides performing in Houston, Texas, and Orlando, Florida, where the choir appeared in 1964 and 1989 respectively, it was the first time the choir had performed in any of the other cities on the tour, which included Fort Worth, Texas; New Orleans, Louisiana; Birmingham, Alabama; Atlanta, Georgia; and Tampa and Miami, Florida.

The tour also marked the first time that members of the Orchestra at Temple Square traveled with the choir and the first time in recent years the choir performed each concert entirely by memory. Singing from memory allowed the group to make eye contact with audience members throughout the entire performance. “They sing with their soul and their minds on the crowd,” said a Fort Worth choral director who attended a concert. “They embrace the audience.” An audience member in Tampa added, “Listening to the choir, I feel like I’m at the gates of heaven.”

The Southern States

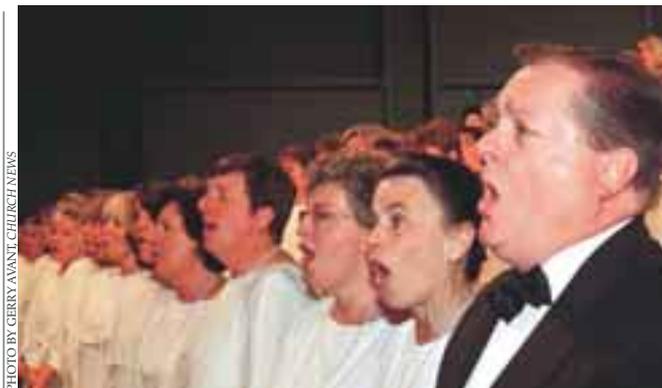


PHOTO BY GERRY AVANT, CHURCH NEWS

Choir members performed each concert from memory, which made greater interaction with the audience possible.

tour, which included preconcert receptions attended by local civic, religious, music, and Latter-day Saint leaders, received praise from local media, government, and the public:

- “The signature arrangements of “America the Beautiful” and “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” were once more stirring. The setting of the spiritual “The Battle of Jericho” was a virtuosic tour de force.” —*Houston Chronicle*

- “The group wasted no time proving that their vaunted reputation is richly deserved. . . . [The] hallelujahs in “All Creatures of Our God and King” rose slowly and powerfully until it rattled the very gates of heaven. It made the hair on the back of the neck stand straight up.” —*Fort Worth Star Telegram*

- “Hearing the choir live was a dream come true.” —Bill G. Carter, Texas House of Representatives

- “It was the most

glorious night of music I can recall.” —Ed Bridges, director of Alabama State Archives and History

- “To say it was an unforgettable experience is an understatement.” —Sam Rumore, president of the Alabama Bar Association

- “When a group like this comes to town, it can really bring people together. Seeing and hearing the choir can clear up misconceptions of the Latter-day Saint faith.” —H. Roy Kaplan, executive director, National Conference for Community and Justice in Tampa

- “It’s really fantastic to have a group like this come to Tampa. . . . I think we all felt a special connection.” —Dr. Joe Gonzalez, director of Tampa’s Ambassador Chorale

- “It was a true honor to see the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in person—a moving experience.” —Ted B. Edwards, Orange County, Florida, commissioner

The choir’s repertoire for the tour included hymns, anthems, patriotic songs, and American folk music. Following are just a



PHOTO BY GERRY AVANT, CHURCH NEWS

Flooding in Houston shut down the choir’s concert hall just days before the scheduled performance. To the delight of the Houston audience, the choir was able to locate a site for their performance.

few highlights from the tour.

The choir's 15 June concert in Houston was nearly canceled when tropical storm Allison caused heavy flooding in the downtown area, leaving the scheduled Jones Hall for the Performing Arts inoperable. Even after several days of frantic searching, only two nights before the date of the performance a new venue had not yet been found. The media began to announce that the concert had been canceled. "But we didn't give up; we kept working to find a new venue," said choir president Mac Christensen.

Just over 24 hours before the concert was scheduled to begin, a venue was found: Houston's Reliant Arena (formerly the Astro Arena) was quickly transformed from a rodeo grounds into a concert hall. The choir's performance provided a needed lift for the 4,000 attendees whose city had been ravaged by the floods.

Tickets for the next day's performance in the 2,000-seat Bass Performance Hall in Fort Worth sold out months in advance. Following one of the concert's numerous standing ovations, choir announcer Lloyd Newell joked with the audience, "Don't encourage them too much. They have a repertoire of 1,500 songs."

As a special conclusion to the concert, the choir sang in Spanish, "God Be With You Till We Meet Again," delighting the hundreds of Spanish-speakers in attendance. The same conclusion was



PHOTO BY GEORGE PAPAS

In Fort Worth, Tampa, Orlando, and Miami, the choir sang "God Be with You Till We Meet Again" in Spanish, charming many Spanish-speakers in attendance. They "brought us close to heaven," said one fan.

also later performed at all three concerts in Florida.

In Birmingham, choir member Ken Wilks recalled how more than a century ago his great-great-grandfather had stood before a crowd intent on tarring and feathering Mormon missionaries in southern Alabama. His ancestor convinced the mob to turn away.

On 20 June, Brother Wilks also stood before a large Alabamian crowd, but the feeling was much different. Brother Wilks, along with his fellow choir members, received two five-minute standing ovations from the audience of 2,500 attending the concert at the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center.

Besides its regular concert, the Choir also recorded its weekly broadcast, *Music and the Spoken Word*, in Birmingham. John E. Enslin, a seventh generation Alabamian and second counselor in the Alabama Birmingham Mission presidency, says

he believes the performances in his state will do much to change misperceptions about the Church.

"I feel as if a spiritual stone has been dropped in the center of the 'pond' of Alabama, and the ripples will move steadily forth, washing away long-standing prejudices," said Brother Enslin. "My guests who attended the concert are still expressing how much it meant to them. One man said hearing the choir made him experience feelings he didn't even know existed. Another couple later accepted our invitation to a ward activity, which I don't think they would have done before the concert."

Later in Tampa, fans filled the 2,557 seats at the Tampa Bay Performing Art Center's Morsani Hall on 23 June. One local fan in attendance was Gail Wright, who began watching the choir's weekly broadcasts a few years ago after she'd lost her mother and was suffering from chronic stress and depression.

The music and uplifting messages buoyed Gail up, and during one broadcast she felt particularly drawn to one sister. "I can't explain it exactly," said Gail, "but I know the Lord led me to her."

Gail sent a letter to the choir and eventually began a correspondence with choir member Karen Jepson. The two women quickly bonded; they shared their mutual faith in the Savior, and Karen taught Gail principles of the gospel.

"I'm not sure what I would have done without Karen's encouragement," said Gail. "Her friendship helped me hang on, and things have gotten so much better for me." The two women met on the morning of the concert. "We hugged and cried," says Sister Jepson. "We talked for a few hours."

Gail and her husband, who were recently married, sat on the front row during the concert, after which she exclaimed, "I prayed that someday I

would be able to meet and thank Karen, and now my prayers have been answered."

On 25 June the choir played to a standing-room-only crowd in Orlando's Bob Carr Performing Arts Centre. The 2,300 in attendance gave three standing ovations, which were answered with three encore numbers. "I wanted to stand up and applaud after every song," said Katie Bravar, a 16-year-old member of another faith.

The day before the concert, the choir also performed twice in front of Cinderella's Castle at Walt Disney World theme park. Hundreds stopped to listen and cheer for the choir's rendition of several familiar American songs, including "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." On the Sunday prior to the concert, choir members divided into three groups and sang and shared their

testimonies at firesides in three area stake centers. In total, 2,100 members and their friends attended the firesides.

"The choir and members of the Orchestra at Temple Square have truly softened the hearts and enlightened the minds of many of our friends in the Orlando area," said Mason Herzog, a member of the Windermere Ward, Orlando Florida South Stake.

Perhaps the words of Douglas Stringham, a member of the Westin Ward, Fort Lauderdale Stake, sum up the tour best. After attending the final, sold-out concert in Miami's James L. Knight Center on 27 June, Brother Stringham said, "We were the beneficiaries of a marvelous outpouring of talent and Spirit. The Choir on compact disc is wonderful, but the choir in concert brought us close to heaven." □

New Temple Announced for Texas

President Gordon B. Hinckley recently announced that a temple will be built in San Antonio, Texas, the fourth in that state.

He made the announcement to a crowd of nearly 5,000 during a regional fireside in San Antonio on 24 June. Thousands more watched the fireside in selected regional meetinghouses via satellite broadcast.

President Hinckley challenged members to prepare to be worthy to enter the temple. "A temple

becomes the bridge from mortality to immortality," he said. "I don't know of anything more serious."

Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Elder Rex D. Pinegar, President of the North America Southwest Area, also spoke about the significance of the temple.

Temples are currently operating in Dallas and Houston, Texas, and another is under construction in Lubbock. Church membership in Texas has grown to more than 217,000. □



PHOTO BY R. SCOTT LLOYD, CHURCH NEWS

Elder Lance B. Wickman praised the Mormon Battalion for "their vibrant faith" in God at a program honoring the battalion in June.

Programs Honor Brigham Young, Mormon Battalion

Church leaders recently spoke at separate programs honoring Brigham Young and the Mormon Battalion.

Speaking at a lecture series observing the 200th anniversary of Brigham Young's birth, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Presidency of the Seventy called President Young "the quintessential man of action."

The lecture series, "Brigham Young, Prophet, Colonizer, Patriarch: The 200th Anniversary of His Birth," was held in June at Brigham Young University.

"If he felt something to be right, Brigham Young had no hesitation in pursuing it, even where he could not see his way through to the end or did not at the moment possess means to finish," said Elder Christofferson. "He was convinced that the Lord would provide whatever he legitimately could not."

President Young knew from experience that faith comes from working hard and accepting responsibility,

Elder Christofferson concluded. "Both Brigham Young's words and actions bore testimony that if he applied all the resources at his command and asked God in the name of Christ to bless his application of those resources, he could then rely implicitly on God for anything yet lacking."

During a program in Salt Lake City on 16 June, Elder Lance B. Wickman of the Seventy praised the Mormon Battalion for "their abject willingness to suffer unspeakable privations; their vibrant faith in their God, their prophet, and eventually, in their tough and austere commander."

Elder Wickman was the main speaker at an annual Mormon Battalion Heritage Day program held at the Mormon Battalion Monument on the Utah State Capitol grounds.

During the program, plans for a Mormon Battalion memorial building at This Is The Place Heritage Park in Salt Lake City were announced. □

Elder Carmack Speaks about the PEF

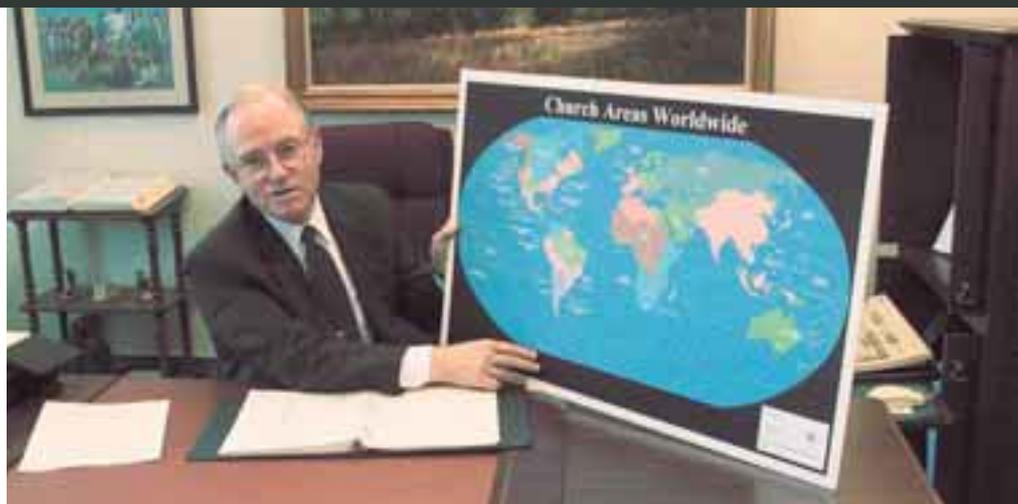
During last April's general conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley made a historic announcement: a new Church program called the Perpetual Education Fund (PEF) would soon be put into operation to help young Latter-day Saints in need, especially returned missionaries, gain an education. Shortly thereafter, Elder John K. Carmack of the Seventy was announced as managing director. Elder Carmack recently spoke with the Ensign about the program.

Question: What is the Church's plan for the PEF?

Response: The Perpetual Education Fund is patterned after the Perpetual Emigration Fund, established by the Church in the mid-1800s to assist European converts immigrating to Zion. That program created a foundation of righteous families, Church leadership, and self-reliance that brought the Church great strength.

The Perpetual Education Fund is based on the same principles as the Perpetual Emigration Fund. It is a modern plan to strengthen Latter-day Saint individuals and families in their own countries.

Education and gainful employment will help bring stability to families worldwide. These families will then strengthen the Church through serving in leadership callings and through paying tithing. The program



In years to come, "I think we'll examine [the Perpetual Education Fund] and call it one of the most important things that has happened," says Elder John K. Carmack, who serves as the program's managing director.

will also help assure young members throughout the world that the Church cares about them and will help them get out of the cycle of poverty described by President Gordon B. Hinckley.

The PEF comes as inspiration from a prophet of God; its reach extends in seemingly every direction. Thirty years from now, I think we'll call it one of the most important things that has happened in the Church.

Q: How have members responded to the PEF?

R: The response has been overwhelmingly positive. It seems members of the Church received an instant testimony that it is a program inspired of God. So many who served missions in developing areas have come home with hearts yearning to help the members they served and the native companions they served with. The PEF now provides an immediate, effective way to do so.

Thousands of members have contributed, and the fund is growing rapidly,

but we need much more. We've also had dozens of people call to ask if they could give all or part of their time to advancing the program. From these, two men have been chosen to serve as full-time volunteer assistant directors. Another one or two will likely be added soon. Other volunteers will serve on Church headquarters committees and on local PEF advisory committees worldwide.

The response from prospective participants has also been strong. We've had inquiries from many countries already: "How can I get a PEF loan?" Area Presidencies are saying, "We're being bombarded with interest—when will the program be ready?" On our recent trip to Mexico, Chile, and Peru, young people eager to know more about the PEF filled the meetinghouses where we spoke about the program.

Q: How has the program been developed?

R: The general priesthood meeting talk in which President Hinckley announced the establishment

of the PEF has become our charter or constitution for what we do. It contains the key concepts and doctrines and is the inspired pronouncement. We've taken this foundation and have worked toward creating the PEF Department and a practical program. We've felt the inspiration of the Lord in doing so, and we're now ready to try it out.

We operate under a board of directors, which consists of the First Presidency, the chairman of the board being President Hinckley himself; two members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; the senior President of the Seventy; the Presiding Bishop; the general Relief Society president; and the administrator of Religious Education and Secondary Education. President Hinckley has been closely involved in the program's development. We feel his urgency. He is anxious for us to get the program in place quickly.

Q: How exactly will the PEF work?

R: The interest and income earned on the donations that make up the fund will be used for student loans. These loans will help pay education costs of those who need assistance. The fund itself will remain intact.

The primary group targeted is young returned missionaries, and others are welcome to apply as well. Applicants must be adults 35 years of age or younger. They must attend the local Latter-day Saint institute of religion and be endorsed as worthy and committed by their bishop or branch president.

But the PEF does more than just provide a loan. It is an inspired, complete program that helps people become self-reliant. Even before the PEF was announced, a Church career workshop was already being taught in developing areas to help members learn how to find local resources—grants, loans, and job opportunities. The workshop also teaches how to make an educational and vocational plan. Individuals must complete this workshop before their application for a PEF loan is considered complete. Applicants must also show they have exhausted other financial resources before seeking PEF assistance.

Institute of religion leaders throughout the world will receive application forms and will guide applicants through the process. Applications will be reviewed for completeness by a local PEF committee of Church members before copies are sent to the Area Presidency and to the PEF Department at

Church headquarters. Area Presidencies will contact us if they have any suggestions, ideas, or concerns.

Loan payments will be made from Church headquarters directly or through a bank to local educational and training institutions, not to the individuals. Participants will be required to report their progress regularly to their local PEF committee. The committee will mentor and supervise participants until they complete their education and obtain gainful employment.

After participants complete their training, they will be required to repay the loan at a very modest interest rate. As these individuals repay their loans, the fund will continually be increased so it can help more young people. We hope it will grow sufficiently to assist hundreds of thousands of young members of the Church.

Q: When and where will the program start?

R: President Hinckley has counseled us to try the program on a modest basis at first, perfecting it before we go full-scale. We are starting this summer with students in Mexico, Chile, and Peru, three countries that have large numbers of returned missionaries. Initially, most of the education will be vocational in nature, but that may broaden as the program grows.

In October, we hope to extend the program to other parts of the world.

Q: What about some developing areas of the world where there simply are no jobs available, even if a person has an education?

R: That's a challenge. In these areas, self-employment is the key. Entrepreneurial training and education can help individuals learn how to start and operate their own small businesses and even employ others.

In all areas of the world, training and education will be chosen to suit needs and available opportunities.

Q: Will the program help only young people in developing countries?

R: That question has been posed to us by a number of stake presidents and other Church leaders. Certainly there are areas in the United States and other industrial nations that are like developing countries. There are people in these areas that have few opportunities. Surely in time they will be considered, but first we'll start in the developing countries.

Q: Is there still an ongoing need for member support?

R: Yes. Our goal is to develop a fund large enough to handle the needs of every worthy, qualified applicant in the world, so it needs to be quite a large fund. Thankfully donations are continuing to come in.

Whether donations are small or large, all are needed. People may be surprised to learn how far their donations can go. In South America, for example, a year of technical education can be obtained for as little as \$500, so even a small donation can help substantially.

Members should also know that 100 percent of their donations go to help the recipients because program administrators are all volunteers and the Church covers all costs of operation.



Member response to the PEF has been overwhelming, says Elder Carmack. But help is still needed.

To make a donation, simply write "PEF" and the contribution amount in the "Other" box on a tithing and offerings slip, then give the donation to the bishop or branch president.

Q: What more can members do to support the program?

R: Some members will be called to volunteer on local advisory committees, of which there will be quite a few in the world. They will help direct, train, and mentor loan recipients and select and work with participating schools.

Members in general can pray for the program's success. We know their prayers can be effective. We believe what the scriptures teach in this regard: the fervent prayer of the righteous "availeth much" (James 5:16). This inspired effort allows all of us to sacrifice, to "lift up the hands which hang down" (D&C 81:5), and to "be one" as we seek to build up Zion (see D&C 38:24-27). It allows us to make a difference for good in the Lord's "own way" (see D&C 104:13-18). □

Church Aids Disaster Victims Worldwide

After natural disasters struck the United States, Peru, Colombia, and the Philippines in June, humanitarian aid was sent from Church headquarters and given by local Church units as well.

QUAKE IN PERU

An earthquake measuring 8.1 on the Richter scale struck the southern tip of Peru on 23 June, killing more than 115 people, injuring 1,500, and displacing more than 46,000. One member child was killed, four Church members were seriously injured, and hundreds were displaced. Local Church leaders used fast-offering funds to supply members in need with water, food, blankets, tents, and other items.

One Church meeting-house was reported to be seriously damaged, and a few others sustained minor damage. Some meetinghouses were used as temporary shelters for displaced victims.

Church humanitarian funds were used for immediate purchase of emergency relief items in the area. Church Welfare Services also shipped 110,000 pounds of food, blankets, hygiene kits, and first-aid supplies. These relief items were distributed by local civil defense authorities.

FLOODING IN TEXAS AND LOUISIANA

Floods and heavy rains from tropical storm Allison killed 16 people in the Houston area and one person in New Orleans. Some 10,000 homes and businesses were flooded, with downtown Houston sustaining much of the property damage.

The floods forced 100 member families to evacuate to homes of other members or relatives, or to emergency shelters. Local leaders used fast-offering funds and the bishops' storehouse to provide food and supplies to displaced members; supplies from the bishops' storehouse were also donated to local agencies. Local units also organized neighborhood

cleanup crews. Church humanitarian funds were donated to the American Red Cross to support relief efforts.

The flooding nearly caused cancellation of the Houston performance of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir scheduled on 15 June, but an undamaged venue was found the day before the concert (see related story, p. 73).

TORNADO IN COLOMBIA

A tornado in Barranquilla, Colombia, on 4 June killed seven people and injured 1,000. Four homes of Church members were extensively damaged. Local leaders used Church welfare resources to help members in distress. The Church provided funds for

emergency relief items to be purchased locally and also sent about 65,000 pounds of food, hygiene kits, toys, and clothing to aid relief efforts.

VOLCANO ERUPTION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Thirty member families were evacuated when Mount Mayon erupted on the southern end of Luzon island, Philippines. The volcano spewed lava 800 meters (about 2,600 feet) into the air, leading to the evacuation of more than 30,000 people. Local leaders used fast-offering funds to assist affected members, and the Church donated locally purchased food and relief supplies to the Philippines Red Cross for distribution. □

Policies and Announcements

The First Presidency sent the following letter, dated 11 May 2001, to General Authorities; Area Authority Seventies; stake, mission, and district presidents; and bishops and branch presidents, to be read in sacrament meeting.

It has come to our attention that some commercial enterprises promising heightened self-esteem, improved family relationships, increased spirituality and the like by participating in their programs are implying Church endorsement. Such claims are untrue and unfounded. *The Church has not endorsed any such enterprise. Neither should the Church's failure to formally challenge any such enterprise coming to its attention be construed as a tacit endorsement or stamp of approval.*

We repeat the counsel set forth in the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, page 157:

"Church members should not participate in groups that:

"1. Challenge religious and moral values or advocate unwarranted confrontation with spouse or family members as a means of reaching one's potential.

"2. Imitate sacred rites or ceremonies.

"3. Foster physical contact among participants.

"4. Meet late into the evening or in the early-morning hours.

"5. Encourage open confession or disclosure of personal information normally discussed only in confidential settings.

"6. Cause a husband and wife to be paired with other parties."

We strongly counsel against affiliation with any such group and warn against believing any claim of Church approval, tacit or otherwise, by any private organization offering "experiential" or "empowerment" training. □

Merlin R. Lybbert, Former Seventy, Dies

Merlin Rex Lybbert, who served as a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy from April 1989 to October 1994, died on 6 July in Salt Lake City at age 75.

He had been president of the Cardston Alberta Temple for three years following his release as a

member of the Seventy. Previously, he had served as a high councilor, bishop, stake president, and regional representative.

He worked professionally as an attorney for almost 35 years before being called to full-time Church service. Born on 31 January 1926 in Cardston, he was a son of Charles Lester Lybbert and Delvia Reed. He married Nola Cahoon on 26 May 1949 in the Cardston Alberta Temple, and they are the parents of six children. □

PAF 5.0 Adds Many Languages

The Church recently released version 5.0 of the Personal Ancestral File (PAF) computer software, offering family history researchers greater versatility in many languages.

Thanks to the software's new features, users can now view screens and print reports in Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Swedish, and German (as well as English); enter data in most languages of the world, including those that use Asiatic and Cyrillic characters; and download data to a Palm OS handheld computer.

"As far as we are aware, this is the first genealogy software that allows users to enter information in nearly any language and view screens and reports in six languages," said Steve Cannon, product manager. "The Palm application will allow users to take their PAF data with them when



doing family history research away from home."

PAF 5.0 may be downloaded free of charge at www.familysearch.org. It may be purchased in CD-ROM form (item no. 77034, U.S. \$6.00) from Church distribution centers. Optional PAF 5.0 Companion software (item no. 50128, U.S. \$13.50), offers enhanced ways of charting pedigrees and stronger search capabilities.

Because PAF 5.0 has greater computer system requirements than previous releases, current PAF users who do not need the Palm application or the non-English applications may want to continue to use earlier versions. □

In the Spotlight



A Chinese opera singer, Sister Tang Yau-Ngan Lai also serves as a temple worker in Hong Kong.

CHINESE MEMBER SINGS IN NATIONAL OPERA

Tang Yau-Ngan Lai, a member of the Ma On Shan Ward, Hong Kong Tolo Harbour Stake, was the only opera singer from Hong Kong invited to Beijing to perform in a nationally televised Cantonese opera. The opera was recently broadcast by China Central Television.

"I am grateful for a gifted voice that allows me to carry on the heritage of Chinese art and culture and, at the same time, to share the gospel through my example," Sister Lai says.

When not performing, Sister Lai spends time with her husband, Tung Sang Lai, as a temple worker in the Hong Kong Temple, which she has done since 1996. Sister Lai joined the Church in 1980 as a teenager in Hong Kong.

BYU ATHLETE SETS AMERICAN RECORD

Brigham Young University runner Elizabeth Jackson won the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) 3,000-meter steeplechase title on 1 June. This was the first women's steeplechase competition in NCAA history. In the race, Sister Jackson set the American record and had the third-fastest time ever recorded in the world.

A few weeks later, Sister Jackson earned a spot on the USA National Track and Field Team by placing second in the USA Outdoor Track and Field Championships. She is a member of the BYU 23rd Ward, BYU 20th Stake.

LATTER-DAY SAINT WOMAN IS MISS INDIAN WORLD

KeAloha Alo, whose heritage includes White Mountain Apache, Hawaiian, and Samoan ancestry, was selected as Miss Indian World 2001 at the Gathering of Nations in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on 29 April.

Sister Alo, a member of the Pinetop-Lakeside Third Ward, Pinetop-Lakeside Arizona Stake, is the first Miss Indian World to represent the Hawaiian islands, where she was reared. The competition is based on talent, speaking, interviewing, and traditional dancing. As Miss Indian World, she will spend the next year promoting education for native youth worldwide. □

Comment

The Man Who Talked Straight

I so enjoyed the June 2001 *Ensign*, especially the article, "We Must Keep One Another," about President Brigham Young's correspondence with Native American

leaders. As a side note to the article, I wanted to tell you about my grandfather Amos Russell Wright, who baptized Chief Washakie in 1884.

Grandfather served several missions to the Wind River Reservation and carefully recorded the names of the 311 Shoshone Indians he baptized. These Native Americans called him Mose Peah Tibo, "the

man who talked straight." He, like President Young, was deeply committed to Native Americans.

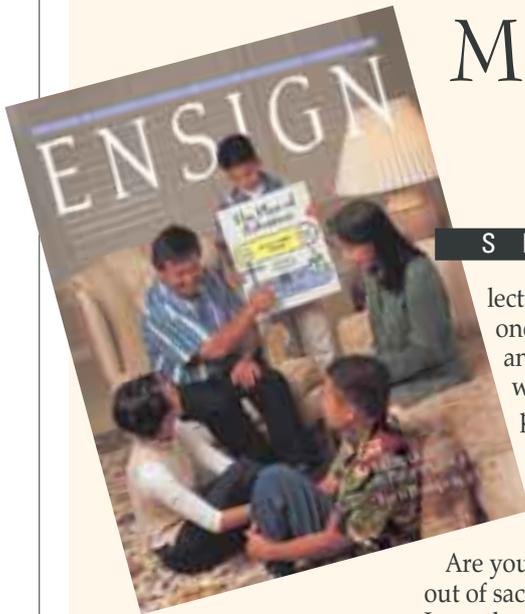
Jo Ann Farnsworth
Montpelier, Idaho

Each and Every Month

I had to write and tell you how grateful I am for the *Ensign* magazine in my life. Never has any magazine on this earth helped me to

gain a testimony of Jesus Christ and strengthen my faith in God the way the *Ensign* has. Each and every month more of my questions concerning the gospel are answered in a way to increase my understanding of the gospel, and I always feel the Spirit on every page.

Adrienne Sears-Logan
Salt Lake City, Utah



Making the Most of This Issue

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 0 1

lecturing? Learn how one woman found answers in working with her daughter, p. 26.

Getting More from Sacrament Meeting

Are you getting enough out of sacrament meeting? Learn how to get more—much more—by understanding fully the privilege of renewing your covenants and receiving the spiritual benefits of the Atonement. See p. 22.

Live for the Lord's Help

"The price of discipleship is personal courage," writes President Gordon B. Hinckley, but when we live up to our convictions despite challenges from the world, we have the Lord's promise of guidance and sustaining strength. See "Living with Our Convictions," p. 2.

Making a Way to Do Family History

You say you don't know how to use the newest tools of family history research or you don't

have time to do family history because you're a busy young mother? See how one stake in Alaska found solutions. See p. 48.

Ending the Cycle of Abuse

The abuse that was part of a woman's childhood became part of her life as a mother—until she found out how her heritage as a child of Heavenly Father could help her change. See "Let It End with Me," p. 61.

Want to Be Happier? Give Thanks

"Those who live in thanksgiving daily . . . are usually among the world's happiest people,"

writes Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin



of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Find out how a grateful attitude can bless your life. See p. 6.

Home Teachers and Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pp. 2 and 69.

Did You Know?

The colophon (left column on the contents page) contains a wealth of informa-

tion, ranging from facts about cover art to how you can submit items for publication. In addition, the colophon lists Church leaders who direct the magazine, information on how

you can subscribe, and, if you have visual impairment or a physical disability that prevents reading the printed version, information on how to get the magazine on tape.

Family Time

- How can you teach the plan of life and salvation to your children? Try a puzzle, a chart, a drawing, a diagram, an activity, or one of other interesting and memorable ways found on pp. 32–39.

- Does a family of two really need to have family home evening? Yes! Find out what it did for a single mother and her toddler, p. 67.

- How can you help your children recognize Church leaders and learn their names? Before each conference, one family posts pictures in the home and holds a special family home evening. Learn more on p. 71.

When a Child Strays

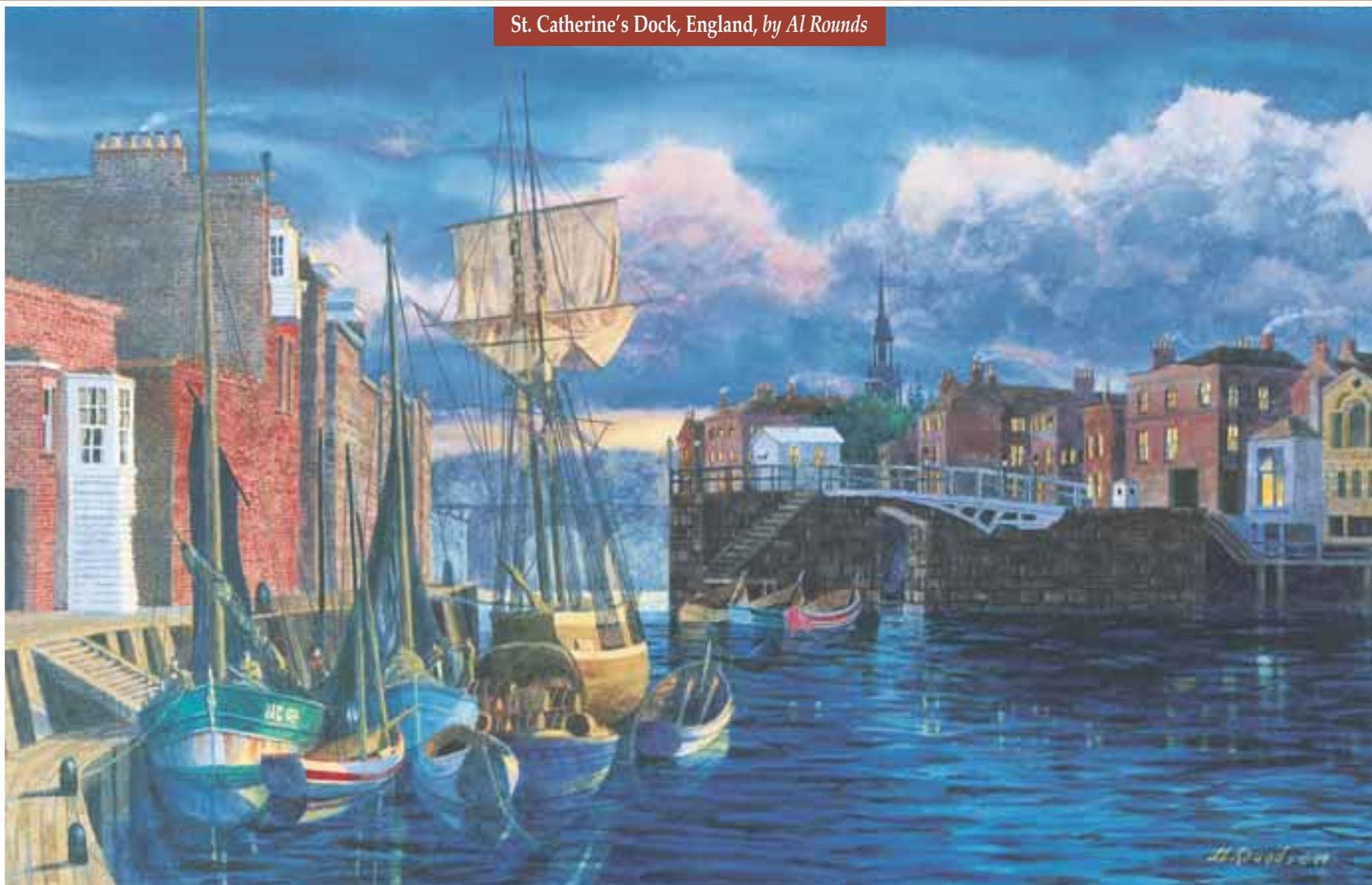
Just cannot get through to your wayward child, despite all your worrying and fretting, pleading and



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St. Catherine's Dock, England, by Al Rounds



At St. Catherine's Dock in London in the 1840s, many converts from the British Isles embarked on their journey to gather to Zion.



“What a glorious and beautiful thing it is to see the child of your dreams walk with head up, standing tall, unafraid, and with confidence, taking advantage of the tremendous opportunities that open around him or her. Isaiah said, ‘All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children’ (Isa. 54:13).”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley,
“Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,”
Ensign, Nov. 2000, 52.