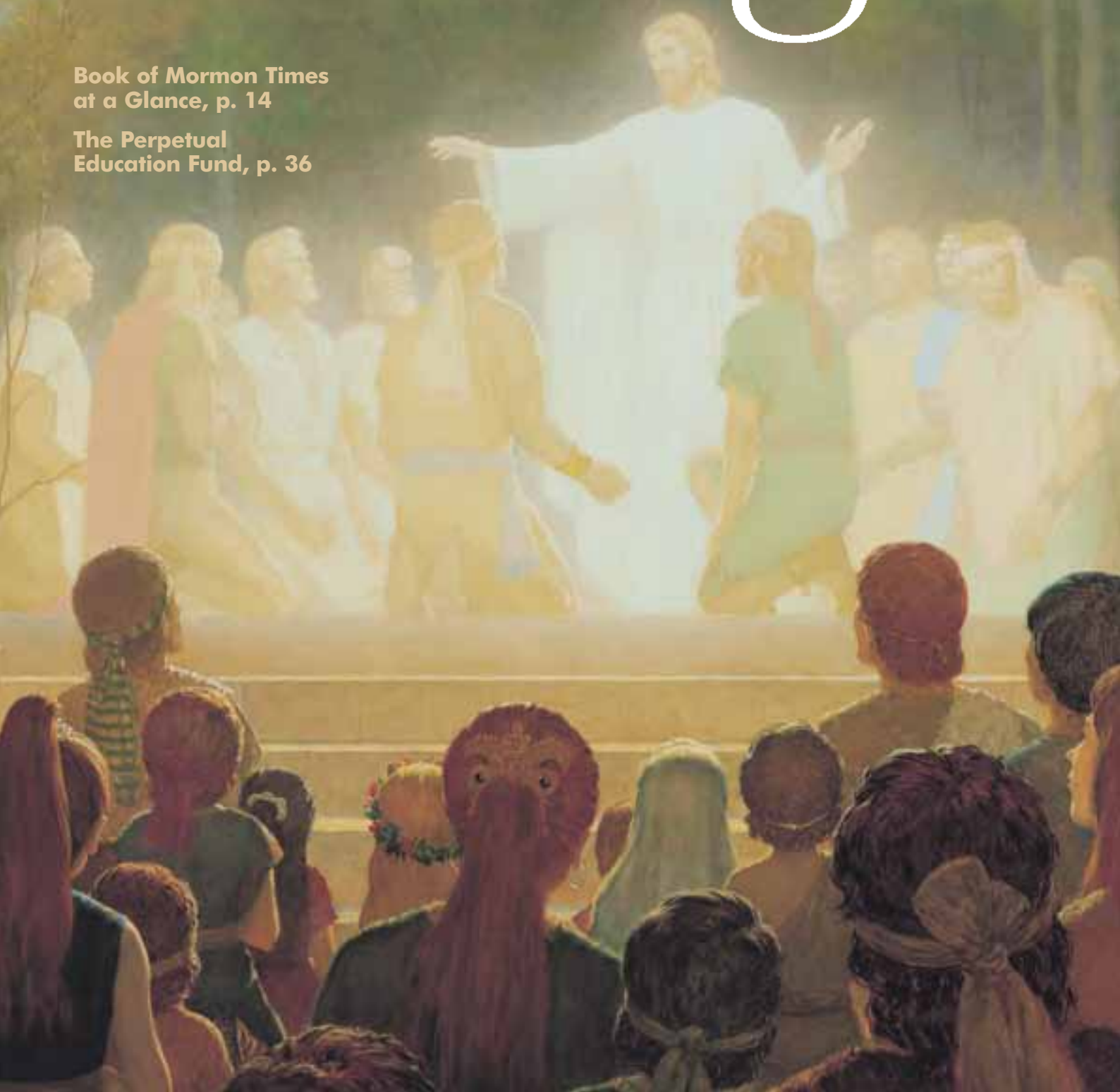


THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • JANUARY 2004

Ensign

**Book of Mormon Times
at a Glance, p. 14**

**The Perpetual
Education Fund, p. 36**





They Did Treat Me with Much Harshness, by Walter Rane

On the ship journeying to the promised land, Laman and Lemuel became angry with Nephi, saying, "We will not that our younger brother shall be a ruler over us." Nephi records, "Laman and Lemuel did take me and bind me with cords, and they did treat me with much harshness" (1 Nephi 18:10–11).

Ensign



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48 *Joy in the Journey*

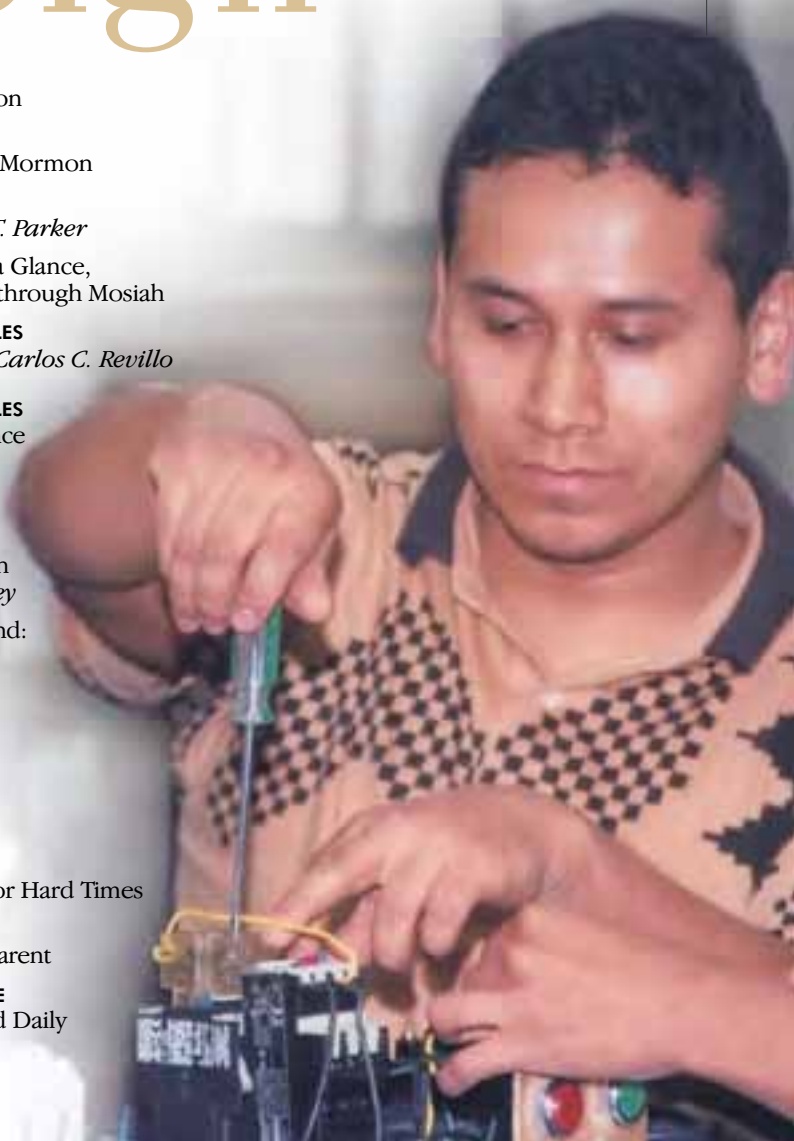


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The Ensign (ISSN 0884-1136) is published monthly by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E.
North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA.
Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah, and at
additional mailing offices.

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CANADA POST INFORMATION: Publication Agreement
#40017431



The Keystone

of Our Religion

BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

After many years, I still remember holding in my hand my mother's copy of her favorite book. It was a timeworn copy of the Book of Mormon. Almost every page was marked. In spite of tender handling, some of the leaves were dog-eared and the cover was worn thin. No one had to tell her that she could get closer to God by reading the Book of Mormon than by any other book. She was already there. She had read it, studied it, prayed over it, and taught from it. As a young man I held her book in my hands and tried to see, through her eyes, the great truths of the Book of Mormon to which she so readily testified and which she so greatly loved.

But the Book of Mormon did not yield its profound message to me as an unearned legacy. Indeed I question whether one can acquire an understanding of this great book except through singleness of mind and strong purpose of heart, manifest through study and prayer. We must not only ask if it is true, but we must also ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Said Moroni, "Ask God, the Eternal Father, *in the name of Christ*, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a

sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost."¹

Why a Keystone?

Joseph Smith, who translated the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon came, had this to say: "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."²

One dictionary defines *keystone* as "the central wedge-shaped stone of an arch that locks its parts together." A secondary definition is "the central supporting element of a whole."³

The Book of Mormon is a keystone because it establishes and ties together eternal principles and precepts, rounding out basic doctrines of salvation. It is the crowning gem in the diadem of our holy scriptures.

It is a keystone for other reasons also. In the promise of Moroni previously referred to—namely, that God will manifest the truth of the Book of Mormon to every sincere



I question whether one can acquire an understanding of the Book of Mormon except through singleness of mind and strong purpose of heart, manifest through study and prayer.

inquirer having faith in Christ⁴—we have a key link in a self-locking chain.

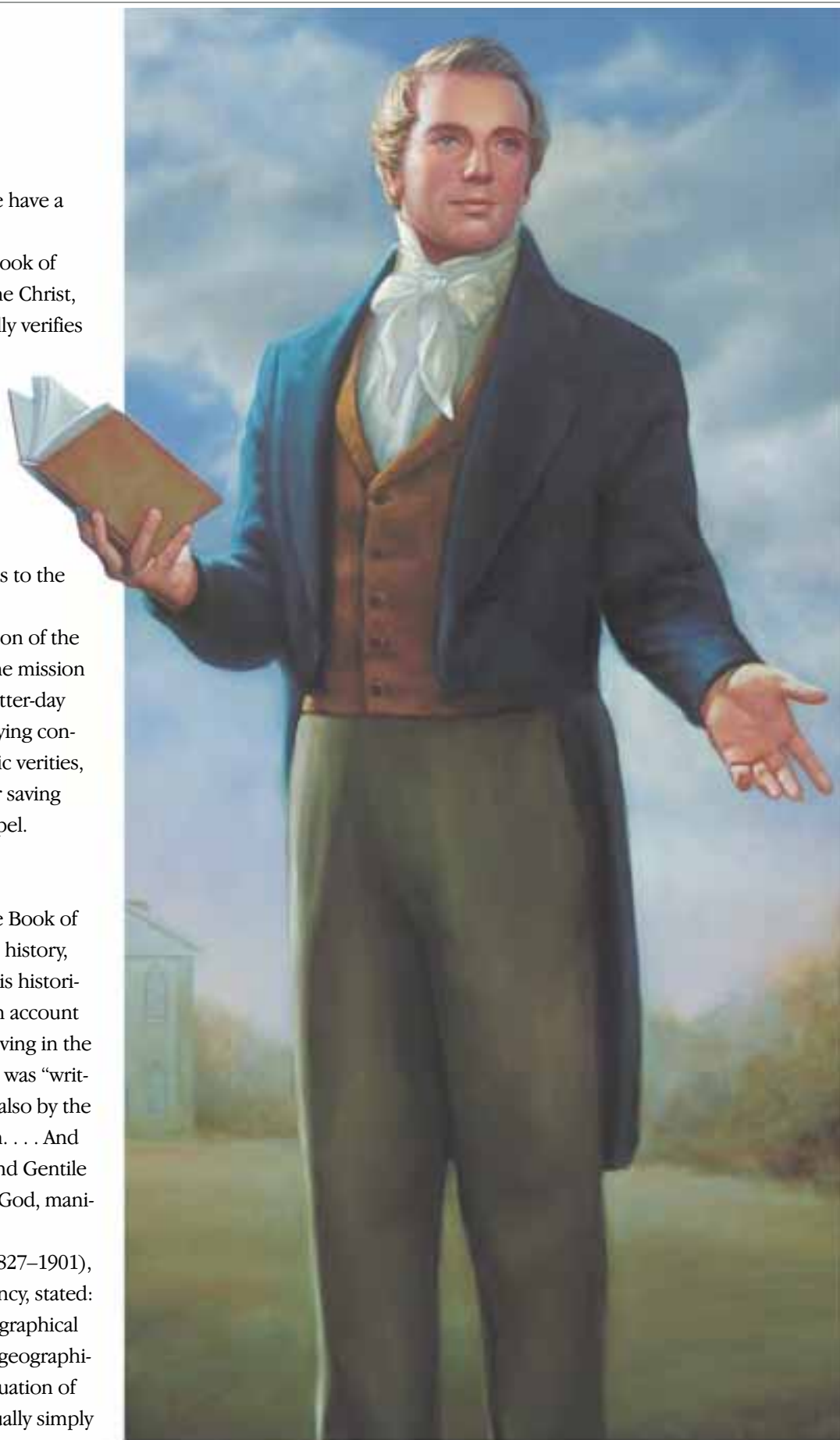
A confirming testimony of the Book of Mormon convinces “that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God”⁵ and also spiritually verifies the divine calling of Joseph Smith and that he did see the Father and the Son. With that firmly in place, it logically follows that one can also receive a verification that the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price are true companion scriptures to the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

All of this confirms the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the divine mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, led by a living prophet enjoying continuous revelation. From these basic verities, an understanding can flow of other saving principles of the fulness of the gospel.

What It Is and Is Not

It is important to know what the Book of Mormon is not. It is not primarily a history, although much of what it contains is historical. The title page states that it is an account taken from the records of people living in the Americas before and after Christ; it was “written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation. . . . And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.”

President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), First Counselor in the First Presidency, stated: “The Book of Mormon is not a geographical primer. It was not written to teach geographical truths. What is told us of the situation of the various lands or cities . . . is usually simply



an incidental remark connected with the doctrinal or historical portions of the work.”⁶

What, then, is the Book of Mormon? It is confirming evidence of the birth, life, and Crucifixion of Jesus and of His work as the Messiah and the Redeemer. Nephi writes about the Book of Mormon: “All ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ.”⁷

Nephi and his brother Jacob join with Isaiah to constitute three powerful pre-Messianic voices proclaiming the first coming of Jesus. Nephi quotes Isaiah extensively because Isaiah was the principal Old Testament prophet who prophesied of the coming of the Messiah.

The Book of Mormon establishes the truthfulness of the Bible.⁸ It is evidence “to the world that the holy scriptures are true.”⁹ It foretells the establishment of the fulness of the gospel of peace and salvation. It was written to give us principles and guidelines for our eternal journey.

One of the ultimate messages of the Book of Mormon, and indeed of the Old Testament and all human history, is that mankind cannot reach perfection on our own. There is another message that comes through loud and clear from its pages. It is the often unpopular and seemingly harsh injunction “Repent or perish.” When the Book of Mormon people listened to this prophetic message, they flourished. When they forgot the message, they perished.

In Galatians Paul said, “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.”¹⁰ The records maintained by the Book of Mormon

prophets—and portions of what is now the Bible brought from the eastern continent—served, according to Abinadi, “to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him.”¹¹ So the Book of Mormon is a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.¹²

Scriptural and Personal Testimonies

The test for understanding this sacred book is preeminently spiritual. An obsession with secular knowledge rather than spiritual understanding will make its pages difficult to unlock.

To me it is inconceivable that Joseph Smith, without divine help, could have written this complex and profound book. There is no way that an unlearned young frontiersman could have fabricated the great truths contained in the book, generated its great spiritual power, or falsified the testimony of Christ that it contains. The book itself testifies that it is the holy word of God.

References to teachings in the Old Testament and the New Testament are so numerous and overwhelming throughout the Book of Mormon that one can come to a definitive conclusion by logic that a human intellect could not have conceived of them all. But more important than logic is the confirmation by the Holy Spirit that the story of the Book of Mormon is true.

All scriptures are one in that they testify of Jesus. Jacob, a Book of Mormon prophet, reminds us “that none of the prophets have written, nor prophesied, save they have spoken concerning this Christ.”¹³ Speaking of the scriptures, the Psalmist said, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”¹⁴

The Book of Mormon will encourage only righteousness. Why, then, has hostility been engendered against the book? In part, no



Joseph Smith, who translated the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon came, had this to say: “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”



God Himself has put His approval on the Book of Mormon, having said, “As your Lord and your God liveth it is true.” I pray that we may gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon.

doubt, it may have come because the origin of the book was from golden plates delivered to Joseph Smith by an angel. These were seen and handled by selected witnesses but not put on public display. Perhaps hostility comes also because the book is claimed to be primarily the work of ancient prophets here on the American continent.

The Savior Himself declared the great worth of the Book of Mormon. He said in 3 Nephi, “This is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me.”¹⁵

The Redeemer further declared in the Book of Mormon, “Behold I have given unto you my gospel.”¹⁶

As a special witness, I testify that Jesus is the Christ and that Nephi’s and Isaiah’s prophecies of His coming have in fact been fulfilled. Like Nephi, “we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ.”¹⁷

I testify through the sure conviction that springs from the witness of the Spirit that it is possible to know things that have been revealed with greater certainty than by actually seeing them. We can have a more absolute knowledge than eyes can perceive or ears can hear. God Himself has put His approval on the Book of Mormon, having said, “As your Lord and your God liveth it is true.”¹⁸

I can now see more clearly through the eyes of my own understanding what my mother could see in her precious old worn-out copy of the Book of Mormon. I pray that we may live in such a way as to merit and gain a testimony of and abide by the great truths of the Book of Mormon. I testify that the keystone of our religion is solidly in place, bearing the weight of truth as it moves through all the earth. ■

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After you prayerfully prepare, share this message using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. A few examples follow:

1. Ask family members to share their feelings about someone whose testimony and love of the Book of Mormon have influenced their lives.
2. Ask family members to reflect on what the Prophet Joseph Smith may have meant when he said the following about the Book of Mormon: “A man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”
3. Ask children or young people in the family if President Faust received his testimony of the Book of Mormon from his mother. Explain that she had worked and studied to receive a testimony, but as wonderful as it was, she could not transfer it to her children. Discuss how a person can receive a testimony of the Book of Mormon through study and prayer.
4. Ask family members what the subtitle of the Book of Mormon is. Explain that as they read the Book of Mormon this year they will read many prophets’ testimonies of Jesus Christ and will come to know why the Book of Mormon is subtitled “Another Testament of Jesus Christ.” Read aloud 2 Nephi 25:23, 26. Ask how we can testify of Jesus Christ in our lives today.

NOTES

1. Moroni 10:4; emphasis added.
2. Book of Mormon introduction.
3. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed. (2000), “keystone,” 961.
4. See Moroni 10:4.
5. Book of Mormon title page.
6. “The Book of Mormon Geography,” *Juvenile Instructor*, Jan. 1890, 18.
7. 2 Nephi 33:10.
8. See 1 Nephi 13:40.
9. D&C 20:11.
10. Galatians 3:24.
11. Mosiah 13:30.
12. See Mosiah 13:27–35.
13. Jacob 7:11.
14. Psalm 119:105.
15. 3 Nephi 11:32.
16. 3 Nephi 27:13.
17. 2 Nephi 25:26.
18. D&C 17:6.

Testimonies

OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Church leaders testify of the Book of Mormon.



PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

“Believe in the Book of Mormon as another witness of the Son of God. This book has come forth as an added testimony to the world of the great truths concerning the Master as set forth in the Bible. The Bible is the testament of the Old World. The Book of Mormon is the testament of the New World, and they go hand in hand in testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“I can’t understand why those of other faiths cannot accept the Book of Mormon. One would think that they would be looking for additional witnesses to the great and solemn truths of the Bible. We have that witness, my brothers and sisters, this marvelous

book of inspiration which affirms the validity and the truth of the divine nature of the Son of God. God be thanked for this precious and wonderful testimony. Let us read it. Let us dwell upon its truths. Let us learn its message and be blessed accordingly” (meeting, Baltimore, Maryland, 15 Nov. 1998; quoted in “Recurring Themes of President Hinckley,” *Ensign*, June 2000, 18–19).



PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

“A keystone keeps an arch in place; without a keystone the whole arch will collapse. Why is the Book of Mormon the keystone of our religion? Because it is central to our history and

theology. It is the text for this dispensation. Nothing took priority over getting the Book of Mormon translated and published. Everything was held until that was accomplished. There were no Apostles until it came into being. Ten days after the book's publication the Church was organized. Publication of the Book of Mormon preceded missionary work because Samuel Smith needed to have it in hand before he could go forward as the first missionary of the Church. Sections 17 and 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants indicate that the Brethren could not fully know the divinity of the latter-day work until the Book of Mormon was translated. . . .

" . . . May our testimonies ring forth with power and authority and conviction concerning Joseph Smith, the greatest prophet who has ever lived, and concerning the Book of Mormon, which he brought forth" ("Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, Jan. 1996, 7).



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

"The Book of Mormon is the most remarkable book in the world from a doctrinal, historical, or philosophical point of view. Its integrity has been assailed with senseless fury for over 170 years, yet its position and influence today are more impregnable than ever.

"The Book of Mormon did not come

forth as a curiosity. It was written with a definite purpose—a purpose to be felt by every reader. From the title page we read that it was written 'to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations.' The message it contains is a wit-

ness for Christ and teaches the love of God for all mankind. Its purpose is to bring people to accept Jesus as the Christ. The book tells of the actual visit of Christ to ancient America and records the teachings and instructions He gave in clarity and great power to the people. The

Book of Mormon substantiates the Bible in its teachings of the Savior, speaks of Christ more than any other subject, and teaches that our Savior is the Redeemer and Atoner

of mankind, constantly emphasizing that He is the central figure in God's plan of salvation. This divine record makes converts to its message and to His Church, which teaches it" ("Joseph Smith, the Prophet," *Ensign*, Dec. 2001, 28).



ELDER RUSSELL M. NELSON
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

"Joseph Smith declared the Book of Mormon to be 'the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion' (*History of the Church*, 4:461). It is the only

book that the Lord Himself has testified to be true (see D&C 17:6). . . .

“Each individual who prayerfully studies the Book of Mormon can also receive a testimony of its divinity (see Moro. 10:4–5). In addition, this book can help with personal problems in a very real way. Do you want to get rid of a bad habit? Do you want to improve relationships in your family? Do you want to increase your spiritual capacity? Read the Book of Mormon! It will bring you closer to the Lord and His loving power. He who fed a multitude with five loaves and two fishes—He who helped the blind to see and the lame to walk—can also bless you! He has promised that those who live by the precepts of this book ‘shall receive a crown of eternal life’ (D&C 20:14)” (“A Testimony of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 70–71).



ELDER M. RUSSELL BALLARD
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

“The Book of Mormon, above all other books that I know of, is the greatest source we have for answers to real-life problems. . . .

“How many times peace has come into the lives of those who are struggling with real problems when they read the Book of Mormon! The examples of spiritual guidance that emanate from the book are without number. My love for the Book of Mormon

is ever-increasing. It seems that every time I read from it, new light flows to me from its pages. I love this sacred and choice book” (in “We Add Our Witness,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1989, 8–9).



ELDER RICHARD G. SCOTT
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

“It is not sufficient that the Book of Mormon be [just physically] in our homes; its principles must be captured in our minds and hearts.

Through consistent reading, prayerful pondering, and conscientious application, its teachings will become an essential part of the fabric of our lives.

“What does the Book of Mormon mean to you?

Has it been a source of inspiration and power in your life? Will it continue to be?

“If you have not yet drunk deeply from this fountain of pure truth, with all of my soul I encourage you to do so now. Don’t let the consistent study of the Book of Mormon be one of the things that you intend to do but never quite accomplish. Begin today.

“I bear witness that it can become a personal ‘Urim and Thummim’ in your life” (“The Power of the Book of Mormon in My Life,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1984, 11). ■

POWER IN PRINCIPLES

BY TODD B. PARKER AND JARED T. PARKER

As we study the Book of Mormon this year, let us be not only bearers of the word but doers also.

A few years ago an employment opportunity prompted a family move. We traveled to the new city to find a home. After three days of searching, we were not able to find anything within our price range that would meet our needs. As father of the family, Todd became anxious because we only had one more day to find a home. Unable to sleep that night, he rose from his bed and began to search the scriptures for guidance. Feeling the need to increase his faith, he turned to Ether 12 and nervously prayed for inspiration. At length he came to the following phrase: “And I also remember that thou hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man” (Ether 12:32). Those words came powerfully to his soul. He felt reassured that the Lord would provide for us.

The next morning, while driving to check on one last new listing, we saw what appeared to be an ideal home with a “For Sale” sign in the front yard. We called the owners, and they allowed us to tour the home. We loved it and were able to purchase it.



“At length I came to the conclusion that I must . . . do as James directs, that is, ask of God” (Joseph Smith—History 1:13).

Imagine! The Restoration began when a young boy decided to apply a scripture!

Moroni undoubtedly did not have our family’s house-hunting trip in mind when he wrote Ether 12:32, but the Holy Spirit confirmed an application of his words that strengthened our faith in the Lord.

Great benefits come when we strive to apply Book of Mormon teachings. The Lord has commanded us to “remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon . . . not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written” (D&C 84:57; emphasis added). The Prophet Joseph Smith said that a person can “get nearer to God by *abiding by its precepts*, than by any other book.”¹

We can apply the lessons of the Book of Mormon by following a simple three-part process: (1) focusing on principles and doctrines, (2) personalizing or “likening” the verses (see 1 Nephi 19:23), and

(3) exercising faith in the promises.

Focusing on Principles and Doctrines

The Lord has revealed that teaching, and therefore learning, in His kingdom should focus on the principles of His gospel (see D&C 42:12) and “the doctrine of the kingdom” (D&C 88:77). A gospel principle or doctrine has been defined by President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum



of the Twelve Apostles as “an enduring truth, a law, a rule you can adopt to guide you in making decisions.”²

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has advised: “As you seek spiritual knowledge, search for principles. Carefully separate them from the detail used to explain them. Principles are concentrated truth, packaged for application to a wide variety of circumstances. A true principle makes decisions clear even under the most confusing and compelling circumstances. It is worth great effort to organize the truth we gather to simple statements of principle.”³

President Harold B. Lee taught, “You must learn to walk to the edge of the light, and then a few steps into the darkness; then the light will appear and show the way before you.”

A PROPHET'S VISION



"I have a vision of homes alerted, of classes alive, and of pulpits aflame with the spirit of Book of Mormon messages. . . . I have a vision of the whole Church getting nearer to God by abiding by the precepts of the Book of Mormon."

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), "Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 6.

Gospel principles and doctrines can often be phrased using a statement of cause and effect, such as "If I do [cause], then [effect] will happen," or "If I am _____, then I will be _____." For example, one of the most

frequently repeated principles or statements of cause and effect in the Book of Mormon is "Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper" (1 Nephi 2:20). Such statements are principles with promises, or eternal and unchanging doctrines showing that God "is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever" (1 Nephi 10:18).

Book of Mormon writers often provide clues to help us find gospel principles and doctrines because they were writing specifically to us in our day. For example, Moroni said: "I speak unto you as if ye were present. . . . I know your doing" (Mormon 8:35). Words and phrases such as *thus*, *therefore*, *because*, *inasmuch*, *thus we see*, or *we can behold* assist us in recognizing what the moral of the story is or what the author wants us to learn. Focusing on gospel principles and doctrines helps us answer the question "Why did the author choose to include this in the book?" For example, in 1 Nephi 3:7, the phrase "for I know that . . ." alerts us that Nephi wants to teach us the enduring truth that the Lord will prepare a way for us to keep His commandments. Nephi then tells us the story of obtaining the plates of brass, a story that illustrates how he applied this gospel principle.

Personalizing the Verses

To personalize, or liken, a scriptural teaching unto ourselves, we must understand how the principle or doctrine should affect the way we think or live. When sought, the Spirit helps us see the importance of the principle and how it could be a blessing to us personally. We then can act to become more like the Savior.

Have you ever imagined yourself in the circumstances of a person in a scripture story? A young woman was recently blessed by likening a scripture to herself. It was the statement of Abinadi: "I must fulfil the commandments

wherewith God has commanded me; and because I have told you the truth ye are angry with me" (Mosiah 13:4). She was inspired by his commitment to stand up for righteous values, even in the face of possible persecution. During that same week she went on a group date to see a movie. As they stood in line to buy

tickets, an anxious feeling rose inside her. She knew the movie they were planning to see was not appropriate. Thinking of Abinadi, she took a deep breath and said, "I'd rather not see this movie. Could we watch something else?" An awkward silence followed. Another person then added, "I'd rather see something else too." Because of Abinadi's example, this young woman concluded, "I went away from the theater a better person that night."

Have you ever tried inserting your name in place of the person in a scripture verse? For example, try inserting your name in place of *ye* and *you* in Moroni 10:27, and see if the passage does not have more immediacy. For example, "For [Jeff] shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord God will say unto [Jeff]: Did I not declare my words unto [Jeff], which were written by this man?"

Writing the thoughts and impressions that come to you during your gospel study can also help you personalize the verses. You could write them in the margins of your scriptures. Or you could keep track of your thoughts by writing them on small cards and filing them by subject. Elder Scott has counseled: "You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come. Also, the knowledge you gain will be available throughout your life."⁴

Exercising Faith in the Promises

Pray and ask for help. Prayer is a vital key to applying the scriptures. President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) said, "There is nothing more helpful than prayer to open our understanding of the scriptures."⁵

Decide to try. Sometimes it may seem difficult to apply the lessons of the Book of Mormon. Living a principle or

doctrine often requires a change in attitude or behavior. In the spring of 1820 a young Joseph Smith decided to apply a scripture he read in the Bible (see James 1:5). The Prophet recorded, “At length I came to the conclusion that I must . . . do as James directs, that is, ask of God” (Joseph Smith—History 1:13). Imagine! The Restoration began when a young boy decided to apply a scripture!

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) taught, “You must learn to walk to the edge of the light, and then a few steps into the darkness; then the light will appear and show the way before you.”⁶

Solve problems. As you read the Book of Mormon, think about the challenges you face at home, church, work, or in your personal life. You could describe a problem on a card and then go to the scriptures, looking for principles and doctrines that relate to that specific problem. A search of the Topical Guide or the index to the triple combination for relevant scriptures can also be very helpful.

A bishop became aware that some of the priests in his ward were struggling with pornography on the Internet. He decided to use principles from the Book of Mormon to help solve the problem. He began his lesson by asking, “Is there anything in the Book of Mormon that could help us in our personal battles against evil?” One young man pointed out that there were lots of battles in the Book of Mormon. The bishop suggested, “Let’s compare those physical battles to our spiritual battles.” Another priest suggested they could check how the Nephites prepared for battle. The quorum searched the Topical Guide under such topics as *Protect*, *Defense*, and *Deliver*. One chapter that particularly interested the priests was Alma 50. As they



read, they began to compare Captain Moroni’s preparations for war to actions they could take to protect themselves from evil, including Internet pornography.

Great Dividends

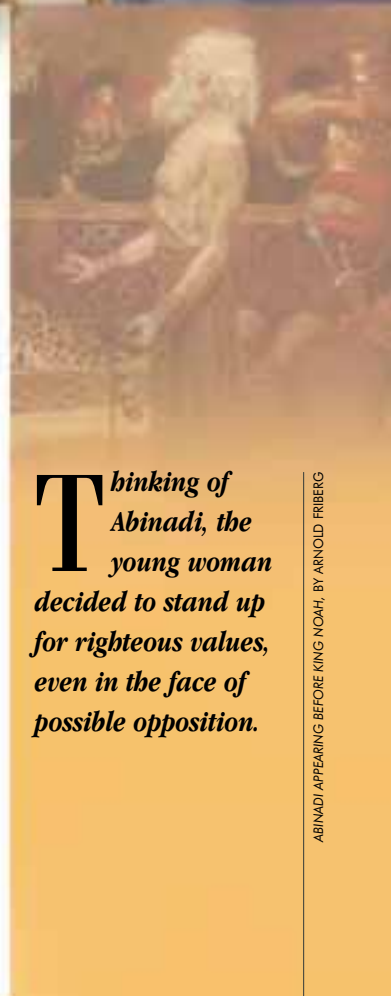
As we study the Book of Mormon this year in our homes and Church classes, we will have the opportunity to be not only hearers of the word but doers also (see James 1:22–24). We can apply the lessons of the Book of Mormon by focusing on principles and doctrines, personalizing the verses, and exercising faith in the promises. ■

Todd B. Parker is a member of the Canyon View Fifth Ward, Orem Utah Canyon View Stake. Jared T. Parker is a member of the River Ridge Second Ward, Orem Utah East Stake.

NOTES

1. *History of the Church*, 4:461; emphasis added.
2. “The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promise,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 17.
3. “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 86.
4. “To Acquire Knowledge and the Strength to Use It Wisely,” *Ensign*, June 2002, 32.
5. “Reading the Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 64.
6. As quoted by Boyd K. Packer in “The Edge of the Light,” *BYU Today*, Mar. 1991, 23.

Thinking of Abinadi, the young woman decided to stand up for righteous values, even in the face of possible opposition.



ABINADI APPEARING BEFORE KING NOAH, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

BOOK/CHAPTERS

ETHER 1–15

AUTHOR/ENGRAVER

MORONI

YEARS SINCE LEHI LEFT JERUSALEM

DATE (Some dates are approximate.)

B.C. 2200

Book of Mormon

TIMES AT A GLANCE

JAREDITES

● Jared, his brother, their families, and others (the Jaredites) left the area of the Tower of Babel and traveled to a new land (see Ether 1–2).

● The Jaredites built barges and crossed the sea to the American continent (see Ether 2–6).



● Akish formed secret combinations (see Ether 8).

● Emer was anointed king and saw Jesus Christ (see Ether 9:14–22).



● Great famine and poisonous serpents caused the people to be humbled before the Lord (see Ether 9:30–35).

Prophets warned of the destruction of the Jaredite nation unless they repented (see Ether 11:1–13).



Eventually bloody civil war destroyed the Jaredite nation. Only Coriantumr and Ether survived (see Ether 13–15).

MAJOR TEACHINGS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST



Christ showed His spirit body to the brother of Jared (see Ether 3–4).

SOME STATEMENTS OF GOSPEL PRINCIPLES

(See chart on page 20.)

1 2

3 4

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Genesis

2 Kings

Isaiah

FROM LEFT: LEHI AND HIS PEOPLE ARRIVE IN THE PROMISED LAND, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG; BROTHER OF JARED SEEING THE FINGER OF THE LORD, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG; JOURNEY OF THE JAREDITES ACROSS ASIA, BY MINERVA K. TEICHERT; PHOTOGRAPH OF SNAKE © PHOTOSPIN; ETHER HIDING IN THE CAVITY OF A ROCK, BY GARY E. SMITH; LIAHONA, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG; LEHI'S DREAM, BY DAVID LINDSLEY; LEHI PREACHING IN JERUSALEM, BY DEL PARSON; NEPHI'S VISION OF THE VIRGIN MARY, BY JUDITH MEHR;

1 NEPHI 1–22

NEPHI (son of Lehi)

2 NEPHI 1–33

600

8

591

11

588

29

570

30

569

THE FAMILY OF LEHI

- Prophets in Jerusalem warned that the city would be destroyed unless the people repented (see 1 Nephi 1:4).
- The Lord commanded Lehi and his family to travel to a promised land. They departed into the wilderness (see 1 Nephi 2:1–6).
- Lehi's sons returned to Jerusalem to obtain the plates of brass (see 1 Nephi 3–4).
- Ishmael and his family joined Lehi's family in their journey to the new land (see 1 Nephi 7; 16:7–8).



- The Lord gave Lehi a brass ball, or compass (Liahona), to guide their journey (see 1 Nephi 16:9–16).

PEOPLE OF ZARAHIELA (MULEKITES)

- Mulek, the son of King Zedekiah, escaped from Jerusalem. The Lord led him and his people to the American continent. Coriantumr, the last survivor of the Jaredite nation, lived with them until his death (see Omni 1:14–21; Helaman 6:10; Ether 13:20–21).



- Nephi kept a secular history (large plates of Nephi) and a sacred record (small plates of Nephi) of his people. He commanded that the plates be handed down from one generation to another (see 1 Nephi 19:1–6).

- The Lord revealed to Lehi that Jerusalem had been destroyed (see 2 Kings 25; 2 Nephi 1:4).



- The Lord commanded Nephi to build a ship. The families crossed the sea and arrived on the American continent (see 1 Nephi 17–18).

- The more righteous part of Lehi's family—the people of Nephi—separated themselves from the more wicked part—the Lamanites (see 2 Nephi 5:1–7).

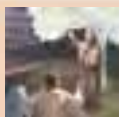
PEOPLE OF NEPHI

- The people of Nephi prospered in the land of Nephi (see 2 Nephi 5:8–13).

LANANITES



- Lehi counseled and blessed his posterity, then died (see 2 Nephi 1–4).



Lehi saw a vision of the tree of life (see 1 Nephi 8).

Lehi prophesied of the Messiah (see 1 Nephi 10:3–15).



Nephi learned of the condescension of God (see 1 Nephi 11–12).



Nephi prophesied of Christ's Crucifixion (see 1 Nephi 19).



Lehi taught Jacob of the Holy Messiah (see 2 Nephi 2).

Nephi and Jacob taught and prophesied of Christ (see 2 Nephi 6–10).



5 6 8
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9 11

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15 17

BOOK	JACOB 1–7		ENOS 1	JAROM 1		OMNI 1:1–22, 26–29		
AUTHOR		JACOB (brother of Nephi)	ENOS	JAROM		OMNI	AMARON	CHEMISH
YEARS	40	55		179	200	238	282	320
DATE	B.C. 559	544		420	399	361	317	279
	▲	▲		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲

PEOPLE OF ZARAHEMLA (Mulekites)



PEOPLE OF NEPHI (Nephites)



- The people of Nephi tried to restore the Lamanites to the true faith in God but failed (see Enos 1:20).
- The people of Nephi became stiffnecked. Many prophets preached repentance. Enos gave his son Jarom the small plates and died (see Enos 1:22–27; Jarom 1:1–2).
- After many seasons of war and peace, Omni gave his son Amaron the plates (see Omni 1:1–3).
- Jacob confronted and confounded Sherem, an anti-Christ (see Jacob 7:1–23).
- The people of Nephi repented and repeatedly defeated the Lamanites in battle (see Jarom 1:3–13).
- Many of the wicked Nephites were destroyed. Amaron gave his brother Chemish the plates (see Omni 1:4–8).
- Nephi gave his brother Jacob the plates and died (see Jacob 1:1–14).
- Jacob gave his son Enos the plates and died (see Jacob 7:27).

- Jarom gave his son Omni the plates and died (see Jarom 1:14–15).

Chemish passed the records to his son Abinadom (see Omni 1:9).



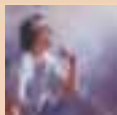
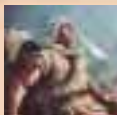
LAMANITES

- Wars and contentions began between the people of Nephi and the Lamanites (see 2 Nephi 5:34).
- There were many wars and dissensions between the people of Nephi and the Lamanites (see Jarom 1:8–13).



MAJOR TEACHINGS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Nephi expounded the doctrine of Christ (see 2 Nephi 31–32).



Jacob taught of obtaining a hope in Christ (see Jacob 4).

GOSPEL PRINCIPLES (See chart on page 20.)

18–38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Ezra Esther Nehemiah Malachi

ABINADOM	AMALEKI	MOSIAH 9–10 MORMON		OMNI 1:23–25, 30 AMALEKI	WORDS OF MORMON MORMON	MOSIAH 11–18 MORMON
		412	421	439		452
		187	178	160		147
		▲	▲	▲		▲

NEPHITES



● Mosiah discovered the people of Zarahemla (Mulekites). Mosiah became their king in the land of Zarahemla (see Omni 1:12–19).

● Being warned of the Lord, Mosiah fled northward with those who hearkened to the voice of the Lord (see Omni 1:12–13; Alma 22:27–34).

● The plates passed from Abinadom to his son Amaleki (see Omni 1:10–12).

- A large group of Nephites left Zarahemla for the land of Nephi. After a violent internal dispute, only 50 returned to Zarahemla (see Omni 1:27–28; Mosiah 9:1–2).
- Another group, led by Zeniff, returned to the land of Nephi and began to live in peace with the Lamanites (see Mosiah 9:3–9).



- Mosiah died and his son Benjamin became king. Wars continued between the Nephites in Zarahemla and the Lamanites (see Omni 1:23–24).

- Amaleki gave King Benjamin the small plates (see Omni 1:25, 30; Words of Mormon 1:10).

- King Benjamin and holy prophets established peace and righteousness in Zarahemla (see Words of Mormon 1:13–18).

- The Lamanites came to battle against the people of Zeniff (see Mosiah 9:10–15).
- The Lamanites again went to war against the people of Zeniff. Many Lamanites died (see Mosiah 10:1–20).

PEOPLE OF ZENIFF

- The Lord delivered the people of Zeniff, and peace was again established in the land of Nephi (see Mosiah 9:16–19).

- Zeniff conferred the kingdom upon his son Noah (see Mosiah 10:21–22; 11:1).

- Alma, one of King Noah’s priests, was converted to the Lord by the preaching of Abinadi. He taught and baptized (see Mosiah 18:1–31).



Abinadi prophesied of redemption through Christ (see Mosiah 13–15).



Alma baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 18).

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BOOK MOSIAH 1–8; 19–29
AUTHOR MORMON

YEARS 454 475 478
DATE B.C. 145 124 121

NEPHITES

- King Benjamin taught his people, gave them a new name, and conferred the kingdom upon his son Mosiah (see Mosiah 1–6).



- Ammon and 15 others journeyed to the land of Nephi to learn what had happened to Zeniff and his people (see Mosiah 7:1–7).



LANANITES

PEOPLE OF ALMA

- Alma and his people worshiped God and prospered in the land of Helam (see Mosiah 23:3–20).

PEOPLE OF ZENIFF

- The Lord warned Alma to flee with his people. They settled in a new land (see Mosiah 18:32–34; 23:1–5).

- A group of 43 men went to find a way back to the land of Zarahemla. They returned with a set of 24 gold plates—the plates of Ether (see Mosiah 8:7–18; 21:25–28).

- King Noah was killed. The people of Zeniff were in bondage to the Lamanites. Limhi, son of Noah, became king (see Mosiah 19:10–29).

- Ammon discovered the people of Zeniff, led by King Limhi; they were in bondage to the Lamanites (see Mosiah 7:8–16).

- Ammon guided Limhi's people back to the land of Zarahemla (see Mosiah 22).

- Gideon led a rebellion against King Noah (see Mosiah 19:1–9; 25:5).

- The people of Limhi drove the Lamanites out of their land (see Mosiah 20:8–26).



- The wicked priests of King Noah escaped into the wilderness and abducted some Lamanite daughters (see Mosiah 19:21; 20:1–5).

- The Lamanites conquered them, but Limhi's people humbled themselves before the Lord (see Mosiah 21:1–22).

PRIESTS OF KING NOAH

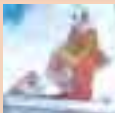
- The Lamanites again went to war against the people of Zeniff (see Mosiah 19:6).

- The Lamanites went to battle against the people of Zeniff because some of their daughters were missing (see Mosiah 20:6–7).

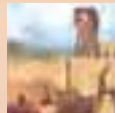
- Lamanite armies, attempting to find Limhi's people, discovered the wicked priests of King Noah (see Mosiah 22:15–16; 23:30–32).

MAJOR TEACHINGS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

King Benjamin preached of our indebtedness to Christ (see Mosiah 2).



An angel revealed to King Benjamin that Christ's blood atoneth (see Mosiah 3).



King Benjamin's people became children of Christ (see Mosiah 4–5).

GOSPEL PRINCIPLES
(See chart on page 20.)

54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63

64

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

479
120
▲

507
92
▲

508
91
▲

● The peoples of King Mosiah, King Limhi, and Alma united to form one nation of Nephites in the land of Zarahemla. Alma established the Church of Christ throughout the land (see Mosiah 25).



● Many were led into sin by unbelievers. Alma received instructions from the Lord on how to judge transgressors and set the Church in order (see Mosiah 26).

● An angel appeared to Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah, causing them to repent and stop persecuting the Church. They began to repair the spiritual damage they had done (see Mosiah 27).

● King Mosiah translated the plates of Ether and read them to the people (see Mosiah 28:10–19).

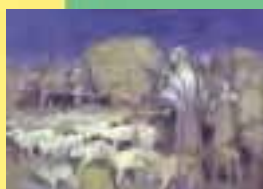
● King Mosiah gave his sons and others permission to preach the gospel among the Lamanites. They left on a 14-year mission (see Mosiah 28:1–9).

● King Mosiah conferred all the records on Alma the Younger (see Mosiah 28:20).

● King Mosiah proposed that the people be ruled by judges. The people agreed, and Alma the Younger was chosen as the first chief judge and also as high priest over the affairs of the Church (see Mosiah 29).

● The people began to measure years according to the reign of the judges. Alma and King Mosiah died (see Mosiah 29:45–47; Alma 1:1).

● Alma and his people were put into bondage to the Lamanites (see Mosiah 23:29, 36–39; 24:1–9).



● Alma and his people prayed for deliverance. The Lord answered their prayers, and they escaped, arriving in the land of Zarahemla (see Mosiah 24:10–25).

● While trying to find the land of Nephi, the Lamanite armies found Alma and his people (see Mosiah 23:21–28, 35).

● The priests and their families became leaders of the Lamanites (see Mosiah 23:33–35, 39).



Alma learned of repentance and forgiveness through Christ (see Mosiah 26).



Alma the Younger learned that all must be born of God (see Mosiah 27).



Book of Mormon Times at a Glance

Some Statements of Gospel Principles

Reference	Principle
1 Ether 4:11–12	All good things come from Jesus Christ and persuade us to do good.
2 Ether 8:22	Any nation that upholds secret combinations to get power and gain, until they spread over the nation, will be destroyed.
3 Ether 12:6	Faith is things which are hoped for and not seen. We receive no witness until after the trial of our faith.
4 Ether 12:27	If we will humble ourselves before God and have faith in Him, He will make weak things become strong.
5 1 Nephi 1:1	We can have many afflictions and yet be highly favored of the Lord.
6 1 Nephi 1:20	The tender mercies of the Lord are over all those who have faith in Him.
7 1 Nephi 2:20	Inasmuch as we keep the Lord's commandments, we will prosper in the land.
8 1 Nephi 3:7	When the Lord gives us a commandment, He will prepare a way for us to accomplish it.
9 1 Nephi 8:10–32	The fruit of the tree of life is more desirable than any other fruit.
10 1 Nephi 10:17–19	The mysteries of God are revealed by the power of the Holy Ghost to all those who diligently seek them.
11 1 Nephi 14:10	There are but two churches, the Church of the Lamb of God and the church of the devil.
12 1 Nephi 17:33–35	The Lord esteems all people as one; those who are righteous are favored of God.
13 1 Nephi 22:26	The righteousness of the people of God will make Satan powerless.
14 2 Nephi 2:11	There must be opposition in all things.
15 2 Nephi 2:16	God has given unto us that we should act for ourselves.
16 2 Nephi 2:25	We are that we might have joy.
17 2 Nephi 2:27	We are free to choose either liberty and eternal life through Jesus Christ or captivity and death through the power of the devil.
18 2 Nephi 9:13–15	In the day of resurrection, we shall have a perfect knowledge of our guilt or our righteousness.
19 2 Nephi 9:20	God knows all things.
20 2 Nephi 9:29	It is good to be learned if we hearken unto the counsels of God.
21 2 Nephi 9:39	To be carnally minded is death, and to be spiritually minded is life eternal.
22 2 Nephi 9:51	We should not spend our money for that which is of no worth or labor for that which cannot satisfy.
23 2 Nephi 25:23	It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.
24 2 Nephi 25:29	If we worship Jesus Christ with our whole soul, we will not be cast out.
25 2 Nephi 26:11	The Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with us.
26 2 Nephi 26:24	Everything the Lord does is for our benefit, because He loves us.
27 2 Nephi 26:28	All people are privileged, the one like unto the other, and none are forbidden.
28 2 Nephi 26:33	All are alike unto God, and He inviteth all to come unto Him.
29 2 Nephi 28:7–8	It is a false teaching to say, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us."
30 2 Nephi 28:21	The devil seeks to pacify the people of God into thinking that all is well in Zion, while leading them carefully down to hell.
31 2 Nephi 28:30	The Lord teaches His children line upon line.
32 2 Nephi 29:1–2	In the last days, the Lord will use the Book of Mormon as a standard to gather His people.
33 2 Nephi 31:6–13	The Savior was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, and those who follow His example and are baptized in His name will be given the gift of the Holy Ghost.
34 2 Nephi 31:17	After repentance and baptism comes a remission of our sins by the Holy Ghost.
35 2 Nephi 31:20	If we press forward, steadfast in Christ, feasting upon His word, we shall have eternal life.
36 2 Nephi 32:3–5	The Holy Ghost can show us all things that we should do.

Reference	Principle
37 2 Nephi 32:8	The Spirit teaches us to pray.
38 2 Nephi 32:9	We should not perform anything unto the Lord unless we have first prayed.
39 Jacob 1:17–19	Before teaching, we should obtain our errand from the Lord.
40 Jacob 2:18–19	We should seek the kingdom of God before we seek for riches.
41 Jacob 2:35	A bad example breaks the hearts of others and causes them to lose confidence in us.
42 Jacob 4:7	God shows us our weakness so we may know that it is by His grace that we have power to do His work.
43 Jacob 4:8–10	We should not seek to counsel the Lord but take counsel from His hand.
44 Jacob 4:14	Spiritual blindness comes from looking beyond the mark.
45 Jacob 5:65–75	In the last days the Lord will clear away the bad parts of His vineyard as the good grows.
46 Jacob 7:11	All prophets have written and prophesied of Jesus Christ.
47 Enos 1:5–8	We may be made whole, forgiven of our sins, because of our faith in Jesus Christ.
48 Omni 1:26	We are to offer our whole souls as an offering unto the Savior by fasting, praying, and enduring to the end.
49 Mosiah 10:17	Teaching our children to hate can have long-term consequences.
50 Words of Mormon 1:7	We should do the will of the Lord even when we do not know why we are doing it.
51 Mosiah 15:11–13	The seed of Christ are those who have obeyed His words, believed in Him, and looked forward to receiving a remission of their sins through His Redemption.
52 Mosiah 16:8	The sting of death is swallowed up in Christ.
53 Mosiah 18:9–10	A desire to give comfort and stand as a witness of God at all times and in all things is part of being prepared for baptism. Baptism by water is a witness before God that we have entered into a covenant with Him.
54 Mosiah 2:17	When we are serving others, we are also serving God.
55 Mosiah 2:21	If we should serve God with our whole souls, yet we are still unprofitable servants.
56 Mosiah 2:32–33, 36	Those who list to obey the evil spirit when they know the law of God receive the wages of eternal damnation.
57 Mosiah 3:17	Christ is the only name or means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men.
58 Mosiah 3:19	The natural man is an enemy to God unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit and becomes as a child.
59 Mosiah 4:3	A remission of sin brings peace of conscience.
60 Mosiah 4:27	All things are to be done in wisdom and order.
61 Mosiah 4:30	We must watch our thoughts, words, and deeds; keep the commandments of God; and continue in faith; or we will perish.
62 Mosiah 5:2	When the Spirit has made a mighty change in our hearts, we will have no more disposition to do evil but to do good continually.
63 Mosiah 21:13–15	The Lord will make it easier for us to carry our burdens.
64 Mosiah 7:29–33	The Lord will not succor His people in the day of their transgression. When we turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, trust, and diligence of mind, He will deliver us from bondage according to His will and pleasure.
65 Mosiah 8:20–21	How blind and impenetrable is the understanding of the children of men.
66 Mosiah 24:14–15	We should cheerfully and with patience submit to the will of the Lord, who strengthens us so we can bear our burdens with ease.
67 Mosiah 26:29–30	As often as we repent in the sincerity of our heart, the Lord will forgive us.
68 Mosiah 27:25–26	All people must be born again, changed from their fallen state to a state of righteousness, becoming new creatures to inherit the kingdom of God.
69 Mosiah 27:31	At the last day every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is God and that His judgment is just.
70 Mosiah 27:36	We can become instruments in the hands of God in bringing many to the knowledge of the Redeemer.



FAVORED OF THE LORD

Living the gospel of Jesus Christ will give us strength and an assurance of promised blessings that can be obtained in no other way.

BY ELDER CARLOS C. REVILLO

Area Authority Seventy
Philippines Area

When I read and ponder 1 Nephi 17:35—“Behold, the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one; he that is righteous is favored of God”—I wonder what Nephi means when he says that some are favored of God. In what way does the Lord favor the righteous?

Many years ago when I was a district president, a father approached me following a district conference. One conference speaker had stated that every family should prepare to be sealed in the temple. This humble father

desperately told me it was impossible for his family to do this, considering their number and the distance they lived from the temple. His meager income for the whole year would not even equal the amount of money needed for the trip.

I told him that even though a person might have millions in the bank, if he was not worthy to hold a temple recommend, those millions would not qualify him or his family to enter the temple. His family’s spiritual preparation must come before anything else. Then I added, “The money needed for this trip will follow later.”

After six months of spiritual preparation,



this man and his entire family qualified for temple recommends. They were happy to be worthy to enter the temple but still had no way to pay for the trip. I counseled them to fast and pray and trust in God. Then, a few days before plans for the next temple trip were finalized, two couple missionaries came to my office and told me they had some friends who wished to sponsor worthy families and pay their travel expenses to the temple. When I announced these blessings from the Lord to this family, their joy was beyond description. Because of their faith and obedience, this family was blessed. Were they not “favored of God”?

We know that our Heavenly Father loves all of His children and wishes all to become like Him. Further, all men are saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. God has made the sun to shine on the evil and on the good and the rains to fall on the just and on the unjust (see Matthew 5:45). He is “no respecter of persons” (D&C 1:35).

Yet those who seek to do Heavenly Father’s will He favors by blessing them for their obedience. The Lord has declared, “Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Samuel 2:30). To those of His day, the Savior said, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him” (John 14:21). The Lord further emphasized this blessing of the righteous in John 15:10: “*If ye keep my commandments*, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (emphasis added).

The God of heaven has never made covenants that are independent of obedience and righteousness. It is common in our day to hear reference made to the unconditional love of God. If this expression is intended to convey the idea that all will enjoy the blessings of God to the same degree, regardless of what they do or how they live, such a notion is incompatible with the testimony of the scriptures and the voice of the Lord Himself. For instance, He has said, “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10).

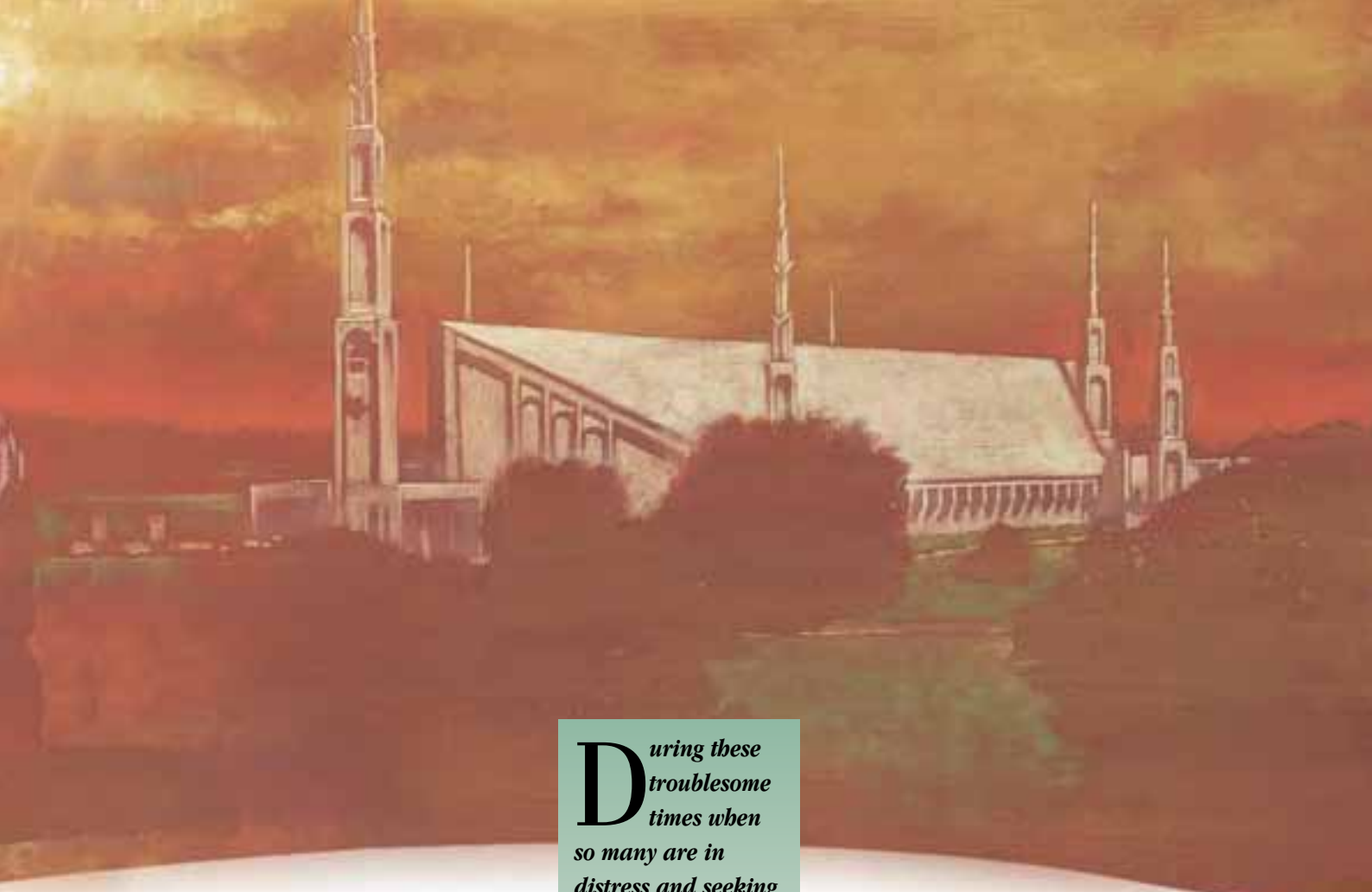
Traveling to the promised land was as difficult for Nephi and his family as for Laman and his family. All endured hunger, heat, privation, and fatigue. Yet the outcome of the experiences was very different for the two families.



One was blessed with faith, understanding, and a living testimony while the other remained unmoved and unchanged.

During these troublesome times when so many are in distress and seeking happiness and not finding it, the Lord and His choice servants have pointed out the way to true happiness. Living a righteous life, in obedience to the commandments of God, is the foundation upon which we must build to enjoy eternal happiness. The Lord stands ready to bless us. But if as individuals or as a people we fail to observe the commandments upon which the blessings are predicated, then the promise is no longer ours. The blessings will be realized by those who are obedient.

An experience my wife and I had several years ago illustrates the power of the Lord and how He can bless our lives if we rely on Him. My wife was in charge of catering food for a special banquet to be attended by numerous city leaders and many high-ranking national officials. The host of the event instructed my wife to prepare food for 350 people, emphasizing repeatedly the importance



During these
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of the occasion and of the invited guests.

On the night of the banquet, the guests began to arrive. Soon the 350 reserved seats were filled. My wife had made allowance for additional guests, but these 25 extra seats were soon filled also. More people streamed in, joining those who were already standing and lining up on all sides of the hall. There were approximately 1,000 people in the hall, and more were still coming in.

My wife recalls what happened this way: “At that moment, I just wished to melt and disappear. I approached the hostess, and she too had the same feeling of desperation. Though I was nervous, I tried to stay calm and began praying fervently and silently: ‘Heavenly Father, please help me. I do not know what to do. Please don’t forsake me.’ Then my husband approached me and whispered, ‘Don’t be afraid. I will bless the food silently.’”

“Instantly, my fears were gone. I had no doubt that I could rely on the Lord. The dinner began. Eleven waiters replenished the food on the tables without ceasing as the banquet proceeded. After the affair, when the guests were

gone, all the tables were still filled with food. And there was still food left in the kitchen—five big baskets full of leftovers. All the guests and visitors had been fed and satisfied. Once home, I went immediately to my room and poured out my soul in gratitude to Heavenly Father. My whole body shook and trembled as I cried. My sincere prayer had been

answered. The power of the priesthood had been manifest. Truly the Lord will not forsake us if we strive to be righteous.”

Many personal experiences have confirmed to me that those who are obedient are blessed by the Lord as they place their faith in Him. Though we cannot escape difficulties, trials, challenges, and afflictions, living the gospel of Jesus Christ will give us strength and an assurance of promised blessings that can be obtained in no other way. When we allow the spirit of the adversary to be with us, it keeps us away from the joy and comfort and satisfaction that are guaranteed to the righteous. True happiness may be enjoyed only when we live worthy to have the Spirit of the Lord with us. ■

The Sweet Fruits of Obedience

*By faithfully holding fast to the word of God,
we are led to a fulness of joy.*



**True happiness
comes from the peace
and joy we experience
when we do that
which we have been
commanded to do.**

BY ELDER STEVEN E. SNOW
Of the Seventy

I still vividly recall the homework assignment from Brother Ortho Christensen, my ninth-grade seminary teacher. It was September 1964, early in the school year, and we were studying the Book of Mormon. We had just completed reviewing Lehi's dream (1 Nephi 8) when Brother Christensen gave us our assignment. "Students," he said, "I want you to draw a picture depicting Lehi's dream. Your assignment is due Friday." Now for those students blessed with even marginal artistic talent, the assignment was not difficult. For students like me, devoid of such talent, it was a daunting task.

I recall my feeble attempts to depict the tree of life, the great and spacious building, the river of water, and the mist of darkness. But what I remember most distinctly is the rod of iron leading to the tree of life and acting as a guide to those who would take hold and follow where it led. The stick figures in my picture who held to the iron rod would reach the tree, "whose fruit was desirable to make one happy" (1 Nephi 8:10). Lehi's son Nephi later explains that this iron rod "was the word of

God; and whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction" (1 Nephi 15:24).


What was so special about the fruit that Lehi describes? "I beheld a tree," he said, "whose fruit was desirable to make one happy. . . . And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy" (1 Nephi 8:10, 12). Nephi later explains the meaning of the tree in his father's dream: "It is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men" (1 Nephi 11:22).

The Obedience-Joy Connection

What is the connection between the iron rod and the fruit of the tree? How does the word of God lead to the joy and happiness that come from partaking of the tree of life?

Church President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught: "The way for each person and each family to guard against the slings and arrows of the Adversary and to prepare for the great day of the Lord is to





hold fast to the iron rod, to exercise greater faith, to repent of our sins and shortcomings, and to be anxiously engaged in the work of His kingdom on earth, which is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Herein lies the only true *happiness* for all our Father's children."¹

In King Benjamin's address to his people he also explained how to experience true happiness: "And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and *happy* state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending *happiness*. O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord God hath spoken it" (Mosiah 2:41; emphasis added).

These prophets teach us that if we are to obtain true happiness, or in other words, to partake of the precious fruit described by Lehi and Nephi, we must obey the word of God, or His commandments, which Nephi describes as the iron rod. True happiness comes from the peace and joy we experience when we do that which we have been commanded to do.

Defining Happiness

In today's world there is confusion over the definition of *happiness*. We can be misled if we listen to those who claim that happiness comes from material wealth or worldly pleasures. This all brings to mind a bumper sticker that was popular a few years ago. It read, "He who dies with the most toys wins!" Nothing could be further from the truth. Pursuing the pleasures of the world, particularly sin, does not bring lasting joy and peace. Alma taught his son Corianton that such pursuits do not bring true happiness: "Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10).

The world defines *happiness* as pleasure or fun, not the inner peace and joy that come from partaking of the fruit of the tree of life. Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) clearly explained the difference: "Happiness includes all that is really desirable and of true worth in pleasure, and much beside. Happiness is genuine gold, pleasure but gilded brass.

. . . Happiness is as the genuine diamond, which, rough or polished, shines with its own inimitable luster; pleasure is as the paste imitation that glows only when artificially embellished. . . . Happiness leaves no bad after-taste, it is followed by no depressing reaction; it calls for no repentance, brings no regret, entails no remorse; pleasure too often makes necessary repentance, contrition, and suffering; and, if indulged to the extreme, it brings degradation and destruction."²

What My Mission Taught Me

As a young holder of the Aaronic priesthood, I watched many of my older peers prepare for and depart to serve full-time missions. When they returned, I was amazed at the transformation that had occurred. I was impressed at how polished and mature they appeared. I was amazed at the strength of their testimonies. They seemed to shine with enthusiasm for the gospel. Where two years earlier they had stumbled and mumbled through a farewell talk in sacrament meeting, they now spoke with confidence and conviction as they described their mission experiences and bore strong testimony of the restored gospel. Invariably they told the congregation, "The past two years have been the happiest of my life."

As a young teenager I wanted to experience the happiness these returned missionaries were describing. Now, I thought I knew what it meant to be happy. I had many friends, I loved playing football and baseball, and life seemed pretty good. I thought a mission would just be a continuation of these happy experiences.

Some years later I found myself in Hildesheim, Germany, as a brand-new missionary serving in the North German Mission. I had come into the mission field believing that missionary life would be a happy continuation of my teenage years. I was quite mistaken. I found missionary work to be difficult and exhausting. I was very homesick. My German skills were grossly inadequate. Small children and even dogs seemed to understand more German than I could. On top of all this, no one seemed to want to listen to our message.

I began to wonder what in the world those returned elders from the St. George Fourth Ward in Utah had been

talking about. This was hard, and I definitely was not happy.

But like many young missionaries who had gone before me, a gradual transformation began to take place. I learned to study and pray in a way I had never known. I learned to be obedient to mission rules. I learned the value of hard work and consistent effort. Only then did I begin to understand what those returned missionaries had meant. I really was happy—the happiest I had ever been. It wasn't the happiness I had experienced with friends on the ball field; it was the inner peace and joy that come from obeying the word of God and feeling His love.

Happiness Is Our Purpose

I am surprised that after all these years I have such a clear memory of my clumsy depiction of Lehi's dream. My efforts certainly would not have won any awards; in fact, I don't recall they even earned a very good grade from Brother Christensen. What that picture did instill in me, however, is of far greater worth. It helped me understand that Lehi's dream is a beautiful description of the purpose for which we come to earth in the first place. The great plan of salvation provides that we may return to God's presence and partake of the precious fruit, namely the love of God, and ultimately eternal life. Part of that plan involves temptations, such as the "great and spacious building" Lehi describes. It includes, as well, the trials and challenges of life. Many will wander from the path and be lost in the "mist of darkness" or perish in the "river of water." But those who hold fast to the iron rod, or, in other words, obey the word of God, will enjoy the fruit of the tree of life and experience a happiness that will fill their "soul

with exceedingly great joy." This joy is the happiness that will last and will bring us peace. ■

NOTES

1. "The Lord Expects Righteousness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 5; emphasis added.
2. "A Greeting to the Missionaries," *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1913, 173.

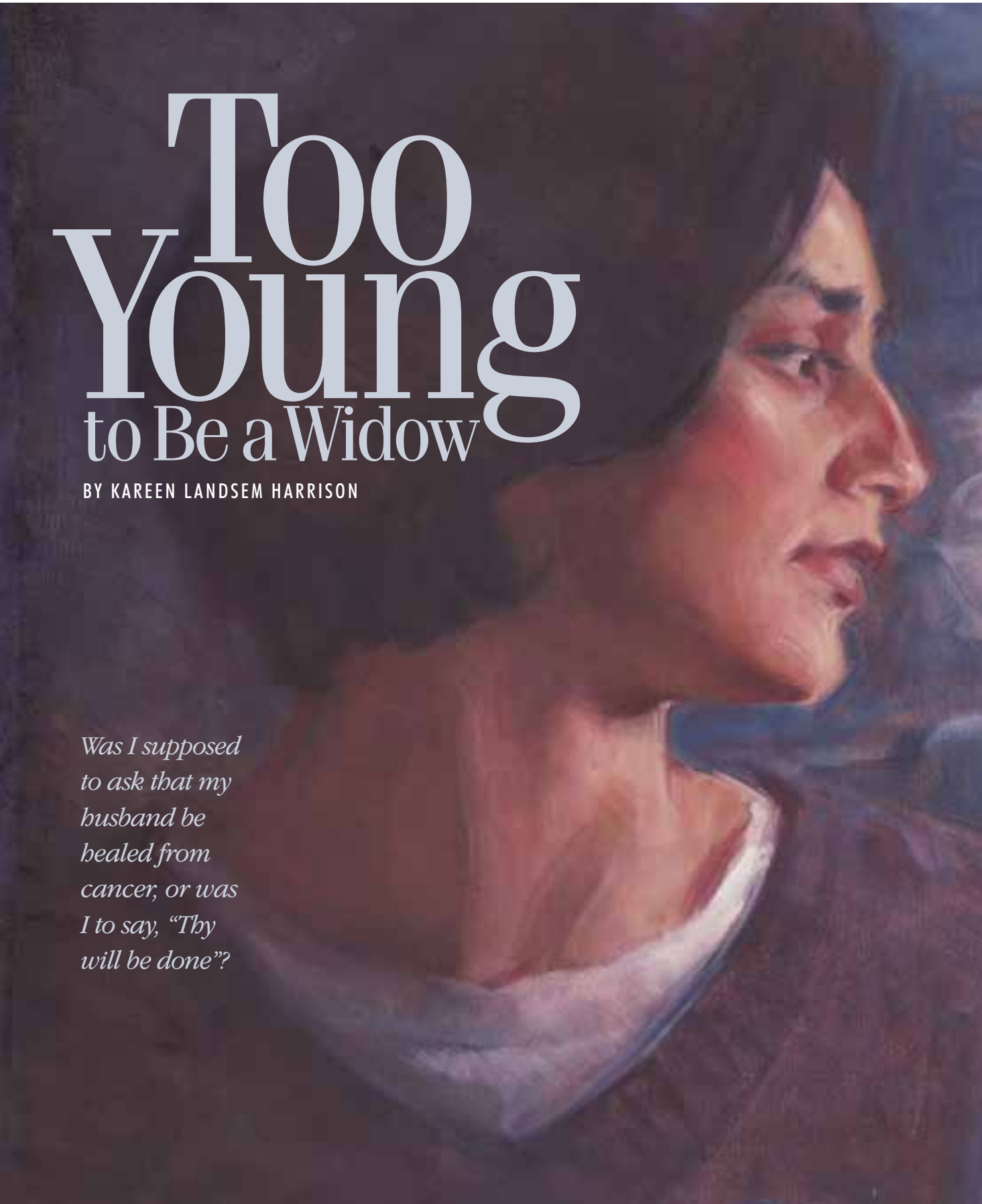
LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Involve your family in drawing a picture of Lehi's dream. Start with the iron rod and talk about its meaning in the dream. Then have each member of the family add a feature. Bear your testimony of the happiness that can come to those who hold on to the iron rod.

2. Share an experience when you had to make a difficult choice. Bear testimony of the joy you felt because you chose to follow the Lord. Then, as a family, make two lists: (1) Things that may bring short-lived pleasure then sadness; (2) Things that bring long-lasting happiness and peace.




Like many missionaries before me, I underwent a gradual transformation and came to understand what happiness really means.



Too Young to Be a Widow

BY KAREEN LANDSEM HARRISON

*Was I supposed
to ask that my
husband be
healed from
cancer, or was
I to say, "Thy
will be done"?*



In August 1990 my husband, David, and I went on a long-awaited vacation, attending Education Week at Brigham Young University. At that time, we had been married nearly 11 years and were parents of five children, ages 20 months to 8 years. My sister and her family agreed to watch our children.

David and I loved our time together, growing in spirit and strength. When the week was over, my sister insisted that we stay for their stake conference because Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was going to be speaking. We were easily persuaded. Our families sat on the second row. What a thrilling conference! I was impressed with one of Elder Maxwell's thoughts about the clinical experiences of life, that we must pass through them to

be more like our Savior. Seated on the second row in the presence of an Apostle, I found it easy to call out in spirit, "Yes, I can do all that is asked of me!"

A Turn of Events

Once David and I went home, we quickly eased into our normal routine. Four days later, David mentioned his stomach hurt. As the days passed, the discomfort increased. Since he usually has such a high tolerance for pain, I was concerned when he began to complain. By the fifth of September, his stomach had become so distended that we went to the doctor. David was immediately admitted into the hospital. After many tests and exploratory surgery, he was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer that had spread

throughout his abdominal cavity. He had to be fed intravenously. Knowing he walked a fine line between life and death, we consented to a tough regimen of chemotherapy.

Life as we had known it changed rapidly. Fortunately, we didn't have to right ourselves with each other or the Lord. We had current temple recommends, we had a strong, close relationship with each other and the children, and our testimonies were intact and growing. We felt we were on the right path. These circumstances, then, instead of being a catalyst for righting wrongs, were a path for growth and preparation.

There was much time for reflection and pondering—in the car traveling back and forth from the hospital, at

At a training meeting, the second counselor in our stake presidency felt inspired to change the topic of his lesson to Ether 12—a chapter I had been drawn to several times for comfort.

David's bedside while he slept, and alone at night. Many times I wondered what faith was supposed to feel like in this case. Was I supposed to ask that David be healed and focus all my energy toward that end? Or was I just to say, "Thy will be done," and refrain from further wonderings? I wasn't sure what I was to do. It seemed my whole self was being given to help David and our children.

Comfort in Ether 12

After a month in the hospital and one treatment of chemotherapy, David had finally stabilized enough to return home. I was often exhausted emotionally and physically.

Though I wasn't reading the scriptures consistently at this time, the truths I had diligently studied earlier came to my remembrance during the quiet moments. When I did read, I was led to Ether, chapter 12, time and time again. The principle of faith began to be more defined. It was as though with each step on this journey, I would gain just enough understanding to illuminate the next step.

Prayer and fasting helped bring understanding and direction. David's attitude and spirit lifted all who came near him. He was at peace with the course that was his. I, on the other hand, struggled with all the responsibilities of caring for the children, home, and an ill husband. Sometimes I felt anger and, on occasion, despair.

At this time, I was serving



PATIENTLY ENDURING



"Endurance is more than pacing up and down within the cell of our circumstance; it is not only

acceptance of the things allotted to us, but to 'act for ourselves' by magnifying what is allotted to us."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, "Endure It Well,"
Ensign, May 1990, 33.

in the stake Relief Society presidency. On one occasion in early December I attended a Saturday night leadership and testimony meeting. After the training and dinner, we adjourned to the Relief Society room. The second counselor in the stake presidency stood up. Immediately, I was arrested by his

countenance. A man never at a loss for words, he struggled for a few moments. "I just love the Spirit," he said. Emotions overcame him. He took a deep breath, then said, "I would like to talk about a special chapter in the Book of Mormon." I felt that he had been directed to change his talk during the few moments of struggle, and I also knew what chapter it would be. He started again, "Ether, chapter 12, is full of truth."

I find it difficult to express what occurred while he spoke. I felt as if my entire body were filled with light. Truth permeated my being to the exhausting of my strength. I wept, for the words he spoke were familiar. He spoke of things that the Holy Ghost had revealed to me. As he recounted the marvels and wonders wrought by the power of faith, I felt then that I too would soon add testimony about the wonders of faith. I was humbled.

Four More Months

In late December it became apparent that the chemotherapy was not working. We sought Heavenly Father in prayer. What would He have us do? We went to the stake presidency for a priesthood blessing. As we listened to the words spoken, we felt their truth. David was told that his time was short and that he had been spared for this space of time to be able to share the holidays with his family, to see the help and love shown his family, and to finish anything left undone. He was told this was because of his faithfulness in following the counsel of the Lord. I knew then that the Lord had rewarded my faith in Him by letting me know His will. I never once had to wonder, "If I had just had enough faith, David would have been healed."

David lived four more months, during which time he

baptized our second child, bid farewell to his extended family, finished some important family history and temple work, and gave me and each of our children a priesthood blessing.

By faith we are propelled into the arms of Christ to be healed. In Ether

12:6, Moroni declares that we "receive no witness until after the trial of [our] faith." During the trial of my faith, I learned more of charity and patience than I had ever learned before. My witness came before David died. Two nights before his death, I read to him Elder Maxwell's April 1990 conference address, "Endure It Well." I guess it was more for myself than for him. When I finished, he meekly asked, "Do you think I endured it well?" Of course my answer was a resounding yes! The next night our stake president and his counselor came to visit. David had taken a turn for the worse. He was hallucinating and was very agitated. I asked that they give him a blessing of comfort and courage. I desired that we have the strength to face whatever was required of us. In that priesthood blessing, David was told that he had endured it well and that the Lord was pleased with all we had done. That blessing was my witness.

Hope in Christ

The scriptures had led me to the power of the Savior's arms. The knowledge of His Atonement and promise of resurrection had filled David with peace and hope prior to his death and his release from the ravages of cancer. The Lord continues to heal me through the knowledge that it is He who "comforteth" me (see 2 Nephi 8:12). I add my testimony to those of others that Christ has taken upon Himself our infirmities that He may succor us and be filled with mercy toward us (see Alma 7:12). And I pray that through the Savior's help, our family may face our challenges with courage and endure them well. ■

Kareen Landsem Harrison is a member of the Elkhorn Springs Second Ward, Las Vegas Nevada Tule Springs Stake.



SINGLES

AND THE PROCLAMATION ON THE FAMILY

BY CYNTHIA DOXEY

What if you don't get married until you're a grandma?" my little niece queried one day. "Isn't there something you can do?" She wondered why I could not just ask a man to marry me. When I asked her where I might find a man to ask, she said a grocery store would probably be a good place to look.

Many times I have pondered my niece's innocent question "Isn't there something you can do?" and wondered if there actually *is* anything I can do to change my life. I realize marriage is a goal I should work toward. But getting married just so I will not be single anymore is not a sufficient reason for marriage. Instead, my greatest desire is to progress toward eternal life, which will include being married to someone who also has been progressing toward the same goal.

One of the things any Church member—married or single—can do to bless his or her life is to apply the principles and counsel contained in the divinely inspired document "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."¹ For some of us single adults, there may be times when the blessings of family life seem distant and unattainable. However, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled that we should "live whatever portion of the plan [of happiness] you can."² In examining the proclamation from the viewpoint of single adult life, we can learn many principles that will help us find happiness and purpose in our lives.

Sons and Daughters of God

The proclamation teaches that "all human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny." This statement shows that each individual, regardless of marital status, is a member of a family—God's eternal family. We are literally His sons and daughters, and consequently, we have reason to be happy.

The proclamation teaches of our inheritance of godly characteristics and of our potential to become like God. This knowledge can help all of God's children find comfort in the midst of trial. Single individuals in particular can be reassured that Heavenly Father loves them as His precious children, even if they do not presently experience the love of a spouse in a traditional family setting.

When I have felt lonely or concerned about my single status, I try to remind myself that the most important aspect of my identity is that I am a child of God, sent to earth to be

tested and to learn patience. The proclamation teaches that as God's offspring, I "accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life." President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) taught, "If a young man or a young woman has no opportunity of getting married, and they live faithful lives up to the time of their death, they will have all the blessings, exaltation, and glory

*The principles
in "The
Family: A
Proclamation
to the World"
can help
single adults
find happiness
and purpose
in their lives.*



Participation in temple ordinances can help us feel connected to our eternal family.

that any man or woman will have who had this opportunity and improved it.”³ Therefore, singles can still receive all the blessings of eternal life as long as we strive to keep our covenants, live worthily, and serve the Lord and His children.

Family History and Temple Work

Another important concept found in the proclamation is that “family relationships [can] be perpetuated beyond the grave” and that the ordinances of the temple “make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.” One of the choicest blessings God has given His children is the opportunity to receive eternal ordinances in the temple for ourselves and then to provide those same ordinances for our kindred dead.

Single adults, although not without demands upon their time, talents, and energy, may have more freedom than married couples in choosing how they will spend their leisure time. One wise use of our time is to attend the temple “as frequently as time and means and personal circumstances allow,” as President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) admonished Church members.⁴ Single members of the Church can become more connected to their eternal family doing family history and temple work.

As I have participated in family history and temple work, my love for my own family and my appreciation for my heritage have grown. In addition, I have recognized more fully the fact that this earthly experience is only a brief period in the eternal scheme of God’s plan. I know that I am an integral part of an eternal family that is depending on me to help them receive the blessings of the gospel. As I

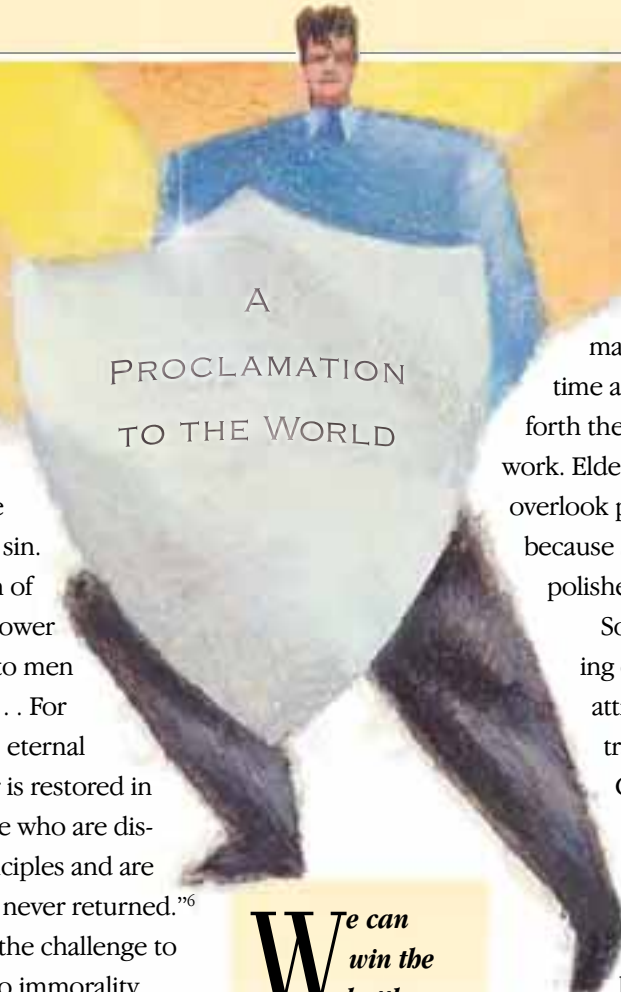
develop this eternal perspective more fully by working on my family history and attending the temple, my concerns about daily life become less significant and more manageable.

The Law of Chastity

Another important proclamation principle states: “The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.”

As a single adult, I am grateful that the prophets again reminded us of the eternal principle of the law of chastity and the importance of children. President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, stated, “The gift of mortal life and the capacity to kindle other lives is a supernal blessing.” However, he also noted that because of the importance of the procreative power in Heavenly Father’s eternal plan, the adversary has fought against that plan by influencing our society in a “rapid, sweeping deterioration of values . . . characterized by a preoccupation—even an obsession—with the procreative act.”⁵

The world teaches that immorality is acceptable. Our society provides a constant barrage of movies, television shows, magazines, books, and other media that portray the procreative act as nothing more than the satisfaction of a physical appetite. Gone is the understanding found in the restored gospel that keeping the law of chastity actually



brings great blessings, not the least of which is a pure heart, free of guilt and free from the consequences of sin. As Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy stated: "The power to create new life is given to men and women for a season. . . . For those who are obedient to eternal law, the procreative power is restored in the Resurrection. For those who are disobedient to righteous principles and are unrepentant, the power is never returned."⁶ Each single individual has the challenge to fight against succumbing to immorality. However, the battle can be won, and the blessings of living a chaste life far outweigh any transitory physical pleasures.

Marriage and Parenthood

The proclamation warns that those "who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God." Church President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) reminded us that "the greatest responsibility and the greatest joys in life are centered in the family, honorable marriage, and rearing a righteous posterity."⁷

While most single adults in the Church desire to have a spouse and children, there may be times when we lose sight of this goal. We may need to periodically reevaluate our conduct and desires to ensure that we have not misplaced our priorities on worldly pleasures and accolades. In other words, we may need to ask ourselves if we are spending too much effort on our professions or leisure pursuits such as travel, social activities, or hobbies. While none of those activities are wrong in and of themselves, they should not become the focus of our lives.

Pursuing our ultimate goal of marriage requires a certain amount of time and energy and a willingness to put forth the effort to make possible relationships work. Elder Scott counseled singles not to overlook people who may have great potential, because some desirable attributes "are best polished together as husband and wife."⁸

Sometimes we may find ourselves being overly concerned with marriage, an attitude which can lead to feelings of frustration, failure, and loneliness. President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "Do not give up hope. And do not give up trying. But do give up being obsessed with it."⁹

We should heed his sound counsel. As we study the proclamation and become grounded in our faith in Jesus Christ and in Heavenly Father's plan for His children, we will be able to keep our priorities centered on the family. We can find joy in knowing that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love us with a pure love that never fails, even if we do not experience the love of a spouse during mortality.

All people, whether married or single, have the responsibility to live the principles of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."

By doing so, we will find great happiness and comfort now and the blessings of eternal life with our families in the life to come. ■

We can win the battle against immorality as we heed the principles in the family proclamation.

NOTES

1. See *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
2. "The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 75.
3. *The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 138.
4. "The Great Symbol of Our Membership," *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 5.
5. "Our Moral Environment," *Ensign*, May 1992, 66.
6. "The Eternal Family," in *Brigham Young University 1997–98 Speeches* (1998), 112.
7. "To the Single Adult Brethren of the Church," *Ensign*, May 1988, 52.
8. "Receive the Temple Blessings," *Ensign*, May 1999, 26.
9. "Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 68.

Cynthia Doxey is a member of the Monument Park 19th Ward, Salt Lake Monument Park Stake.

The Perpetual



Education Fund

A Bright Ray of Hope



PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDUARDO VILLAGOMESE AND COURTESY OF THE PERPETUAL EDUCATION FUND DEPARTMENT

The Perpetual Education Fund is blessing not only participants and donors but also the Church as a whole.

BY ELDER JOHN K. CARMACK

Managing Director
Perpetual Education Fund Department

In the priesthood session of general conference on 31 March 2001, President Gordon B. Hinckley made an announcement heard around the world. The Church was to create a Perpetual Education Fund (PEF). It would be patterned after the 19th-century Perpetual Emigrating Fund, which helped tens of thousands of Latter-day Saint converts from Europe join the body of the Saints in the valleys of western North America.

This new PEF would provide loans to help worthy returned missionaries and other young Latter-day Saint adults gain the training and education necessary for adequate employment in their own countries. President Hinckley concluded his bold announcement with this invitation and promise: “I believe the Lord does not wish to see His people condemned to live in poverty. I believe He would have the faithful enjoy the



The Perpetual Education Fund has advanced from a vision foreseen by a prophet to a powerful reality. It is preparing Church leaders, fostering hope, and building character and self-reliance—all of which will bless generations to come.



Top: Cibertec, a school in Lima, Peru, prepares students for careers in information technology. Above: “I had so little hope and so many fears—even after the PEF was announced. But I prayed and went forward. Now I am in school to become a Web designer. With the job I have found already, I hope to pay off the loan by the time I graduate!” says Meriam Erquiza (left) of the Philippines.

good things of the earth. He would have us do these things to help them. And He will bless us as we do so. For the success of this undertaking I humbly pray, while soliciting your interest, your faith, your prayers, your concerns in its behalf.”¹

Latter-day Saints everywhere received the announcement with joy. Many shed tears. Thousands and tens of thousands who had been blessed with sufficient material blessings for their needs had wanted some way to help those Church youth mired in poverty and hopelessness. Now, here was a way for virtually everyone to help provide education for those without resources, enabling them to rise out of poverty. The recipients would, after securing good employment, repay their loans, providing the means for others to enjoy the same assistance. The whole concept, explained in detail by President Hinckley, resonated in hearts and minds.

In developing countries, young people with ambition and desire to rise out of their circumstances immediately grasped the meaning of the PEF. Here was the way to gain skills, knowledge, and opportunities. President Hinckley had taught us that education was

the key to progress. The Perpetual Education Fund became a bright ray of hope.

Two Faithful Sons

The story of two equally fine young men will illustrate the PEF’s impact. They have recently served missions in a less-advantaged country. Both of these elders served obediently. But when one returned home, he enjoyed the means to attend a great university, thanks to parents who had saved enough through self-reliance and provident living to pay for his education. He would not even have to work during school. The other missionary, equally worthy and obedient, returned home to face the same poverty from whence he came.

Anguished at the situation, the returned missionary from better financial circumstances sent a letter to the PEF office. Following inner promptings, he took the money his parents provided for a year of college, donated it to the PEF, and found a job to earn his own way through school that year. Clearly he sought to become one with the Savior by becoming one with his brother. (See D&C 38:25–27.)

This generous young man is just one of many Latter-day Saints who have responded

to President Hinckley's invitation. In the days and months that followed the general conference announcement, hundreds of thousands opened their purses and sent what they could to the fund—in addition to their tithing and fast offerings. The fund grew, almost overnight, to major proportions. "It is a miracle!" President Hinckley exclaimed over and over.

Less than two years after the announcement of the PEF, the program had been introduced in most of the areas where our young adults face serious conditions of poverty. More than 10,000 loans have been approved, and the applications for loans continue to arrive in the PEF office. The loans are helping our young people gain a rich variety of vocational and technical skills needed in their countries.



OBTAINING SOMETHING OF WORTH

"It has been said that if one obtained some-

thing that is worthwhile and very desirable for nothing he has paid too dearly for it."

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

A recent batch of loan applications from one South American country revealed the following occupational goals: automobile mechanic, banking clerk, certified software systems engineer, clothing maker, computer maintenance worker, computer network systems engineer, computer programmer, electronic technician, en-

vironmental technician, hairstylist, hotel administrator, marketing and sales technician, natural gas technician, nurse, nutritionist, pathology lab technician, and Web technician. Note the practical nature of these educational goals.

Developing Leaders

As this effort begins to bear fruit, the implications for the Church are wonderful to contemplate. Finding leaders

PERPETUAL EDUCATION FUND FACTS

- The PEF is governed by a board of directors that includes the First Presidency, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, other General Authorities, and general auxiliary leaders.

- The PEF is funded by donations—most coming from average, not wealthy, members of the Church. All contributions go directly to educational loans; none are used for administrative costs.

- Only *earnings* from the corpus (or body) of the fund are used for loans; the corpus is untouched and continues to generate money for loans.

- More than 10,000 loans have been approved.

- The full program is available in 11 international areas, which include 85 percent of the 1.2 million Latter-day Saint young adults living outside North America. An additional 6 international areas are preparing to implement the program.

- The average age of participants is 26. About 55 percent are young men (85 percent returned missionaries); 45 percent are young women (25 percent returned missionaries).

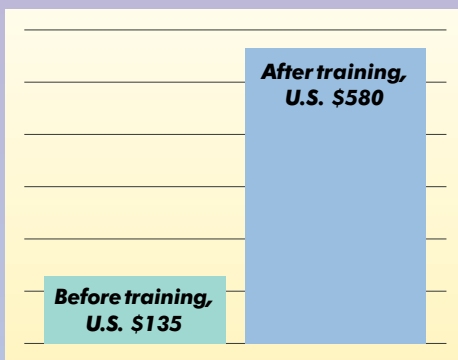
- The average payment for a year of quality education is U.S. \$800; the average training program length is 2.2 years.

- Each participant receives training in setting realistic goals, budgeting and managing finances, and developing other skills and attitudes necessary for success. Many who take this course discover they can enter school *without* a PEF loan.

- Most loans are for vocational or technical training that

matches local job opportunities.

- Loans are typically used only for costs of tuition, books, and fees.



The average income per month for participants before and after vocational training



Above and below:
Waldir Amarrillo—on
his own since shortly
after his mission—
lives in a small room
built onto the side of
a garage in Lima,
Peru, while he
completes the last
two years of a five-
year mechanical
engineering program.
His education is being
aided by the PEF.

to meet the needs of a rapidly growing Church membership ranks high on the list of challenges the Church faces. The issue is particularly pertinent in places such as Latin America and the Philippines, where our major growth is taking place. Where will we find these leaders? They will come as those who have stable financial circumstances—gained through educational opportunities—take leadership roles, marry, and establish righteous families. Those righteous families will continue to produce the next generation of Church leaders.

Speaking of those who would be blessed by the PEF, President Hinckley said: “With good employment skills, these young men

and women can rise out of the poverty they and generations before them have known. They will better provide for their families. They will serve in the Church and grow in leadership and responsibility. . . . As faithful members of the Church, they will pay their tithes and offerings, and the Church will be much the stronger for their presence in the areas where they live.”²

The blessings for future families are already becoming evident. A young returned missionary in Mexico reports:

“In December 2001, I returned home after a full-time mission in the México Veracruz Mission. My goals were high, but it appeared that I would be unable to achieve them due to



finances, even with the help of my family. It was then I discovered that through the PEF my dream could be achieved.

“Only last week I finished my studies and was immediately hired at a salary three times greater than that which I was earning before. I can now begin my family. I was married on 20 December 2002.”

Hope

The blossoming of hope among those who had previously despaired is proving to be one of the powerful effects of the PEF. One Brazilian young man speaks for many when he says: “I was discouraged and had abandoned my goals for a good career. But then the Perpetual Education Fund helped me raise my head and discern new horizons.”

To hope is “to cherish a desire with anticipation [or] expectation of obtainment [or] fulfillment.”³ We think of it in gospel terms as the expectation that we will live again and be saved with our Father in Heaven. Our young people with testimonies cherish the hope of immortality and eternal life. It is hard, however, for them to become excited about the next life if they cannot anticipate having a good life while on earth, including a decent career and the opportunity to develop their skills and talents. When these goals appear impossible to attain, hope turns to hopelessness. Without such temporal hope, the spiritual hope of salvation can seem unreal.

The PEF has already increased hope in our young men and women all over the world. Just knowing that our prophet is deeply concerned about them and wants the best for them has been powerful. Knowing that he has declared that education is the key to opportunity has turned their hearts and minds to education, training, and a search for a satisfying career. Knowing that career training, guidance, and the means to obtain them are available is powerful medicine. This reaching out to the youth may yet prove the most important principle and brightest light of the Perpetual Education Fund.

WHO MAY PARTICIPATE?

Participants may include worthy young men and young women who are:

- Generally between 18 and 30.
- Married or single.
- Active in the Church and enrolled in the local institute of religion.
- Living, working, and attending school in areas where the PEF program is approved.
- Lacking resources to finance their own education.



Self-Reliance

Another powerful principle at work in the PEF is self-reliance. President Hinckley continually stresses that young people are not being given anything but an opportunity: “They will repay their loans to make it possible for others to be blessed as they have been blessed.”⁴ He believes in our young people, and they are responding. The early reports on repayment rates by those receiving the first loans are encouraging evidence of this principle at work.

Built into the program is a strong covenant-like promise to repay the loans to benefit others. Applicants for loans also promise to borrow only the amount absolutely necessary to help achieve their goals. They must pay all of their own room and board, stay in their own communities, and find ways to pay as many of their own school expenses as possible. They welcome this responsibility.

One young married couple applied for PEF loans. During the application process, they took the short training course designed to help them choose a career and budget their money. Upon reflection and upon working out their budget, they decided what unessential expenditures they could reduce or eliminate, such as eating in fast-food establishments. They were startled to discover that by exercising frugality they would not need the loans. They could pay for their own schooling.

The PEF has already proven a catalyst for teaching self-reliance to our Church members—and particularly to our young adults. The benefits will extend to their children, to their wards and branches, and to the Church as a whole. Every community will be better as our people learn and exemplify self-reliance. Self-esteem and confidence will soar, and the effect will be miraculous.

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE?

If you live in an area where the PEF is approved:

- Enroll in institute.
- Maintain a job, if possible, so you can pay for your living costs and help pay for your education costs.
- Talk with your institute director about a Perpetual Education Fund loan application. Church Educational System personnel will help you begin the process.



This is a win-win situation with tremendous potential benefits. Those with enough and to spare can help those in poverty. In the process, those receiving loans gain independence and repay their loans to help others. As President Hinckley has said: “With greatly improved opportunities, they will step out of the cycle of poverty which they and those before them have known for so long. . . . They will

become leaders in this great work in their native lands. They will pay their tithes and offerings, which will make it possible for the Church to expand its work across the world.”⁵

Sacrifice

From the wards and branches have come literally millions of dollars. Most of the contributions have been from the rank-and-file members of the Church. Every day, every week, their small contributions arrive to build the fund. If there were no other result than this outpouring of love and sacrifice, we would have to conclude that the fund had increased the spirit of sacrifice among the Saints everywhere in the world, thus exerting a powerful influence for good among them.

But there is also a corollary principle involved here. It is the principle of making choices to make us a more caring and just people. When someone sees people suffering in poverty and hopelessness, a voice inside asks, “When I have so much, how can I rest and feel that I am just?” The PEF is a wonderful way for ordinary individuals to help tip those scales toward balance and justice.

The contrast between those with enough and to spare and those without enough is not new. Paul saw similar conditions among the Corinthian Saints. The solution was to share. He reminded the Corinthian Saints that the “Lord Jesus Christ, . . . though he was rich, yet for [your] sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9). Paul urged those who had means to use their abundance as a supply for what others lacked. In doing so, they would receive as well as give because “their [the poor’s] abundance also may be a supply for your want” (2 Corinthians 8:14). He urged them to “give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

An Invitation

Since its initial announcement, the Perpetual Education Fund has advanced from a vision foreseen by a prophet to a powerful reality. It is preparing Church leaders, fostering hope, and building character and self-reliance—all of which will bless generations to come.

President Hinckley has invited us to become a part of this bold initiative. Church members who give to help others will gain spiritual blessings in the process. Qualified young people who accept the prophet’s invitation to participate will be better able to provide for themselves and their families. And they will gain skills and confidence that will enable them to make greater contributions to the Church and their communities. The Lord loves wonderful, worthy young people, and He loves those who give with pure



intent, regardless of the size of their gift.

Through the establishment of the Perpetual Education Fund, the Lord has provided another powerful mechanism for the continued growth of His kingdom. And He has provided another way for us to grow individually as well—becoming more just, more generous, more hopeful and self-reliant, more as one with our fellow Saints. ■

Elder John K. Carmack served as a member of the Seventy from 1984 to 2001.

NOTES

1. "The Perpetual Education Fund," *Liabona*, July 2001, 67; *Ensign*, May 2001, 53.
2. *Liabona*, July 2001, 62; *Ensign*, May 2001, 52.
3. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., "hope," 558.
4. *Liabona*, July 2001, 62; *Ensign*, May 2001, 52.
5. "Reaching Down to Lift Another," *Liabona*, Jan. 2002, 62; *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 53–54.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

- Who can benefit from participation in the Perpetual Education Fund?
 - Why do you think Church leaders created a loan program rather than a scholarship program?
 - Why does the Lord want us to be self-reliant?
 - How did you feel about the Perpetual Education Fund when you initially learned about it? How do you feel about it now?
 - How does adequate employment help strengthen family life?
 - How do strong Latter-day Saint families produce strong leaders?
 - The scriptures frequently include hope along with faith and charity as an essential principle (see Moroni 10:20). What role does hope play in your own life?
 - Why is sacrifice such a powerful principle?
- How have you personally benefited from the sacrifice of others?



Above: Carlos Salinas Villantoy of Lima, Peru, is studying computer science.

Below: Students learn to repair diesel engines at an auto mechanics school in Mexico City.



"I Beheld a

Tree"

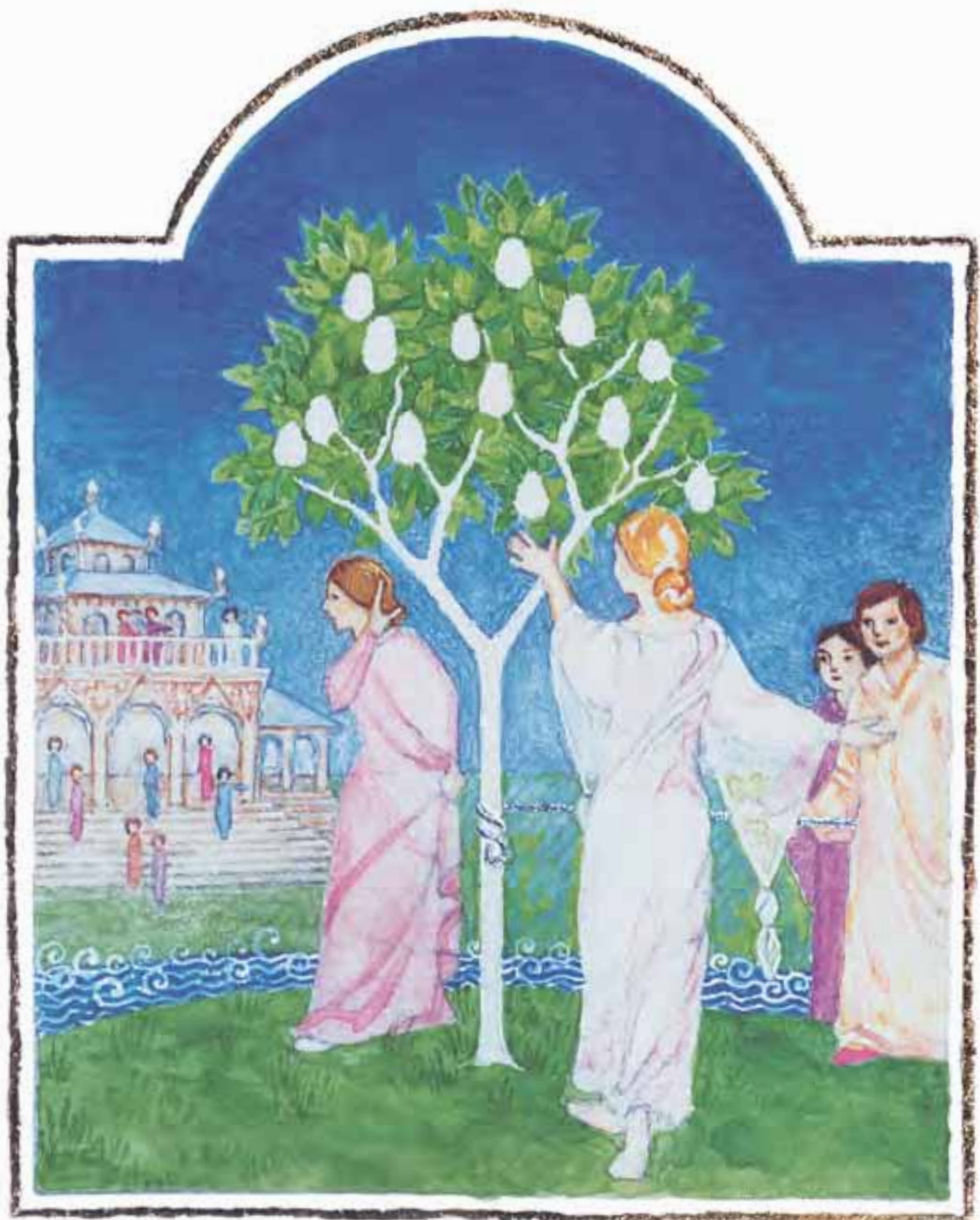


From left to right: *Lehi's Vision of the Tree of Life*, by Wang Xiu, Chinese scroll; *Lehi's Vision of the Tree of Life*, by Diane Aposhian-Moffat, hand-knotted rug; *Tree of Life*, by LaMona Brown, hand-knotted rug; *A Vision of the Tree of Life*, by Carol Lind, watercolor on parchment.

Lehi's dream of the tree of life is an ongoing source of inspiration to Latter-day Saints worldwide. The prophet Nephi writes of his father's dream in 1 Nephi, chapter 8: "While my father tarried in the wilderness he spake unto us, saying: Behold, I have dreamed a dream; . . . I beheld a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy. And . . . I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it was most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white. . . . And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit" (vv. 2, 10–12).

On these pages are various artists' depictions of this passage of scripture.





Right: Tree of Life, by Charlotte Andersen, quilt; far right: Tree of Life, by Carol Johnson, quilt; below: Tree of Life, by Marcus Alan Vincent, oil on linen.





Far left: Tree of Life, by Mabel "Belle" Lara, oil on panel; above: Tree of Life, by Derek Hegsted, oil on canvas; left: Tree of Life, by Lucile C. Fish, tatting; below: Lehi's Dream, by Damaris Puga de Garcia, metal work.



JOY

in the Journey

BY S. MICHAEL WILCOX

Lehi was right—the fruits of the gospel of Jesus Christ really are the sweetest of all.

When I was a teenager, my front teeth were removed due to an accident I had suffered years earlier. During the following years of corrective dental work, I lived with a toothless smile that resulted in a lack of social confidence. I reached maturity believing I could not marry a wonderful woman. Yet I had dreams. I formed a portrait of the woman I wanted to marry, down to her talents, personality, commitments, even the color of her hair and eyes. It was a dream I never believed could be true.

When I met the young woman I eventually married, I was surprised by how closely she matched the details of my portrait. Perhaps you can understand, then, how I felt as we knelt in the Cardston Alberta Temple to be sealed and heard the wonderful words of promise and knew that a unity and love that I never believed would come into my life would never leave it. As she placed her hand in mine, such a warmth of spirit and light and beauty

rolled over and through me that ever since that time whenever I hear the word *glory* I think of that moment. In the temple, the Lord opens a window of heaven just a crack to let celestial light strike our souls. It is ours forever if we are true to our covenants.

Lehi wrote of similar feelings in the Book of Mormon when he described his glorious dream. In this vision, he saw “a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy” (1 Nephi 8:10). He partook of the fruit, and “it filled [his] soul with exceedingly great joy; wherefore, [he] began to be desirous that [his] family should partake of it also” (1 Nephi 8:12).

The Book of Mormon uses seven words to describe the fruit of this tree: *white, sweet, desirable, beautiful, precious, joyous, and pure*. Each word is used in a comparative sentence. The fruit is not only white and sweet, but “white, to exceed *all* the whiteness that I had ever seen” and “sweet, *above all* that I ever before tasted” (v. 11; emphasis added in this and subsequent verses). It is more than desirable; it is “desirable *above all* other fruit” (v. 12). Its beauty is “*far beyond, yea, exceeding of all* beauty,” and it is “precious *above all*,” “*the most joyous* to the soul”

Line upon line,
the gospel has
blessed my life.
In the temple, the Lord
opens a window of
heaven just a crack to
let celestial light strike
our souls. It is ours
forever if we are true
to our covenants.



Sweet fruits
of the gospel
have been
found in simple
things like daily
family associations,
responding to a
bishop's call to help
in finishing a chapel
(below), or hearing
Mother read from
the Book of Mormon
(right).

(1 Nephi 11:8–9, 23), and “pure *above all* that is pure” (Alma 32:42).

The following stories illustrate how the gospel can bring us joy. In sharing them, I do not wish to paint a picture that life is without problems. I realize that we all experience pain and sorrow. But the gospel does truly help, and the fruits of the gospel are sweet and precious. I believe that the Lord's way is the way to joy, and happiness comes as we walk the path shown to us by the Savior.

**Strengthened by
the Word of God**

My mother, who raised us alone, often told the Lord she didn't have the wisdom to do it

without His help. So whatever the Church counseled parents to do, she did. Every Monday night we gathered in the living room for family home evening. We had no manual, so my mother taught us from the Book of Mormon. I would lie under the table near our sofa, listen to Mother's voice, and visualize the great Nephite prophets. Later in my life, those images often returned to warn, inspire, or comfort me. I can still hear my mother's voice and see the black leather Book of Mormon resting on her lap. How grateful I am now that those images were there during the troubled years of my youth, when my immaturity made me so vulnerable to Satan's deceptions and to the popular voices of the world.

The story of our first parents, Adam and Eve, gives us great insight into what makes a happy life. It is a subtle lesson and is found by comparing our Heavenly Father's words to Adam and Eve with Satan's words to them. After showing Adam and Eve all the beauty of the Garden of Eden with its multitude of fruitful trees, the Lord said, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest *freely* eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it” (Genesis 2:16–17). The Lord focused their minds on all they could *freely* have and do.

In light of this, the forbidding of one tree did not seem so restrictive.

Now, notice Satan's words to Eve: “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall *not* eat of *every* tree of the garden?”

(Genesis 3:1). Satan focused her mind on the one thing she could not have and do. Our happiness in life largely depends on which of those perspectives we choose to accept.





Obedience Is Happiness

There is a suggestion in Satan's words to Eve that a commandment from God is a limitation of personal freedom and therefore a cause of unhappiness. Satan would have us believe that obedience equals unhappiness.

In fact, the opposite is true—obedience is happiness. Obedience is liberating, not restricting (see John 8:32).

A mother in our stake recently shared a letter from her daughter who was living in a foreign land: "When I was growing up, I used to think you and Dad were too strict. You wouldn't let me go to some of the movies, concerts, and activities that some of my friends were attending. Sometimes I would get angry at you because the standards of the Church seemed to stand in the way of my happiness and acceptance with my friends. Now that I am in an environment far from the teachings of my faith and I can reflect on those early years of training, I am 10 times more grateful than I ever was mad." This young woman had learned that the counsels of the Church are really a barrier to keep out temptation and sorrow instead of a fence to lock us in.

Joy is the natural fruit of obedience. "Men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25), and joy is doing "all things whatsoever the Lord [our] God shall command" (Abraham 3:25).

Uplifted through Serving

As Latter-day Saints, we can find joy in service and taste the sweetness of our Father's work and glory as we serve. In the Lord's Church, all callings are important. A brother in our ward taught this truth by sharing the following account of a calling he received from his bishop years ago. "I remember my first calling in the Church. I was eight years old. Our ward was building a chapel, and the members were helping with the construction. While watching the work, my bishop took me into the chapel, pointed to the beautiful wood paneling that covered the walls, then gave me a little can of putty and a putty knife. 'There are tiny nail holes in these panels,' he said, 'and they won't be beautiful until all are filled in. Can you do that for the Lord?' I felt so important, as if the whole success of the building depended on how well I spread my putty.

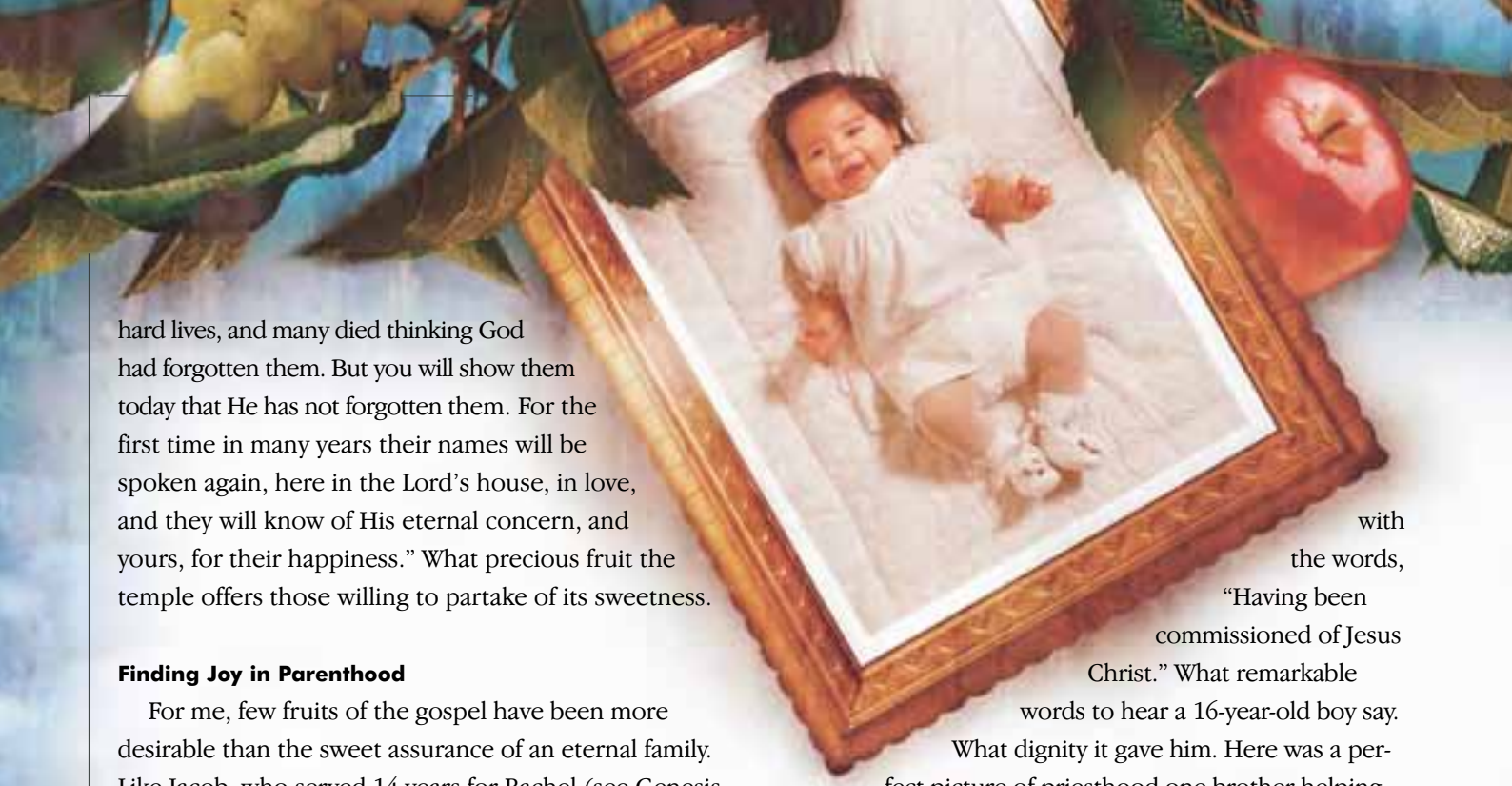
Since that day, I have had many callings. Each has lifted and blessed my life. Even today, I cannot enter that chapel without lovingly running my fingers over the tiny dots of putty."

Service in the temple as a proxy for our ancestors is a unique and beautiful opportunity to serve. I learned as a young boy that family history begins with a love for our ancestors. One year when my grandparents were visiting, my mother brought home an old tape recorder. She put me to bed and then in the other room turned on the tape recorder as my grandparents related the events of their own and their ancestors' lives. I crept to the door leading to the front room, opened it a crack, and listened to the wonderful stories.

I learned of Anders Jensen, my Danish ancestor, who defended a Latter-day Saint boy in the streets of Copenhagen from a gang who wanted to beat him up. Later, when he joined the Church, Anders was cut off from his family. He joined other Danish Saints and left for America. When he learned of the Word of Wisdom, he threw away his plug of tobacco for good, then scrubbed his mouth out with soap to be clean when he entered Zion.

I loved these stories and felt the "welding link" about which the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote (see D&C 128:18). I wanted to know all I could about my ancestors. Their lives strengthened mine, completed it, and gave me a sense of belonging—a wholeness that I cannot adequately explain. I wanted to do something for them, give them back in small measure what they had given me.

As I grew up, I learned that I could do something for my ancestors through the redemptive work of the dead, which reaches its fulfillment in the temple. When I did the baptisms for my ancestors, a wonderful temple worker said: "Many of these people for whom you will be baptized lived



hard lives, and many died thinking God had forgotten them. But you will show them today that He has not forgotten them. For the first time in many years their names will be spoken again, here in the Lord's house, in love, and they will know of His eternal concern, and yours, for their happiness." What precious fruit the temple offers those willing to partake of its sweetness.

Finding Joy in Parenthood

For me, few fruits of the gospel have been more desirable than the sweet assurance of an eternal family. Like Jacob, who served 14 years for Rachel (see Genesis 29:9–20), I would serve all my life, and beyond, for the eternal companionship of my wife and children.

As Latter-day Saints, we, like Lehi, find joy as we watch our children partake of the fruit of the tree or sadness as they choose not to partake. We rejoice in watching them learn that they are children of God and that He is a God who communicates with us through personal revelation.

I was deeply moved recently as I listened to the testimony of a father, an acquaintance, who shared with me the joy he felt as his daughter discovered the personal care of a loving Father in Heaven: "A few years ago my daughter hungered, as we all do, to know that she was loved. She wanted to know, especially, that her Father in Heaven loved her but did not tell anyone her desire. When she turned 13 years old, she asked for a patriarchal blessing. She prayed that her Father in Heaven would tell her in it He loved her. She was deeply moved when the first words of her blessing were, 'Heavenly Father is pleased that you have the desire to know of His feeling and His love for you.' I did not know what a joyous miracle God had granted her until she told me later of her spiritual longings. What a happy moment we shared!"

Having the priesthood in our home has brought joy to our family. Some time ago my youngest son was baptized by his 16-year-old brother. I watched my older son enter the font, help his little brother into the water, raise his arm to the square, and begin this priesthood ordinance

with
the words,
"Having been
commissioned of Jesus
Christ." What remarkable

words to hear a 16-year-old boy say.
What dignity it gave him. Here was a perfect picture of priesthood one brother helping the other while being edified and strengthened himself.


For weeks before this ordination I had watched my sons. There was unity and kindness between them. The thought of this sacred ordinance sobered and humbled my older son and filled my younger one with love and respect for his brother. Even now, the memory of that shared sacred time continues to elevate their relationship. That ordinary men and boys can bring such blessings into the lives of others in the Savior's name is surely one of the purest fruits of the gospel.

Comforted by the Holy Ghost

The gift of the Holy Ghost is a great source of joy and wisdom. This "Comforter," bestowed by the priesthood, "teaches [us] all things," guides us into all truth, and brings "all things to [our] remembrance" (see John 14:16–27; 16:13). "Put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good," the Lord counsels, and it "shall fill your soul with joy" (D&C 11:12–13).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught us to "turn not away the small, still voice; it will teach [us] what to do and where to go; *it will yield the fruit of the kingdom . . . it will whisper peace and joy to [our] souls*; it will take malice, hatred, strife and all evil from [our] hearts, and [our] whole desire will be to do good" (*Millennial Star*, 23 Sept. 1873, 598).

There are many examples in the lives of Latter-day Saints that illustrate the power of the Spirit to bring joy.

A decorative border surrounds the page, featuring clusters of red grapes, yellow pears, and a large red apple at the bottom. A framed photograph of a man and a woman in white robes is positioned on the right side, overlapping the text box.

As our family
grew, so did
our joy—such
as when our son
baptized his younger
brother. Patriarchal
blessings provided
peace and direction.

The following experience from a member of the Church may serve as an example.

“I first felt the deep joy of the gospel as a small boy in Primary. Our music leader told us we were going to learn a new song. She told us to listen carefully and she would sing it to us first and then we would sing it together. She had a beautiful rich voice, and slowly and distinctly she sang the words, ‘The golden plates lay hidden, deep in a mountainside, until God found one faithful in whom he could confide’ (‘The Golden Plates,’ *Children’s Songbook*, 86). As she sang, I was overcome with the Spirit. I closed my eyes, and I could see in my mind the Hill Cumorah and Joseph Smith climbing through the trees to lift the rock and look upon the records of ancient prophets. I knew it was true, and the thought filled me with happiness. I sang the song as loud as I could, and all that week I continued to sing my testimony into being. Since that time I have felt the joy that knowing truth produces. It has become the anchor of my life.”

Reason to Rejoice

What a blessing and honor it is to be a Latter-day Saint—to know the great plan of happiness, to know who we are and what our destiny will be, to taste all the fruits the Lord so graciously offers us. Surely we have great reason to rejoice. Surely no happier message can be carried to a troubled and unhappy world than the gospel message proclaimed by our missionaries.

The more I learn of the Savior’s great “plan of happiness” (see Alma 42:16), the more I love it and the more confident I am that it is the path of joy and fulfillment. I believe that a whole lifetime, perhaps even a whole eternity,

is not sufficient time to enjoy all the splendors of the Lord’s glorious plan of happiness.

I feel that the wisest, noblest, and most significant thing we can ever accomplish as children of Heavenly Father is to discover His will and do it. Obedience to the Lord’s will has always brought peace and rest, fulfillment and joy.

Our Heavenly Father continues to issue His invitation, “Of every tree of the garden, thou mayest freely eat.” May eternity find each one of us feasting in his eternal Garden of Eden. ■

S. Michael Wilcox is a member of the Draper 16th Ward, Draper Utah Stake.



THE FALLEN Sparrow

*A father tells how he shares his love
for the scriptures
with his children.*



29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?
and one of them shall not fall on the ground
without your Father.

BY ROBERT K. MCINTOSH

Raised in a Christian home, I learned as a young boy to love the Bible stories of prophets like Moses and Elijah. When I later joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I began loving and appreciating the standard works even more. The scriptures have, therefore, become a vital part of my parenting and family life. From scripture charades in family home evening to reading verses together as a family, my wife and I have tried to instill in our children a love for the word of God.

“Dumb Daddy”

Scripture stories at bedtime have created some of our favorite family memories. My wife and I cherish these teaching moments, for they come when we have our children’s full attention—and they have ours.

One such moment came one evening as I was telling my son the story of Joshua and the battle of Jericho. Three minutes into the story, he stopped me and asked, “Daddy, is it wrong to think something bad if you never say it?”

I replied, “I suppose it is, because Jesus said we should learn to control our thoughts.”

He then admitted, “Well, sometimes when you discipline me I say in my mind, ‘Dumb Daddy.’ ”

A few minutes later, my daughter called from her bedroom, “Dad, when you’re done there would you come in here?” After talking the question over with my son, I went into my daughter’s room. She said, “I heard what he said. I do the same thing, but instead of saying, ‘Dumb Daddy,’ I say, ‘Stupid Dad.’ ”

Needless to say, I didn’t get the children of Israel settled in the promised land that evening. This did not concern me, because the scripture story had been the catalyst for my children to talk about their feelings. I realized once again the importance of listening to and understanding their tender feelings.

A Fallen Sparrow

The scriptures are also helpful in responding to everyday problems and challenges at home. This idea was dramatically emphasized to me one day when my son walked into the house with a dying sparrow in his hand. I asked him, “Son, where did you get that bird?”

“It fell out of the sky,” he answered.

“Oh, how did it fall out of the sky?”

“I don’t know. It just came down.”

At that moment, I noticed his BB gun in the corner. Pressing further, I asked, “Son, what caused the bird to fall?” He answered that a BB had hit it. “Well, how did the BB get into the sky?” I asked.

His head dropped as he said, “I shot it with my BB gun.”

I could have handled the situation several different ways. I decided to turn to the scriptures. I said to him, “Son, what did Jesus say about little birds?”

“I don’t know,” he said.

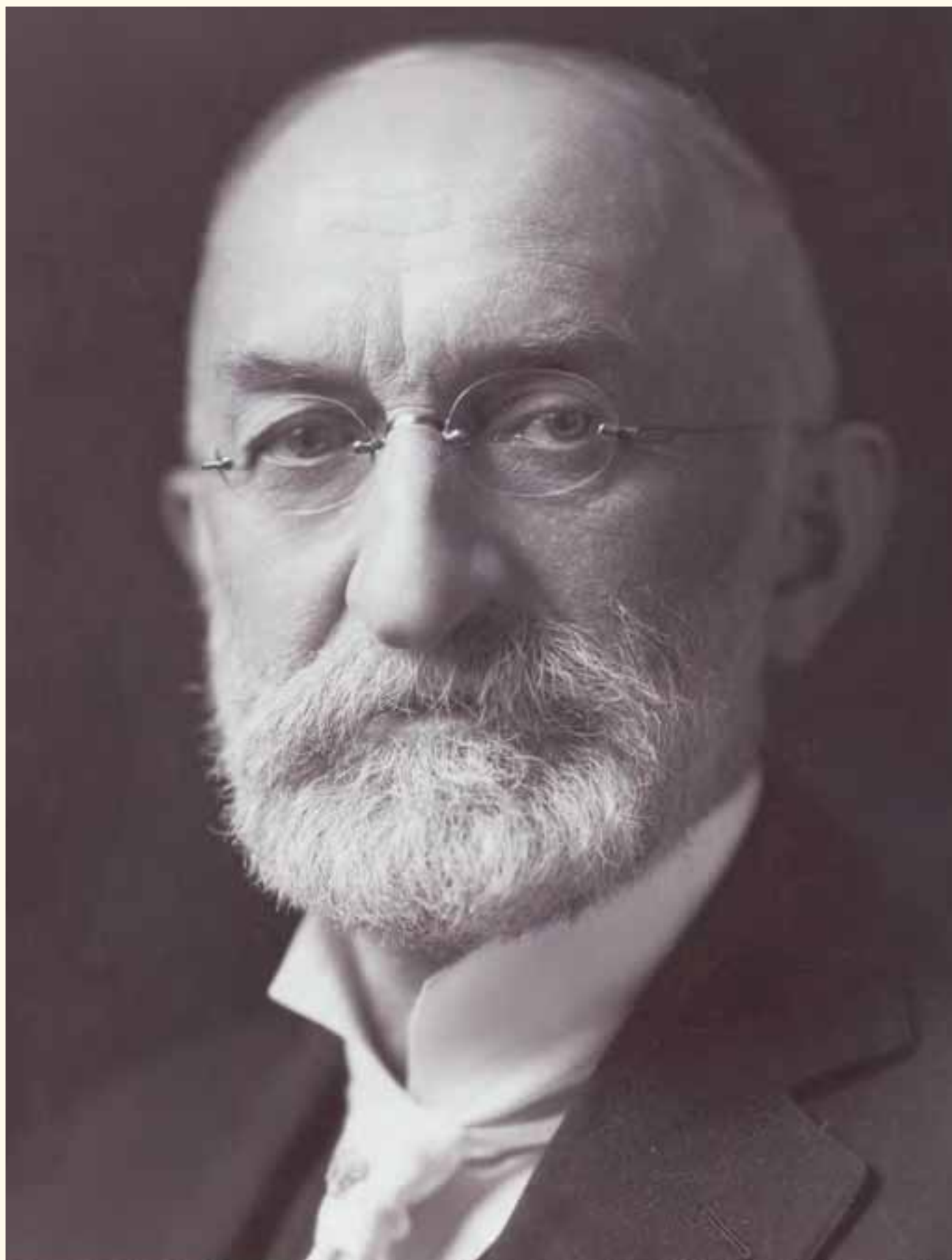
Together, we found the pertinent reference in the Bible: “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father” (Matthew 10:29).

I asked my son what this scripture taught us about shooting little birds. He replied that Heavenly Father knows when even a bird is hurt. Then the crucial moment: “How would Heavenly Father have us treat little birds?”

“We shouldn’t hurt them,” he answered.

My testimony of the value of the word of God in the standard works has grown significantly since the day I joined the Church. Now, as I immerse myself in the scriptures, I find a treasure chest full of precious gems and pearls of great price—a treasure to be shared with my family. ■

Robert K. McIntosh is a member of the Smoky Hill Ward, Arapahoe Colorado Stake.



Heber J. Grant

A Prophet for Hard Times

Known for his persistence, President Grant was well prepared to lead the Church after World War I, through the Great Depression, and through World War II.

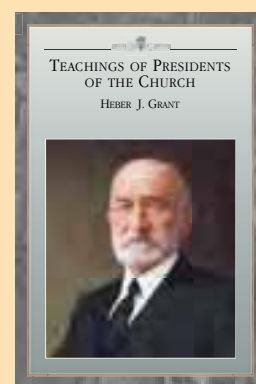
BY SHERRIE MILLS JOHNSON

When President Joseph F. Smith lay dying in 1918, Heber J. Grant, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was at his bedside. Taking Heber's hand, President Smith said: "The Lord bless you, my boy, the Lord bless you; you have got a great responsibility. Always remember this is the Lord's work and not man's. The Lord is greater than any man. He knows whom He wants to lead His Church, and never makes any mistake. The Lord bless you."¹

With these words of encouragement, the leadership of the 495,000 members of the Church fell to Heber Jeddy Grant. World War I

had just ended, and people were struggling to recover from its horrible devastation. A worldwide influenza epidemic, which eventually killed more than 20 million people, began in the fall of 1918. Because of it, the April 1919 general conference in which President Grant was to be sustained had to be postponed until June.²

But the more-than-six-foot-tall (185-cm) leader was ready for the task. For the next 26 1/2 years, President Grant served as prophet, seer, and revelator. As the seventh President of the Church, he served longer than any other Church President had except Brigham Young. During these years the Church almost doubled in size, growing to 954,000; built 3 new temples; and added 16 missions. Under President Grant's leadership, the Church inaugurated the welfare system, began microfilming family history records, and established the weekly Tabernacle Choir radio program. President Grant delivered a sermon during the Church's first radio broadcast and did much to change the negative image of the Church that existed at the time.



The teachings of Heber J. Grant are the Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society curriculum for 2004, the fifth study guide in the series of Teachings of Presidents of the Church.



Above: Jedediah M. Grant. Right, top: Rachel Ridgeway Ivins Grant, with Heber J. Grant, age 10. Right, bottom: Heber J. Grant, age 34. Opposite page, top: Heber J. Grant and Lucy Stringham Grant in 1887 with daughters Rachel, Lucy, Florence, Edith, and Anna. Opposite page, bottom: Heber J. Grant's missionary calling card, used during his 1901–03 mission to Japan; the first missionary tract in Japanese, published in 1908; Heber J. Grant in Japan in 1902.

Jedediah and Rachel

President Grant had been well prepared spiritually by the example of his parents. His father, Jedediah M. Grant, Second Counselor in the First Presidency to President Brigham Young, died of pneumonia at age 40, only nine days after Heber's birth on 22 November 1856. However, the legacy of faith and righteousness his father left was a motivating factor throughout Heber's life. "Years after his death I was reaping the benefits of his honesty and faithful labors," President Grant later explained.³

The influence of Heber's mother, Rachel Ridgeway Ivins Grant, was equally as powerful. Rachel's wealthy family in the eastern United States offered her a large income if she would renounce the gospel of Jesus Christ. But she refused and stood by her testimony. After the death of her husband, the young widow, who had been left penniless, worked sewing clothing and taking in boarders in order to provide for her son.

She taught Heber the value of hard work, and together they eked out a meager existence. In the process, Rachel and Heber grew very close. He was later to say of her: "I stand here today as one whose mother was all to him. She was both father and mother to me; she set an example of integrity, of devotion and love, of determination, and honor second to none. I stand here today as the president of the Church because I have followed the advice and counsel and the burning testimony of the divinity of the work of God, which came to me from my mother."⁴

A Prophet's Influence

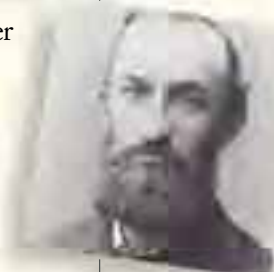
While his mother was the dominant influence in Heber's life, the Lord placed many others in his path to help guide and direct him. One of the first of these associations was with President Brigham Young (1801–77). Young Heber, too poor to own a sled, entertained himself in the winter by catching hold of passing vehicles, sliding on the snow a block or two, and letting go. One day when he was six years old, Heber caught

hold of President Young's sleigh.

As Heber later told the story, President Young "was very fond of a fine team, and was given to driving quite rapidly. I therefore found myself skimming along with such speed that I dared not jump off, and after riding some time I became very cold."

Finally President Young noticed Heber, told his driver to stop, tucked the cold child under buffalo robes, and then asked who he was. When President Young discovered that the boy was Jedediah M. Grant's

son, he expressed his love for Heber's father and the hope that Heber would be as fine a man. Before President Young dropped Heber off, he invited the boy to visit him in his office. Thus began a friendship that lasted until President Young's death. Of this friendship, Heber said, "I learned not only to respect and venerate him, but to love him with an affection akin to that which I imagine I would have felt for my own father, had I been permitted to know and return a father's love."⁵





Young Heber's Choices

Poverty defined Heber's growing years but not negatively. Having little money was a challenge that never deterred him. Wanting to learn to pitch a baseball but not having enough money for a ball, Heber earned the money by shining boots for his mother's boarders. Later he longed to attend the Salt Lake Theatre; instead of feeling sorry that he had no money to buy tickets, he obtained a job as a water carrier for theater patrons and was thus allowed to watch the plays.⁶

As Heber grew older, his persistence and fortitude were put to good use in business ventures. Offered an appointment to the United States Naval Academy, he opted to stay near his mother and to become a businessman instead.⁷ After finishing his schooling at age 16, Heber got a job as a bank clerk and learned bookkeeping. His honesty, ability to work hard, and great desire to learn soon opened up many opportunities. By the time he was 20 years old, he had been made the assistant cashier of Zion's Savings Bank and Trust Company, and he had purchased an insurance agency.⁸

The poverty of Heber's youth made him compassionate and prepared him to lead the Church through the aftermath of World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II.

Overcoming "Mr. Devil"

As a young man, Heber was bothered by a promise made to him in his patriarchal blessing that he would be called to the ministry in his youth. Thinking this meant he would serve a mission for the Church, he was disturbed when at age 23 he had received no mission call. This lack caused him to feel concerns about his status and also about the Church. Thoughts began to cross his mind that the patriarch had not been inspired, and if so, maybe other revelations weren't inspired either. As he pondered, he grew more confused. He knew the Church was true, so why did doubts continue to plague him? Eventually he concluded that the patriarch must have made a mistake, but still he found no peace concerning the issue.

One day while he was walking down Main Street in Salt Lake City, these thoughts began to torment him again. Heber stopped right there on the sidewalk and spoke out



loud, even though no one was present: "Mr. Devil, shut up. I don't care if every patriarch in the Church has made a mistake in a blessing, and told a lie, I believe with all my heart and soul that the gospel is true and I will not allow my faith to be upset."

Never again was Heber tormented by these negative thoughts. And within a short period of time he was called to serve as a stake president—a fulfillment of his patriarchal blessing.⁹

Called as an Apostle

Ordained an Apostle in 1882 when he was only 25 years old, Heber worried that he was not capable or worthy of the trust that had been placed in him. While on a visit to



Native Americans in Arizona, he left his companions to pray and meditate about the matter. He later explained that while he was alone he “seemed to see” a council on the other side of the veil. The council was discussing who should fill two vacancies in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Heber’s father and the Prophet Joseph Smith proposed Heber’s name. That satisfied Heber’s concerns. “It was also given to me,” Heber said, “that that was all these men . . . could do for me; from that day it depended upon me and upon me alone as to whether I made a success of my life or a failure.”¹⁰

Family Life

President Grant was a loving husband and father. Once his wife suggested that they should tell each other of their faults. President Grant agreed. She mentioned one or two of Heber’s faults and then invited him to tell hers. A slight twinkle came into his eyes, and he replied, “You haven’t one.”¹¹

President Grant loved his 10 daughters and was very close to them, but the fact that his only 2 sons died while still children was a deep and lasting sorrow to him.

Through many years of traveling to carry out his Church responsibilities, President Grant felt lonely whenever he was away from his family. His return home was marked with great joy. His daughters remember how on these occasions he would tell them of his experiences,

walking around the house with a child on each foot and delighting in their company.¹²

Persistence and a Sense of Humor

Those who knew President Grant personally agree that two characteristics stood out among the many good qualities he possessed: his persistence and his sense of humor. President Grant often referred to the story of an ant that made 69 attempts to carry off a grain of corn before it was successful. “This wonderful lesson of perseverance by an insect has been an inspiration to me all the days of my life,” he said.¹³

An example of his persistence is demonstrated in the way he learned to sing. When President Grant was 43 years old, he decided he wanted to sing, despite the fact that he had never been able to carry a tune. As he explained:

“I had a private secretary with a beautiful baritone voice. I told him I would give anything in the world if I could only carry a tune. He laughed and said, ‘Anybody who has a voice and perseverance can sing.’ I immediately appointed him as my singing teacher.

“My singing lessons started that night. At the end of two hours’ practice I still couldn’t sing one line from the song we had been practicing. After practicing that one song for more than five thousand times, I made a mess of it when I tried to sing it in public. I practiced it for another six

months. Now I can learn a song in a few hours.”¹⁴

President Grant’s sense of humor was evident in the stories he shared of his efforts in learning to sing. He told of a time when he was practicing his singing next to a dentist’s office. He heard someone in the hall remark that it sounded like somebody was having teeth pulled.¹⁵

A Man of Faith

President Grant was 62 years old when he became the seventh President of the Church on 23 November 1918. He was 88 years old when he died on 14 May 1945. He was stern from the pulpit when he needed to be. He preached extensively for Prohibition, which made illegal the manufacture and sale of alcohol in the United States, and against the dole. But he also often used his sense of humor to make a point. When speaking on the attributes of Latter-day Saints, he once said: “I have heard it remarked that when a measure is before Congress, which would injure the Mormons, that the Saints pray that it may be defeated, and if it is not, they thank God any way. . . . There is some truth in this remark. A Mormon knows that the promises of God are true, and He said that all will be tried; realizing these things the Latter-day Saints will acknowledge their Maker not only in blessings but also in tribulations.”¹⁶

Above all, President Heber J. Grant was a man of abiding faith who bore witness as he traveled all over the world, including the years he spent presiding over missions in

Europe and in Asia. He once testified: “I know that God lives, I know that Jesus is the Christ, I know that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, I know that the Gospel

tree is alive, that it is growing, that the fruits of the Gospel growing upon the tree are good. I have reached out my hand, I have plucked the fruits of the Gospel, I have eaten of them and they are sweet, yea, above all that is sweet.”¹⁷ But more than just tast-

ing, President Grant did all he could to offer the fruit to others because he knew from his own experience that the gospel would sustain people through any adversity. ■

Sherrie Mills Johnson is a member of the Cascade Fourth Ward, Orem Utah Cascade Stake.

NOTES

1. Quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (2002), xx.
2. See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, 20th ed. (1966), 639.
3. “Work, and Keep Your Promises,” *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1900, 191.
4. In Conference Report, Apr. 1934, 15.
5. See Preston Nibley, *The Presidents of the Church* (1941), 271.
6. See *The Presidents of the Church*, 273.
7. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, xiii.
8. See *The Presidents of the Church*, 276–77.
9. See Francis M. Gibbons, *Heber J. Grant: Man of Steel, Prophet of God* (1979), 35–36.
10. In Conference Report, Apr. 1941, 4–5.
11. Augusta Winters Grant, “My Husband,” *Relief Society Magazine*, Nov. 1936, 671.
12. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, xv.
13. “A Story That Helped Me,” *Juvenile Instructor*, June 1913, 366.
14. Quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 34.
15. See “Learning to Sing,” *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1900, 887.
16. In Brian H. Stuy, comp., *Collected Discourses Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 5 vols. (1987–92), 2:101.
17. In Forace Green, comp., *Testimonies of Our Leaders* (1958), 50.

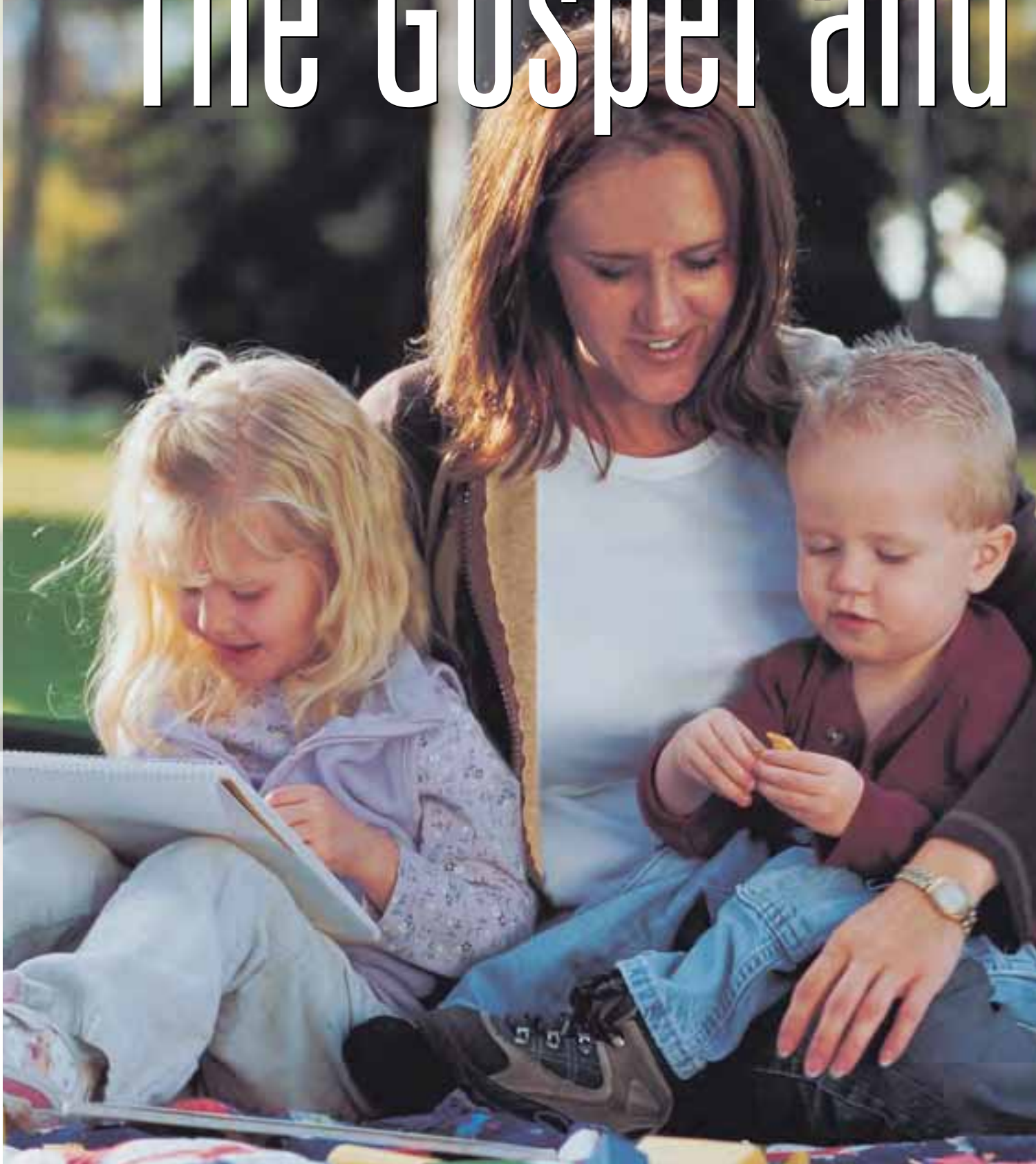
Opposite page, left, top: In 1922, President Grant delivered his first radio message.


Left, bottom: Deseret Industries began during President Grant’s administration.

Right: The First Presidency in 1925—President Anthony W. Ivins, First Counselor; President Heber J. Grant; President Charles W. Nibley, Second Counselor. This page, top: President Grant, age 64. Middle: The First Presidency in 1936—President J. Reuben Clark Jr., First Counselor; President Heber J. Grant; President David O. McKay, Second Counselor. Below: President Grant, age 84.



The Gospel and





the Single Parent

President Gordon B. Hinckley, speaking about the demanding role of parents, said, “What a difficult, at times discouraging, but nevertheless wonderful and challenging thing it is to be a parent—a mother, a father of children born and growing in this complex age.”¹ Imagine now this dual role required of a single individual: to provide, nurture, and care for one’s children in every aspect of their lives, temporally as well as spiritually. This is the situation many thousands of Church members face each day.

The *Ensign* asked single parents to tell how the gospel has helped them in their parenting roles and in meeting their challenges. Men and women from all over the world responded with examples of faith and trial, love and learning. In the following pages, members who have lost a spouse through death or divorce share how living gospel principles makes them better parents, providing vital tools that make the difference between struggling on their own and succeeding with the help of the Lord.

Stay Centered in Testimony

Beth McDonald of New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania, the mother of five children,

echoes the thoughts of many when she writes that we must “make Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ the center of our lives. No one knows us better than They do nor wants to help us more. Our children need a parent who stays strong in a testimony of the Savior and His commandments. We need to fight against Satan’s attempts to weaken us. We must not forget daily family prayers and scripture reading, family home evenings, and family councils. Our children also benefit by our example of personal scripture study and personal prayer. As we put on the whole armor of God, we receive the spiritual protection we need.”

“While life certainly changes in a death or divorce,” says Matt Brown of Salt Lake City, Utah, “it still moves forward. And whether the parent deals with the changes in faith or despondency can influence how the children respond. When first separated from my boys, I noticed they were uncomfortable and anxious in my home when I would sulk and mope about my situation. But when I was positive and saw my situation as an opportunity to establish a new life with my boys, there was a spirit of joy and camaraderie in our home.

“Just as there is a time to mourn in the wake of a death or divorce, there is a time to

get back on our feet, forgive, and move forward with faith that Heavenly Father will watch over us and our children. The scriptures give many accounts of faithful men and women who by their faith in God turned a seemingly hopeless situation into one in which they and those around them were blessed. Joseph, who was sold by his own brothers as a slave, is one example. Just as reading about scriptural examples helped me, I hope my example of making the best of a difficult situation will stay with my boys when they face their own trials in life.”

Heed Prophetic Counsel

Along with the proclamation on the family, other latter-day counsel provides much-needed strength to many single parents. Martin Frey of Los Altos Hills, California, says, “President David O. McKay’s great phrase ‘No other success can compensate for failure in the home’² rang out in my mind over and over as I balanced being a single dad and the demands of starting a new job.”

Brother Frey continues: “There were many times when I had to leave work in the middle of a meeting to pick up my daughter. Once home, the prophet’s counsel of putting family first continued to give me the strength and focus to put my daughter ahead of the endless demands of getting dinner ready and the other household chores. Even when I was totally exhausted, we always made time for bedtime stories and prayers. I’m so very grateful for the Church’s continued focus on the importance of family, because it has helped me set my priorities straight, and over the years, that has made all the difference in the relationship I have with my daughter.”

Patricia-Ann Morrison of Ontario, Canada, tells how following the prophet’s counsel to hold family home evening regularly has helped her family grow closer: “My children have come to enjoy our family home evenings, and so have I. A year and a half ago, I would never have imagined

the comfort and love that come from getting together once a week to discuss scriptures and play a couple of games together. At first it was extremely difficult to make the time; now if we miss our Monday evening, my children plead to have it on the next night.”

Lana Burnham of North Ogden, Utah, writes: “Our family nights were sometimes hit or miss, but we tried to hold them faithfully. Always in the back of my mind was the promise made by President Joseph Fielding Smith and his

counselors, which said that our efforts to hold family home evening would ‘foster meaningful and close family relationships’ and would ‘help the home serve as a sanctuary from evil and become a source of strength to each family member.’³ Now, as adults, my children thank me for not giving up on family home evening.”



When single parents relate how the gospel has helped them be better parents, they consistently speak of the powerful influence and strength available through prayer.

Pay an Honest Tithe

“When money got tight, I knew if I first paid my tithing, everything else we needed would be supplied,” says Stephanie Goodell of Andrews, North Carolina. She explains that everything seems to work out when she trusts the Lord’s promise of opening the windows of heaven. “The schools send gift certificates for new shoes; a huge box of

goods is delivered right when we are about out of groceries; a bag of clothes comes right as one of the children is taking a growth spurt.”

Also testifying to the law of tithing, Wilma Britton Peterson of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, says, “When the choice had to be between fuel to keep us warm or paying tithing, I paid tithing, and the fuel lasted until the next time I could afford more.”

Find Strength in Prayer and Scripture Study

Christie Christopherson-Berg of Escondido, California, tells of a particularly difficult time in raising her two teenage

boys. While living in Panama, where Sister Christopherson-Berg taught school, she felt her son was drifting away from her and from the gospel. "The turning point came when I felt completely powerless," she says. "I could not help my oldest son. It was beyond my abilities. And that was exactly the key: It was beyond *my* abilities to help, but not beyond sharing my yoke of responsibility with the Lord."

Thinking of the Savior's words "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28–29), Sister Christopherson-Berg prayed for help: "I pleaded with Heavenly Father on my knees that night to help my son be rid of the heavy darkness that was over him. I pleaded that He would intercede for me because I could do no more for my son by myself. I told Him that I was relinquishing my son to Him and that I would accept with faith whatever the outcome would be. I felt almost an immediate sense of relief. Then I lay back in bed and slept till morning, something I had not done for many nights.

"Even when I was totally exhausted, we always made time for bedtime stories and prayers. I'm so very grateful for the Church's continued focus on the importance of family, because it has helped me set my priorities straight."

YOU NEED NOT BE ALONE



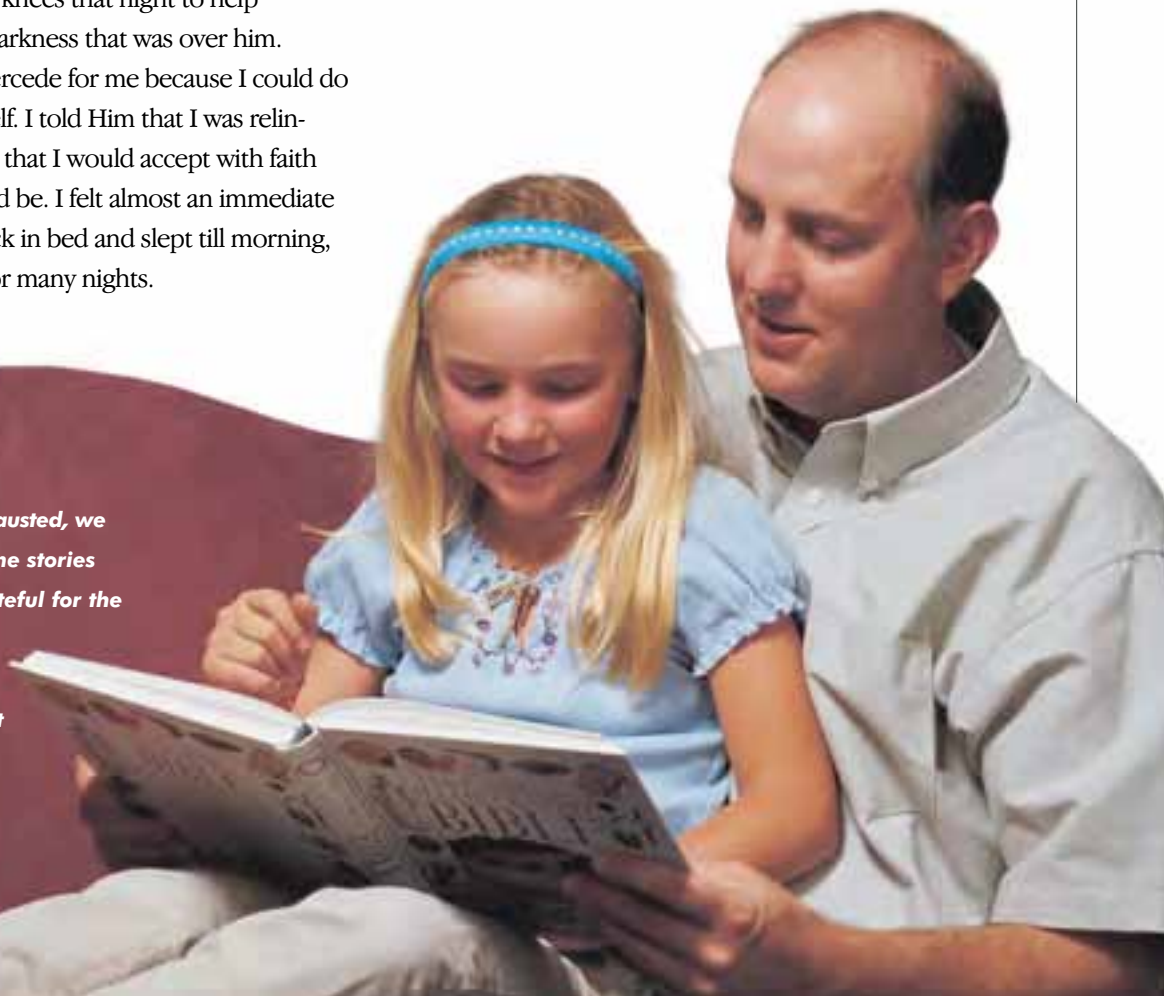
"Now a word to the single parents among us. . . . You need not be entirely alone. There are many, ever so many in this Church who would reach out to you with sensitivity and understanding. They do not wish to intrude where they are not wanted. But their interest is genuine and sincere, and they bless their own lives as they bless your lives and those of your children. Welcome their help. They need to give it for their own sakes as well as for your sake."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "To Single Adults," Ensign, June 1989, 74.

"That was over nine years ago, and we have had many trials together since, but I will eternally remember that night of humbly submitting to Heavenly Father. Both my sons have since served missions, and I can see the Lord working in the lives of my family. Without asking the Lord to share my yoke, my burden, I would never have known how He could ease my soul with rest."

Nearly every single parent who responded to the call for personal experiences spoke of the powerful influence and strength available through prayer.

Rebecca Maughan Cook of Prosser, Washington, writes: "We can teach our children what to do when we need help.



Recently, I was overwhelmed by the responsibilities of providing, homemaking, parenting, and fulfilling Church callings and personal commitments. I felt unable to bear up under them. I told my children that Mommy was having a hard time doing all she was required to do and I needed their help. I asked them to please pray for me and ask Heavenly Father to give me strength. They did, then and throughout the day and ensuing weeks. They learned where to go when you must keep going and from whom you draw strength.”

Nicolle Girdwood of Perth, Western Australia, says: “I am very reliant on prayer and the scriptures with my parenting. I pray constantly to my Father in Heaven, as I sometimes doubt myself and at times feel pushed beyond my capabilities. It is at these times that I pray for strength to continue. I pray that I will have the ability to endure this time in my life and that my daughter will also.

“My favorite scripture, and one that I rely upon heavily, is Doctrine and Covenants 24:7–8: ‘For thou shalt devote all thy service in Zion; and in this thou shalt have strength. Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days.’ This scripture has been a strength to me so often. It is a constant reminder that the Lord is with me even unto the end. I am so grateful for this knowledge because it is often a lonely time being a single parent, and to know that I always have my Savior is a great comfort to me.”

Attend the Temple

“Temple attendance helps me when I am feeling overwhelmed with all the things I have to do,” writes Laura Welch of Port Townsend, Washington. “It takes a whole day, which ought to contribute to the backlog, but it doesn’t. If the boat is floundering, attend the temple. It keeps the

boat afloat. The gospel helps prevent everything from becoming overwhelming because I have learned the value of the family, the importance of being there for my children, ways to balance a clean, orderly house and time with my children, and the perspective that each event is more important to the child involved than getting the laundry done is to me. We are an eternal family, sealed together in

the temple. The laundry will not be with me in eternity. My children will.”

These examples from members around the world are personal testimonies that living gospel principles provides strength to the single parent. From President Hinckley comes the counsel to all parents: “Love your children. Cherish them. They are so precious. They are so very, very important. They are the future. You need more than your own wisdom in rearing them. You need the help of the Lord. Pray for that help, and follow the inspiration you receive.”⁴ This is what many members are doing, as evidenced by the testimony from Sister Britton Peterson of Ireland, who says, “There is no more sure way of surviving and succeeding in single parenthood than to share the partnership with the Lord.” ■



“While life certainly changes in a death or divorce, it still moves forward. And whether the parent deals with the changes in faith or despondency can influence how the children respond.”

NOTES

1. “The Environment of Our Homes,” *Ensign*, June 1985, 3.
2. Quoted from J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* (1924), 42; in Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 116.
3. *Family Home Evening* (1972), 4.
4. “The Fabric of Faith and Testimony,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 89.

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Discuss some of the challenges a single parent faces. Read the testimonies of the single parents in each of the five sections. How might the principles they discuss apply to any one of us during difficult times?
2. Invite family members to share experiences when they have felt the power of the Lord help them in times of need.

Feeling the Love of the Lord Daily in Our Lives

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

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president: "If I could have one thing happen for every woman in this Church, it would be that they would feel the love of the Lord in their lives daily. I have felt the love of the Lord in my life, and I am so thankful for that" ("Feel the Love of the Lord," *Liabona*, July 2002, 95; *Ensign*, May 2002, 84).

As We Love Him, What Does Our Gracious God Promise Us?

1 Corinthians 2:9: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

2 Nephi 1:15: "The Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love."

President Gordon B. Hinckley: "Love of God is the root of all virtue, of all goodness, of all strength of character, of all fidelity to do right. . . . Love the Lord your God, and love His Son, and be ever grateful for Their love for us. Whenever other love fades, there will be that shining, transcendent, everlasting love of God for each of us and the love of His Son, who gave His life for each of us" ("Words of the Living Prophet," *Liabona*, Dec. 1996, 8; "Excerpts from Recent

Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, Apr. 1996, 73).

1 Nephi 11:22-23: "The love of God . . . sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things . . . and the most joyous to the soul."

What Can We Do to Feel the Love of the Lord Each Day?

Jacob 3:2: "Lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever."

Elder Gene R. Cook of the Seventy: "True gratitude is the ability to humbly see, feel, and even receive love. Gratitude is a form of returning love to God. Recognize His hand, tell Him so, express your love to Him. As you come to truly know the Lord, you will find an intimate, sacred relationship built on trust. You will come to know He understands your anguish and will, in compassion, always respond to you in love.

"Receive it. *Feel* it. It is not enough just to know that God loves you. The gift is to be *felt* continually day by day.

It will then be a divine motivator throughout your life. Repent. Remove any worldliness from your life, including anger. Receive a continual remission of your sins, and you will bridle all your passions and be filled with love" ("Charity: Perfect and Everlasting Love," *Liabona*, July 2002, 92-93; *Ensign*, May 2002, 83). ■



Making Time for the Temple

When I became a member of the Church in Ghana, West Africa, my desire to receive the blessings of the temple was strong, yet the prospect seemed remote. When I finally had the opportunity, I felt truly blessed. Still, in subsequent years, my temple attendance fluctuated until I made it a priority. The following suggestions can help all of us attend the temple more often:

- At the beginning of every year, plan on your calendar when you will attend.
- When you are away from home for business or travel, seek out the temple when possible.
- Participate in branch or ward temple assignments, or invite others to join you.
- Think of those you are doing the proxy work for, remembering that they are real people, not just names on paper.
- Commit to doing the temple work for your deceased ancestors. The

temple blessings will become even more meaningful as you remember your loved ones.

- Use vacation time to work in the temple for a day. The benefits of repeating the ordinances and enjoying your extended time in the temple will enhance your spiritual well-being.

If you live close to a temple, consider the following:

- Attend early in the morning before work. In the temple, you will receive rest from your daily cares and start your day on a spiritual high.
- If you are retired or are free during the daytime, attend the temple

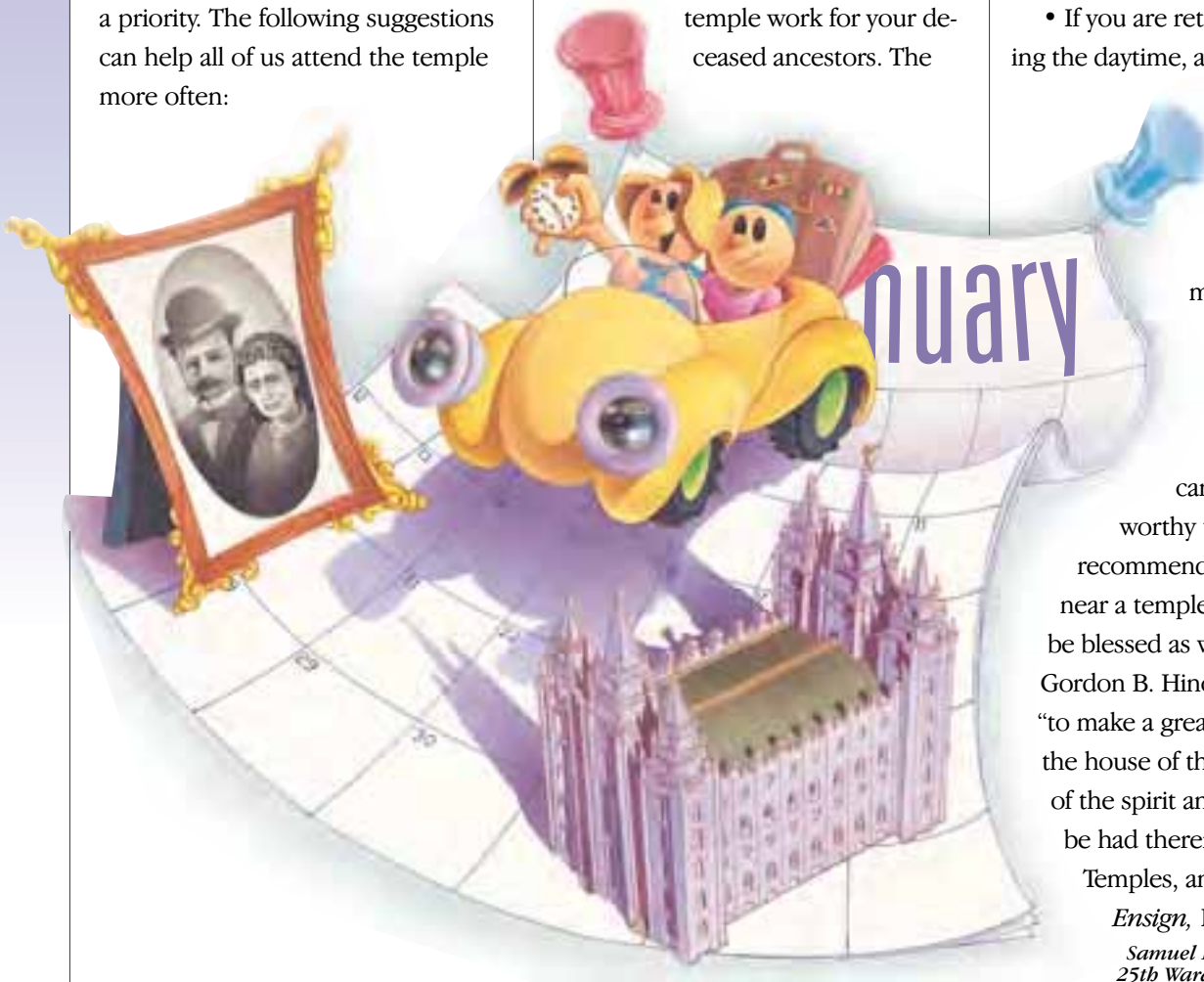
during the hours when it tends to be less busy.

- If you are married, go to the temple with your spouse for a “date night” each month.

Church members can choose to live worthy to hold a temple recommend, whether they live near a temple or not. We will also be blessed as we follow President Gordon B. Hinckley’s admonition “to make a greater effort to go to the house of the Lord and partake of the spirit and the blessings to be had therein” (“Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship,”

Ensign, Nov. 1995, 53).

Samuel E. Bains, Crescent
25th Ward, Draper Utah
Crescent View Stake



Including Singles

One of our foremost goals as Church members is to help everyone feel welcome, appreciated, and comfortable when they attend meetings and activities. Through small means we can become more mindful of those who have never married and those who are divorced, separated, or widowed or who have a less-active or non-member spouse. The following suggestions can enhance interactions among all members of the Church, regardless of their marital status:

1. Include singles at Church socials and other events. When setting tables for ward socials, arrange an odd number of seats at some tables. This simple arrangement may resolve singles' concerns that they might be taking a spouse's seat. Invite singles to join your table, or call ahead with an invitation. Ask them to join you for Church classes and other meetings. Home teachers and visiting teachers can also offer rides or extend invitations.

Single members can introduce themselves and show interest in others. Remember, some people may not think to include singles, especially if they're preoccupied with family or other matters.

2. Expand lesson topics that are specific to marriage. Teachers who



Scripture Study with Children

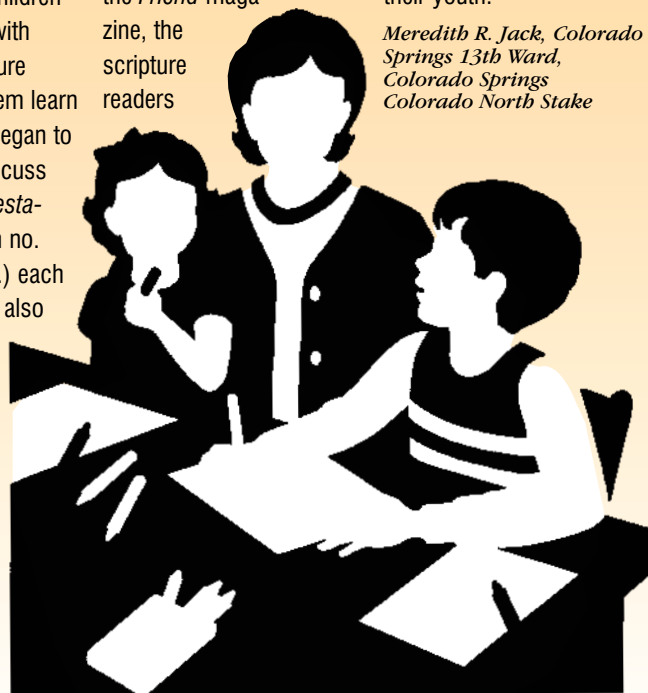
A few years ago we became concerned that our Primary-age children were not familiar with some of the scripture stories. To help them learn more, our family began to read aloud and discuss stories from *Old Testament Stories* (item no. 31118; \$7.75 U.S.) each Monday night. We also invited family members to illustrate an event from one of the stories. After completing our pictures, we hung them on a wall in our family room to form a general time

line. During subsequent family home evenings we played question-and-answer games related to the stories in our pictorial time line.

Available online at www.lds.org, at Church distribution centers, or as selections printed in the *Friend* magazine, the scripture readers

illustrate most of the standard works, making this activity adaptable to your family's choice of study. Our children have had a stronger foundation for studying and understanding the scriptures as they grow older, after learning the fundamental stories in their youth.

Meredith R. Jack, Colorado Springs 13th Ward, Colorado Springs Colorado North Stake



must address topics specific to marriage could broaden the lesson's focus to include singles and their experiences. For instance, a lesson on improving marital relationships could be expanded to include ideas for improving interpersonal relationships. Singles can also benefit from lessons primarily focused on marriage relationships by pulling out the "nuggets of truth" that apply to all relationships.

3. Be inclusive when making ward temple plans. Leaders should remember to invite singles

to participate in temple assignments.

Regardless of our circumstances, each member of the Church, whether single or married, is responsible for his or her own attitudes, behaviors, and actions. All Church members should reach out to those who are alone, to be inclusive rather than exclusive. We should remember that we are all "fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

Lori Smith, Val Verda Ninth Ward, Bountiful Utah Val Verda Stake

Peeking out from his hiding place, Jason was horrified to see an intruder going through drawers.

Call Home Now!

By Barbara Elkins Catmull

When our eldest son, Jason, was 11 years old, we had an experience we will never forget. It was Sunday, and as the rest of the family was preparing for church, Jason complained he was feeling ill. We decided to leave him home and promised we would telephone him later to see how he was doing. Our meetinghouse was not far away, and we could run home if he needed us.

Just before sacrament meeting began, I felt prompted to call Jason right at that moment. The telephone rang many times, but Jason didn't

answer. I assumed he was sleeping and did not hear the phone. Yet a nagging feeling told me something was very wrong. Since my husband was in the bishopric at the time and was already sitting on the stand, I left my other children in their seats and told them I would return in a few minutes.

The five-minute trip to our home seemed to take forever. Once there, I raced into the house, frantically calling Jason's name. For what seemed like an eternity, there was no answer, and I could not find him. Finally, I heard soft

crying as Jason cautiously crawled out from behind the couch in the family room. I put my arms around him and could feel him trembling as he related what had happened.

He had been lying on the couch when he had a feeling he should hide. He got up immediately and hid behind the couch. Just then, he heard someone come in the front door. Thinking it must be the family, he quietly peeked out from his hiding place. He was horrified to see an intruder, wearing a black ski mask and gloves, going through drawers. He listened as

the stranger wandered throughout the house. At that point the phone began ringing, and the intruder left. Of course, the ringing phone had been my call just before I left the meetinghouse.

I will always be grateful for the promptings of the Holy Ghost that both Jason and I experienced that day. I am so grateful I was prompted to come home to be there when Jason needed me. Who knows what might have happened if Jason had been discovered by the intruder? Not only was he protected, but I believe the Spirit helped him heal from this traumatic experience. Today Jason is a courageous and strong missionary whose treasured companion continues to be the Holy Ghost. ■

Barbara Elkins Catmull is a member of the Ammon Seventh Ward, Idaho Falls Idaho Ammon Stake.

The Lord Knew What Was Ahead

By Linda Sims Depew

Alone in my home and on my knees in tearful prayer, I asked Heavenly Father why things were not working out for me. Personal challenges during the previous two years had convinced me that I needed to move from the small town where I lived and find a different job. Despite many efforts, however,

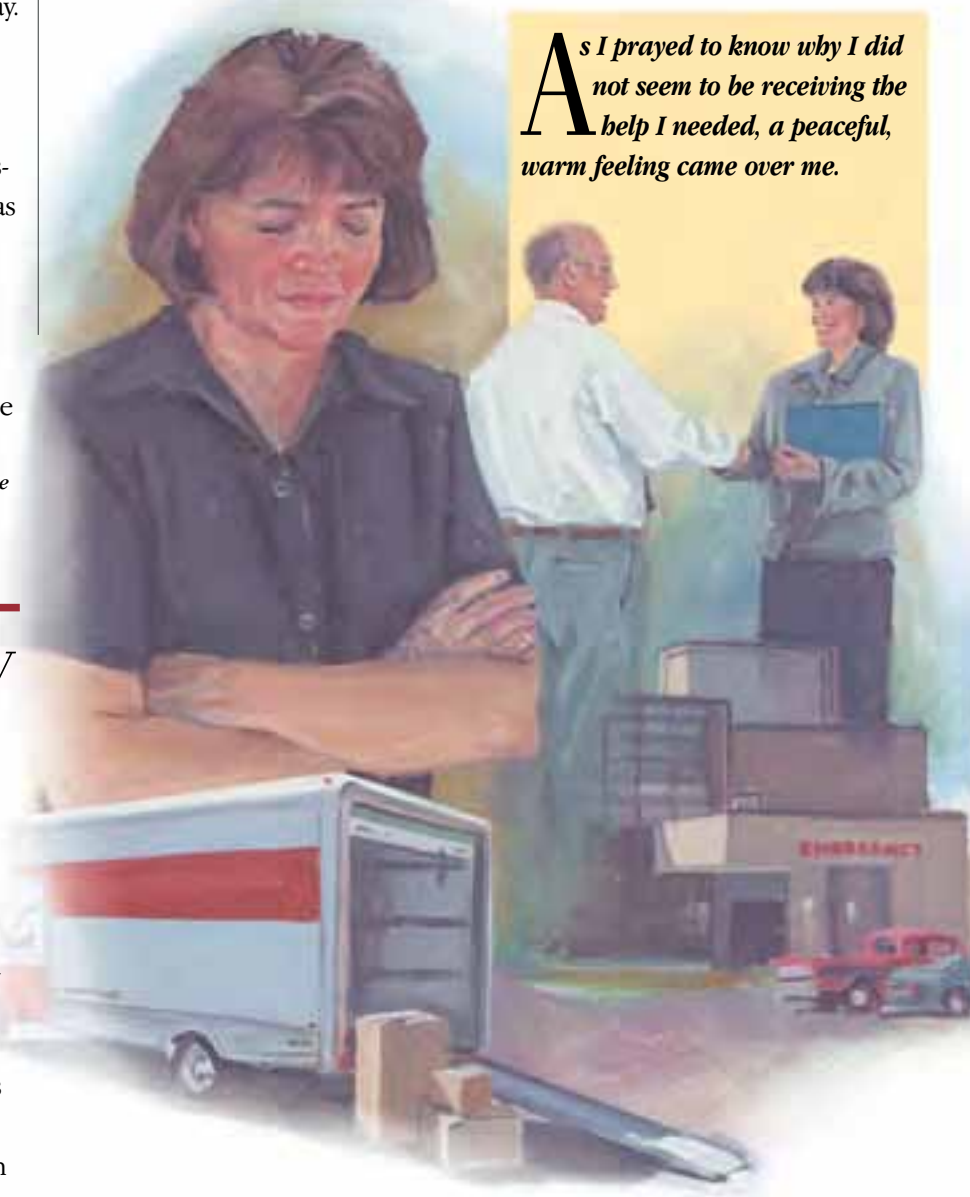
I had not yet been able to find an appropriate position.

As I sobbed and prayed to know why I did not seem to be receiving the help I needed, a peaceful, warm feeling came over me. I stopped speaking and just knelt there quietly. I knew that Heavenly Father was comforting

me through the Spirit. To my mind came the passages of scripture that I had read many times during the previous two years and that had been a source of great comfort.

One passage was 2 Nephi 4:16–35, particularly verse 28, where Nephi says, “Rejoice, O my heart, and give

As I prayed to know why I did not seem to be receiving the help I needed, a peaceful, warm feeling came over me.



place no more for the enemy of my soul.” The other passage was Doctrine and Covenants 98:3, which reassured me that my prayers were heard and that “all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name’s glory, saith the Lord.”

So now, even though I still felt that I wanted to move from that town, I knew with all my heart that I would be OK. Heavenly Father was there, and I felt fine about staying if He wanted me to.

Just three months later I learned that my 24-year-old son, who was attending medical school in a neighboring state, had cancer. I spent the next three weeks with him at the hospital. Had I gotten a new job, I would have had no vacation time, no release time, no sick leave. I would have had to quit the new job in order to be with my son, thereby adding unemployment to my challenges.

I couldn’t help but think that the Lord knew what was ahead and so for the moment had said no to my prayer.

My son underwent chemotherapy, and during the first few months we had no assurance he would live. I felt I needed to move to the neighboring state where he was; I could not stand to be so far away when he was sick and still making the effort to attend classes at medical school. Thankfully, through a chain of events that indicated to me the Lord was helping me, I was able to get a job in the area where my son lived.

I lived in that area long enough to see my son marry his childhood sweetheart, regain his health, graduate with honors, and present me with my first grandchild. Soon I was blessed to marry a wonderful man who was a longtime and respected friend.

“Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul.” “All things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name’s glory, saith the Lord.” When the time was right, the Lord opened the windows of heaven and blessed me. I continue to remember those blessings and the comforting words of the scriptures, and I pray never to forget. ■

Linda Sims Depew is a member of the Lost Mountain Ward, Powder Springs Georgia Stake.

He Restoreth My Soul

By Sérgio Ribeiro

I was born in 1961 in Brazil and learned about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when I was six years old. My childhood was immensely happy, but my family’s life began to change at Christmastime in 1970, when I contracted a very rare disease.

At one point I was admitted to the hospital for a year, and the doctors didn’t know what to do. Several times the Lord saved my life after my father

placed his hands on my head and pronounced a powerful priesthood blessing. I recall one occasion when a team of doctors was amazed upon seeing my fever of 106 degrees (41° C) instantly abate when my father took his worthy hands from my head. Such miracles went on for about four years while the disease was at its worst.

One day there was a conference in our city. My parents were excited and grateful when they learned we would have Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles among us.

On the day of the conference, the chapel was overflowing. My mother could not get close to Elder Ashton. When my six-year-old brother saw my mother’s despair, he managed to get through the human barrier and reach him. He asked Elder Ashton to bless his brother who was very sick and insisted that he come to where we were. But Elder Ashton couldn’t come at that moment. We prayed for an opportunity to meet him at the end of the conference.

To our surprise, at the beginning of his talk Elder Ashton said, “When I got here, a little boy asked me to bless his brother who is gravely ill, and I would like to say to all within the sound of my voice that your brother will get well and fulfill his mission here on earth.”

For my parents, this was the balm they had prayed for, a relief from their days of pain and sadness. We



My six-year-old brother managed to get through the human barrier to ask Elder Ashton to bless me.

began a new treatment, and with confidence in the power of Elder Ashton's promise, I found my life changed completely.

When I turned 19, I went into the mission field in partial fulfillment of the promise I had received and to satisfy my heart's desire to serve the Lord by sharing His wonderful gospel. I served in the Brazil Recife Mission, where elect families were placed in my path, and I was able to serve as an instrument in the hands of the Lord in bringing souls to repentance.

When I returned from my mission, I married a beautiful young woman I had grown up with in the Church. When our first child was born, however, the Lord took it unto Himself.

I couldn't believe this new tragedy in my life, but I knew my testimony and confidence in the Lord were still being molded.

Today my wife and I have a beautiful family of five children. Our oldest son is preparing to serve a mission. I have served as bishop of my ward. The symptoms of my previous illness have disappeared.

My life and my testimony are based on a belief in the power of the priesthood, the eternal nature of the family, and the teachings of the 23rd Psalm, in which David says:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me

beside the still waters.

"He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." ■

Sérgio Ribeiro is a member of the Jardim do Lago Ward, Campinas Brazil Stake.



Greeted by performers at the Polynesian Cultural Center, President and Sister Hinckley (center) helped the center celebrate its 40th anniversary in October.

President Hinckley Joins in Island Celebrations, Groundbreaking

By Taralyn Trost, Church Magazines

President Gordon B. Hinckley praised the people, institutions, and buildings of Hawaii during a weekend visit to the islands on 24–26 October 2003. The tour included festivities for the Polynesian Cultural Center’s 40th anniversary, a groundbreaking ceremony for the beautification project of the area surrounding the Laie Hawaii Temple, and an address to island members at a special combined conference on the Brigham Young University—Hawaii campus.

“We have here something that we have nowhere else in all the Church: we have the beautiful temple and all of its environs, we have Brigham Young University—Hawaii . . . ,

and we have the cultural center—and they work together,” said President Hinckley to 2,000 residents, visitors, and alumni gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony of a project that will renovate Hale La’a Boulevard from the Pacific Ocean to the Laie Temple and will include a new front entrance for BYU—Hawaii.

While asking the Lord’s blessing on the project, President Hinckley prayed that those who drive along the Kamehameha Highway may be inspired to “slow down and look to the House of the Lord and be constrained in their hearts to come and go about the grounds and visit these

beautiful places. We pray that this project may result in greater respect for [Thy] church and its people and its purposes and its desires.”

The project will include an enclosed meditation garden on the beachfront, six-foot blue rock walls lining the boulevard, a new traffic roundabout for the temple, and extensive relandscaping.

“The project will open up a beautiful vista for the temple,” said John Hoag, director of Church public affairs for Honolulu. “It will set the tone for the community to upgrade and improve the neighborhoods surrounding the temple.”

Community leaders, including state senator

Melodie Aduja and state House of Representatives member Michael Magaoay, also participated in the ceremonies.

After the groundbreaking, President Hinckley and his wife, Marjorie, served as grand marshals for the Polynesian Cultural Center’s 40th anniversary community parade. The prophet’s visit was the culmination of a year-long celebration commemorating the center’s 40th anniversary, which was 12 October 2003.

Dressed in matching Hawaiian-print outfits and beautiful leis, President and Sister Hinckley joined in a traditional Hawaiian Alii (royal) Luau and traditional Polynesian entertainment at the cultural center on Friday with alumni and local Latter-day Saints.

On Sunday President Hinckley spoke to Church members in an address broadcast from BYU—Hawaii’s Cannon Activities Center throughout the Hawaiian Islands. During his remarks, President Hinckley recalled being sent to Hawaii by President David O. McKay to look over the site for the cultural center. While walking through taro fields, then-Elder Hinckley and Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve decided on a location on the Kamehameha Highway.

“I have watched [the Polynesian Cultural Center] grow through the years and it has been phenomenal and wonderful,” said President Hinckley. “What a significant and wonderful

Students Help Prepare for the Prophet

By S. Rick Crump

Latter-day Saints usually think of the prophet as serving the members of the Church, but occasionally members are in a position to serve him. On 19 October 2003 about 500 young single adults from the BYU—Hawaii First Stake descended upon the Polynesian Cultural Center to help the center's staff prepare for a visit from President Gordon B. Hinckley.

October 2003 marked the 40th anniversary of the cultural center, and President Hinckley was to attend the celebration in commemoration of the anniversary. To prepare for the prophet's visit, stake president Keith Pierce and his counselors coordinated with PCC officials in scheduling a cleanup.

The date was set for the Saturday prior to President Hinckley's arrival. The Friday evening before, BYU—Hawaii held its annual Fall Ball in

Honolulu, which meant many students got home quite late. But they made the effort and sacrifice to be ready to work at 6:45 A.M. to beautify the center's villages, parking areas, and lagoon. With laughter and joking, they made their way through the facility, picking up rubbish and dead vegetation, weeding flower beds, and making the center sparkle.

Following the cleanup, the bishops of the 12 wards in the stake served breakfast to their tired and hungry ward members. After the students had eaten their fill, they still had enough energy to play games and enjoy the spirit of a morning well spent.

When President Hinckley arrived later in the week, members of BYU—Hawaii First Stake had the joy of knowing they had been of service to their beloved prophet. ■



Young single adults in the BYU—Hawaii First Stake prepare the Polynesian Cultural Center grounds for President Hinckley's visit in October.

institution it has become. How profound is its effect upon people."

In this his second visit to Hawaii this year, President Hinckley also urged the island Saints to be a light and example for their friends, families, and neighbors.

"Let people see in us virtue that they would want

to emulate in their own lives," President Hinckley told the 7,000 Church members gathered for the conference.

"For many members it was historic and breathtaking," commented Brother Hoag on President Hinckley's visit. "It was a momentous occasion for the Saints as well as for other community members." ■

Saints Reach Out in Wake of Wildfires

By Lisa Ann Jackson, Church Magazines

In true Brigham Young fashion, members of the Elders quorum in the Redlands First Ward, Redlands California Stake, set aside the lesson one Sunday in October and organized the troops. From the windows of their Sunday School classrooms they could see the flames of a raging wildfire lapping the hills not far from their building.

"Most of us saw the flames coming down the mountains, coming near our neighbors, and we just wanted to do something," said Robert Elkins, Redlands First Ward elders quorum president.

During elders quorum, the group decided to make lunches for weary firefighters and evacuees. After church, home teachers called upon families to prepare meals, and "within 45 minutes to an hour, we were able to fill up a truck and a minivan with what was on hand," Brother Elkins reported. The meals were delivered to a fire command center in nearby San Bernardino and

to a local Red Cross shelter.

This was just one of several examples of Latter-day Saints organizing in formal and informal ways to reach out during fires that ravaged southern California in late October 2003. The fires, stretching from Simi Valley to the U.S.-Mexico border, burned more than 740,000 acres and 3,600 homes and took the lives of 22 people.

About 400,000 Latter-day Saints in the area were affected by the fires, with 67 families losing their homes. All Church members and missionaries were reported safe, and no Church buildings were damaged.

On 2 November, after the area had suffered a long week of devastation, President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy, President of the North America West Area, visited with Saints in the San Diego area, and Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the



Duane and Rillene Nielsen from San Bernardino rummage through their burned home. They are among 67 Latter-day Saint families who lost their homes in California wildfires.

Twelve Apostles and Elder Ned B. Roueché of the Seventy, Second Counselor in the North America West Area Presidency, visited with Saints in the San Bernardino area. The leaders brought messages of comfort and commendation.

President Packer told members that they may have lost their houses, but they did not lose their homes. He said that as they work to keep their families together through this trial, they would find resilience and resourcefulness they did not know they had.

In his visit with the Saints, Elder Eyring commented, "Your children will always remember how you have acted and how you have handled this terrible situation."

Teaming up with relief organizations, the Church made extensive contributions. It provided large cash donations to the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army and opened its bishops' storehouses in the area to provide food for firefighters and displaced families. The

Church also loaned tables and chairs from local meetinghouses to the efforts at Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego, a gathering point for 5,000 evacuees.

"It is a very sad situation, but there has been a lot of effort to rally and assist," said Garry Flake, director of humanitarian emergency response for the Church.

In the San Bernardino California Stake, where almost 1,000 Church members were evacuated and two families lost their homes, members helped feed evacuees gathered in a hangar at Norton Airbase, and missionaries and Relief Society sisters in the Victor Valley area (north of San Bernardino) garnered attention from the local press as they prepared and served hot meals for several consecutive evenings to evacuees staying at a local high school.

In El Cajon and Santee (near San Diego), stakes had held an emergency preparedness training meeting only a day before the fires struck. Using the system taught just 24 hours earlier,

Church members contacted 8,000 Saints in their area within 90 minutes, enabling safe evacuations. Preliminary counts indicated about 44 Latter-day Saint families in the San Diego area lost their homes.

Members also opened their homes to those of their wards and stakes who were evacuated, and missionaries were heavily involved in clean-up efforts.

"It's just incredible how the Church works," said Dale T. Poulsen, president of

the San Bernardino California Stake, whose own home was threatened by the fires. President Poulsen said he received several phone calls from stake presidents throughout the Los Angeles area asking how their stakes could be of assistance. "It's just amazing to see the love and concern to see that the Saints are provided for—and not just the Saints, but the whole community." ■

Sonja Eddings Brown and Cray Carlson contributed to this report.

Amid War, Church Members Find Strength in Gospel

By Taralyn Trost, Church Magazines

Across the Tigris River and 40 miles (64 km) away from the biblical city of Nineveh, a dozen or so Latter-day Saint military personnel meet each Sunday in northern Iraq's largest city, Mosul, to partake of the sacrament and have a lesson.

The group is called the Quyyaarah LDS service group. Along with the other LDS service groups in the region, they are finding spiritual sustenance amid the strife of war.

The first Church unit based on Iraqi soil was organized 27 April 2003 at Tallil Air Base in southern Iraq. Kenneth M. Lightheart, a member of the United States Air Force, was called to be the group leader.

Speaking of the first group meeting, held in a small room inside an Iraqi building, Brother Lightheart says: "The Spirit was strong

that day, especially for me during the hymns. It almost sounded like home. We were all happy to be part of something special and to have the gospel and the priesthood in Iraq."

Like their fellow Latter-day Saints serving in southern Iraq, Church members in the Quyyaarah LDS service group have been able to turn to each other and the gospel during difficult times.

Brian Marble is serving with the United States Army's 101st Airborne Division in Mosul and has been in Iraq since March. Brother Marble says he has found strength in praying and reading the scriptures daily as well as in the knowledge that he and his wife were sealed in the Nashville Tennessee Temple about a month before he was deployed.

"Living under the guidance and protection of

Heavenly Father has helped me to realize how true the gospel is," says Brother Marble. "The gospel is a great source for strength to help me cope with this deployment."

Latter-day Saint service members at Camp Speicher, Iraq, also boost morale and fill the void of being away from their families by participating in a weekly family home evening.

"Coming to family home evening allows us to recharge our spiritual batteries," says Army Capt. John Stephenson. "Combat exposes many soldiers to a harsher side of humanity, so coming to family home evening offsets some of the unpleasant experiences dealt to deployed Church members."

Unfortunately there have been unpleasant experiences facing Church members serving in Iraq. To date, four members have died as a result of the conflict, and one was taken prisoner of war and later rescued. The most recent casualty was United States Army Specialist Alyssa R. Peterson. She was killed in Tel Afar, Iraq, in September 2003 as a result of a noncombat weapons discharge. A member of the Cherry Hill Ward, Flagstaff Arizona Stake, Sister Peterson was in Iraq serving as an Arabic-speaking intelligence specialist assigned to the U.S. Army's 311th Military Intelligence Battalion, 101st Airborne Division. Sister Peterson, 27, served a full-time mission to the Netherlands. ■

Church News contributed to this report.

An Artist's Lifework Captured in Exhibit

By Lisa Ann Jackson, Church Magazines

When President Boyd K. Packer was in high school, he wanted to be an artist. He went on to become an educator, and while art did not become his profession, it has continued to be a treasured pastime. For the first time, a collection of his life's artwork is gathered for display at the Church's Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City and on the museum's Web site.

The exhibit, Boyd K. Packer: The Lifework of an Amateur Artist, chronicles his art created over a lifetime—from some of his earliest sketches done at age nine to masterful carvings created in recent years. The exhibit also offers patrons a glimpse into the personal life of a respected Apostle and Church leader.

President Packer's penchant for art began very early and was nurtured by his parents. "When I was a little boy and exhibited some creative talent, it was always encouraged and fostered by my parents," said President Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He used whatever media was available to him to express his talent. His father would bring home scrap paper from work or give him and his siblings leftover wood. President Packer even sketched on the backs of the envelopes in which he mailed letters to his family during World War II.

Almost without exception his subjects include nature. With a keen sense of observation, President Packer has made the study of birds and other elements of nature a lifelong pursuit, and his attention to detail is evident in his work. "He is the master of [portraying] the natural attitudes of birds and animals," artist Lance Turner noted.

Art was President Packer's focus early on, but as he grew older, his priorities changed. He decided to channel his talent to support his family and other aspects of his life.

"When our children came, I knew that the time I spent improving my own abilities would be taken away, in a sense, from our children," President Packer said. "So during the growing-up years of our family, perhaps 20 years, most of the things that I did in a creative way were done with the children in trying to teach them."

Among the many projects completed as a family is a 14-foot-wide mural created for the family's living room. It is a painting of a tree with 50 varieties of birds in the branches, most of which were seen in the trees around the Packers' home. The children helped draw the birds, and President

Packer taught the children each bird's name and habits.

Like this mural, much of his art is created for personal purposes. A family favorite is a wooden Noah's ark that President Packer carved for his grandchildren.

"Noah's Ark is a favorite thing with our grandchildren," said Sister Donna Smith Packer, President Packer's wife. "They can look at it, then they can enjoy it, but they can also handle it, and get their little chairs and kneel up and play with these animals."

President Packer's art has not only helped him



President Boyd K. Packer's lifelong love of birds and nature is captured in this carved-wood and annealed-copper piece entitled Lazuli Bunting, Irises.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART

New Temple Presidents and Matrons

In October, 35 new temple presidents and matrons received training from members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. On 1 November 2003 they took their posts at their assigned temples. Assignments typically last for three years.

Temple	President and Matron
Accra Ghana	Grant and Alice P. Gunnell
Adelaide Australia	Thomas F. and Margaret F. Hooper
Albuquerque New Mexico	Allen E. and Jan M. Litster
Boston Massachusetts	Allan H. and Joanne G. Barker
Bountiful Utah	L. Stephen Jr. and Annette N. Richards
Brisbane Australia	John D. and Lois G. Jeffrey
Buenos Aires Argentina	Donald E. and Beverly Jacobson
Cardston Alberta	Lynn A. and Beth Ann K. Rosenvall
Fukuoka Japan	Kiyoshi and Aiko Sato Tokuzawa
Guatemala City Guatemala	Louis W. and Ruth H. Latimer
Hermosillo Sonora México	Albert M. and Constance A. Farnsworth
Houston Texas	Richard H. and Barbara F. Sutton
Las Vegas Nevada	Frank F. and Nancy S. Dixon
Manila Philippines	Ray W. and Kleah R. Nelson
Manti Utah	Archie M. and Doreen K. Brugger
Mesa Arizona	Albert Jr. and Marilyn J. Choules
Montevideo Uruguay	J. Robert and Carolyn P. Driggs
Monticello Utah	F. Cooper and Colleen W. Jones
Oaxaca México	Maurice D. and Petronella "Nellie" Bowman
Palmyra New York	Howard C. and Marjorie T. Sharp
Porto Alegre Brazil	Walter G. and Neide Ito de Queiroz
Preston England	John and Elizabeth Sheila W. Maxwell
Recife Brazil	Nivaldo and Clery P. Bentim
Redlands California	Rodney J. and Arleen E. Nelson
Regina Saskatchewan	Noel W. and Rita Burt
San José Costa Rica	Frank S. and Ingrid G. Moffett
São Paulo Brazil	J. Kent and Jill L. Jolley
Seoul Korea	Do Whan and Kim Jai Sook Lee
St. Louis Missouri	Michael W. and Barbara S. Barker
Stockholm Sweden	Max M. and Deborah L. Kimball
Taipei Taiwan	Jon N. and LeAnn C. Vawdrey
Tokyo Japan	Makoto and Yasuko Fukuda
Tuxtla Gutiérrez México	Earl W. and Rose Marie R. Redd
Veracruz México	William R. and Vicki K. Treu
Villahermosa México	Juan M. and Palmira Rubalcava Cedeño Rodríguez

teach his children and grandchildren but has also helped him in his service as a leader of the Church. Those who have heard him speak have likely heard wisdom and insight he gained while creating a work of art. "During those hours working with my hands, I pondered on the marvels of creation, and inspiration would flow.

As I carved wood, I carved out talks," he said.

Pieces from this exhibit can be viewed online at www.lds.org/museum. Click on "Exhibits and Galleries," then "Current Exhibits," then "Boyd K. Packer: The Lifework of an Amateur Artist." The exhibit runs through 6 September 2004. ■

Strengthening the Community

Australia Stake Helps Burmese Orphans

Members of the Church from the east coast of Australia recently responded with overwhelming support to the plight of Burmese children stranded near the Thailand border.

The Gold Coast Australia Stake donated 303 blankets, eight boxes of bedsheets, 54 boxes of books and activity sets, and cash donations to 200 Burmese children orphaned as a result of civil unrest that destroyed their villages and families.

Janelle Nicholson of the stake's Lismore Ward first learned of the children—many who are younger than 10 years of age—from Norene Colley of Rotary International.

While Ms. Colley began an ambitious project to build a shelter to house the children, Sister Nicholson worked with her stake Relief Society president, Kaye Hettig, to help arrange for other much-needed supplies such as clothing and toiletries.

"The response swept through like a fever among our people, and they have really caught the vision," Sister Hettig said. "We invited everyone to donate—to provide toiletries, basic hygiene essentials, and clothing for the little ones—and we have well exceeded our goals."

Young women from the Mudgeeraba Ward took the children's plight to heart and fashioned T-shirts from their wardrobes into sundresses that were packaged along with new hair ties and combs for the young girls in the camp.

"They now have something new and pretty that is just like them!" said 15-year-old Bianca Eagle of Bonogin. "I hope they can somehow feel our love for them through these dresses."

Members in El Salvador Help Ease Parents' Grief

Responding to the needs of impoverished families in their community, members of the San Salvador El Salvador La Libertad Stake built 300 small coffins for families who have lost children.



Church members in Australia load boxes full of donations for Burmese orphans. Thousands of blankets, articles of clothing, toys, and shoes were collected during the project.

The unique service is particularly tender because Salvadoran health regulations require that parents provide a suitable coffin in order to claim the body of a child who has died in the hospital. Many parents who cannot afford a coffin fear they will not be able to claim their child's body should he or she die. So at times parents choose to remove a sick child from the hospital. La Libertad Stake

president Angel Duarte, a pediatrician at Benjamin Bloom Pediatric Hospital, worries that some children who might recover with diligent hospital care are dying as a result.

President Duarte contacted Church Humanitarian Services, who provided enough wood and materials to build 300 small coffins. Members of the La Libertad Stake donated time and labor.



Relief Society sisters in San Salvador, El Salvador, help build small coffins for families who have lost children. The project served a unique need in their community.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Each coffin was lined inside with white cloth. A floral pattern was then added—offering a personal, comforting touch to each casket.

The completed coffins were shipped to a government warehouse where they are provided by hospital social workers to needy families on a case-by-case basis.

Members of the stake hope the coffins will bring comfort to families who have lost children and that the availability of such coffins will help parents decide to leave a sick child in a hospital for continued care.

In addition, many Salvadorans are catching a glimpse into the hearts of their Latter-day Saint neighbors. Local television and radio stations and newspapers have covered the coffin project. President Duarte also appeared on a popular Salvadoran talk show, answering questions about the project and his faith.

"The more the Church requires," he said in the interview, "the better we become." ■

Church News contributed to these reports.

Comment

Call for Scripts

The Music and Cultural Arts Division of the Church is seeking original gospel-oriented scripts of plays and musicals suitable for ward and stake use. Scripts should be a minimum of one act long, teach gospel principles in uplifting ways, be doctrinally correct, and be accurate and footnoted if historically based. (Some liberties may be taken to move the story along.) Selected scripts will receive the Deseret Dramatic Recognition Award and may be performed in a reader's theater performance at the Conference Center Theater prior to the October 2004 general conference.

Each submission should include the following:

- Two copies of the script and any applicable music on 8½ x 11 inch paper.

- A signed statement saying, "The work submitted, entitled _____, is my original work, is owned by me, and conforms to the submission rules." The statement should also include the author's name, address, and telephone number.

- A cover letter with (1) the title of the production; (2) the author's name, address, phone number, and e-mail address; (3) type of script (e.g., musical, reader's theater); (4) period of play (e.g., biblical, pioneer, modern); (5) central theme; (6) synopsis of action; (7) gospel topics

explored; and (8) number of and age requirements for cast members.

To be considered for this year's review, all submissions must be postmarked by 1 April 2004. Selections will be completed and entrants will be notified by August 2004.

Send submissions to Church Theatrical Script Submission, 50 East North Temple Street, Room 2082, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150, USA.

Call for Articles

Do you have a successful family home evening experience you would like to share? Tell us what has worked for your family. Submissions will be considered for possible inclusion in Random Sampler or as other *Ensign* articles.

Random Sampler articles should be no more than 300 words and focus on creative lesson ideas, object lessons, activities, and/or methods for encouraging family participation.

Other *Ensign* articles should be 400–800 words and focus on examples of family home evening successes such as service projects, testimony meetings, or family councils.

Send your ideas by 27 February 2004 to *Ensign*, 24th Floor, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA; or e-mail to cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org. Authors whose submissions are selected will be notified. ■



MAKING THE MOST OF THIS ISSUE

J A N U A R Y 2 0 0 4

life of the man whose teachings we will be studying in priesthood and Relief Society lessons this year. See page 56.

Finding Time for Eternity

The temple is a wonderful haven from the hectic rush of everyday life—if only you can get away from that rush in the first place. Find helpful suggestions in “Making Time for the Temple,” page 68.

Especially for Singles

• What does “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” have to do with single adults? See page 32.

• Parenthood is challenging even for a father and mother working together. How do single parents meet the challenges? See “The Gospel and the Single Parent,” page 62.

Blessed from a Distance

Stricken with a rare illness, a young Brazilian Saint had been helped many times by priesthood blessings. Then came the day when an Apostle pronounced a healing blessing from the pulpit. See “He Restoreth My Soul,” page 72.



PHOTO BY CRAIG W. DIMOND

THE ENSIGN IS ONLINE

Just go to www.lds.org. Click on “Gospel Library”; then, under “Church Publications,” choose HTML, PDF, or Handheld format.

The *Ensign*, *New Era*, and *Friend* magazines are available in HTML format (text only) beginning with the first issues in 1971, and the *Liabona* is available beginning with the January 1977 issue. In this format you can search for words, authors, or subjects. All four magazines are available in PDF format (full-page image) beginning with January 2001.

You can also find Church curriculum materials such as Sunday School, Relief Society–priesthood, and Primary manuals at this site. The scriptures and many curriculum materials can be downloaded for use on your handheld personal digital assistant.

For Your Book of Mormon Studies

• Yes, the Book of Mormon was written for the Lamanite, the Jew, and the Gentile. But it was also written specifically for Bill, and Mary, and you. See “Power in Principles,” page 10.

• Lehi spoke of the sweet fruits of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In “Joy in the Journey,” page 48, author S. Michael Wilcox tells of some of the times he has personally tasted that fruit.



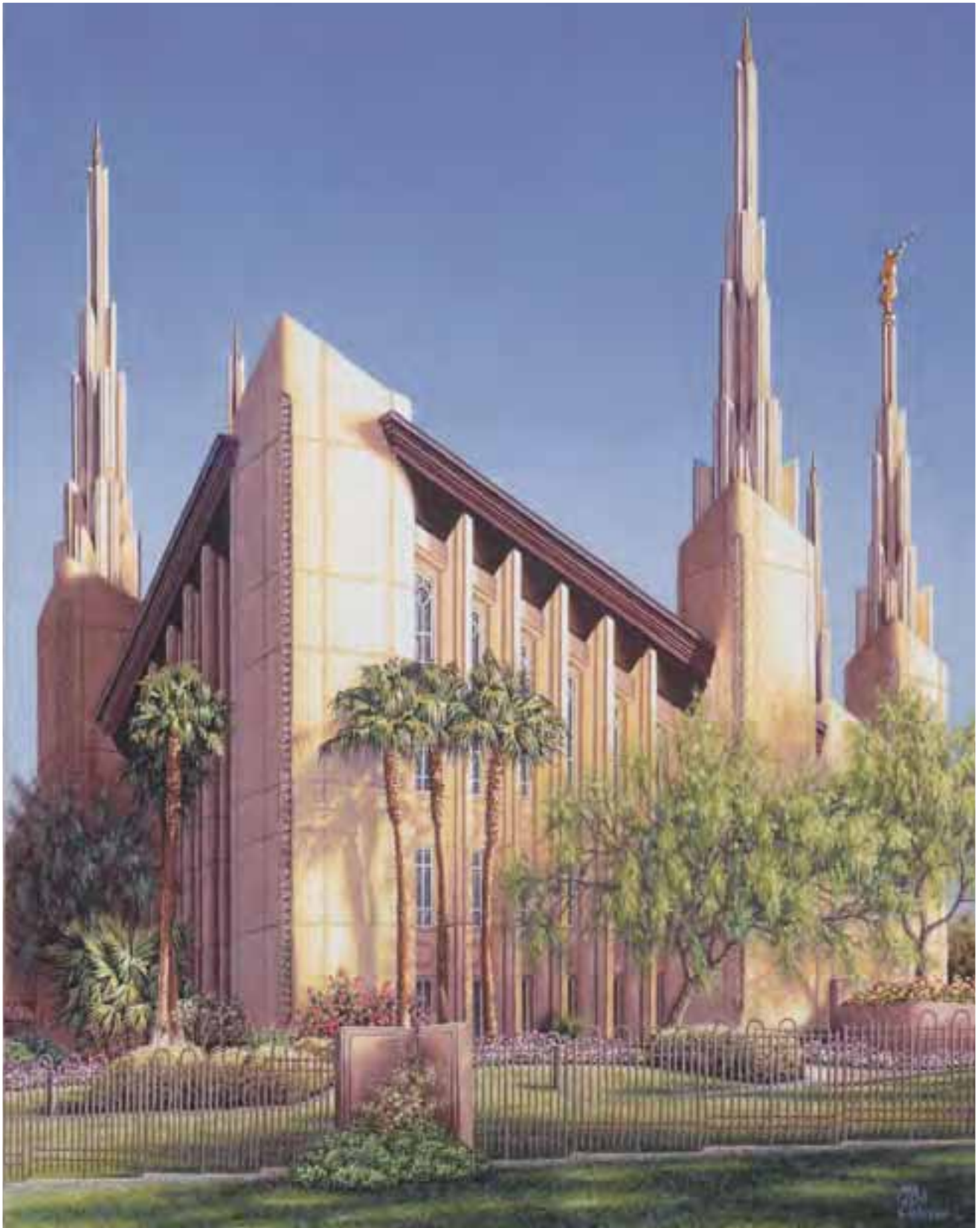
Heber J. Grant

Known for his persistence, President Grant presided over the Church during some of his century’s most difficult years. Learn more about the



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Las Vegas Temple, by Mitch Johnson

Temples are places where Latter-day Saints worship so that in due time they may come to the Father and receive of His fulness (see D&C 93:19). The building of temples in our day is the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy that “in the last days . . . the Lord’s house shall be established . . . and all nations shall flow unto it” (Isaiah 2:2).

The Book of Mormon is a keystone because it establishes and ties together eternal principles and precepts, rounding out basic doctrines of salvation. It is the crowning gem in the diadem of our holy scriptures.” See President James E. Faust, “The Keystone of Our Religion,” p. 2, and “Book of Mormon Times at a Glance,” p. 14. Depicted at right: Jesus Christ blessing his Nephite Twelve as they pray unto Him (see 3 Nephi 19:25).

THE LIGHT OF HIS COUNTENANCE DID SHINE UPON THEM, BY GARY L. KAPP

