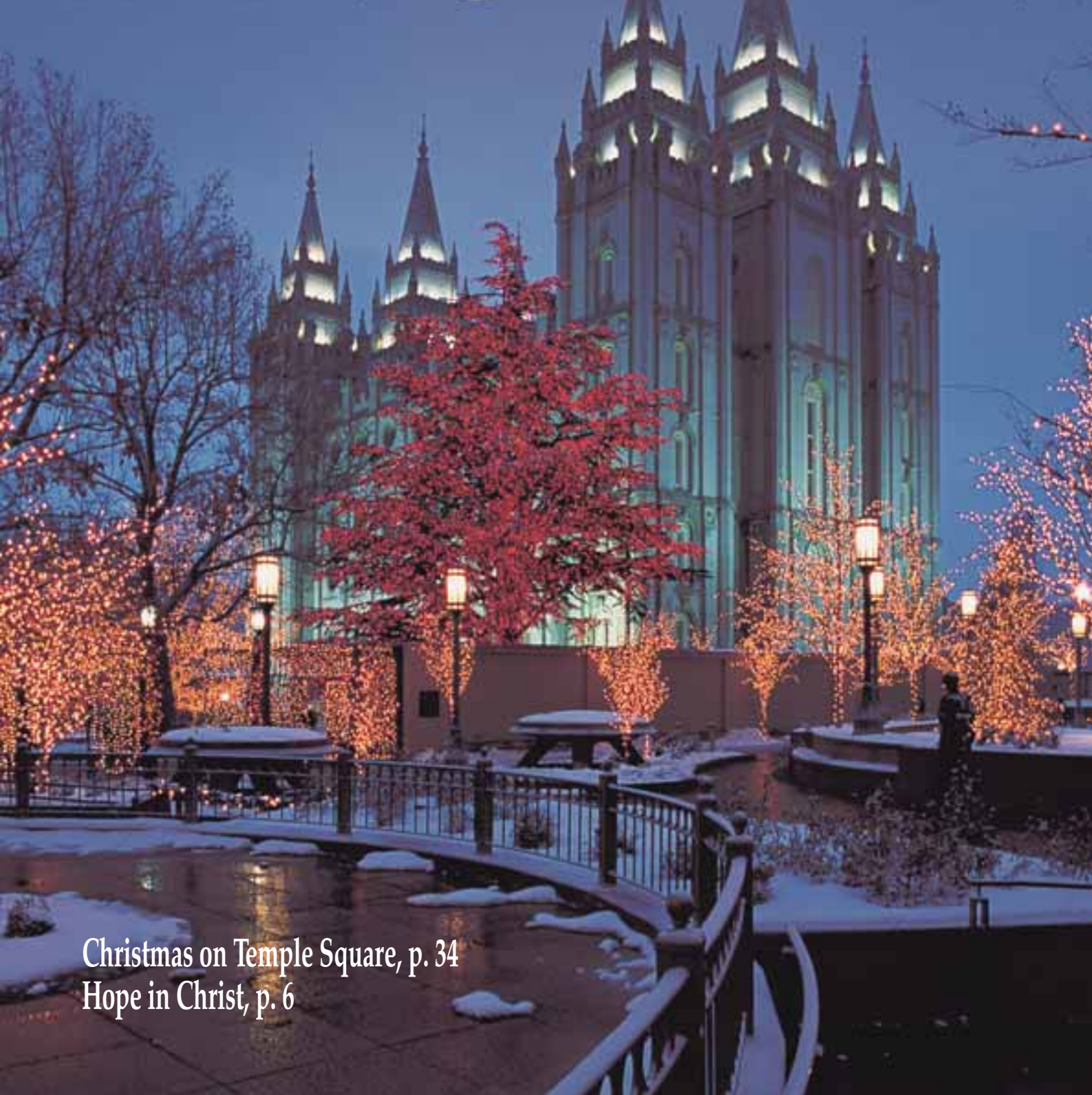


THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • DECEMBER 2002

ENSIGN



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The Birth of Jesus, by Del Parson



"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

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A TESTIMONY OF THE SON *of* GOD



BY PRESIDENT
GORDON B. HINCKLEY

A little more than 2,000 years ago the Redeemer of mankind was born in Bethlehem of Judea (see D&C 20:1). While yet an infant, He was brought to the temple in Jerusalem. There Mary and Joseph heard the wonderful prophecies spoken by Simeon and Anna about the tiny babe who was destined to become the Savior of the world.

He spent His boyhood in Nazareth of Galilee, and when 12 years of age He was brought to the temple again. Mary and Joseph found Him conversing with learned men, “and they were hearing him, and asking him questions” (JST, Luke 2:46).

THE GREAT JEHOVAH

Later, as the Master stood on the temple’s pinnacle, Satan tempted Him as He began His ministry. Still later, the Lord drove the money changers from

the temple, declaring, “My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Matt. 21:13).

Jesus was in very deed the great Jehovah of the Old Testament, who left His Father’s royal courts on high and condescended to come to earth as a babe born in the most humble of circumstances. His birth was foretold centuries earlier by Isaiah, who declared prophetically, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6).

This Jesus Christ of whom we solemnly testify is, as John the Revelator declared, “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.” He “loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever” (Rev. 1:5–6).



After the agony of Gethsemane came His arrest, His trials, His condemnation, then the unspeakable pain of His death on the cross, followed by His burial in Joseph's tomb and the triumphant coming forth in the Resurrection. . . . God be thanked for the gift of His son.

THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

He was and is the Son of the Almighty. He was the only perfect man to walk the earth. He healed the sick and caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He raised the dead. Yet He suffered His own life to be taken in an act of Atonement, the magnitude of which is beyond our comprehension.

Luke records that this anguish was so great that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44), a physical manifestation confirmed in both the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. The suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary, just a few hundred meters from Gethsemane, included both physical and spiritual "temptations, . . . pain, . . . hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer," said King Benjamin, "except it be unto death" (Mosiah 3:7).

After the agony of Gethsemane came His arrest, His trials, His condemnation, then the unspeakable pain of His death on the cross, followed by His burial in Joseph's tomb and the triumphant coming forth in the Resurrection. He, the lowly babe of Bethlehem who two millennia ago walked the dusty roads of Palestine, became the Lord Omnipotent, the King of Kings, the Giver of Salvation to all. None can fully comprehend the splendor of His life, the majesty of His death, the universality of His gift to mankind. We unequivocally declare with the centurion who said at His death, "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39).

OUR LIVING LORD

Such is the witness of the testament of the Old World, the Holy Bible. And there is another voice, that of the testament of the New World, wherein the Father introduced His resurrected Son, declaring, "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name" (3 Ne. 11:7).

Added to all of this is the declaration of modern prophets: "And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!" (D&C 76:22).

No event of human history carries a more compelling witness than does the reality of the Resurrection. His followers on two continents testified of it. Uncounted millions of men and women through the ages have suffered, even unto death, for the witness in their hearts that He lives, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind, whose Atonement came as an act of grace for the entire world. How long and how great is the concourse of brave and humble people who have kept alive the name of Jesus and a testimony of His Redemption!

Now He has come again, in the latter days, to bless us and warm our hearts, to quicken our faith and bring us sure and certain knowledge of His living reality. We, of all people, can sing:

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King!
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
And Saints and angels sing.
("Joy to the World," Hymns, no. 201)*

We honor Him, we worship Him, we love Him as our Redeemer, the great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New Testament. The entire thrust of the testimony of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants declares our living Lord before whom we kneel in humility and faith.

THE SON OF GOD

And so at this Christmas season, we sing His praises and speak our words of faith and gratitude and love. It is His influence in our lives that stirs within us more kindness, more respect, more love,

more concern. It is because of Him and His teachings that we reach out to those in trouble, distress, and need wherever they may be.

It is proper during this season when we commemorate His birth that we remember the Lord Jesus Christ in reverence and with love. He has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. He has brought meaning to our mortal existence. He has given us the gift of eternal life. He was and is the Son of God, who was “made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

God be thanked for the gift of His Son, the Redeemer of the world, the Savior of mankind, the Prince of Life and Peace, the Holy One. □

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

Preparation

Think about what the Savior has done for you that you could not do for yourself. Prayerfully choose one or two statements from President Hinckley’s message that you feel will most benefit those you teach. Then choose a teaching method or activity for each statement that is appropriate for the ages and circumstances of the family members. A few examples of how this may be done are listed below.

Suggestions for Teaching

1. Show some pictures of Christ or of events from His life. Ask family members to describe the pictures and tell how each picture makes them feel about Jesus Christ. Read the last four paragraphs of President Hinckley’s message, and bear your testimony of the Son of God.

2. Invite family members to join you in singing a few Christmas carols (see Hymns, nos. 201–14). Select a few parts of President Hinckley’s message that express his personal feelings for the Son of God. Invite family members to tell which parts of President Hinckley’s testimony most impress them.

3. Write the following name-titles on different sheets of paper: Jehovah; Prince of Life and Peace; Beloved Son; Savior; Giver of Salvation; Redeemer of the world; the Holy One. Show one paper at a time to family members and discuss what we can learn about Christ from each name-title.

No event of human history carries a more compelling witness than does the reality of the Resurrection. . . . We honor Him, we worship Him, we love Him as our Redeemer, the great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New Testament.





Because we believe
in the message of
the empty tomb, we
can trust that God is
a God of love, mercy,
and compassion.

Finding Hope in Christ

The gospel of Jesus Christ enables us to find peace and hope in any circumstances.



BY ELDER JOHANN A.
WONDRA
Area Authority Seventy

When I was a student at the University of Vienna in Austria, two missionaries came to my door, saying, “We have a message for you from God.” I invited them in, wondering why I did so because I didn’t have any interest in religion. Deeply affected by the Hungarian Revolution of 1956—which resulted in thousands of refugees streaming into Austria—I had been seeking to know the meaning of life. But I didn’t expect to find the answer in any church.

The message of these missionaries was the message of the Restoration. I think I loved the Prophet Joseph Smith from the first moment I heard about him. I was especially touched by the circumstances of his Martyrdom. Later, as I spent time reading the Book of Mormon and praying, I received through the power of the Holy Ghost a joyful, peaceful assurance that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was the Prophet of the Restoration, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s restored Church on the earth, led by living prophets who prepare the world for His Second Coming.

In my more than 40 years of Church membership, many personal experiences have confirmed to me that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only true way to peace and happiness in this world. But I also know that you and I cannot escape difficulties, trials, and afflictions in our mortal lives. The gospel of Jesus Christ, however, gives us the strength to prevail, to “overcome by faith” (D&C 76:53), and to go forward with hope and optimism.

THE WOUNDS OF PARTING

My wife and I came to better understand this truth through the loss of our beloved son Georg, who was 27 years of age when he died. When this occurred, I was serving as president of the newly created Austria Vienna South Mission, which included the countries of the former Yugoslavia. Following a zone conference in Zagreb, Croatia, Sister Wondra and I were given a message that we should call home. Soon our beloved daughter-in-law Regina was on the telephone, crying out in the anguish of her soul, “Papa, Georg is dead, Georg is dead!” Subsequent extensive investigations were unable to provide any reason for his death. Our son had never been seriously ill. His heart simply stood still, without any medical reason.

Georg was such a special son, full of joy and life, full of love for us and for his own family, pure in heart and without guile. In 1989 he had been one of the first missionaries to be sent to East Germany during what was a great time for missionary work.

He spoke often about the baptisms in which he and his companions participated, but never about the number of baptisms—he felt these experiences were too sacred to be reduced to statistics. At the end of Georg’s first letter from his mission, he wrote, “Don’t miss me too much. Life has to go forward without me.” On the day of his death, he had read President Gordon B. Hinckley’s message “The Victory over Death” and had underlined, “How tragic, how poignant is the sorrow of those left behind. The grieving widow, the motherless child, the father bereft and alone—all of these can speak of the wounds of parting” (*Ensign*, Apr. 1997, 2).

Our family has suffered from these wounds. We miss Georg so very much! But there is also a burning feeling in our souls that because we believe in the Atonement, in the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ—because we believe in the message of Gethsemane, Golgotha, and the empty tomb—we can also trust, during the sorrowful moments in our lives, that God is a God of love, mercy, and compassion, even when we don’t understand what has happened or why. He accepted the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ, who suffered all things “because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men” (1 Ne. 19:9).

Some weeks after Georg’s death, Sister Wondra and I traveled through Serbia and Montenegro and visited the *White Angel* fresco at the Mileseva Monastery. This fresco is one of the greatest works of art in existence and contains the words to one of the greatest messages ever spoken: “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen” (Luke 24:5–6). This message was a message of comfort to the wonderful, peace-loving, and hospitable people of Serbia throughout all the centuries of tyranny and destruction in their history. And this message provides comfort for all of us—the only real and lasting comfort we have.

In the upper room on the night of the Last Supper—the night of the greatest suffering that ever took place in all the worlds created by Him—Christ spoke about peace, His peace: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). How could He speak about peace in this situation? I feel it was possible only because of His “perfect love” which “casteth out fear” (1 Jn. 4:18). In His intercessory prayer, Christ prayed for His disciples and

for all “which shall believe on me through their word”—which, it is important to note, includes us—“that they may be made perfect in one” and “that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:20, 23, 26).

Leaving the upper room, Jesus and His disciples crossed the Cedron (Kidron) Valley and came to a garden of olive trees on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. This garden was called Gethsemane, a name meaning “oil press.” Olives taste bitter, but when crushed in an olive press, their oil tastes sweet. Christ drank the “bitter cup” so that all bitterness may be removed from our lives and become sweet if we will forsake our sins and come unto Him.

He said, “I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world” (3 Ne. 11:11).

While He prayed in Gethsemane, all of the agony and sorrow of the entire world was centered in Him. He was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows” (Isa. 53:3–4). He took upon His sinless soul the sins of the world and the weight of the world’s

sorrows. “It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that caused Him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from every pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such as only God was capable of experiencing” (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [1916], 613). He prayed to the Father, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). To do the Father’s will was the Son’s supreme desire—even when it was as painful as it was in Gethsemane.

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore. . . .

“Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:16–19).

From Christ we learn to be obedient, even when it is painful, as it was painful for Him in Gethsemane. We learn to serve others, even when it is inconvenient, as it certainly was “inconvenient” for Him on the cross of Golgotha. And we learn to trust in the love of God, even if we might feel God has forsaken us—for when we overcome through faith, these bitter and

In Gethsemane the Savior took upon Himself the sins of the world and the weight of the world’s sorrows. Even when His suffering caused Him “to tremble because of pain” (D&C 19:18), His supreme desire was to do the will of the Father.

sorrowful moments in our lives can become like steps on Jacob's ladder, leading us into the heavenly presence of God (see Gen. 28:12–13).

A GLORIOUS MOMENT

What a glorious moment when the resurrected Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene! "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master" (John 20:15–16).

What exceedingly great joy it must have been for Mary Magdalene to see her beloved Lord, risen from the dead. But He gently said to her, "Hold me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (JST, John 20:17).

He left Mary Magdalene and went triumphantly into the presence of His Father. Again and again I try to imagine this wondrous scene.

ALL MY HOPE IS CENTERED IN CHRIST

Through His atoning sacrifice, Christ broke the bonds of death. Just as He took up His body and came forth from the tomb, even so shall all of us

enjoy a reunion of body and spirit in the day of our own resurrection. "The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individ-

uals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). What "glad tidings of great joy" (D&C 128:19). Life is eternal. Families can be together forever. The loving relationship between husband and wife and between parents and children continues beyond the grave. This will also prove true in our relationship with our beloved son Georg. It is a miracle to Sister Wondra and me that even in the loss of our son, our faith in Christ has grown stronger, and so has our confidence in His words: "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord

that hath mercy on thee" (3 Ne. 22:10).

All my hope is centered in Christ. He is our Savior and Redeemer. He truly is the Good Shepherd who gave His life for His sheep. "God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son" ("The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," *Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 3). □

Elder Johann A. Wondra is an Area Authority Seventy serving in the Europe Central Area.



JESUS KNEELING IN PRAYER AND MEDITATION, BY MICHAEL JARVIS NELSON

A CLOUD OF

*We have ample witnesses
of our Savior's birth and mission.*

BY STEPHEN K. IBA

Christmas is a time for remembering and for being thankful. We often take so much for granted. For example, when was the last time you looked into a beautiful blue sky and wondered at the miracle of stunning white clouds? They come in various sizes and types, such as cirrus, stratus, and cumulus.

In scriptural texts, clouds are often used to carry or convey spiritual presence. The Lord appeared in a cloud to guide the children of Israel through the wilderness to the promised land. The resurrected Jesus was "overshadowed" by a cloud as He ascended into heaven. At the end of the world, the Savior will descend in a cloud with power and great glory.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrews: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, . . . looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1-2).

The Apostle Paul's metaphor of "a cloud of witnesses" in the meridian of time has grown into many clouds of witnesses. We are overshadowed with witnesses of the divinity of Jesus Christ from the fulness of the scriptures and by hundreds of special witnesses since the Restoration commenced.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES BEFORE HIS MORTAL BIRTH

At Christmastime our thoughts particularly turn to our Savior's birth. We often read and ponder the testimonies of those who were witnesses of His

Elisabeth bore witness of the divinity of Jesus Christ when she greeted Mary as "the mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43).



WITNESSES



The shepherds

coming in the flesh, as recorded in the scriptures: **Mary** (see Luke 1:26–56; 2:7, 19) and **Joseph** (see Matt. 1:18–25; 2:13–23), **Elisabeth** (see Luke 1:41–45) and **Zacharias** (see Luke 1:67–79), **the shepherds** (see Luke 2:8–20), **Simeon** (see Luke 2:21–35), **Anna** (see Luke 2:36–38), **the Wise Men** (see Matt. 2:1–12), and **people of ancient**

America (see 3 Ne. 1:15–21).

We may also review and reflect on the scriptural record from some of those who knew of His coming long before He came:

“And the Lord spake unto **Adam**, saying: . . . The name of [the] Only Begotten is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, a righteous Judge, who shall come in the meridian of time. Therefore I give unto you a com-



Adam

mandment, to teach these things freely unto your children” (Moses 6:55, 57–58; emphasis added).

“And it came to pass that **Enoch** talked with the Lord . . . [and] saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh; and his soul rejoiced” (Moses 7:20, 47; emphasis added).

Abraham recorded in Cainan: “Thus I, Abraham, talked with the Lord, face to face. . . . And the Lord said unto me: . . . I am the Lord thy God” (Abr. 3:11, 19). “Abraham saw of his coming, and was filled with gladness and did rejoice” (Hel. 8:17).

“**Moses** stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face” (Moses 1:31; emphasis added). “Yea, did [Moses] not bear record that the Son of God should come?” (Hel. 8:14).

The Savior to **the brother of Jared**: “Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; . . . therefore I show myself unto you. . . . And even as

I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh” (Ether 3:13, 16).

Isaiah: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” (Isa. 9:6) and “Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isa. 6:5).



Brother of Jared

In vision **Father Lehi** “saw One [Jesus Christ] descending out of the midst of heaven” (1 Ne. 1:9).

Nephi: “I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!” (1 Ne. 11:20–21).

Nephi further testified: “My brother, Jacob, also has seen him as I have seen him” (2 Ne. 11:3).

Jacob: “In the body he shall show himself unto those at Jerusalem . . . ; for it behooveth the great Creator that he suffereth himself to become subject unto man in the flesh. . . . And he cometh into the world that he may save all men (2 Ne. 9:5, 21).

Abinadi: “God himself [shall] come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man” (Mosiah 13:34).

Alma prophesied, “He shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel” (Alma 7:10).

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES SINCE HIS RESURRECTION

Consider the following cloud of witnesses in the scriptural record and annals of Church history who testify that the Lord lives today:

In a Jerusalem garden, “Jesus saith unto her, **Mary**. She turned herself, and saith unto him, **Rabboni**” (John 20:16; emphasis added).



Mary

When **eleven of the Apostles** were gathered, “then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst. . . . And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God” (John 20:26, 28).

From **John the Revelator** exiled on an isle: “When I saw him, I fell at his feet. . . . And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not. . . . I am he that liveth, and was dead; . . . I am alive for evermore” (Rev. 1:17–18).

And from the **Apostle Paul**: “Last of all he was seen of me also” (1 Cor. 15:8).



The Nephites

The chief **Apostle Peter** witnessed with certainty: “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, . . . but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet. 1:16).

The **2,500 at Bountiful** went forth, “one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety

and did bear record” (3 Ne. 11:15).

Mormon tells us, “I being fifteen years of age, . . . was visited of the Lord, and tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus” (Morm. 1:15).

Moroni witnesses, “I have seen Jesus, and . . . he hath talked with me face to face” (Ether 12:39).

From **Joseph Smith Jr., in his 15th year**: “When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages. . . . One of them spake . . . , pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*” (JS—H 1:17).

In Hiram, Ohio, the **Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon** (1793–1876) were enwrapped in heavenly vision and testified, “We saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father” (D&C 76:23).

At Kirtland, Ohio, after the temple dedication, the **Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery** (1806–50) declared, “We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit . . . , saying: I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:2–4).



Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery

President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) to his granddaughter: “He stood right here, about three feet above the floor. It looked as though He stood on a plate of solid

gold” (quoted in LeRoi C. Snow, “An Experience of My Father’s,” *Improvement Era*, Sept. 1933, 677).

“I saw the hosts of the dead,” explained **President Joseph F. Smith** (1838–1918). “And while this vast multitude waited and conversed, . . . the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful” (D&C 138:11, 18).

In general conference, **President Spencer W. Kimball** (1895–1985) bore witness by quoting **President John Taylor** (1808–87): “‘I know that Jesus Christ lives,’ said John Taylor, my predecessor, ‘for I have seen him.’ I bear this testimony to you brethren in the name of Jesus Christ” (“Strengthening the Family—the Basic Unit of Society,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 48).

THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHIEF APOSTLE AT THIS TIME

“Of all the things for which I feel grateful . . . , one stands out preeminently,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley. “That is a living testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Almighty God, the Prince of Peace, the Holy One. . . .

“ . . . I have become His Apostle, appointed to do His will and teach His word. I have become His witness to the world. I repeat that witness of faith. . . .

“Jesus is my friend. . . .

“He is my exemplar. . . .

“He is my teacher. . . .

“He is my healer. . . .

“He is my leader. . . .

“He is my Savior and my Redeemer.

Through giving His life in pain and unspeakable suffering, He has reached down to lift me and each of us and all the sons and daughters of God from the abyss of eternal darkness following death. He has provided something better—a sphere of light and understanding, growth and beauty where we may go forward on the road that leads to eternal life. My gratitude knows no bounds. . . .

“ . . . I add my own witness that He is ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ and that ‘no man cometh unto the Father, but by





*President
Gordon B. Hinckley*

[Him]' (John 14:6). Gratefully, and with love undiminished, I bear witness of these things" ("My Testimony," *Ensign*, May 2000, 71).

A TESTIMONY OF CHRIST

The Lord has explained that all of us may obtain a testimony of Him and that such testimony is a gift of the Spirit:

"To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.

"To others it is given to believe on their words" (D&C 46:13–14).

If we believe on the words of the cloud of witnesses who "know," we place ourselves in a position

to be instructed by the Holy Ghost. The Spirit testifies of Christ's divinity as we read and ponder the words of the modern prophets and the holy scriptures. The latter-day apostles and prophets have made it clear that as Church members we should be witnesses of the Savior. And as we testify of Christ and His servants, you and I become part of the glorious cloud of witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. □

Stephen K. Iba is a member of the Olympus Seventh Ward, Salt Lake Olympus Stake.

More on this topic: See Gordon B. Hinckley, "My Testimony," Ensign, May 2000, 69–71; Russell M. Nelson, "Jesus Christ, Our Master and More," Ensign, Apr. 2000, 4–17; Jonathan H. Stephenson, "I Am He," Ensign, Apr. 1999, 6–12.

After Jesus' ascension, two angels from heaven testified to His disciples that "this same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner" (Acts 1:11).





More Than and

BY PATRICIA MERLOS

One year my husband and I felt a deep desire to celebrate Christmas in a different way than we had ever done before. We wanted to teach our two small children a deeper meaning of Christmas, that it means more than lights and bright colors, more than parties and celebrations, more than wrapping paper and ribbons, more than decorating a tree, more than hugs and best wishes.

As Christmas Eve drew near, we weren't sure what we were going to do that night, but I felt free of the stress that normally overwhelms me at Christmastime. We decided we would not go out with friends that night or make any other social commitments. Instead, we would spend the night in simple celebration as a family. Our thoughts would center around our Savior.

On Christmas Eve, I prepared a delicious meal. After dinner, my husband taught us about the birth of Jesus Christ as described in the second chapter of Luke. When he read verses 13 and 14—"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"—we silently joined with the heavenly hosts in thanking our Eternal Father for sending His Son to atone for our sins. Then our young daughter, Ileana, read to us the meaning of Christmas symbols. We opened a few simple gifts and took photographs.

Our evening together was filled with reverence, love, and gratitude for Jesus Christ. We experienced a sweet joy we had never felt before on Christmas Eve.

On Christmas morning we decided to continue our celebration the way we had started it. We

prepared food as if for a picnic, and at about 11:00 A.M., we headed for Opal's house. Opal is 80 years old and not a member of the Church. She has an inner beauty that makes people want to be close to her. Even though Opal doesn't speak our native language and isn't from our Spanish culture, our children have accepted her as their grandmother. Ileana could spend hours talking with Opal. And despite his shyness, our son, Kevin, doesn't hesitate for a minute to hug her. I am grateful for Opal's love, especially since our children's grandparents live very far away from our home in Texas.

We wanted to share our Christmas with this lovely widow who lives alone and has no children. Her eyes sparkled when we arrived. She was emotional as we served dinner—it was probably the first Christmas in many years she had spent with anyone.

After we ate, Opal opened some gifts we had brought her. But our visit was more of a gift to us than to Opal. Her joy warmed our hearts.



Lights Bright Colors

Our family's unplanned Christmas celebrations taught us about the deep significance of the holiday.

Next we went to the hospital to visit Sister Schroeder, a member of our ward. From the time our children were very young, Sister Schroeder had taken notice of them and had made them

feel important and loved. Every time she greeted us, her first smile was for the children. Now she was in intensive care and was close to leaving this world. I didn't think the children would be allowed into her room. But their sincere pleading softened the heart of the nurse, and they were admitted inside.

Since Sister Schroeder was unconscious, I didn't know if she would hear anything we said to her. We wanted to tell her that she was important to us and that we loved her. With all the tenderness in my heart, I caressed Sister Schroeder's arm as I sent a prayer to our Heavenly

Father in her behalf. It was the first Christmas gift I have ever given with such a sincere desire; it was wrapped in compassion and tied with the ribbon of my tears.

Then Ileana approached her bedside and said in an angelic voice, "Sister Schroeder, it's Ileana. I'm here to wish you a Merry Christmas." Her words were brief but sincere.

Our unplanned Christmas taught us much. We came to understand that Christmas celebrations need not be competitions to see who can give or receive the most expensive present. Our most valuable gift is our love—love for the Christ child, who was born 2,000 years ago in a humble manger; love for our families and our neighbors; love for the beautiful world Heavenly Father has given us. Another valuable gift is our compassion—the feeling that causes us "to mourn with those that mourn" (Mosiah 18:9), to lift the weak, to visit the lonely, to dry the tears of those who are sad. And another gift is our gratitude—gratitude for our Savior, who taught us how to live and who lovingly and willingly bore our sins, our griefs, and our weaknesses as His Father had commissioned Him to do.

We celebrate Christmas best when we live the Savior's teachings—not just at Christmas but every day of the year. □

Patricia Merlos is a member of the Longview Third Ward, Longview Texas Stake.

THE

Gifts of Christmas

BY PRESIDENT HOWARD W. HUNTER
(1907–95)

The following address was given at the First Presidency Christmas Devotional, broadcast by satellite to the worldwide membership of the Church on 4 December 1994. It was President Hunter's last public address to the Church.



Brothers and sisters, we extend to you our warmest holiday greetings. As followers of the Master, we desire to draw closer to Him as we remember during this season His wondrous birth two millennia ago.

We are all aware of the significance that a name or title can have in describing an important office. In foretelling the birth of Christ more than 700 years before it occurred, the prophet Isaiah used titles expressing great admiration: “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father” (Isa. 9:6). Isaiah also used the titles *Savior* and *Redeemer*, expressing great faith in Christ and His mission (see Isa. 45:15; 47:4; 49:26; 60:16; 63:16). One of these titles that is of particular interest in our present world is “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,” Isaiah declared (v. 7). What a thrilling hope for a war-weary, sin-laden world!

A PROPHECY FULFILLED

The Lamanite prophet Samuel foretold the birth of the Savior five years before it happened. The people would not let Samuel into Zarahemla to preach, so he stood on a city wall and proclaimed:

“Behold, I give unto you a sign; for five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name.

“And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his coming; for behold, there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day. . . .

“And behold, there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you” (Hel. 14:2–3, 5).

Luke recorded the fulfillment of this prophecy:

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. . . .

“And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

“To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

“And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

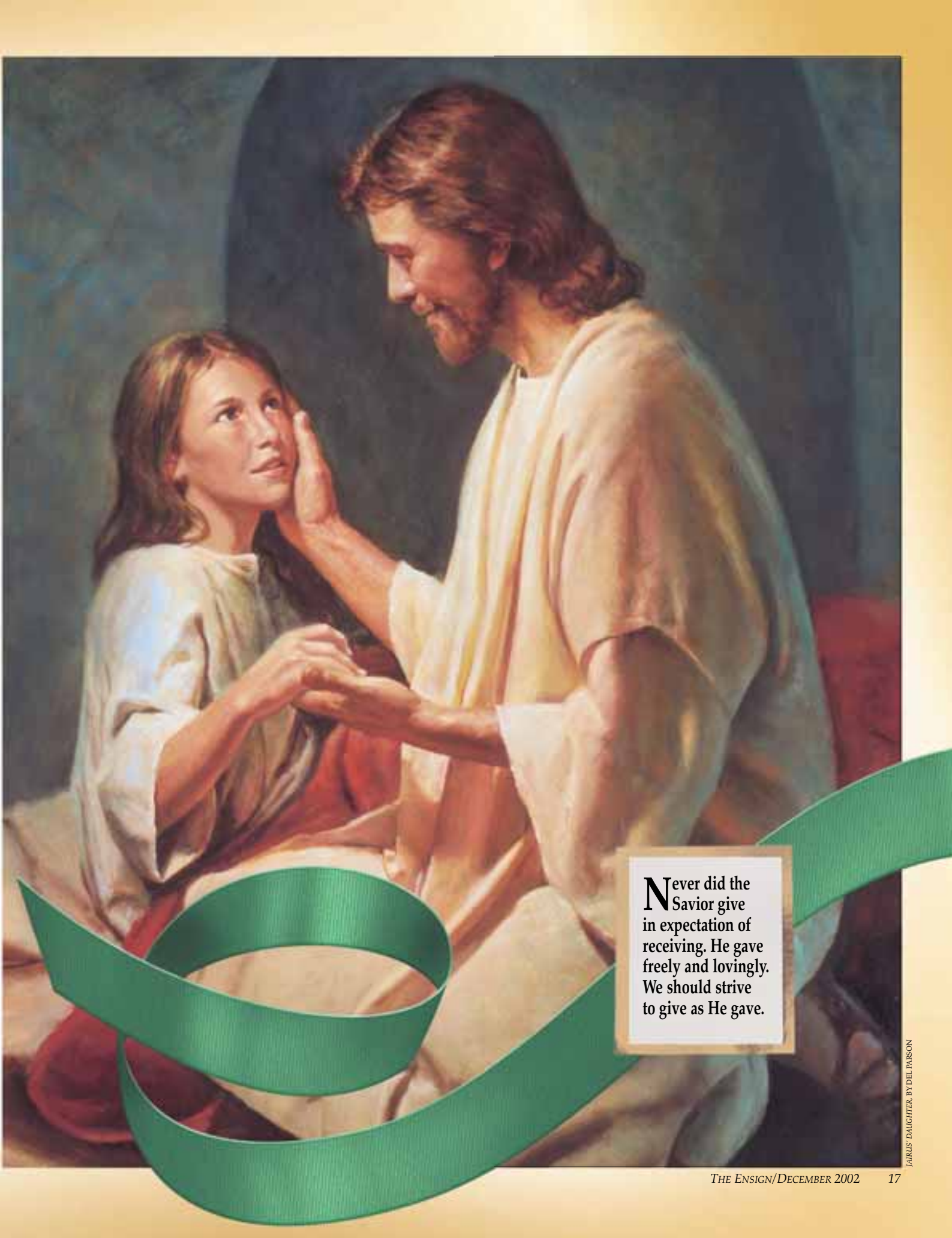
“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

“And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

“And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.



Never did the Savior give in expectation of receiving. He gave freely and lovingly. We should strive to give as He gave.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:1-14).

Such is the beautiful account of our Savior's advent. In the words of Cecil Frances Alexander:

*He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable
And his cradle was a stall.
(Hymns, no. 205)*

In this humble way His life of selfless service began.

GIVING AS HE GAVE

The Savior dedicated His life to blessing other people. As expressed by His chief Apostle, Peter, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

Never did the Savior give in expectation of receiving. He gave freely and lovingly, and His gifts were of inestimable value. He gave eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and legs to the lame; cleanliness to the unclean, wholeness to the infirm, and breath to the lifeless. His gifts were opportunity to the downtrodden, freedom to the oppressed, forgiveness to the repentant, hope to the despairing, and light in the darkness. He gave us His love, His service, and His life. And most important, He gave us and all mortals resurrection, salvation, and eternal life.

We should strive to give as He gave. To give of oneself is a holy gift. We give as a remembrance of all the Savior has given.

Christmas is a time for giving. Someone once said he couldn't think of what to give for Christmas. The next day in the mail he received an anonymous list which read:

*Give to your enemy forgiveness,
To your opponent tolerance,
To your friend your heart,
To all men charity, for the hands that help
are holier than lips that pray,
To every child a good example,
and to yourself—respect.*

All of us need to follow the example of the Savior in giving these kinds of gifts. From Christina Rossetti we read:

*What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would give Him a lamb,
If I were a Wise Man,
I would do my part,—
But what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.¹*

This Christmas, mend a quarrel. Seek out a forgotten friend. Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust. Write a letter. Give a soft answer. Encourage youth.



Write a letter.



Apologize.



Laugh a little more.

Manifest your loyalty in word and deed. Keep a promise. Forgo a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Apologize. Try to understand. Examine your demands on others. Think first of someone else. Be kind. Be gentle. Laugh a little more. Express your gratitude. Welcome a stranger. Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love and then speak it again.

Christmas is a celebration, and there is no celebration that compares with the realization of its true meaning—with the sudden stirring of the heart that has extended itself unselfishly in the things that matter most.²

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

A life filled with unselfish service will also be filled with peace that surpasses understanding. The Savior said: "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). "Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1–3).

This peace can come only through living the principles of the gospel. These principles constitute the program of the Prince of Peace, who is also the prince of glory and the prince of eternal progress. May we be ever faithful in observance of our Savior's teachings. Said He, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

I testify that as we follow the Savior with full purpose of heart, His promise to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well will be fulfilled in our own lives: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13–14).

May we find our spiritual thirst quenched by the living water of the Savior. May He become our focal point at this Christmas season and always. I testify that He lives today, the babe of Bethlehem—now the risen Lord. He and His Eternal Father love and care for each of us in a sacred and personal way.

As His special witness, I extend my love to you this evening and to all of our Heavenly Father's children wherever they may be. My wish for you is a happy, joyous Christmas. May this season bring to you and yours the rich blessings of the gospel of the Savior, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. □

NOTES

1. From "A Christmas Carol," in James Dalton Morrison, ed., *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* (1948), 154.

2. See *McCall's* magazine, Dec. 1959, 82–83.



*Gladden the heart
of a child.*



*Enjoy the beauty
of the earth.*



*Speak your love and
then speak it again.*



THE POWER OF COMPASSION

Church Welfare Services missionaries show the power of love as they bless the lives of others throughout the world.



BY NEIL K. NEWELL AND
LLOYD D. NEWELL

They opened the letter, looked at each other, and laughed. Not that what they had read was funny; it was anything but that. It was just so unexpected. Gary and Molly Dolana of Highland, Utah, both had been working in the medical technology field and were only a few years away from retirement. They had been planning to serve a mission and had expressed to their stake president their willingness to serve. But when they read the words “Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia,” and “humanitarian mission,” they almost couldn’t believe their eyes.

“We were knocked off our feet by the call,” Sister Dolana says. “It was a complete shock. But we went to the temple. We prayed and fasted. We thought about it, and there was no question that we would go. We knew it was a call from the Lord.”

So Brother and Sister Dolana took early retirement, packed their bags, and stepped onto the plane that would take them half a world away to Mongolia.

When the Dolanas accepted the call to serve as humanitarian missionaries, they joined more than 700 others who serve throughout the world relieving suffering and fostering self-reliance among some of the world’s neediest people. Through their service, they

Far left: A Guatemalan girl typifies some of those reached through the compassionate service of missionary couples. Above left: While serving as a missionary in India, Elder Charles Parker helped people like this local Relief Society president learn to use computers.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG DIMOND

Sister Loretta Smith taught English classes in Ghana. Inset: Elder Larry Call helped Muza villagers in Zimbabwe obtain a new well with the assistance of Latter-day Saint Charities.



PHOTO BY KATHLEEN CALL

are living testimonies of the Prophet Joseph Smith's belief that "a man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 174).

ANSWERING THE CALL TO SERVE

In 1990 the first full-time welfare missionary calls to serve in humanitarian assignments were extended to three couples and two sister missionaries to travel to Romania and assist those who cared for the many thousands of children in state-run orphanages. Each of these missionaries had specific training in a field

that would be of use: Harold and Enid Davis, a businessman and a social worker; Alvin and Barbara Price, a professor of child development and a special education teacher; Fred and Dorothy Fife, a physician and a nurse; Beverly Campbell, a professor of education; and Virginia Bruce, a registered nurse. They worked with physicians, teachers, and government officials to improve the lives of the children in government orphanages. These pioneers of modern-day humanitarian work discovered that as they worked with local officials and child care providers, bonds of friendship developed and mutual respect, love, and understanding grew.

Today welfare missionaries serving in humanitarian assignments come from a wide variety of occupations and life experiences. Although many have medical or dental expertise, welfare missionaries today are just as likely to have worked as teachers, administrators, homemakers, or accountants. The Church has discovered that although a specialized

A CALL TO SERVE



"You have received much in your life; go forth and freely give in the service of our Lord and Savior. Have faith; the Lord knows where you are needed. The need is so great, brothers and sisters, and the laborers are so few."

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Couple Missionaries: A Time to Serve," Ensign, May 2001, 27.

skill can be useful, what is most needed is someone who can go into the world and represent the Church following the counsel of the Prophet Joseph Smith "to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide for the widow, to dry up the tear of the orphan, to comfort the afflicted, whether in this church, or in any other, or in no church at all, wherever he finds them" (*Times and Seasons*, 15 Mar. 1842, 732).

THAILAND

Joel and Kathryn Sperry of Heber City, Utah, always wanted to go on a mission. After Joel retired from a career in education, they received a call to Surin, Thailand. They felt stunned. They didn't have much idea of what they'd find there. They knew they would be in a rural area and their primary assignment would be training local elementary and middle-school English teachers. For several months, the Sperrys worked to introduce new teaching techniques and to help Thai teachers and school administrators refine their English pronunciation.

But as they taught, the Sperrys noticed many of the children arriving at school without shoes. Some had little to eat. The more the Sperrys investigated, the more they realized the children's diet consisted mostly of rice, very few vegetables, and almost no protein.

Joel had always loved gardening and Kathryn's father had worked as a county agricultural agent, so the thought occurred to them that it might be possible to create a few self-sustaining projects that could not only provide additional nutrition for the children's school lunch but also help the children learn to grow their own food.

School administrators were excited about the idea, and the Sperrys proposed it to the Church Welfare Services. With funding from the Church, projects began to spring up in schools all over the province of Surin. In one school, the students created an agricultural plot where they weeded, watered, and grew fresh vegetables. In another, they created an artificial pond and stocked it with fresh fish. Chickens laid eggs and provided protein in another school project. In yet another, they built a specially designed shed for growing mushrooms.

In each case, the schools purchased the products from the projects, providing funds to ensure the projects would continue. Lunch at the schools became

more nutritious, providing students with needed vitamins and protein. Students learned valuable skills as they grew food and cared for animals. By the time the Sperrys had fulfilled their mission and were ready to return home, they had created projects in 36 schools.

"When we first announced we were going to serve a mission," Sister Sperry says, "people would say, 'But we need you in the ward.' After serving in Thailand, I know that we were needed more in the world."

ZIMBABWE

When Larry and Kathleen Call of Afton, Wyoming, received their mission call to serve as Church Humanitarian Service directors in Zimbabwe, they had no idea where the country was. Larry, a retired business executive, had thought it would be enjoyable to teach religion in Spain; Kathleen was happy to go wherever the Lord wanted them. Like many members, they thought humanitarian missionary assignments were only for those with a medical background. But they had a willingness to serve, and so they accepted the call.

"It's a mission we wouldn't trade for anything in the world," Sister Call says. "This is the most exciting thing we've ever done!"

In Zimbabwe they worked with churches and other nonprofit agencies, bringing in food, clothing, blankets, and hygiene supplies to people in extreme circumstances. They worked with schools, hospitals, orphanages, and social service organizations. They combined their efforts with countless people of various religions to relieve suffering and improve the quality of life for the people of the country.

So many have so little in Zimbabwe. There are hospitals without aspirin, soap, or towels; schools without books or electricity; homes without food or hope. "We didn't scratch the surface," Brother Call says, "but we made a difference! We had no idea before we left how the Church has been prepared by the Lord to make such a difference in people's lives."

Patricia Walsh of the Dominican Sisters Health Desk in Zimbabwe (she is an authority on the AIDS pandemic and one of those responsible for the health care of tens of thousands) wrote Brother and Sister Call: "The two of you have given so much hope and courage to so many; you have been so generous with

your precious time, your friendship. We have never received so much material support from one group before. This is not just 'material.' It is indeed love translated into action. I pray that both of you and your family, friends, and Church will be abundantly blessed for all that you are to God's people and for all that you are doing for them."

Jean Webster, head of orphan work for the Evangelical Fellowship in Zimbabwe, told the Calls, "When people ask me where I get my help, I tell them I get it from the Mormons—and that they are good Christians."

During the Calls' mission, a Catholic nun and friend with whom they had worked closely asked Brother Call to give a blessing to a young girl dying of AIDS. He willingly responded. Sister Call comments, "I learned that true religion is to 'visit the fatherless and widows' and alleviate the suffering of God's children. That's what we were there to do."

INDIA

Graham and Colleen Misbach of Levan, Utah, found rich experience assisting the poor in India. They discovered a school for the blind that had only one toilet. It was connected to the main building by a rope, and the children had to hold on to the rope in order to find it. The Misbachs, with the resources of the Church Welfare Services, helped build six new toilets and also acquired Braille typewriters for the school. Sister Misbach noticed how beautifully the children sang, and she organized a choir made up of students from the school. They entered a talent competition sponsored by a TV station, and students from the school won first, second, and third place.

Later the Misbachs discovered a leper hospital founded by Mother Teresa that had fallen into disrepair. The Misbachs went to work once again, binding up wounds, providing leper bandages, bringing in blankets and baskets of fruit and nourishing food.

"We could have stayed home and been content," Brother Misbach says, "but we know we are needed so much more here. As a consequence, we feel much closer to the prophet and to our Savior."

FOLLOWING THE SAVIOR

"What a tragedy if we had missed this opportunity," says Brother Dolana of the call to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. "This was a life-altering experience. Our marriage was strengthened, and our children and their families were affected as well. While we were away, our children kept in touch with their elderly grandparents. Without that, they might never have grown so close to their grandparents."

"We wanted our children to understand more than their little world. We wanted them to understand what the Savior did when He walked among the poor. We hoped that through our example, they would feel His presence."

"After this experience," Brother Sperry says of his time in Thailand, "material things don't mean so much. We have a whole new set of things to think of and pray about."

SERVING A WELFARE/HUMANITARIAN MISSION

There are three types of welfare missions:

1. Welfare operations. Many are called to serve in and administer welfare operations (such as overseeing bishops' storehouses or serving in an LDS employment center or in an LDS Family Services office). These operations are primarily within the United States, although as Welfare Services operations expand throughout the world, opportunities for serving international welfare missions (particularly in Employment Services) are increasing.

2. Humanitarian assignments. Welfare missionaries who serve in humanitarian assignments generally work in areas where the Church is less developed (Asia, Russia, eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa). These missionaries often work with community groups and already established agencies to help those of other faiths. In some areas, welfare missionaries may assist with leadership development, reactivation, and other missionary activities.

3. Additional assignments. Sometimes proselyting missionaries can be given additional assignments in welfare (these are primarily single sister missionaries). They work with members as well as with those of other

faiths to improve living standards.

Although all mission assignments are directed by inspiration, consideration is given for those who request a specific kind of mission. Certain skills and qualities may lend themselves more to a welfare mission. These include:

- Good health.
- Fluency in a second language or a desire to learn one.
- Technical background (such as medical, social science, engineering, health, or education).
- Administration and management background.
- Ability to serve 18 months. (Those serving less than 18 months are rarely asked to serve an international mission.)
- No dependent children.
- Church leadership experience.
- Adequate finances.
- Interest in serving a humanitarian mission.

Those interested in serving a welfare mission may want to:

- Discuss their interests with their bishop.
- Talk with others who have served similar missions to get a feel for what the experience is like.
- Work to get medical concerns resolved. □



Left: John Hess, right, helped farmers in Belarus learn how to multiply the yield of their potato crops.

Below: Marva Watson found love and friendship among the people she served in Beirut, Lebanon.



PHOTO BY THOMAS WATSON

President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) taught, “The Lord doesn’t really need us to take care of the poor, but *we* need this experience; for it is only through our learning how to take care of each other that we develop within us the Christlike love and disposition necessary to qualify us to return to his presence” (“Living Welfare Principles,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 92; emphasis in original).

“Our life in Peru was better than anything we’ve ever known,” says Rick Meyers of Victorville, California. He and his wife, Alma, accepted a call to serve as welfare missionaries in Peru while still in their 40s. “Nothing matches the fulness of joy we had down there. We felt that we were following a call from the Lord, that we were fulfilling our purpose on earth, the mission of Jesus Christ.”

Neil and Laverle Christensen of Holladay, Utah, served three other missions before being called to Djakarta, Indonesia, on a humanitarian mission. “When we accepted this calling, we knew it would take us out of our comfort zone,” Brother Christensen says. “To say that our lives will never be the same is an understatement. This is so much more fulfilling than sitting in a chair watching your birth certificate expire. It’s real adventure. We’ve had wonderful experiences we never dreamed we would have.”

Perhaps these experiences are what President Gordon B. Hinckley had in mind when he said,

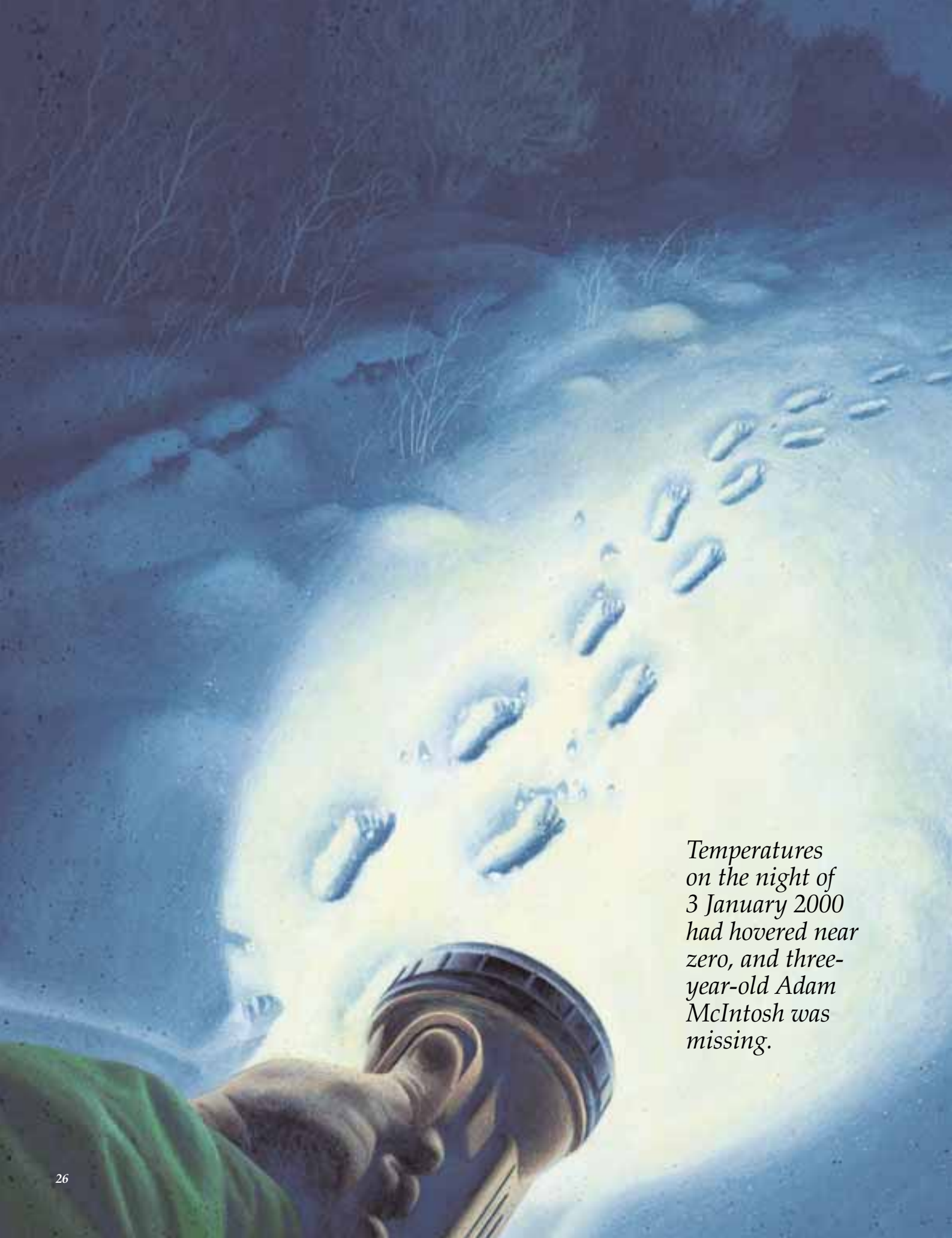
“Generally speaking, the most miserable people I know are those who are obsessed with themselves; the happiest people I know are those who lose themselves in the service of others” (“Whosoever Will Save His Life,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1982, 5).

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “If the Savior were among us in mortality today, He would be found ministering to the needy, the suffering, the sick” (“Inspired Church Welfare,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 78). Those who serve welfare missions spend their lives in service to “the least of these” (Matt. 25:40). They walk in the footsteps of the Savior, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the lonely, and giving hope to the despondent. They understand in a profoundly personal way the Lord’s counsel to “Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37).

“Have compassion, making a difference” (Jude 1:22). Those who serve welfare missions show that rich blessings come into the lives of both givers and receivers when loving, generous people exercise this compassion that makes a difference. □

Neil K. Newell is a member of the Orem Utah Fifth Ward, Orem Utah Stake. Lloyd D. Newell is a member of the Moyle Park Ward, Alpine Utah North Stake.

More on this topic: See Vaughn J. Featherstone, “Couple Missionaries: ‘Too Wonderful for Me,’” *Ensign*, Sep. 1998, 15; David B. Haight, “Couple Missionaries: A Wonderful Resource,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1996, 7; Giles H. Florence Jr., “So Many Kinds of Missions,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1990, 6.



*Temperatures
on the night of
3 January 2000
had hovered near
zero, and three-
year-old Adam
McIntosh was
missing.*

Little Boy Lost

BY EMMETT R. SMITH

Carl and Paula McIntosh live with their five children in the serenity of the rural mountain community of Central, Utah, located 25 miles from St. George. Cabins and houses are widely scattered along the unpaved cedar-lined roads nestled in a valley that sits at 5,200 feet surrounded by 9,000-foot mountains.

On the evening of Sunday, 2 January 2000, it seemed idyllic here, as if nothing could go wrong. Brother McIntosh had finished his duties as elders quorum president and Sister McIntosh as Young Women president. Dinner was over, games played, stories read, prayers offered, and hugs and kisses given. Morning would come soon. Brother McIntosh had to get up by 5:00 A.M. The three older children—Benjamin, Peter, and Gabriel—had to get up in time to catch a 7:50 A.M. bus to take them 17 miles to their elementary school. Three-year-old Adam and five-year-old Carl also had to get up early so they could go with their mother when she drove the older boys the half mile to the bus stop.

Nearly four inches of snow had fallen during the day on Sunday, but by night the skies had cleared, bringing frigid temperatures. The fields were covered with icy crystals. Before he went to bed, Brother McIntosh turned up the heat, since this was to be one of the coldest nights of the year, with temperatures hovering near zero.

ADAM'S GONE

The next morning, Brother McIntosh's eyes blinked open before 5:00 A.M. Why? What had awakened him? He felt something was wrong. He got out of bed and went to the family room. It was so cold. Then he heard the furnace going on and off, on and off.

He continued his search through the house and discovered that the front door was open. "It's that dog," he muttered to himself. "Somehow he's pushed the door open." A blast of cold air hit him as he pulled the door closed. But the dog, Duncan, a 40-pound Australian shepherd and Border collie mix, was not inside the house or on the porch.

Then Brother McIntosh went from bedroom to

bedroom, checking his children, finding all but three-year-old Adam. Fear began to rise in his heart. "Adam," he whispered as he checked the beds again. Finally, he gently shook Paula awake. "Don't panic, but Adam's gone. He must be outside."

Brother and Sister McIntosh pulled on their coats and shoes, grabbed two flashlights, and rushed into the night. They stopped, wondering which way to go. Both knew no one could survive for long outside in that cold and snow in just pajamas and bare feet. Adam could have gone any direction—up the hill toward Cedar Drive, north on Lodge Road, down toward the bus stop, or off on any number of roads that connected fields, woods, and houses.

Then Paula saw footprints of small bare feet in the snow outside the house.

THE DISAPPEARING TRAIL

Paula got in the van and slowly followed Carl as he tracked the footprints 100 feet to Lodge Road. There the footprints disappeared. With prayers in their hearts, both felt inclined to go south on the road toward the old lodge. They did not understand the inspiration in that decision until later.

"The promptings of the Spirit came over and over, and we knew they would lead us to our little boy," remembers Brother McIntosh. "We knew that Adam's time was limited."

Brother McIntosh could hardly walk on the road because it was glassed over with black ice. "How could Adam have walked on this road?" he wondered. "Maybe we are going the wrong direction." Then something drew him over to the side. There in a small patch of snow were the prints of two small bare feet. Next to them were the paw prints of a dog.

Adam and Duncan had been this way! "Stay with him, Duncan!" Brother McIntosh pleaded out loud. Soon the snow patch disappeared, taking with it the footprints. Then, to their joy, they reappeared in the next patch of snow. Brother McIntosh hurried, figuring that Adam had been outside at least 45 minutes.

Now the McIntoshes were almost a half mile from their house. Suddenly Duncan came trotting

out of the darkness toward Carl. Rejoicing, Brother McIntosh said, "Go to Adam, Duncan. Go to Adam." The dog turned and led Brother McIntosh on toward the lodge. As they approached the old building, Duncan led Carl away from the building on a snow-packed trail used as a shortcut to the bus stop. Sister McIntosh had to leave Carl and Duncan temporarily so she could drive on the road that swept around west of the lodge. There she met up with her husband again.

"Anything?" Now she was in tears.

"Nothing, but we'll find him."

Carl slid into the van, and they slowly retraced the route back to the lodge. As they neared the building, Brother McIntosh heard a child's scream. They stopped. Carl climbed out of the van, calling Adam's name as he made his way toward the old lodge. There in the beam of his flashlight he saw two old backless, broken chairs pulled together—nothing else. Then he noticed Adam intertwined on the rungs under the seats. He ran through the snow to get him. Cuts and bruises and scrapes covered Adam's face, hands, and arms. His eyes were wild and glassy and his breathing shallow.

"I thought I was going to have trouble getting Adam untangled from those crosspieces, but he was so stiff and still that I was able to get him out easily," remembers Brother McIntosh. "I knew hypothermia had set in; I had seen it before. We bundled him in a blanket and got him home as fast as we could."

FIVE HOURS

Once at home, the McIntoshes noticed a bluish hue around Adam's mouth and on his fingers and feet. Again and again they prayed for help as they put Adam in a bathtub with lukewarm water. They worked furiously for 45 minutes, but Adam's response was still not good. He could not speak or see. He did not recognize his parents and made only a few sounds.

At last the McIntoshes felt they could transport Adam to the hospital, and they bundled him up in blankets and rushed down the mountain to St. George. Adam's fingers and toes were now black. Immediately the medical personnel encased him in

PRAYER: AN OPEN CHANNEL



"One of the requirements made of the Latter-day Saints is that they shall be faithful in attending to their prayers, both their secret and family prayers. The object that our Heavenly Father has in requiring this is that we may be in communication with Him, and that we may have a channel open between us and the heavens whereby we can bring down upon ourselves blessings from above."

President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945), *Gospel Standards*, comp. G. Homer Durham (1941), 548.

inflated heat blankets. His body temperature was an alarming 85 degrees Fahrenheit instead of 98.6. For five hours the doctors, nurses, and technicians worked to save Adam's life. Slowly, ever so slowly, Adam's body temperature came back to normal. The doctor said that Adam would have died if he had been outside even 10 minutes longer.

That night, Brother McIntosh held Adam in his arms. The room was bright, warm, and safe. Among the things they talked about was why Adam had screamed out.

"It was good that Duncan went with you," said Carl.

"Yep, but I got mad at him."

"Why? You love him."

"Duncan wouldn't let me

sleep. I was tired and lay down. I closed my eyes, but he kept breathing on me. He bumped me with his nose and licked my face. I yelled at him, but he wouldn't stop. He kept me awake. I was mad at you too."

"Why?"

"I heard the car and you calling me. It was keeping me awake, so I yelled at you. That's when you came to get me."

HEART FULL OF THANKS

"Because of this experience," says Brother McIntosh, "we know that the Lord holds true to His promises when we keep His commandments, pray always, and follow spiritual promptings. He will bless us greatly. Yet we also know that if Adam had died, Heavenly Father would have comforted us and helped us to understand."

Sister McIntosh agrees, adding, "We know Adam was watched over. We realized now that we were led to him. For the next two weeks, I held him in my arms all night and kept him at my side all day. Never before that awful but blessed day did I realize the importance of following the teaching found in Alma: 'Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God' " (Alma 37:37). □

Emmett R. Smith is a member of the Central Ward, St. George Utah West Stake.

When children want to bear TESTIMONY

Young children can be taught to respond to the Spirit and share heartfelt experiences.



BY ELDER CARL B. COOK
Area Authority Seventy

A few years ago, during the general session of a stake conference at which I was presiding, my testimony was strengthened by the expressions of a young boy. I invited Brian Cox, a priest preparing for a mission, to come forward and bear a brief testimony. To my surprise, a very young boy, also named Brian Cox, began making his way to the pulpit. When he arrived, I explained to him that the invitation had been meant for an older boy with the same name. I then gave him the option of returning to his seat. However, he quickly assured me that he wanted to bear his testimony!

He proceeded to the pulpit with my approval, stretched tall so he could see over it, and shared his sincere feelings about the restored gospel. He declared that Joseph Smith had been called of God and that the Church today is led by a prophet. He expressed his appreciation for Jesus Christ, for his blessings, and for a loving family. Young Brian spoke spontaneously from his heart, with conviction, and without rehearsal or memorization. Hearts were touched and testimonies strengthened because this young boy was prepared to bear his testimony at a moment's notice.

Contrast this with the child who goes to the microphone less prepared with his own feelings



Loving, sincere parents can extend a spiritual lifeline to their children through consistently seeking, developing, and bearing strong testimony.

and convictions who must be prompted on what to say, or who is primarily looking for the approval of others.

Young children desiring to bear testimony in public can be taught to respond to the Spirit and share heartfelt expressions. Such teaching is done most effectively in the home by loving parents who adhere to principles related to testimony bearing.

A LIFELINE OF STRENGTH AND POWER

The testimonies we bear to one another become a spiritual lifeline, helping us as we encounter the difficulties and challenges of life. Our testimonies, the core of our moral strength, develop, grow, and flourish, in large part, because the Holy Ghost has confirmed to us the truthfulness of the testimonies borne by others. It is especially important to extend this lifeline to our children.

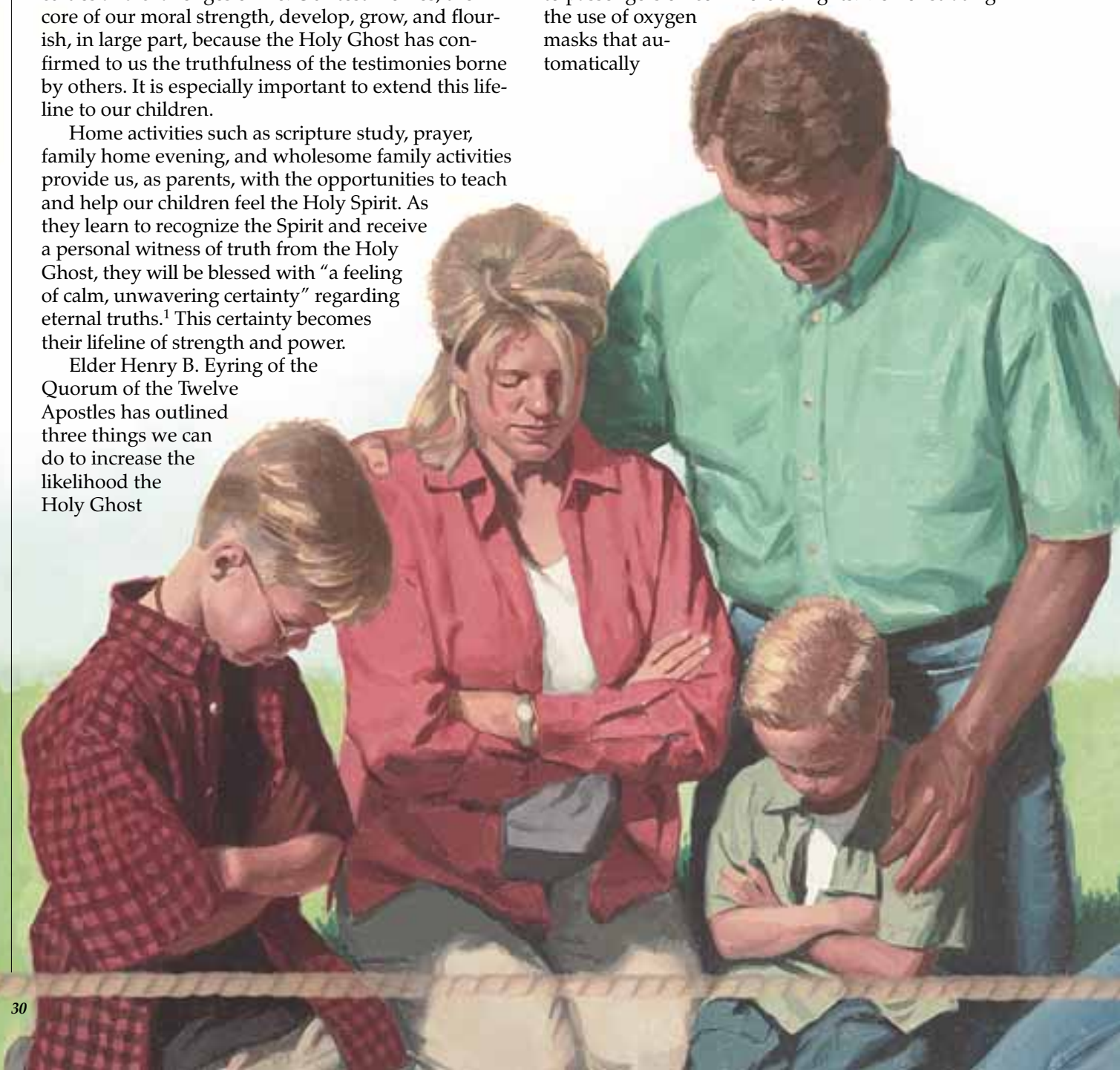
Home activities such as scripture study, prayer, family home evening, and wholesome family activities provide us, as parents, with the opportunities to teach and help our children feel the Holy Spirit. As they learn to recognize the Spirit and receive a personal witness of truth from the Holy Ghost, they will be blessed with “a feeling of calm, unwavering certainty” regarding eternal truths.¹ This certainty becomes their lifeline of strength and power.

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has outlined three things we can do to increase the likelihood the Holy Ghost

will bear witness of sacred truth to our children:

“First, we can teach some sacred truth. Then, we can testify that we know what we have taught is true. And then we must act so that those who hear our testimony see that our actions conform with what we said was true. The Holy Ghost will then confirm to them the truth of what we said and that we knew it to be true. That is how a legacy of testimony is created, preserved, and transmitted in a family.”²

Loving, sincere parents with strong testimonies of their own are better equipped than anyone else to influence their children’s testimonies. Our instructions and examples are like those given by flight attendants to passengers on commercial flights. Demonstrating the use of oxygen masks that automatically



drop from the ceiling during emergency situations, flight attendants instruct parents to first put on their own masks, then assist their young children. We must be consistently seeking, developing, and bearing strong testimonies of our own in order to extend this spiritual lifeline to our children.

EXPRESSING FEELINGS IN THE HOME

Learning how to appropriately express heartfelt feelings is a prelude to inspirational testimony bearing. And what better place to learn and practice this than within our families? When parents establish a pattern of sharing their innermost feelings in the home, children will gain confidence that their expressions will be accepted and respected. Our homes will then become spiritual fortresses.

The sharing of spiritual feelings can become an integral part of family communication as daily experiences unfold and gospel principles are discussed. The scriptures provide many examples of parents expressing their testimonies to their children. For example, Lehi spoke to his family “according to the feelings of his heart and the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Ne. 4:12). His wife, Sariah, also revealed her innermost feelings to

her family when her sons returned safely from Jerusalem (see 1 Ne. 5:8). She showed great humility and took the opportunity to testify to her family.

The Prophet Joseph Smith enjoyed a home where feelings could be expressed without fear. He recorded that when the angel Moroni told him to tell his father of the visions he had received: “I obeyed; I returned to my father in the field, and rehearsed the whole matter to him. He replied to me that it was of God, and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger” (JS—H 1:50). It is significant that Joseph Sr. told his son that he believed the manifestation was of God. Father Joseph was expressing his feeling and testimony that the vision was divine. Therefore, his instruction to his son to obey the angel carried particular spiritual power.

As we share expressions of our innermost feelings with our children, we can include various elements of what we know to be true, thus providing the Holy Ghost with an opportunity to manifest the truthfulness of what we say. Elder Eyring has said, “Because God always honors covenants, I can make a promise to those who in faith keep the covenant to create experiences of giving love and bearing testimony with their families. They will reap a harvest of hearts touched, faith in Jesus Christ exercised unto repentance, and the desire and the power to keep covenants strengthened.”³



When parents establish a pattern of scripture study, prayer, family home evening, and sharing spiritual feelings, children gain the confidence to bear inspirational testimony.

INFORMAL COMMENTS

Often our daily activities and challenges give parents opportunities to bear testimony in informal conversations with family members. Some examples are:

- “I know Heavenly Father loves you and is mindful of what you are feeling.”
- “Even though money is limited, I know that if we keep paying our tithing the Lord will bless us to be able to obtain the things we need.”
- “Today in sacrament meeting I felt the Spirit confirming the truth of the counsel given by our bishop.”
- “I have had similar trials and was lifted as I turned to our Savior for help.”

Candid statements of love and testimony not only teach but can become the basis for more formal testimony bearing by parents and children. For example, after his experience in the Sacred Grove, Joseph Smith went home fatigued. He recorded that his mother was concerned and inquired what the matter was. Joseph replied, “Never mind, all is well—I am well enough off.” He then said to his mother, “I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true” (JS—H 1:20).⁴ Young Joseph’s response to his mother’s honest concern set the stage for Joseph to share his experience with his whole family and eventually the world.

This interaction between mother and son reveals several significant lessons: (1) Mother Smith was available when Joseph wanted to talk; (2) she knew Joseph well, so she sensed that something was wrong; (3) she listened even after Joseph seemed to shrug off her concern; and (4) the sharing of feelings was possible because of the closeness and trust in their relationship, as evidenced by Joseph’s candid response to his mother that the church she was attending was not the true Church.

INSPIRED QUESTIONS

Questions such as the one asked by Mother Smith can evoke expressions of insight, deep feelings, and testimony. The Savior’s question to His disciples, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” elicited from

Simon Peter one of the most powerful testimonies in all scripture: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:13, 16). This question required His disciples to ponder their feelings and put them into words.

Asking sincere questions of family members can provide similar opportunities for meaningful expressions within our homes. Some questions we might ask are:

- Would you like to tell me what you are feeling now?
- How do you know when Heavenly Father has answered your prayers?
- What did you feel in your heart as we discussed this principle?
- What do you think the Savior would do?

As family members ponder and express their thoughts and feelings about such questions, the Holy Ghost will bear witness of truth, and testimonies will be strengthened.



Young Joseph Smith shared his experience in the Sacred Grove with his family, among whom feelings could be expressed without fear.

PUBLIC TESTIMONIES

Parents are responsible to teach their young children how to bear their testimonies in public settings such as youth conferences, semi-

nary, Primary, or fast and testimony meetings. The principles that govern appropriate testimony bearing should be learned and applied at home, thus preparing children to share their heartfelt thoughts with others. Public testimony bearing is most often a natural extension of the testimony bearing experiences family members have at home.

In fast and testimony meetings, our Church leaders invite us to “bear brief, heartfelt testimonies and to relate faith-promoting experiences.”⁵ When guided by the Holy Ghost, we will refrain from sharing lengthy narratives, unloading personal challenges, giving preachments, making repetitious statements, or saying and doing anything that detracts from the Spirit.

Allowing the Holy Spirit to prompt family members to bear testimony, rather than directly or indirectly pressuring them to do so, contributes to the likelihood that each will have a positive experience and also preserves the spirit of the meeting.

Young children should be encouraged to bear testimony in sacrament meeting only when *they*

TEACHING ABOUT TESTIMONIES



"Parents and teachers should help children learn what a testimony is and when it is

appropriate for them to express it. It may be best to have younger children learn to share their testimonies at such times as family home evening or when giving talks in Primary until they are old enough to do so in a fast and testimony meeting."

From First Presidency letter, 2 May 2002.

feel the Holy Ghost prompts them to do so, and when they can do so on their own. By not directing their expressions, we are conveying the important principle that testimonies are not a recitation of words but an opportunity to express sincere feelings related to the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Recently, I listened as a very young girl bore her testimony in fast and testimony meeting. I was particularly touched when she expressed appreciation for Joseph Smith in "restoring our Church." Even at a young age this daughter of God felt a part of the body of Saints. The words she used to express her feelings were her own. I felt her sincerity and humility as she spoke by the Spirit.

I testify that we can extend a lifeline of testimony to our children when we provide a home environment inviting to the Spirit. We can teach and testify as

prompted by the Holy Ghost, allowing the Spirit to develop within their souls a core of strength that will carry them through the challenges of life. They will then come to know and feel joy as they, in turn, bear their testimonies and extend that lifeline to others. □

NOTES

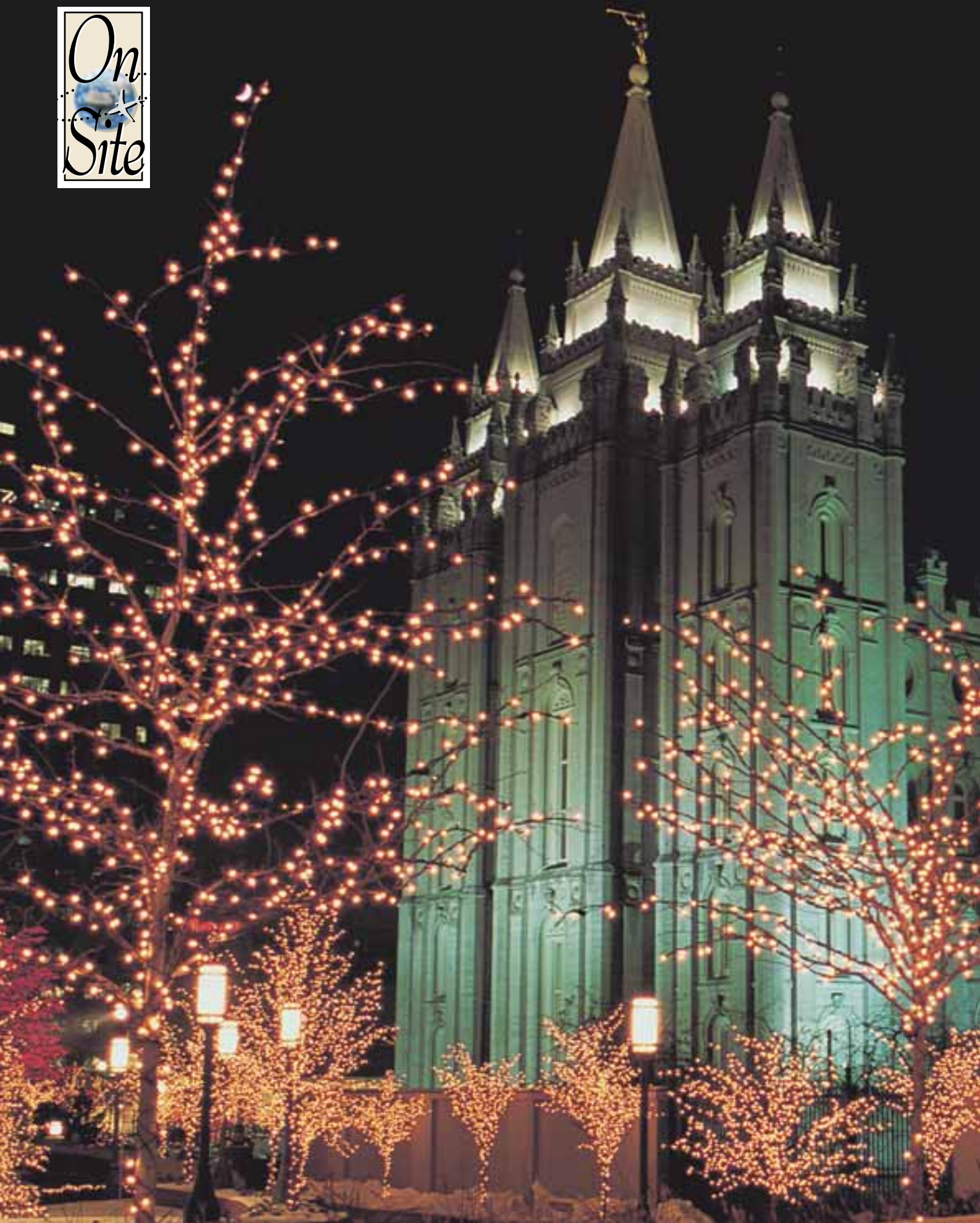
1. See Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 785.
2. "A Legacy of Testimony," *Ensign*, May 1996, 62.
3. "Witnesses for God," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 32.
4. Joseph had received some pressure to become Presbyterian from family members who had recently joined that church. See Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley (1958), 69–70.
5. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics* (1998), 56.

Elder Carl B. Cook is an Area Authority Seventy serving in the Utah North Area.

More on this topic: See Shirley M. Call, "Helping Children Learn to Give Talks," Ensign, Mar. 1999, 44; Susan L. Warner, "Bear Record of Him," Ensign, Nov. 1998, 66; Emerson R. West, "This I Know," Ensign, Dec. 1993, 26; LeGrand R. Curtis, "Happiness Is Homemade," Ensign, Nov. 1990, 12.



The principles that govern appropriate testimony bearing should be learned and applied at home.





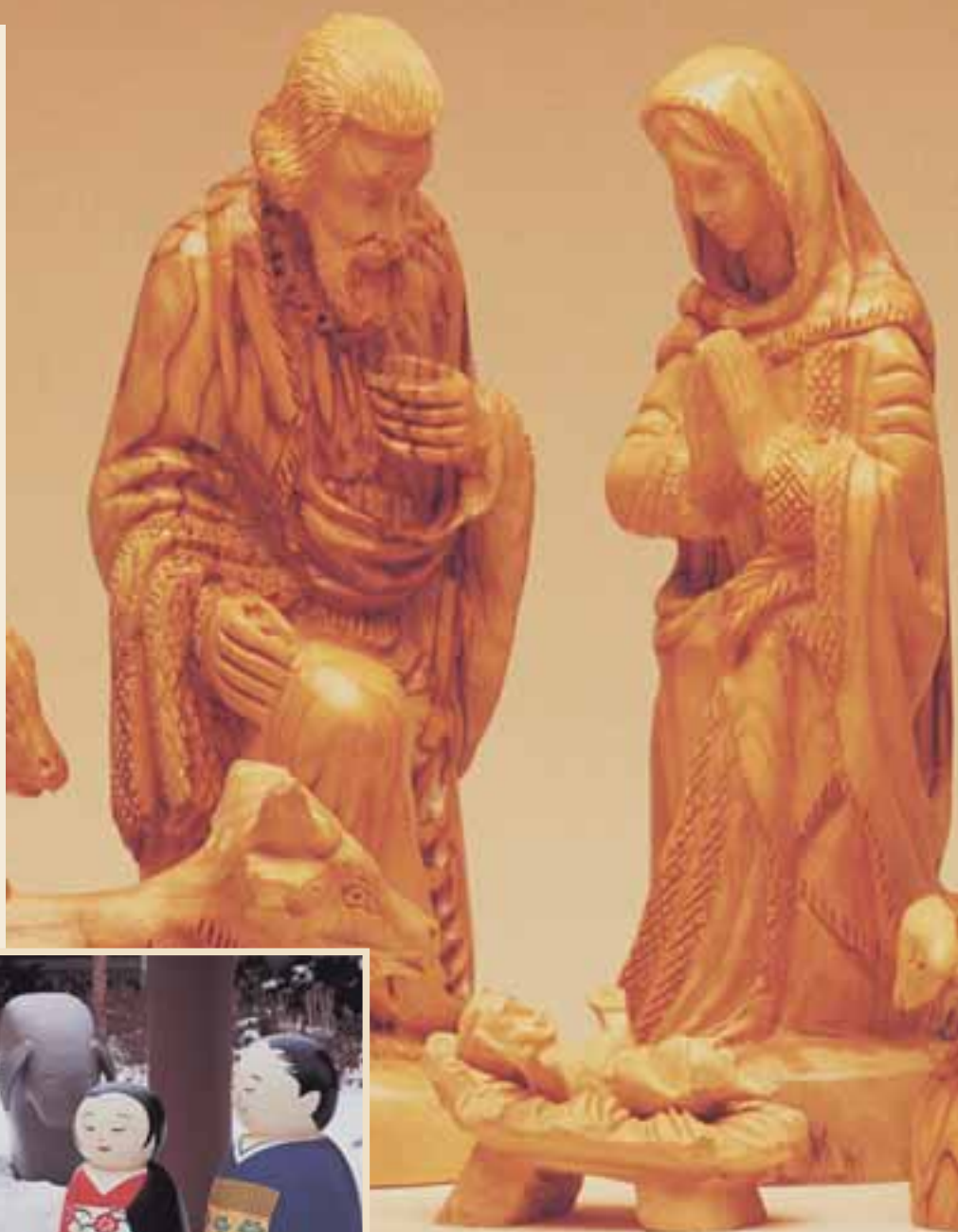
IN *Light* OF His Birth

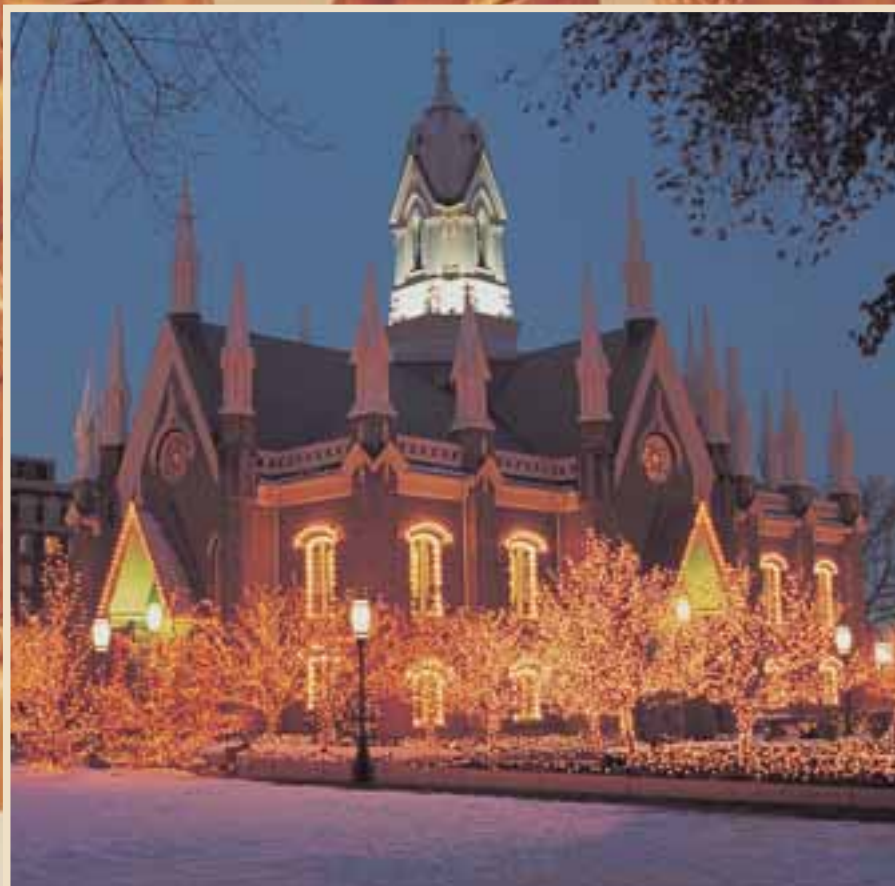
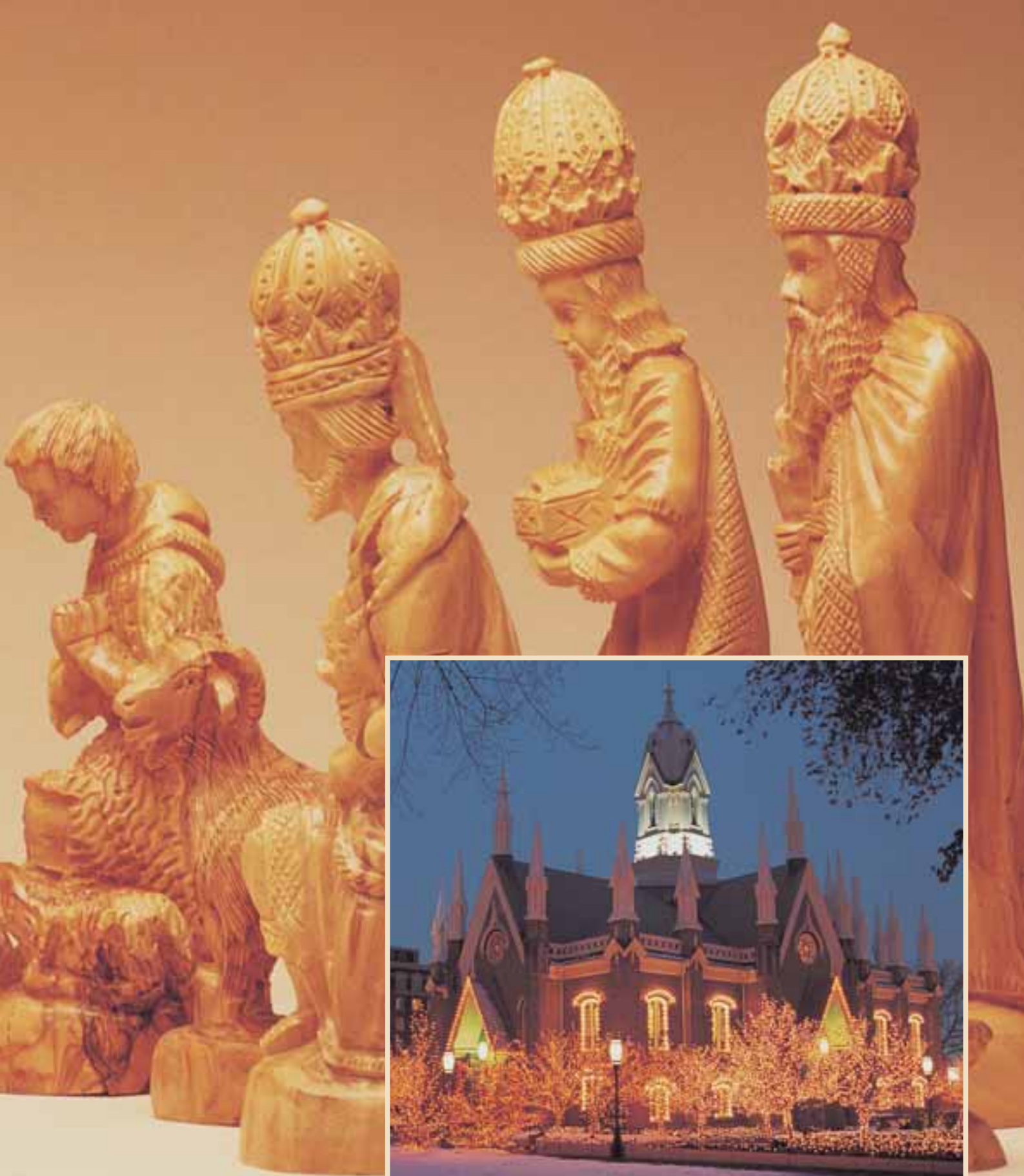
You can almost feel the light as you walk through the gate of Temple Square. Light surrounds you. A myriad of Christmas lights—hundreds of thousands of them—shine in the trees. Patterns in light shine beneath the snow on the ground. Lights bob in plastic bubbles on the reflecting pool in front of the Salt Lake Temple. Luminarias light your way along the walkways of the Church Office Building plaza.

It is Christmas on Temple Square, and you are among the thousands who come to appreciate the beauty of this place at this season. Temple Square is the most visited tourist site in Utah. About one-sixth of its annual visitors come between the last week in November, when the Christmas lights are turned on, and the end of December. Nearly half a million people passed through the gates during December 2001.

The decorations speak to the hearts of members and other visitors from many lands. Words on some of the luminarias say “Feliz Navidad,” “Joyeux Noel,” “Frohe Weinachten”—“Merry Christmas” in many languages, including sign language. On the plaza, you see large nativity scenes from Mexico, Japan, New Zealand, and other countries. In the Church Museum of History and Art on the west side of Temple Square, a display of crèches depicts the nativity as seen through the eyes of different cultures. In a brightly painted Swedish scene, the three Wise Men arrive on horseback dressed as fine gentlemen. From Ecuador and Nigeria come manger scenes carefully carved in natural wood. From Italy come carved wood Renaissance versions of Mary,

Below: The nativity is portrayed with Japanese characters on Temple Square. Right: The traditional portrayal of the nativity is depicted in a crèche carved in the Holy Land. Far right: Lights adorn trees around the Assembly Hall.





Joseph, and the Christ child in the manger, sculpted and painted in fine detail.

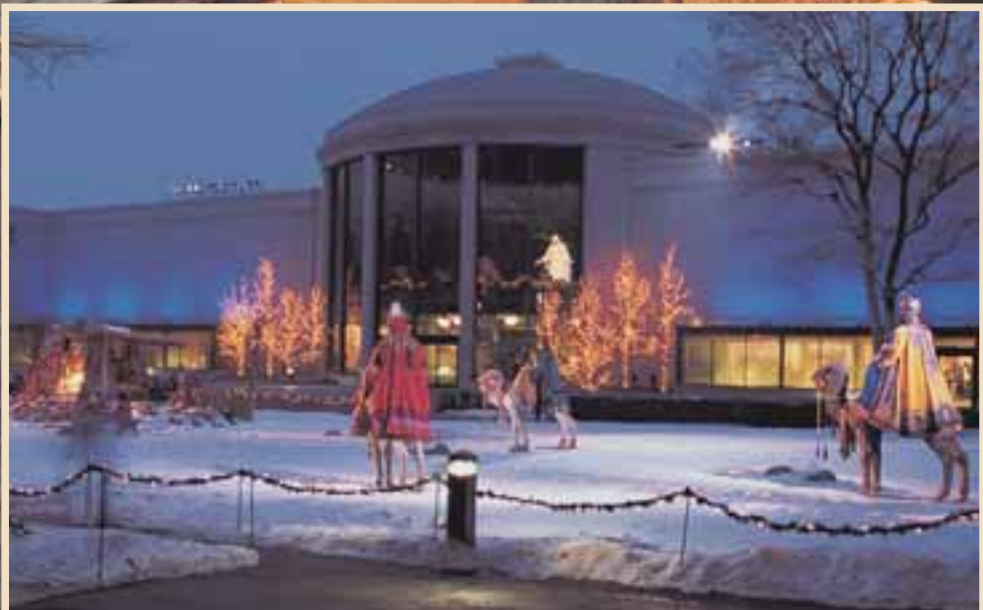
There seems to be something to delight every eye and every heart. Overhead colors reflect off the silver in the hair of an older couple strolling among the lights and lanterns, gloved fingers intertwined. With wide Christmas eyes, a toddler riding his daddy's shoulders ponders the kings on camels' backs and a babe in a manger. Inside the North Visitors' Center, a lone woman pauses to look up into the face of the *Christus* statue, reflecting the serenity she sees there.

Below: A carved Nigerian nativity scene on display in the Church Museum of History and Art. Right: Shepherds "abide" in lighted fields on Temple Square. Top inset: A carved nativity scene from Mexico. Bottom inset: One of the many luminarias lining walkways.









For the most part, visitors on the square keep moving because of the cold. But you may pause at the focal points—that manger scene with its recorded narration about the Savior’s birth in mortality, and the *Christus* statue with the great expanse of the heavens depicted behind it. While the beauty of the lights on Temple Square will linger in the mind, what you feel as you think about the birth and mission of the Savior will linger longer in the heart.

You can feel it strongly in this place when you think of Him, the source of all light.

Welcome to this celebration of His birth. Feel the peace of knowing that He lives, and that because of Him you too can live. □

Left: Christmas tree in the lobby of the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. Far left: A traditional crèche from Italy. Above: Wise Men on camels in the life-size manger scene outside the North Visitors' Center.

THE MAN in the LEATHER COAT

For 20 years, friends, neighbors, and family had been trying to interest him in the gospel, but "I never saw myself joining the Church."



BY ELDER DAVID B. HAIGHT
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Most of the people who stayed to speak to me after a stake conference in the south part of the Salt Lake Valley simply offered kind words of appreciation. But one sister added something more, pointing to the man a few people behind her in the line: "My husband—the man in the leather coat—is not a member."

She left me wondering what her husband might say. I was intrigued when he confided, "I am closer to joining the LDS Church than I have ever been."

That was the beginning of my acquaintance with Duane Marsala. "All we do is teach the gospel of Jesus Christ," I assured him and invited him to call if there was anything I could do to help him make a decision.

Duane told me later that his heart had been changed that day. At the moment we spoke, he felt a strong outpouring of the love of his Heavenly Father. It struck him that there had been no attempt, no pressure to convert him, only an assurance that he was loved.

He would come to realize that this feeling was

simply a more intense manifestation of the love he had long felt from family and friends.

For 20 years, friends, neighbors, and family had been trying to interest him in the gospel. He had shown little interest in the Church, though he would attend meetings when his children were participating. "Sunday was *my* day," he said. Ordinarily, he could be found on the golf course. "I never saw myself joining the Church."

Nevertheless, as a loving father, he often helped his children choose the right by asking them, "What does your religion stand for?" His wife and children dreamed that one day the family might be sealed in the temple, but they knew that if it were ever to happen, they would have to live as examples for him. His wife, Carolee, went to church without him for many years, offering countless prayers that someday he would be a member. She received her own temple endowment with Duane's blessing.

Duane was proud of his children for the examples they set. He was proud of his son Nathan's service as a missionary, so he was upset when Nathan had to come home for medical reasons. Why should this happen when his son was trying so hard to serve the Lord? "I was mad—real mad—at God and at the Church," Duane says.

Then he met two missionaries with the knack of caring despite his anger. When Sisters Rachael Sites and Misty Still asked to hold family home evenings with the Marsalas, Duane let them because he could feel they cared about him as a person, not just a statistic. They invited Duane to the stake conference where he and I met.

The softening of his heart was not immediately visible, but things were beginning to come together in his life. From his family, the missionaries, and one Apostle fortunate enough to know him, "I felt more love than I could turn away from," he says.

The intensity of those feelings surprised him. Uncertain what to make of them, Duane decided to talk with me. He made an appointment for a day when I would be in the office.

We visited for more than an hour. I tried to assure

him that joining the Church was something he needed to do because *he* knew it was right and not just to please his wife. Later he told me that he left my office wondering again why I had not put pressure on him to be baptized. But then he understood: both of us knew what he needed to do, but *he* would have to make the decision.

The next night was the sister missionaries' family home evening with the Marsalas. As part of their presentation on the Savior, they used the Special Witnesses of Christ video.¹ Knowing that Duane and I had met at stake conference, the missionaries chose to play the portion of the videotape in which I bore my testimony. I told of my experience when President Spencer W. Kimball called me to be a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, with, he had said to me, "all the love that I possess." I explained: "He was teaching me that love is essential—the love that the Savior hopes that we will acquire—that we must show, that we must demonstrate, we must feel in our hearts and souls in order to teach the gospel properly."² As Duane listened, he understood the true source of the love he had been feeling from all of us.

After the video, the missionaries asked everyone to express their feelings about the Savior. When everyone else had spoken, Duane told his family of his meeting with me the day before. Then he told the missionaries that he would accept their discussions, but they would have only "one shot" to teach him.

On the day he was to have the first discussion, he called me to ask for my prayers in his behalf. I assured him that he would have them.

As the missionaries taught him that day, he found himself focusing only on the voice of the missionary speaking to him. "I felt warmth and peace," he recalls. When Sister Still asked him about his feelings, he realized clearly what they indicated. Calmly he answered yes to the questions, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ?" "Do you believe Joseph Smith was a prophet?" "Do you believe the Church is true?" and, finally, "Will you be baptized?"

Brother Marsala entered the waters of baptism on Christmas Day 2000, with more than 250 of the people who love him in attendance. On 7 January 2001, his son Nathan conferred the priesthood on him. One year and one day later, the Marsalas were sealed as a family in the Salt Lake Temple.

Not long afterward, a large card arrived at my office with a picture of Duane and Carolee and their children, Nathan,

Alyssa, Miles, and Quinten. On a separate sheet, in large type, were these words: "Prayers are answered. Dreams do come true. Families are forever."

My friend Duane tells me that the year after his baptism was one of the hardest of his life. But along with the challenges, there were good things, including his daughter Alyssa's wedding in the temple, which he was able to attend. Duane and Carolee regularly attend the temple together now.

"I am so blessed and thankful for the impressions and the witness of the Holy Spirit in my life," Duane says. "When I hit obstacles in my path, I can draw on the strength of that witness. Because of it, I can continue to move forward and know that what I am doing is right." □

NOTES

1. *Special Witnesses of Christ* contains testimonies of the Savior Jesus Christ and of His gospel offered by members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The videotape is available to members through Church distribution centers (item no. 53584, \$5.00 U.S.).

2. "Special Witnesses of Christ," *Ensign*, Apr. 2001, 12–13.



Duane Marsala, center, on the day he was sealed in the Salt Lake Temple to his family: wife, Carolee, right; Nathan, left; Alyssa; Miles; and Quinten.

WANTED: MODERN

Nehemiah

The valiance of Nehemiah, governor of Jerusalem, is an example of what the Lord asks of us.

BY ELDER MODESTO M. AMISTAD JR.
Area Authority Seventy



Nehemiah was a Jew exiled with his people in Persia. Though he was born far away from his homeland, his heart yearned for Jerusalem. During the reign of King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah knew that some of the Jews were already gathering back to the land of Judah (see Bible Dictionary, "Cyrus," 651), yet his position as cupbearer¹ to the king required that he remain in Babylon.

Nehemiah inquired about the welfare of the Jews in Jerusalem and was told that they were "in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire" (Neh. 1:3). When Nehemiah heard this, he "sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven" (Neh. 1:4). He so loved and wanted to help his people! What Nehemiah chose to do at that crucial time in his life provides us with an example of what we can do when our hearts are drawn out in prayer for the welfare of others.

HIS PRIORITIES

To help his people, Nehemiah knew he would have to make some drastic changes in his life and that he would need the permission and support of the king. One day as he appeared before the king with his food, he went with a sad countenance. The king noticed and asked why he was so unhappy. Nehemiah was fearful at first, but taking courage from a prayer of the heart, he asked the king for permission to temporarily journey to Jerusalem. He also asked for letters and soldiers to ensure his safe passage to Judah and for the materials he would need to rebuild the gates and walls of Jerusalem. All this the king gladly granted, so Nehemiah gave up his comfortable position as the king's cupbearer and set out to fulfill the true desires of his heart (see Neh. 2:1–11).

Nehemiah mounted his horse and inspected the deteriorated walls of Jerusalem by night. The next day he called on the people to rebuild their walls and their lives.



THEY LAUGHED HIM TO SCORN

The arrival of Nehemiah's group at Jerusalem caused hostility from two other regional governors in Palestine, Sanballat and Tobiah. They viewed Nehemiah as a political rival and were upset that "there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel" (Neh. 2:10).

The first thing Nehemiah did was to inspect Jerusalem's walls. Any breach in a city's walls brought serious consequences to the safety of its inhabitants. The walls of Jerusalem were not only a protection but a physical symbol of the establishment of the Jews as a people. The Holy City was a unifying force and place of refuge for the Jews.

Nehemiah mounted his horse and by night went completely around the city, noting the deplorable condition of the wall and gates. The next day he appeared before the priests and leaders of the people and announced his intent: "Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach." And the people responded, "Let us rise up and build" (Neh. 2:17-18).

Nehemiah's call to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem was much more than a simple renovation project. It was a call for the Jews to take control of their lives, land, and destiny as the people of God.

But when Sanballat, Tobiah, and others heard Nehemiah's plan, they laughed and ridiculed him and the people. They did not want the Jews to rise again to political prominence in the region. But Nehemiah answered them, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build" (Neh. 2:20).

REBUILDING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM

Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and raised the first new gate into place. The men of Jericho built an adjoining section. The sons of Hassenaah rebuilt the next gate, as group after group of Jews mobilized to the cause (see Neh. 3:1-32).

The closer the wall came to completion, the stronger the opposition became from Sanballat, Tobiah, and others. "Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night" (Neh. 4:9). Nehemiah rallied his discouraged workers: "Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses" (Neh. 4:14). Working with their instruments of war in one hand and their tools for building in the other, they rebuilt the city walls in just 52 days (see Neh. 4:21; 6:15).

BUILDER OF LIVES

Nehemiah was not satisfied with simply building physical structures; he wanted his people to be edified spiritually as well. Under his skillful leadership and direction, Jews who had been sold into slavery to other Jews were freed and restored to their lands. And the practice of usury—Jews charging other Jews excessive interest for the use of their money—was also discontinued (see Neh. 5:1–14). Nehemiah established law and order in the newly revitalized city and withheld the priesthood of God from any man who did not have genealogical records to prove his right to the priesthood (see Neh. 7:63–64).

Because of the poverty of the people, Nehemiah refused to receive his lawful payment as governor, and he entertained each day at his own cost 150 Jews, welcoming any who were returning from captivity (see Neh. 5:14–19). In these and other reforms Nehemiah received support from Ezra the priest (see Bible Dictionary, “Ezra,” 669). In so many ways, Nehemiah is a model for service in the kingdom of God today.

MODERN NEHEMIAHS

I often think of the thousands of valiant full-time missionaries and members all over the world who are serving like latter-day Nehemiahs. I also think of the thousands who have gone before them and the thousands who are preparing to serve the Lord. They are willing to sacrifice their personal comforts to build lives of faith among the children of God through the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Many years ago when my wife and I were married civilly, we belonged to two different religions. Our children grew and began to ask which church service they should attend. This caused disagreements within the family. Then one afternoon, two tall and weary American missionaries found me gardening in front of our home. They introduced themselves politely and courageously as missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with an important message about God and His Son Jesus Christ. They patiently made return appointments and taught my family. In 1984 we were baptized, due largely to the dedication and faith of these missionaries and others who came to our home. We have been so blessed by these faithful servants of the Lord—latter-day Nehemiahs! Each performs the work of the Lord at great sacrifice, in the midst of difficulties and hardship. They each can testify that God provides a way for their success, as the Lord did for Nehemiah and the ancient Jews.

Sometime in my early membership in the Church, I became less active when I succumbed to pressures

from professional and social circles. My family and I were restored to full Church activity and faith by loving home and visiting teachers. They too were latter-day Nehemiahs to us.

RETURNING TO THE HOMELAND

There are many today who find themselves spiritually in a situation similar to that of the Jews in Nehemiah’s time—in danger of long-term captivity because of unrighteousness. In God’s great mercy, He gives His children opportunities to return to Him.

What helped the Jews succeed in the face of tremendous opposition? They had a great leader—Nehemiah. He was humble, self-motivated, confident in the will of God, willing to take the lead, full of faith, fearless, an organizer, obedient, and just. He was able to gain the love, trust, and confidence of his people.

Today we are blessed with a living prophet, apostles, and many faithful men and women who lead the Church. They provide the strength so many of us need in times of spiritual and temporal crisis as we heed their inspired counsel. Families are likewise blessed when family members provide an enduring and uniting influence of faith and strength to each other.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has taught of the need to be a friend to new members, to keep them strongly integrated in the Church.² Modern Nehemiahs are needed to befriend them, to become their mentors and guides. Such a person is willing to give precious hours of fellowship to those who need stronger walls of faith.

Nehemiah’s story of inspired leadership and mission to rebuild walls and lives teaches us of a loving and merciful Father in Heaven. He gave His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to atone for the sins of all mankind. His Atonement makes our glorious return to Their presence possible. The road toward that return may at times be difficult, but it is very possible only because of and through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer.

The valiance of Nehemiah is an example of what the Lord requires of the Latter-day Saints today: the courage to rebuild the lives of His scattered people and bring them back into His presence. □

NOTES

1. An officer who tasted the food and drink before it was passed to those at the table. He was a person of rank in the household, possessing great influence.

2. See “Feed the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 108–10.

Elder Modesto M. Amistad Jr. is an Area Authority Seventy serving in the Philippines Area.

Ezra

UNFOLDS THE SCRIPTURES

BY BRIAN D. GARNER

The astonishing power of the scriptures changed the lives of the exiled ancient Israelites and can change your life too.

What if you had longed for but had not been able to read from the scriptures for many years? And what if it had been even longer since you had been able to listen to or read the talks from general conference?

Now, what if such a spiritual drought were to finally end? How would you feel and what would you do? The story of Ezra shows us how the ancient Jews felt and what they did at the first public discourse on the scriptures in Jerusalem in at least 120 years.

THE EXILED JEWS RETURN

After more than 60 years in Babylonian captivity, the Jews as a people began to return to their beloved Jerusalem. Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon and founder of the Persian Empire, issued a decree giving them permission to reclaim their homeland and rebuild their temple (see 2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:2–3). Cyrus even gave back to them 5,400 gold and silver “vessels of the house of the Lord” that Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of Jerusalem (see Ezra 1:7–11). The first group to journey back to Jerusalem consisted of 42,360 Jews, arriving in 537 B.C. (see Ezra 2). For several more decades, additional groups migrated to help reconstruct the city walls and temple. Led by Zerubbabel, a prince of Judah, and the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the people joyously dedicated the temple in 516 B.C. (see Ezra 3:1–6:16). The people again offered sacrifices to the Lord in His holy house, and Levitical priests were organized to do their duties according to the law of Moses. They “kept the feast of unleavened bread seven



days with joy: for the Lord had made them joyful" (Ezra 6:22). Yet something of eternal import was still missing among them: a knowledge of the scriptures.

A SCRIBE FOR THE PEOPLE

To fill such a need, the Lord raised up a Levite, a direct descendant of Aaron, named Ezra (see Ezra 7:1–5). Born in captivity, Ezra was inspired to ask Artaxerxes, king of Persia, for permission to lead another group of Jews back to Jerusalem in 459 B.C. (see Ezra 7:6–7). The king granted him everything he asked, providing him with an impressive letter of introduction and credentials that entitled Ezra to whatever he and his group needed during their journey (see Ezra 7:11–27).

Now, Ezra was no ordinary priest of Aaron, for he was a "ready scribe in the law of Moses . . . even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel" (Ezra 7:6, 11). The word *scribe* "does not merely signify a *speedy writer* or an *excellent penman*, but one who was eminently skilful in expounding the law."¹ Ezra was a teacher, well versed in the scriptures, who had devoted himself to the study and observance of their commands and decrees. Furthermore, he "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it" (Ezra 7:10).

Ezra and his group made the difficult journey of about 1,100 miles in just four months, so that Ezra could "teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10). Thus the Lord had made ready a man of God to end the long famine "of hearing the words of the Lord" (see Amos 8:11–12). For the rest of our story we must now turn to the book of Nehemiah.

"THIS DAY IS HOLY"

Not long after Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, the people prepared for a special celebration called the Feast of Tabernacles (see Bible Dictionary, "Feasts," 673). Traditionally it is perhaps the most joyful of all Jewish feasts. Coming in the fall of each year, it is a time of thanksgiving for the harvest and other blessings from the Lord. The people must have been particularly grateful at the feast that year for their newly acquired freedoms, land, and temple. They asked Ezra to be

their spiritual leader and to teach them from the scriptures (see Neh. 8:1).

A wooden stand was built for Ezra from which he could speak so that all the people could see and hear. Similar to our conference gatherings, 15 men, including Nehemiah, the governor, occupied the stand, as an assembly of "all that could hear with understanding," including men, women, and children, anxiously awaited instruction (see Neh. 8:2–4, 9).

As Ezra opened the scriptures, all the people simultaneously stood up and remained standing throughout the meeting. Ezra knelt down and offered thanks to the Lord, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," with hands raised to heaven. They then "bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground" (Neh. 8:6).

Ezra, Nehemiah, and several other Levites then instructed the people, reading from the scriptures, giving clear explanations of their meanings so that all the people could understand (see Neh. 8:7–9). The speeches went on for five or six hours (see Neh. 8:3), yet the people listened attentively. This experience affected the people so profoundly they were moved to tears by the words of the scriptures.

"This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep," Ezra told the people. "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet," he

said, "for this day is holy unto our Lord" (Neh. 8:9–10). Ezra also asked the people to make sure that no one went without plenty of delicious food on this day. So the people went home and made "great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them" (Neh. 8:12).

"A SURE COVENANT"

The next day the heads of all the families gathered around Ezra to continue their study of the scriptures. To their surprise they discovered instructions written in the law that the people were supposed to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles while living in booths, or temporary shelters made of branches of trees and shrubs (see Lev. 23:42–43). So they immediately spread word to the people to build their booths and live in them for the remainder of the seven-day feast,



"Often we spend great effort in trying to increase the activity levels in our stakes. . . . All of these are commendable efforts."

a practice that had been lost from this feast for more than 1,000 years! And the people celebrated with “very great gladness” for six more days, gathering each day to hear Ezra read to them from the scriptures. On the last day, there was a great solemn assembly (see Neh. 8:13–18).

As a result of this wonderful occasion, the people fasted, confessed their sins, and continued to study the scriptures. They expressed gratitude to the Lord in a beautiful prayer that recounted the grace and power of Jehovah from the Creation to their return from exile (see Neh. 9:5–37). Through their scripture studies they had come to appreciate the great blessings the Lord had given them. “Thou art a God ready to pardon,” they acknowledged, “gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness” (Neh. 9:17). Because their hearts were contrite and their desires were pure, the people made “a sure covenant” with the Lord, put it in writing, and had all the leaders and priests affix their seals to it (see Neh. 9:38). This story contains many remarkable parallels to the story of King Benjamin’s address to his people in the Book of Mormon and their reaction to his message (see Mosiah 2–5).

THE POWER OF THE SCRIPTURES

The prophet Alma taught that the word of the Lord can have a more powerful influence upon people than the sword or anything else (see Alma 31:5). In fact, the preaching of the word enabled the righteous Lamanites to completely destroy the Gadianton robbers from among them (see Hel. 6:37).

A modern-day Ezra, President Ezra Taft Benson, has said: “Often we spend great effort in trying to increase the activity levels in our stakes. We work diligently to raise the percentages of those attending sacrament meetings. We labor to get a higher percentage of our young men on missions. We strive to improve the numbers of those marrying in the temple. All of these are commendable efforts and important to the growth of the kingdom. But when individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently, these other areas of activity will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened.

Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow.”² What happened when the Israelites heard and studied the scriptures is a wonderful example of this great teaching.

The study of the scriptures is often a significant way for us to learn from the Lord what we need to know and do. Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that if we “are acquainted with the revelations, there is no ques-

tion—personal or social or political or occupational—that need go unanswered. . . . Therein we find principles of truth that will resolve every confusion and every problem and every dilemma that will face the human family or any individual in it.”³

A regular and consistent pattern of scripture study is what will be most helpful. Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “A few little flowers will spring up briefly in the dry gully through which torrents of water pass occasionally. But it is steady streams that bring thick and needed crops. In the agriculture of the soul that has to do with nurturing attributes, flash floods are no substitute for regular irrigation.”⁴

Ezra and the Jews of his day provide a worthy model showing why and how we should study and teach the scriptures. May we in reverence come to spiritual attention each time we open their pages. May we rely on the words

of living apostles and prophets to help us understand their true meanings. May we celebrate with “very great gladness” that the study of the scriptures is our privilege. And may we make and keep our sacred covenants with great diligence and faith, using the scriptures as our guide. □

NOTES

1. Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible . . . with a Commentary and Critical Notes*, 6 vols. (1973), 2:743.

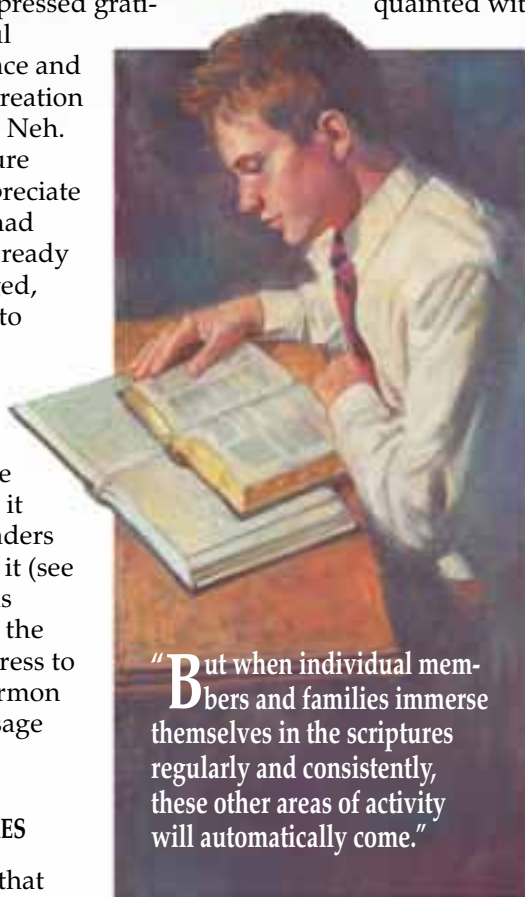
2. “The Power of the Word,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 81.

3. “Teach the Scriptures,” (address to CES religious educators, 14 Oct. 1977), 5.

4. *Notwithstanding My Weakness* (1981), 7.

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More on this topic: See Timothy L. Carver, “Enjoying the Old Testament,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2002, 56–60; Richard D. Draper, “Judah between the Testaments,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1982, 36–41; Edward J. Brandt, “The Exile and First Return of Judah,” *Ensign*, July 1974, 12–13.



“But when individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently, these other areas of activity will automatically come.”

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS AND EXPERIENCES ARE SHARED BY ENSIGN READERS

QUESTION

We are taught to use careful judgment in choosing the music we listen to. As a parent or leader of youth, how can I ensure that the music played at home or a Church dance is appropriate without offending someone?

MUSIC IN THE HOME

I often think of my mother and how she influenced me in developing a love for good music. For quite some time she was a ward chorister and would practice singing the hymns while she went about her household chores. What a blessing this was to me because I constantly heard her singing songs of praise.—**Dean Steele, Boise Ninth Ward, Boise Idaho Stake**

When our oldest child began to be interested in questionable music, my husband and I felt we shouldn't be subjected to her choices, so we initially confined her music to her own ears or her room. But it soon dawned on us that our daughter could still hear it, and the music was not conducive to the presence of the Holy Ghost in our home. We decided to



Music should bring joy, so we try not to make it a battleground.

play uplifting music for all the family to enjoy so that we could become the major music influence in our children's lives. The change didn't happen overnight or without struggles, but our children have come to respect the idea that our house is holy ground. Just as smoking, alcohol, and swearing are not allowed because they chase away the Holy Ghost, so also is inappropriate music not allowed.—**Rose V. Voigt, Preston Branch, Rochester Minnesota Stake**

Our 14-year-old son loved the pulsating rhythms of rock music. He turned it on when he was getting ready for school, when we traveled in the car, and the instant he arrived home from school.

Though we had a family collection of uplifting recordings, unless I got to the stereo first, his music invaded our home. We had some family discussions, but our son's ears seemed closed. Then one summer we attended a Church musical production. Our son loved one of its songs, so we purchased it for him. He listened to it all the time. Not long after, we found the objectionable recordings in the trash!—**Betty Jan Murphy, Pine Ward, Payson Arizona Stake**

My oldest son brought home a CD of a few songs a school friend had made for him of a popular music group. His younger brother reported that some of the words on the CD might be bad. As my husband and I listened to the music and discussed the songs with our sons, we agreed that this music was not an appropriate choice. We emphasized the guidelines set forth in *For the Strength of Youth*. We encourage our children not to rely on others' opinions and preferences but to assess whether the music is appropriate based on the Lord's standards given to us through latter-day prophets.—**Lisa Whitsitt, Whitby Ward, Oshawa Ontario Canada Stake**

When the missionaries began teaching me, I knew I was going to have to make some major changes

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

in my life. One area was my music collection. I remember Elder Sutton looking through it to see what I owned. I knew my old behaviors in music no longer fit what I was learning about the Savior and His Church. It was either the gospel or my selfish desires. One day I scooped up my collection and got rid of it. I moved one step closer toward that sweet peace found in the Atonement of Jesus Christ.—**Kevin Mesch, Market Street Branch, Beaverton Oregon Stake**

MUSIC AT CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Three years ago we formed a stake youth dance music committee. There are two youth from each unit on the committee with youth cochair. They meet one hour prior to each dance and preview the music. It has been a tremendous help, and the youth are so good to cut out the “trashy” music. Some adults thought that many youth would not come to the dances if they could not play anything they wanted. The opposite happened. We have large crowds, and in the schools our youth are being asked, “When is the next Mormon dance?”
—**Barbara L. Brown, Yuma First Ward, Yuma Arizona Stake**

We know that when youth and adults work together and communicate, dances can be enjoyable for all. Everyone shares in the responsibility for the appropriateness of the music. However, whenever there is a difference of opinion, the stake leader assigned to oversee that dance makes the final decision. Music is played from a list of songs approved by the Stake Youth Activity Committee. We avoid using edited versions of songs because playing them reminds us of the ugly words taken out. If someone wants a song added to the list,

that person is encouraged to write his or her name, the song title, and the artist on a piece of paper and hand it to a stake youth or adult leader. The song is reviewed before the next dance, and if it is not added to the list, an explanation is given to the person who requested

In dances for youth and adults, dress, grooming, lighting, dancing styles, lyrics, and music should contribute to an atmosphere where the Spirit of the Lord can be present. Those who oversee dance activities should pay strict attention to the following policies.

“The Performance Contract form should be used when hiring a band, orchestra, or disc jockey. . . . Leaders hold auditions and make firm, clear agreements in writing that commit the persons who provide music to follow Church standards. . . .

“The beat of the music, whether instrumental or vocal, should not overshadow the melody. Music volume should be low enough so two people standing side by side can hear each other as they carry on normal conversation” (*Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* [1998], 277).

it. All songs on the list and a copy of the list are available at each dance. We also like to watch when songs are played to see which ones youth dance to. If few people dance to a song, we consider removing it from the list, because we prefer a dance, not a “stand around and listen.” Music should bring joy, so we try not to make it a battleground.—**Carol Bowes, Roxboro Branch, Durham North Carolina Stake**

This past summer at girls’ camp, the young women of each ward were asked to choose a song to perform with karaoke. The

performances went off well; however, some leaders questioned the suitability of several of the songs. So in a follow-up lesson we had the young women read and discuss the thirteenth article of faith. Then we talked about each of the karaoke songs. Without any promptings from leaders, the girls found several songs to be inappropriate, the same songs leaders had questioned.—**Shauna Wheelwright, Union Park Fourth Ward, Midvale Utah Union Park Stake**

Organizing dances around a theme, such as the ’50s or ’60s, is an effective way to narrow the type of music played.—**Tamara Woolley, Tokyo Third Ward, Tokyo Japan South Stake**

A rule that has worked well for us is to judge a song on its own merits. Although some types of music seem to have a greater percentage of songs with inappropriate lyrics, I always try to play good songs from many different genres, even if I don’t personally care for them. I also intersperse dance classics with modern songs, and the youth dance right along with the adult chaperones.—**Chris Ishoy, New City Ward, Caldwell New Jersey Stake**

Most youth in the Church do not seek out immoral and offensive music; they simply like familiar tunes. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the adults in their lives, who have broader experience, to lovingly monitor their exposure to offensive music. By being good examples of wise music selection, demonstrating love and concern, and exercising common sense, adults can help youth make better choices until they are mature enough to discern appropriate music for themselves.—**Michelle Piercy, Chambersburg Second Ward, York Pennsylvania Stake** □

Wrapped in My Mother's Love


By Bonnie Danielson

When I was about three or four years old, my mother was the ward Relief Society president. Part of her responsibility, it seemed, was to always have a quilt in progress in our home. Sisters would filter in and out of our basement at any given time to quilt for a while. Often my mother would thread a needle for me and let me "quilt" with the sisters (my clumsy stitches were patiently removed when I was not around). I relished these moments and learned at a young age to love the quilting bee and the Relief Society.

My mother suddenly died when I was only five. It wasn't until years later that I found she had left me a great gift of love. The Christmas of my 19th year is one I will always remember, for that was when I received this most precious gift from my mother, although she had passed away 14 years before.

Unbeknownst to me, before my mother died she had pieced together two special quilts from swatches of fabric, one for my older brother and one for me. Unfortunately, she passed away before they could be completed.

When I turned 19, my older sister felt it was time to complete the quilts for my brother and me and asked a ward Relief Society to finish them. These sisters sewed the intricate



I unfolded the quilt my mother had never finished and wrapped it around my son's little body.

stitches without knowing how much it would have pleased my mother.

When I received the quilt on Christmas Day, I loved the gift with all my heart, but I had no idea how much more it would yet come to mean to me.

Years went by, and I married and started a family of my own. I kept my quilt wrapped in a plastic bag in a drawer for fear something would happen to it. One day I took it out and was carefully admiring it when one of my little boys came into the room and asked me where I got the quilt. I explained to him that his Grandma Brown had made the quilt for me before she died.

"Who is Grandma Brown?" my young son asked.

How it pained me that my children had never known the mother whom I cherished, that she was not able to put her arms around them and tell them she loved them in her tender, gentle way. I explained to my son once again that Grandma Brown, my mother, was someone special in heaven who loved him.

"Why do *you* have that quilt, Mommy?" he asked.

Suddenly it came to me. I knew exactly why I had the quilt. I unfolded it and wrapped it around his little body.

"I have this quilt so Grandma Brown can give you hugs even though she is in heaven," I said.

A big smile spread across his face, and I could see that this was the best answer I could have given him. Since that time the quilt has made its way out of the drawer much more often. Whenever a family member is hurt, sad, or in need of extra love, the quilt is a great source of comfort. To me, it is still

the greatest gift I could ask for. I love touching the quilt, knowing my mother's hands have touched it also.

Many years have passed, and I can now quilt correctly. My sisters and I have spent many hours around quilting frames talking about our mother. Since I am the youngest, my sisters tell me stories about her to help me know her better. Yet no matter how many stories I hear, nothing has helped me or my children turn our hearts to my mother more than the quilt I got for Christmas the year I turned 19. □

Bonnie Danielson is a member of the Rancho Del Mar Park Ward, Chandler Arizona Alma Stake.

The Gift My Father Gave Me

By Ruth M. Anderson

For many of us, one Christmas stands out above all the others. I am now a great-grandmother, but I shall never forget a particular Christmas when I was a young child.

I was one of 14 children in my family, and we lived in a farming town. We were very poor as far as worldly goods are concerned, though I didn't know it then. A family in our town was even poorer than we were. Their mother had died, and the father was working away from home, leaving the older children to care for the younger ones.

On this particular Christmas, after we had opened our gifts, my father spoke to us of this motherless family and how they might not receive Christmas gifts as we had. He suggested that each of us

choose one of our new gifts to be placed in a box, along with food and other goodies, to be taken to this family.

I had three presents—a doll, a necklace, and an article of clothing. What a hard decision it was for me! I needed the clothing and I wanted the doll badly, but the necklace was so pretty and sparkly. After a time, I reluctantly dropped the necklace into the box.

It was dark on Christmas night when Dad buttoned our coats and placed all of us in our horse-drawn sleigh. We left the box on the doorstep of this family, with no indication of the giver.

The next Sunday, I saw the necklace around the neck of a girl my age from that family. She excitedly told me that Santa had left a box of gifts for them on Christmas night. Of course, my parents had sworn us to secrecy. Dad had told us that giving anonymously was the best part of giving. But at my young age I can't say it felt that good to see what had been my necklace on someone else's neck.

Though it wasn't an easy lesson then, I now realize the great impact this experience has had on my life. As a child I thought my father was asking me to give up a gift, but later I understood that he was actually giving me one of the most precious gifts I've ever received. I think of how much he must have loved me, to teach me that loving someone is far more important than having something. My father's showing his love in this way has helped me understand the love of our Heavenly Father, who presented us the greatest gift of all when He gave His only begotten Son. □

Ruth M. Anderson is a member of the North Logan Third Ward, North Logan Utah Green Canyon Stake.

A White Christmas in Ecuador

By Carl Grossen

As a new missionary experiencing my first Christmas away from home, I was anxious to see what the holiday would be like where I was serving in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

Being so near the equator, I knew we would not be having a white Christmas like those I was accustomed to. As other thoughts of home, turkey, games, lights, and caroling flashed through my mind, I soon began to sense a need for the familiar feeling of Christmas in my unfamiliar surroundings.

My companion and I felt a renewed urgency and responsibility to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to make the Christmas season more meaningful. One day we were given a warm welcome at the humble home of Señor Torres. He told us he'd been waiting and praying for the truth for eight years. For two months, my companion and I had passed by his house daily without stopping. Brother Torres told us later, "I always wanted to stop you to ask about your church, but you were always walking so fast that I thought you were too busy for me." Prayers had been answered. We began teaching Señor Torres and his family with great joy.

Christmas day drew nearer, and we could hardly wait to see this family as we quietly approached their home for our fourth visit. Before we knocked on the door, we saw through the window a scene that touched our hearts.

Beauty emanated from all around the family as their loving dark eyes, rosy cheeks, and soft innocent faces glowed in the dimly lit room. Beneath a two-foot artificial tree on a table in the corner of the room lay the miniature figures of a nativity scene, telling the story of a small family in a stable.

As the Torres family entered the waters of baptism, my companion turned to me and whispered, "Looks like it's a white Christmas after all."



Now, centuries after the nativity, the Torres family, in similarly humble circumstances, sat around an old table. Two young girls leaned anxiously over their mother's shoulder as she read the book we had given her, *Gospel Principles*. The eldest child, eight-year-old Victor, was seated across from his mother, watching attentively as his father played "Silent Night" on an old rusty xylophone.

Then Victor saw us and ran to greet us. The family seemed embarrassed until we joined in and sang along in their language. Next they asked us to sing "Silent Night" in English; then we all sang the hymn again in Spanish. That event marked the start of a precious Christmas memory I'll never forget.

Sister Torres told us she hadn't felt like celebrating Christmas until we started to share the gospel with her family in their home. Then pictures of Christ, Christmas music, and the nativity scene had been brought from their place in her cupboards, where they had been collecting dust for the past three years. The true Christmas spirit had been restored as we presented the gospel message. As servants of Jesus Christ, testifying in His name, we had helped to bring Him back into a family's Christmas.

On the third week of December, Christmas seemed complete as I watched Brother and Sister Torres and Victor, all dressed in white, enter the waters of baptism and become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My companion turned to me and whispered, "Looks like it's a white Christmas after all." I thought to myself, "What better Christmas could anyone ever ask for?" □

Carl Grossen is a member of the Crescent Park Third Ward, Sandy Utah Crescent Park Stake.

She Brought Light

By Muriel Robinson

It has been many years since my husband, Ken, was released from the Air Force and we moved to Provo, Utah, so he could attend Brigham Young University. Prior to our move, Ken had traveled to Provo, purchased a mobile home, and arranged to have it set up on a lot and the utilities turned on when we moved in.

We arrived in Provo on a cold December night. All our belongings were packed in the back of a rental truck. Our nerves were on edge from the tiring trip. Six months pregnant, I was feeling the effects of cleaning, packing, and traveling; and our 15-month-old daughter, Shawna, was tired and crying.

A blast of cold air greeted us as we opened the door to our home. The electricity and water had been turned on, but for some reason the natural gas had not. Too exhausted to do anything else, we put a mattress on the floor with an electric blanket to keep us warm and tried to sleep with our daughter between us. She ended up crying most of the night, so when morning came we were almost as tired as when we had gone to bed.

After we unloaded the truck, Ken left to return it, check with the gas company, and arrange for a phone to be installed. I dressed Shawna in her snowsuit and placed her in her high chair with a few toys while I started to unpack the boxes.

When I unpacked our electric frying pan, I decided to heat water in it to wash out the cupboards. As I turned on the faucet of the kitchen sink, the faucet came off and water shot up into the air. I tried to turn off the water valve under the sink but could not get it to

turn. Frantically, I searched for the water shutoff valve for the house. By the time I found it, the kitchen and living room were flooded.

As I desperately started moving boxes out of the water, Shawna sensed my panic and began to scream. Carrying her with one arm, I continued to try to lift boxes with the other.

It was then that I started into premature labor. Now I was truly panicked. I didn't know anyone in the neighborhood, and I didn't even have a phone to call for help. Desperately I prayed, "Heavenly Father, please help me!"

I'll never forget answering a knock that soon came at the door. The woman standing there was shivering, with soap suds up to her elbows. She introduced herself as Amalia Van Tassel, the branch Relief Society president, and told me the Spirit had sent her.

I would later learn that Amalia had been standing at her sink washing dishes when she felt prompted to check on the new family who had just moved in. Sensing an urgency, she called to her oldest daughter to watch her other children and, without even stopping to dry her hands or grab her coat, ran to my door.

Amalia made me lie down, comforted Shawna, cleaned up all she could, and invited our family to dinner. She brought light, safety, and comfort into that dark December day. Rest stopped my premature labor, Ken returned with the gas man and fixed the sink, and portable electric heaters dried the soaked carpet.

I have always been grateful to Heavenly Father for answering my prayer that day and for the loving sister who quickly followed the promptings of the Holy Spirit. □

Muriel Robinson is a member of the Sunset Heights Third Ward, Orem Utah Sunset Heights Stake.

LIVING *after the Manner of* HAPPINESS

The principles of happiness that Nephi identified centuries ago work equally well today.



BY ELDER MARLIN K. JENSEN
Of the Seventy

Certain unchanging principles and truths bring happiness to our lives. This subject has been of interest to me for many years because although I am richly blessed and have every reason to be happy, I sometimes struggle and do

not always have the natural inclination toward happiness and a cheerful disposition that some people seem to enjoy.

For that reason, several years ago a Book of Mormon passage caught my attention. It concerns the period of time just after Nephi had separated from Laman and Lemuel and departed into the wilderness. There Nephi established a society founded on gospel truths; and of that society he says, “And it came to pass that we lived after the manner of happiness” (2 Ne. 5:27). The passage deeply impressed me. I pondered what it could mean to live “after the manner of happiness.” I knew it had to be related to the gospel and God’s plan for our lives. In fact, sometimes His prophets call that plan the “plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8). I wondered, though, what the individual elements of a truly happy society and life might be, and I began to search Nephi’s writings for clues. I wish to share with you my tentative findings, primarily from 2 Nephi, chapter 5, and invite you to conduct your own personal search. It could be a lifelong and worthwhile pursuit.

FAMILY

I begin in 2 Nephi 5:6 with Nephi’s observation: “I . . . did take my family . . . and Sam, mine elder brother and his family, and Jacob and Joseph, my younger brethren, and also my sisters.” Here indeed is a significant key to happiness—one’s family.

There is no other organization that can so completely satisfy our need for belonging and happiness like the family. Why do we yearn for home and loved ones? I believe this yearning is a universal, God-given instinct that all people in all cultures are blessed with. I also believe that a loving Heavenly Father gives it to us because within the family we experience most of life’s greatest joys. The sights, sounds, and associations of family and home are among our most treasured memories and provide our fondest anticipations.

Sometimes after an enjoyable family home evening, during a fervent family prayer, or when our entire family is at the dinner table on Sunday evening eating waffles and engaging in a session of lively, good-natured conversation, I quietly say to myself, “If heaven is nothing more than this, it will be good enough for me!”

KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS

For the next ingredient of a happy life, I go to verse 10: “And we did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things.”

Here is a simple but powerful truth: living righteously and keeping God’s commandments make us happy. Alma gave a concise sermon on this topic when he said, “Wickedness never was



DETAIL FROM NEPHI LEADS HIS FOLLOWERS INTO THE WILDERNESS, BY MINERVA KOHLHEPP TEICHERT, COURTESY OF BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Nephi led his followers into the wilderness, where he established a society founded on gospel truths.

happiness" (Alma 41:10). Based on my own experience and my observations of others, Alma's declaration is as categorical a statement as can be made on the subject, and our chances of proving Alma wrong are about zero.

In May 1957, Cecil B. DeMille, renowned producer of motion pictures, gave the commencement address at Brigham Young University at the invitation of President David O. McKay (1873–1970). His latest production, *The Ten Commandments*, had been filmed with some technical advice from President McKay. In the course of its production, a close friendship had formed. Following a tender introduction by President McKay in which he praised the nobility and character of his friend, Cecil B. DeMille stunned the BYU graduates with a masterful address on the purpose of God's laws.

Drawing on the lesson of the idolatrous worship of the golden calf from the 32nd chapter of Exodus, Mr. DeMille noted that the children of Israel had been freed from the bitter bondage of Egypt and had seen the wonders of God in the desert and in the divided sea. They were free, they thought. Then Moses left them to go up the mountain to receive the law. Mr. DeMille observed:

"No sooner was he gone the short space of forty days and nights when, in spite of all his teaching, in spite of all the marvels they had seen God work, the children of Israel became slaves again—not this time of a tyrant like Pharaoh, but slaves of their own passions and their own fears. . . .

"If a man will not be ruled by God, he will certainly be ruled by tyrants—and there is no tyranny more imperious or more devastating than man's own selfishness, without the law.

"We cannot break the Ten Commandments. We can only break ourselves against them" (*BYU Speeches of the Year*, 31 May 1957, 6).

From the depths of my soul I testify that we cannot break God's laws, we can only break ourselves against them. Satan wants us to believe we are an exception to God's rules, that somehow our transgressions are more noble, or more justifiable, than anyone's have ever been, but that is a lie. And not only do we offend God by breaking His laws, we also offend ourselves and others and thereby experience heartache, suffering, and misery—the exact opposites of happiness.

There is no more poignant description of the contrast between the pain of rebellion and the joy of obedience to divine law than the one given by Alma to his son Helaman:


"Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy" (Alma 36:21).

One of the keys to a truly happy life is to learn, as early as possible, that wickedness is never happiness and to never forget this truth, preferably learning from others' mistakes rather than making our own.

PLANTING GARDENS AND RAISING ANIMALS

In 2 Nephi 5:11, Nephi observes that "we did prosper exceedingly; for we did sow seed, and we did reap again in abundance." In a 1978 general conference address, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said: "With the arrival of spring we hope all of you will put in your gardens and prepare to enjoy their produce this summer. We hope you are making this a family affair, with everyone, even the little ones, assigned to something. There is so much to learn and harvest from your garden, far more than just a crop itself" ("Becoming the Pure in Heart," *Ensign*, May 1978, 79).

Animals can touch our lives deeply and promote our emotional well-being.



I cannot tell you logically why something as simple as planting a garden, however modest, and harvesting and enjoying the fruits of one's labors is a source of great happiness, but I know it is. There is "far more than just a crop itself" to be gained, and it can come from a flowerpot, a window box, or a single tomato plant, as well as from an entire garden or field.

In verse 11, Nephi also records, "We began to raise flocks, and herds, and animals of every kind." This is an element of a happy life to which many will readily relate. Animals—be they horses, cats, dogs, hamsters, or turtles—touch us deeply and promote our emotional well-being. Given affection and care, they return affection and care generously and consistently. People whose lives include relationships with animals are usually happier. For me at least, heaven will not be heaven unless the animal kingdom is part of God's kingdom.

SCRIPTURES

In verse 12, Nephi mentions he "had also brought the records which were engraven upon the plates of brass." Why would having access to the scriptures be a consideration in a happy lifestyle? Anyone who reads scripture regularly develops a clearer perspective and purer thoughts and has more sincere and thoughtful prayers. Our lives are bound to be happier when we use the scriptures to answer our very personal questions and needs.

There are other uplifting influences the scriptures can have in our lives. They can cleanse us from evil thoughts and fortify our resolve to resist temptation. They can give comfort in times of need such as the death of a loved one or other personal tragedy. Reading them can put us in tune with the Spirit of the Lord so that our depression and self-doubts will flee and our "confidence [will] wax strong in the presence of God" (D&C 121:45).

A powerful expression of the happiness that can come from immersing ourselves in the scriptures comes from Elder Parley P. Pratt's (1807–57) autobiography, in which he describes his first encounter with the Book of Mormon, which he called "that book of books":

"I read all day; eating was a burden, I had no desire for food; sleep was a burden when the night came, for I preferred reading to sleep.

"As I read, the spirit of the Lord was upon me, and I knew and comprehended that the book was true, as plainly and manifestly as a man comprehends and

Laboring with our hands produces a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment.

knows that he exists. My joy was now full, as it were, and I rejoiced sufficiently to more than pay me for all the sorrows, sacrifices and toils of my life" (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. [1979], 37).

I understand that in some Jewish families when a son starts Torah studies, a drop of honey is placed on the page to indicate this duty is also a great joy. I find that symbolism very appealing, and I testify that there is great constancy and happiness to be had from a daily study of the Bible and the scriptures of the Restoration.

PREPAREDNESS

The next element of a happy life is in verse 14—preparedness. Nephi "did take the sword of Laban, and after the manner of it did make many swords, lest by any means the . . . Lamanites should come upon us and destroy us." Nephi was preparing for possible skirmishes with the Lamanites and we must likewise prepare for our battles of life if we hope to lead happy lives. If we are prepared we not only do not fear (see D&C 38:30), but we actually enjoy and derive considerable happiness from the events of our daily lives.

My children and I have been blessed and made very happy by my wife's preparations for marriage and motherhood. She came with the fundamentals of spiritual preparation, education, cooking, sewing, gardening, reading, music, and game playing all in place. I would probably have loved her just as much without all these credentials, but I doubt that our children and I would have been as happy!

Those who have had some savings and a little food storage during a period of unemployment or who have been consistently treasuring up the "words of life" (see D&C 84:85) and have been called on to speak extemporaneously in stake conference will know the happiness (and relief) that comes from being prepared. The Boy Scouts and their motto, "Be prepared," have it right. Someone once asked Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting, "Be prepared for what?" "Why," said Baden-Powell, "for any old thing." That's just the idea, and Nephi knew it too.

WORK

Nephi's next comment on his happy society has to do with the principle of work: "And I did teach my people to build buildings, and to work in all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores, which were in great abundance" (2 Ne. 5:15).

In verse 17, he adds, "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cause my people to be industrious, and to labor with their hands."

Six thousand years ago Father Adam received the commandment, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen. 3:19). Today it is more socially acceptable to "perspire" than to "sweat," and we have lost more than just moisture in that transition.

I realize that work can be mental, spiritual, or physical effort, but Nephi's emphasis is on "laboring with our hands," or manual labor. No matter what our life's work turns out to be, I know we'll be happier if we regularly labor with our hands. Labor can take many forms: yard work, sewing, quilting, cooking, baking, auto repair, home repair—the list is endless, and so is the happiness and sense of accomplishment such activities produce.

I think it is a regrettable sign of our times that most family activities today take place in a

recreational rather than a work setting. I'm grateful I was able to work alongside my grandparents and parents, and in turn am able to work with our sons and daughters. There is something inspiring to me about the declaration of Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on this vital element of a happy life: "We are here on earth to work—to work long, hard, arduous hours, to work until our backs ache and our tired muscles knot, to work all our days" ("Stand Independent above All Other Creatures," *Ensign*, May 1979, 93).

TEMPLES

Nephi writes, "And I, Nephi, did build a temple" (2 Ne. 5:16). Nephi's temple may have differed in some ways from our latter-day temples, but its central purpose was likely the same: to teach and orient God's children concerning His plan for their happiness and to provide the ordinances and covenants essential to the attainment of that happiness.

After living on this good earth for over five decades, I can honestly say that the most spiritually mature and happy people I know are ardent temple goers. There is good reason for that. It is in the temple that the full sweep of God's program for us is told and retold, each telling bringing greater understanding and commitment to living life His way.

What images does the word *temple* call to our minds? Listen to Elder Boyd K. Packer's expression of feelings about this: "When we say *temple* I would list what in essence are Latter-day Saint synonyms for the word: marriage, family, children, happiness, joy, eternal life, resurrection, redemption, exaltation, inspiration, revelation" (*The Holy Temple* [1980], 260).

A good test of how well we are doing in our quest to come unto Christ may be how we feel about the temple and our experiences there. *Temple* can be synonymous with *happiness* and *joy*. It was for Nephi and his people.

CHURCH SERVICE

The final element I wish to highlight concerns the roles Church callings and service play in a happy life. Nephi notes in verse 26 that he "did consecrate Jacob and Joseph, that they should be priests and teachers over the land of my people." Of course, true Christian service can't be provided exclusively through institutional means. Random acts of personal service

motivated by our feelings of charity are necessary for our salvation. But the organized Church as established by the Lord Jesus Christ, in which we look after and serve others and are looked after and served by others, provides a wonderful

The Church organization provides many opportunities for worthwhile service.



Serving others enriches our lives and helps us feel needed.

source of happiness for all of us. Nephi epitomizes this ethic of caring and service. He wrote, “For I pray continually for [my people] by day, and mine eyes water my pillow by night, because of them” (2 Ne. 33:3).

I can’t begin to express how grateful I am for the countless opportunities for growth, service, and happiness that activity in the Church has provided. It is not by accident that in God’s plan for us we have been given a Church that “hath need of every member” (D&C 84:110). Because we are needed and encouraged and enabled to serve, we are much happier.

OTHER ELEMENTS

If we go beyond 2 Nephi 5 in Nephi’s writings we discover even more about the patterns of life that enabled Nephi and his people to live happily. For instance, we learn he faithfully kept a journal. We learn that he was an avid student and teacher of the doctrines of the gospel, and a sensitive follower of the Spirit of the Lord.

We also learn that he and his people did “look forward with steadfastness unto Christ” (2 Ne. 25:24). The Savior and His teachings were the focus of Nephi’s energies: “And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for

a remission of their sins” (2 Ne. 25:26).

Nephi knew and taught, as have all the prophets, that true peace and happiness can only come through a remission of our sins. Taking full advantage of the Savior’s infinite Atonement is the only sure antidote for unhappiness!

A PATTERN FOR HAPPINESS

Since first making my personal discovery about living after the “manner of happiness,” I have thought deeply about the principles involved and about how timeless and universal they are. The same patterns and elements of daily life that enabled Nephi and his people to be happy 560 years before Christ work equally well today. They fit comfortably at every stage during our lives and in every culture. In a time when “diversity” is so frequently touted as something desirable, it is interesting to note the uniformity and unchanging nature of these principles. Perhaps every purveyor of “new lamps for old” ought not to be heeded.

These principles of happiness can be lived virtually without cost. It’s almost as if Nephi’s brother Jacob were speaking to this issue as he extended the invitation, “Come, my brethren, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price” (2 Ne. 9:50). This should tell us something about the very minimal role material things play in a happy life.

It has been interesting, too, to discover that the principles of happiness Nephi shares are found in all the scriptures. I often wonder why we sometimes wrestle over the meaning of obscure passages of scripture when what is really important for our happiness and salvation is stated by the Lord over and over again in very plain terms.

It is noteworthy, too, that the prophets of the past 50 years or so have had as the hallmarks of their teachings and service some of these same principles. President David O. McKay and President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) made powerful statements about the sanctity and importance of the family. President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) and President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) pleaded with us to make the scriptures a more significant part of our lives. President Kimball spoke movingly on the importance and value of physical work, journals, and gardens. President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) lovingly invited us to make the temple the symbol of our Church membership. And like the prophets before

him, President Gordon B. Hinckley continually reminds us of the blessings of obedience to God's laws and of the need to give ever greater attention to Christ and His teachings. These chosen men understand better than all the world the sources of true happiness.

I doubt that Nephi intended his list of ingredients in a happy society to be exhaustive. There is no formula for guaranteeing happiness every day of our lives; in fact, scripture suggests that God did not intend for every day to be entirely happy (see 2 Ne. 2:15–16). There is eternal design and purpose to be seen in suffering, sadness, and adversity.

There will be a tendency, in the complexity of these times, to forget that Nephi did “glory in plainness” (2 Ne. 33:6) and that the principles of happiness he modeled are both plain and simple. If we overlook that fact, we may be like the children of Israel at the time of Moses, who, when bitten by poisonous serpents, failed to look at the brass serpent Moses held up and live. Of these, Nephi says, “And the labor which they had to perform was to look; and because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished” (1 Ne. 17:41). The way to happiness can be just as simple and just as easily missed.

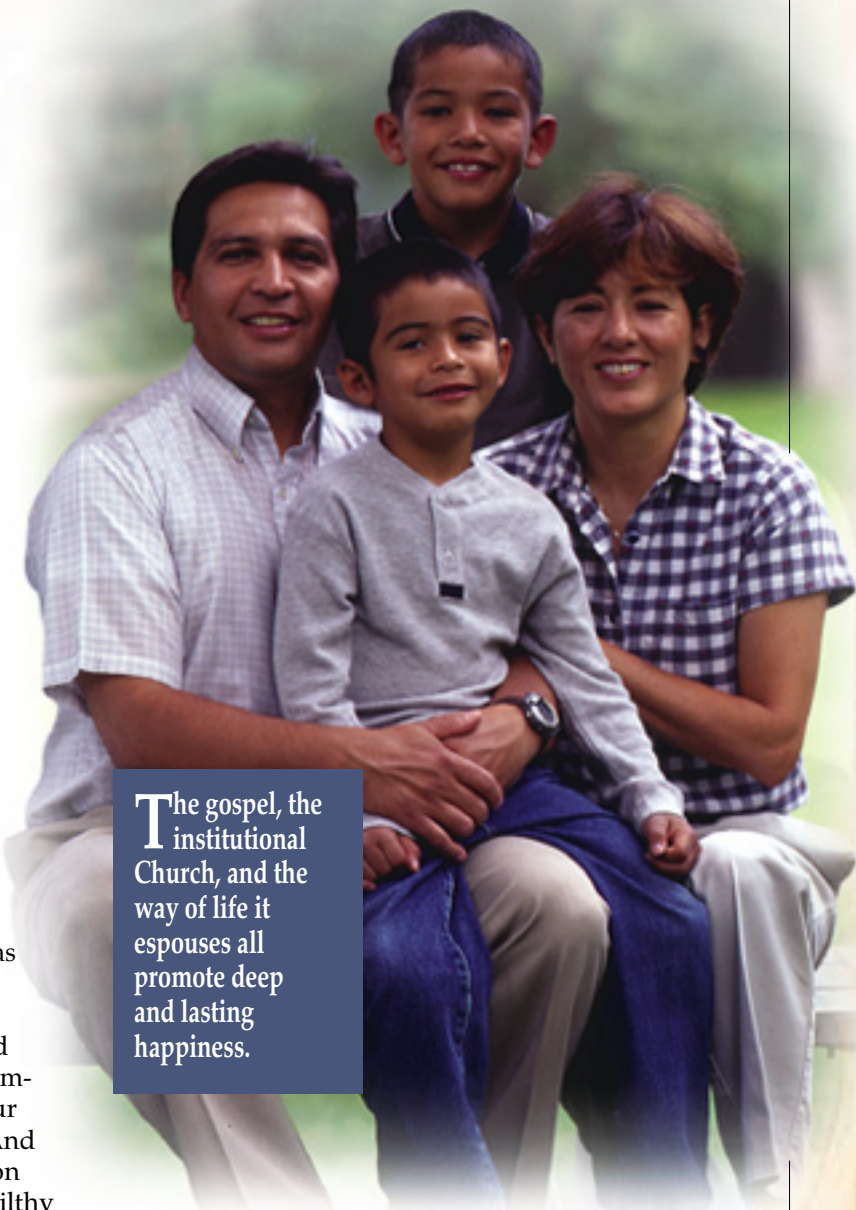
If we aren't happy, of what use is the gospel, the Church and its organizations, programs, and the way of life it espouses? Moroni stresses the importance of being happy during this phase of our eternal existence by describing the judgment: “And then cometh the judgment of the Holy One upon them; and then cometh the time that he that is filthy shall be filthy still; and he that is righteous shall be righteous still; he that is happy shall be happy still; and he that is unhappy shall be unhappy still” (Morm. 9:14).

Nephi's society wasn't the only happy one of which the Book of Mormon speaks. There was another time and another people of whom it was written:

“And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

“And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God” (4 Ne. 1:15–16).

May we strive for this same happiness as we obey the commandments, study the scriptures, attend the



The gospel, the institutional Church, and the way of life it espouses all promote deep and lasting happiness.

temple, work, serve, prepare, and plant—that our harvest may be great and our joy eternal. □

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on 19 September 1995.

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. What can we change or improve in our lives to increase our happiness?
2. Why does keeping the commandments help make us happy?
3. Why is the Lord concerned with our happiness and well-being?

Rejoice in the Blessings of the Temple

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

Isaiah 2:2–3: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, . . . and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.”

Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Come to the temples worthily and regularly. Not only do you bless those who are deceased, but you may freely partake of the promised personal revelation that may bless your life with power, knowledge, light, beauty, and truth from on high, which will guide you and your posterity to eternal life. What person would not want these blessings, as expressed by the Prophet Joseph Smith at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. He said: ‘We ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them.’ (D&C 109:22.)

“When you return from the temple, share with your children

and loved ones at home your feelings about what you experienced. Speak not of the sacred ordinances, but of the love and power manifest by them.

“Let your children see you behave—toward them and your eternal companion—in kindlier, more loving ways. Your consistently positive expressions about what you experience in the temple will create in your children a desire to receive those same blessings and provide them with strong motivation to resist the temptations which could disqualify them from temple blessings” (“Come to the House of the Lord,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 16).

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95): “What a glorious thing it is for us to have the privilege of going to the temple for our own blessings. Then after going to the

“Every man or woman who goes to the temple comes out of that building a better man or woman than he or she was when entering into it.”



temple for our own blessings, what a glorious privilege to do the work for those who have gone on before us. This aspect of temple work is an unselfish work. Yet whenever we do temple work for other people, there is a blessing that comes back to us. Thus, it should be no surprise to us that the Lord does desire that his people be a temple-motivated people. I repeat what I have said before: It would please the Lord for every adult member to be worthy of—and to carry—a current temple recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent use of it. The things that we must do and not do to be worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families” (“A Temple-Motivated People,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 5).

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “Every man or woman who goes to the temple comes out of that building a better man or woman than he or she was when entering into it. That’s something that’s remarkable that happens with all of us. . . . Do you have problems and concerns and worries? Do you want for peace in your heart and an opportunity to commune with the Lord and meditate upon His way? Go to the house of the Lord and there feel of His Spirit and commune with Him and you will know a peace that you will find nowhere else” (stake conference, Wandsworth, England, 27 Aug. 1995; see *Ensign*, Apr. 1996, 72).

- In what ways can the ordinances and covenants of the temple affect our lives?
- How can we teach our family members and others about the temple so that they desire to live worthy of entering there?
- How is our Christmas celebration made more meaningful through our knowledge of temple blessings? □

No-Fuss Family History

For Christmas one year, each of our family members received a binder titled “Our Family—Then and Now.” Sectioned to store past and present information, these simple gifts helped us to begin recording our family’s history. One Sunday each month our family members all gather to write on a specific “then” topic, such as “Memories of times I spent with Dad,” “What I have learned from Mom,” “My most embarrassing moment,” or “What I remember about my baptism.” That same evening we also write about recent family events and personal experiences, especially those that occurred during the month. Some family members have recorded highlights such as babies’ births or blessings, children’s lost teeth, good test scores, or funny experiences. We help those too young to write, and long-distance family members mail or e-mail their contributions. A family member types the handwritten drafts, and on a subsequent Sunday, family members each receive a copy of the finished product to read and place in their binders. This Sunday activity unites our family. We share our trials and triumphs and focus on blessings we have received from the Lord.—**Kristin W. Belcher, Riverton 10th Ward, Riverton Utah Central Stake**



Our Ward's Gift of Service

At Christmastime we often sing of “peace on earth, good will to men.” The spirit of Christmas moves many of us to help others in Christlike ways. Still, despite our best intentions, the busyness of numerous holiday preparations and celebrations can cause us to lose our charitable focus. A few years ago, our ward decided to change the plans for our annual Christmas party. Instead of having the usual elaborate dinner, entertainment, and visit from Santa Claus, we celebrated the season with a potluck dinner and service activity of helping homeless men in a nearby city. The project touched our hearts and added meaning to our celebration of Christmas. Following is a brief description of our service project with suggestions for planning a successful activity.

1. *Plan early.* Well before the activity, we talked to representatives of the homeless shelter to see what items were most needed. They said women and children are more often the recipients of service, so we decided to focus on the men’s needs this time. The shelter suggested we provide personal grooming items, primarily to help the men make themselves more presentable for job interviews. Then our Relief Society sisters donated fabric and made 260 over-the-shoulder bags to store the toiletries and other gifts we would give.

2. *Involve everyone.* To reach our goal of filling 260 bags, we invited ward members to contribute soap, shampoo, shaving cream, razors, and other items. Several companies also donated needed goods, and we added candy for a festive touch. Then we organized like items in cardboard boxes and placed them on a table in one room of the meetinghouse. The youth formed an assembly line to fill the bags, and the Primary children made Christmas cards in another room. In a third room, the brethren made checkerboard games, while the sisters gathered in the cultural hall to make 10 quilts for the shelter. Throughout the evening, some members moved from room to room, helping one another in a unified effort.

We added to the joy of the evening by starting with a simple potluck meal and ending with Christmas songs sung by the Primary children, accompanied by two brethren playing guitars. Enhanced by the spirit of Christmas, our evening of service helped us to focus more fully on others’ needs as the Savior would have us do.—**Martha D. Harger, Sandy 13th Ward, Sandy Utah West Stake**

Making Family Home Evening Glow

As busy parents of five children, we wanted to make family home evening special. My husband and I decided to organize a candlelight dinner.

First, we sent our older children on a search for candles around our home, and they returned with taper candles, scented candles, birthday candles, and more. Later at dinner, after dishing up everyone's plate and filling the water glasses, we lit several candles in the middle of our dining room table and turned off the lights. Through the

candlelight, we noticed our children's faces glowing as a seven-year-old, a five-year-old, a three-year-old, a two-year-old, and a baby all dined by candlelight together. The dimmed lights stilled our busy home, and the soft glow quieted our hectic lives.

As we asked a blessing on our dinner, we truly felt the Holy Spirit with us. The children



spoke in hushed tones and remembered their manners as if they were seated in a fancy restaurant. Before we even cleared the dishes, the children were begging to "eat with candles tomorrow." Our decision to reserve these special candlelight dinners for family home evenings was rewarded with cheers of excitement.

Now our children look forward to Monday nights with great anticipation as we enjoy our candlelight meal together. The wonderful atmosphere around our table carries over into our family home evening and enlivens lessons, songs, prayers, and treats.—**Kathy L. Wilde, Shelley Eighth Ward, Shelley Idaho Stake**

A Child's First Budget

Parents can help young children begin learning the fundamentals of financial management by implementing a few basic ideas.

1. To learn how to manage money, a child needs a source of income. For many, this comes from an allowance. Allowances may include money that would be spent on a child anyway. Some suggest parents pay a fixed sum regularly. How much and how often depend on the age of the child and on the family's circumstances. Young children may do best with a weekly allowance.

2. Children also need a way to earn extra money. Being paid for jobs at home or around the neighborhood may be your child's first step toward financial independence. One way to do this is to sit down with your child and agree on a list of jobs and determine appropriate compensation for each. Children are free to do or not to do jobs on the list.

3. Begin a very simple budget to be used for all income. Tithing should be paid first and should be kept separate from other money. When a child learns to write, that child is ready to begin filling out a donation slip.

4. Next, budget long-term savings. Open a savings account and help the child make regular deposits. Some parents deposit

funds equal to the child's deposits. These funds are to be saved for future missions or other "grown-up" expenses.

5. Help a child budget all remaining funds. This might include a short-term savings can or jar where funds can accumulate for items on a child's wish list. In addition, some funds need to be spent on other people, such as buying birthday gifts. The remaining funds should be spent as a child wishes.

For a child to develop into a fiscally responsible adult takes time. Beginning to budget while children are young can help them grow into confident, disciplined young adults who are prepared to meet the financial challenges ahead.—**Jerry Mason, Vienna Ward, Oakton Virginia Stake**

PHOTOGRAPH BY SHAUND STAHL/CHURCH NEWS



President Gordon B. Hinckley smiles to crowds after the Freiberg Germany Temple rededication. The prophet recently completed a historic visit to Europe, visiting members in five nations.

President Hinckley Makes Historic Visit to Europe

To the thrill of Saints across Europe, President Gordon B. Hinckley made a historic tour of the continent in September. While there, the prophet dedicated a new temple, rededicated a refurbished one, and met with members and government officials in Ukraine, Russia, and Iceland—the first visits of a latter-day prophet to these nations.

“There is strength throughout the world from those who have heard the restored gospel and accepted the truth,” reported President Hinckley of his travels.

FREIBERG GERMANY TEMPLE

Ask the local Saints and they’ll tell you the dedication of a small, modest temple in 1985 became the catalyst that eventually opened the doors for the Church in Eastern Europe.

It was the final step in a series of events that started in the 1960s when Church members in the German Democratic Republic were promised by President Thomas S. Monson, now First Counselor in the First Presidency, that they would have every blessing available to members elsewhere.

Surrounded by thousands of tearful members who only a dozen years ago had limited contact with Church leaders, President Gordon B. Hinckley rededicated the completely refurbished Freiberg Germany Temple in one session on 7 September 2002.

“We thank Thee for the manifestation of Thy power when this temple was first built, that Thou didst touch the hearts of men in a miraculous manner to make it possible to construct it and dedicate it to the blessing of

the very many who have used it,” prayed President Hinckley as he rededicated the temple.

“Bless this land and its people. May the nation go forward in peace and its people be prospered. . . . [And may] Thy work become a mighty force for good in this favored part of Thy vineyard.”

The Freiberg temple renovations took more than a year to complete and include significant structural upgrades as well as a new baptistry, office space, and an angel Moroni statue.

More than 6,000 members from throughout the temple district participated in the rededication. Busloads traveled from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Ukraine. Special translation facilities in the nearby Freiberg Ward meetinghouse allowed Saints to hear proceedings in their own language. Proceedings were also broadcast to stake meetinghouses in Dresden, Berlin, and Leipzig, Germany.

Among those attending the rededication was Edith Krause from the Prenzlau Branch, Neubrandenburg Germany District. Sister Krause joined the Church before World War II, and over the years, she and her husband, Walter, were instrumental in sustaining the Church when Saints were allowed only limited contact with Church leaders.

“We came this long distance because the Church is our joy,” she said. “We are examples that when

the Lord wants something, nothing can stop Him.”

THE HAGUE NETHERLANDS TEMPLE

Early on the morning of 8 September, faithful Saints lined the walkway leading to the front door of The Hague Netherlands Temple. As a car rolled to a stop and President Gordon B. Hinckley stepped out onto the sidewalk, the strains of “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” floated through the morning breeze and greeted the beloved leader, who on that day dedicated The Hague temple, the Church’s 114th.

“The faithful of this land have given so much for their testimony of Thy divine work,” said President Hinckley in the dedicatory prayer. “Bless to our memory all who have gone before, and bless mightily those who



Members from Belgium, France, and the Netherlands line up to participate in The Hague Netherlands Temple dedication.

PHOTOGRAPH BY O. JAY CALL

now walk in faith before Thee."

"Dear Father, we plead with Thee that this day of dedication may herald a new day in this great nation," he continued. "Touch the hearts and the minds of the people of the land. Lead them from the pursuit of the things of the world to a new yearning for knowledge of Thee and for things divine and eternal."

The temple district includes the Netherlands, Belgium, and part of France. Saints filled the temple as well as meeting-houses in Rotterdam and The Hague to participate in the services.

"We were very excited in 1999 to hear that the Church was going to build a temple here," says Robert Kirschbaum, longtime member of the Church in the Haarlem Ward, The Hague Netherlands Stake. "It seemed that immediately difficulties started, but we overcame them all, and now you have no idea how blessed we feel having a temple in the Netherlands."

More than 32,000 guests, including local government and civic leaders, toured the open house held on 17–31 August. The temple's construction workers and their families were also taken on a private tour of the finished building.

"There was to be no swearing, no smoking, and no alcohol on the job, and all our people showed respect and understanding for this," says Ad Backens, project manager for the construction company that



A choir in Ukraine performs during the meeting held with President Hinckley in September. More than 3,200 Saints gathered to hear the prophet.

built the temple. "More and more, I felt that what we were building was unique; this was going to be a temple in which members of your church would find inner peace, and I was convinced that this was really the greatest structure I have ever been able to build."

KIEV, UKRAINE

With record numbers in attendance, President Hinckley addressed a full auditorium in Kiev, Ukraine, on 9 September. More than 3,200 Saints, government officials, and community members gathered for the first visit of a Church President to this Eastern European nation.

Telling the congregation, "Ye are a chosen generation" (1 Peter 2:9), President Hinckley said, "This is the greatest age in the history of the world when you and I have come to earth [to] partake of all the blessings that are available to us,

and in a particular way, the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

He admonished the congregation to cling to the Word of Wisdom, the blessings of the priesthood, and the law of tithing. "You cannot afford not to pay [tithing], my brothers and sisters," President Hinckley said. "You have made a covenant with the Lord, and . . . the Lord has the power to fulfill His promises."

In conclusion, he expressed his love and said, "I just wish that I could come down and put my arms around every one of you and say, 'Thank you.'"

In a reception before the meeting, President Hinckley met with Ukrainian government officials, including Viktor Bondarenko, chair of the State Committee for Religious Affairs. President Hinckley thanked Mr. Bondarenko for his kindness in assisting with

matters pertaining to the Church in Ukraine. He expressed particular appreciation for Mr. Bondarenko's help in arrangements for the Church meeting that took place in the Ukraine Palace Concert Hall. Few religious events have been held in the government-owned hall.

MOSCOW, RUSSIA

It wasn't hard to recognize those en route to the Cosmos Hotel to hear President Hinckley on 10 September. Men in white shirts and women in skirts—with scriptures tucked under their arms—thronged Metro stations around Moscow. In all, more than 2,000 people packed three halls, anticipating instruction from their prophet.

"I never dreamed I would be in Moscow, Russia, speaking to a large group of this size," President Hinckley said.



President Hinckley greets members after his address in Reykjavík, Iceland. About 300 members make up two branches in this Nordic country.

"Thank you for coming, for traveling to be here. It is a great day."

He admonished members to "be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27). "Believe in God; go to Him in prayer as His sons and daughters. You have divinity in you. Believe in Him; worship Him in spirit and truth," he said. He encouraged youth to hold fast to the gospel and to prepare for missions. He also encouraged members to be good citizens and strengthen their land.

"When the meeting was finished, I joined other people on the street in front of the entrance of the hotel. I did not want to go away immediately but wanted to share my feelings with the other members of the Church," said Maryana Dombrovskaya, Severo-Zamoskvoretsky Branch, Moscow Russia North District. "There were many people on the street. . . . We were a community—not a crowd."

Prior to meeting with members, President Hinckley received a warm reception from local government and religious officials. Among these was Viktor Zorkaltsev, chair of the Public Unions and Religious Organizations Affairs Committee of the Russian parliament. President Hinckley expressed his gratitude for the manner in which the Russian government has aided the establishment of the Church in that nation. He also emphasized that missionaries who serve in Russia become the nation's best ambassadors when they return home.

REYKJAVÍK, ICELAND

The weather had been blustery and rainy, but the clouds gave way and President Hinckley arrived in Reykjavík, Iceland, on a calm autumn day. There he met with more than 200 enthusiastic Saints on 11 September.

Speaking in Iceland's only Church meeting-house, President Hinckley encouraged the congregation to strengthen their marriages, live the Word of Wisdom, pay tithing, and share the gospel. He praised early Icelandic members of the Church who emigrated to Utah in the 19th century in the infancy of the Church. He also praised the modern pioneers whose faith and diligence are helping the Church grow in Iceland.

While in Reykjavík, President Hinckley paid a courtesy visit to President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, head of state for Iceland. They met at President Grímsson's residence, a

small complex of gleaming white buildings with red roofs, surrounded by lush green lawns.

The two discussed the emigration of early members of the Church from Iceland to Utah. "Their journey to Utah required extraordinary courage and strength," observed President Grímsson. He remembered fondly his 1997 visit to Utah and noted how impressed he is with the manner in which the descendants of early Icelandic pioneers have retained their ties to the land of their forbears.

President Hinckley spoke of the Church's emphasis on the family, of the growth of the Church in the world, and of the importance of building strong local leadership. "We are a Christian people," he said, "who are trying to act like Christians." ■

New Temples Announced

The First Presidency has announced plans to construct new temples in Curitiba, Brazil, and Panama City, Panama.

The Curitiba Brazil Temple will serve more than 42,000 Latter-day Saints in a temple district that will include stakes from the Brazilian states of Paraná and Santa Catarina. This temple will be the fifth in Brazil. Other temples are in São Paulo, Campinas, Porto Alegre, and Recife.

Members of the Church in Panama enthusiastically welcomed the news of the first temple to be built in

their country. The Panama City Panama Temple district will serve approximately 22,200 Latter-day Saints in Panama.

Specific locations and groundbreaking dates for the two temples are yet to be announced.

The First Presidency has also announced the location for the San Antonio Texas Temple. It will be built at Stone Oak Parkway and Hardy Oak Boulevard in San Antonio. Temple construction is expected to begin early this year. This temple will be the fourth in Texas. ■

Programs Commemorate September 11

By Lisa Ann Jackson

It was a blustery, gray day in New York City as thousands gathered at ground zero to commemorate the first anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Similar groups gathered at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., in a field in Pennsylvania, and in services around the world. Church leaders and members joined in honoring the victims and survivors of a day that, according to President James E. Faust, “changed forever the way we live our lives.”

People thronged Temple

general auxiliary presidencies were present for the service. President Gordon B. Hinckley was out of the country.

Calling the attacks a “pernicious assault” and “an evil conspiracy,” President Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, addressed the congregation. “The greatest tragedy of it all was the loss of human life. All were innocent. Over 2,800 were killed with malice aforethought. The death of even one person among our citizenry is incalculable.”

President Faust reminded listeners that the United States is a blessed land, and with those blessings come responsibilities. “God Almighty established this land,” he said. “He raised up giants among men as our founding fathers. They acted for us, ‘the people,’ who were and who remain sovereign. The motto stamped on our coins, ‘In God We Trust,’ must also be stamped in our hearts and minds.”

The Tabernacle Choir provided several musical selections, including arrangements of “Nearer, My God, to Thee,” “The Lord Is My Shepherd,” and “The Lord’s Prayer.” Emotions were tender in the congregation as the choir concluded with “America the Beautiful.”

Earlier that day President Monson spoke at a community interfaith



Church leaders hold a remembrance service in Salt Lake City to commemorate the events of September 11. The Tabernacle Choir provided much of the program.

gathering in Salt Lake City along with other community leaders of Christian, Islamic, and Jewish faiths. He counseled listeners to remember those who died, those who survived, and those who worked tirelessly after the attacks. He also highlighted the role faith has played in the aftermath of the attacks.

“Amidst the fear, the sorrow, the pain, and the suffering, a mighty miracle occurred—a fusion of faith, even a pattern of prayer—as Americans turned not to dial 911 but rather dropped to their knees and looked heavenward to God for help,” President Monson said.

In Washington, D.C., the Mormon Choir of Washington, D.C., held a memorial concert at Arlington National Cemetery on 10 September and at the Washington D.C. Temple Visitors’ Center on 14 September. The choir was accompanied by the Southern Virginia University orchestra and included soloists David Glenn Hatch, Erika

Hatch, and Liz Smith.

Two members of the Church perished in the attack in Washington, D.C. Brady Howell and Rhonda Rasmussen were at work at the Pentagon when an aircraft collided with the building. Along with four other victims at the Pentagon, Sister Rasmussen’s remains were never identified, and she was honored in a special ceremony held by the military at Arlington National Cemetery on 12 September. There the military buried all human remains that could not be identified.

Brother Howell’s widow, parents, and siblings attended a national memorial service at the Pentagon on 11 September. Brother Howell’s alma mater, Syracuse University, also created the Brady Howell Community Service Initiative in his honor “as a means of not only remembering this outstanding American, but as a way of continuing his dedicated service to community and country,” according to the university’s Web site.



President James E. Faust offers words of comfort and respect in remembrance of September 11.

Square in Salt Lake City to remember the events of September 11 in a noon-time service. President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the meeting, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the Quorums of the Seventy, and the

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND



The Mormon Choir of Washington, D.C., holds a memorial concert honoring the victims and survivors of September 11.

The New York New York Stake sponsored a memorial fireside on 8 September. Stake president Brent J. Belnap offered remarks, and various musical selections focused on the Atonement and the redemptive power of the Savior. The stake also opened all three of its buildings on 11 September at the request of New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg. He asked that all religious edifices be open to the public that day. The stake center carried the broadcast of the Church's remembrance service held in Salt Lake City as well as rebroadcasts of last year's memorial service.

The New York New York Stake also issued a statement thanking members of the Church for their outpouring of support during the past year:

"We express our heartfelt gratitude to literally thousands of Church members around the world who so generously contributed of themselves following the tragic events of September 11, 2001. . . .

"Your example of Christ-like love and service has blessed many lives. We unite with you in expressing our faith and hope in a

loving Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ."

Three members of the Church died in the attacks on the World Trade Center. Ivhan Luis Carpio was at work on the 107th floor of One World Trade Center that day; Mary Alice Wahlstrom and her daughter Carolyn Meyer-Beug were onboard the first plane to strike the World Trade Center.

Sister Wahlstrom's son Norman and grandson Nate of the Kaysville 17th Ward, Kaysville Utah East Stake, attended the service held at ground zero. "I'm glad I came," said Nate Wahlstrom in an interview with *Deseret News*, "because it is a time to reflect on the lives of my grandmother and my aunt. . . . Now we'll be able to take back what we saw here to our family. . . . It looks almost like a cemetery, . . . like sacred ground."

At a ceremony in Kaysville, Utah, on 11 September, community members broke ground for a monument park honoring Sister Wahlstrom, Sister Meyer-Beug, and Brother Howell, all of whom had ties to the community. ■

Lisa Ann Jackson is a member of the Church magazines staff.

Comment

CALL FOR ARTICLES

Do you have parents whose lifestyles are contrary to the principles of the gospel? What insights can you share to help others successfully deal with such a situation? Send your responses by 1 March 2003 to *Ensign*, 24th Floor, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3224, USA, or to cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org. Clearly mark your submission "Parents," and on the top of your submission, write your name, address, telephone number, ward and stake (or branch and district).

While we cannot acknowledge receipt of individual responses, authors whose submissions are selected for publication will be notified. If you would like your manuscript returned, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope and allow up to a year.

THANKS FOR VIDEO

Although my family is grown, I wanted to view the new video by President Gordon B. Hinckley

("President Hinckley Speaks to Children through New Video," July 2002, 75). I ordered it, enjoyed it, and then watched it a second time. What a sweet teaching message to Primary-age children from a prophet of God.

The following Sunday I took the video to church and shared it with a family for their family home evening. When it was returned, I shared it again, and it is now in a second family's home for the benefit of their little ones.

What a joy the gospel is! It provides the way to fortify ourselves and our families. Thank you, President Hinckley, for making this available.

Sharlie Carter
Louisville, Kentucky

UPDATE

In a descriptive paragraph with the "New Area Presidency Assignments" chart on pages 76-77 of the September *Ensign*, it was stated that "All presidency members belong to the Quorums of the Seventy." Elder Dallin H. Oaks, President of the Philippines Area, and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, President of the Chile Area, are members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. ■

President Hinckley Offers Comfort

President Gordon B. Hinckley released the following statement of condolence and comfort on the anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks:

"Today, the world remembers the tragic events of September 11, 2001. We are still shocked and dismayed at the infamy of those cowardly attacks.

"During the past year, we have come to know the heroic acts of men and women whose courage and selflessness were manifest on that terrible day. So many lost their lives. So many friends and families have been deprived of dear ones. Today we pause to remember and join in tribute to those whose lives were taken and to those who have carried on so bravely in their absence.

"We know that much good has come of these dreadful circumstances. From the smoke and ashes of New York, Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, and other areas of the world has arisen a greater sense of unity and purpose in ridding the earth of evil and providing for the freedom and security of all people. We endorse the righteous efforts of God-fearing people everywhere in this important endeavor.

"May our Father in Heaven smile upon us all, comfort those who continue to mourn, and guide the leaders of nations in the quest for justice and liberty, is our sincere prayer." ■

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Winter Quarters, by Gregory Sievers



After negotiations with Indian tribal leaders, Church leaders established the town of Winter Quarters on the west side of the Missouri River in September 1846. About 4,000 Latter-day Saints lived there, with many others living across the river in hundreds of small camps in Iowa.



*You can almost feel the light
enveloping you as you
walk onto Temple Square
at Christmastime. Myriads of
lights, decorations, and exhibits
commemorate the mortal birth
of that Light of the World
who came as a babe to Bethlehem
2,000 years ago.*