

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

Ensign

One Million Milestone in Mexico, p. 34

Searching Out Young Adults, p. 56

Choir: 75 Years on the Air, p. 68





The Beautiful, by Al Rounds

Today, as in 1846, a temple overlooks Nauvoo, the “City Beautiful.” Built on the site of the destroyed Nauvoo Temple, the Nauvoo Illinois Temple was dedicated in June 2002 by President Gordon B. Hinckley.

Ensign



16 *Protecting Your Child from Gang Influence*



43 *How Could This Happen to Me?*



56 *Search and Rescue*



68 *From the Crossroads of the West*

- 2 **FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE**
Miracles of Faith
President Thomas S. Monson
- 8 Be Strong in the Lord
Elder M. Russell Ballard
- 16 Protecting Your Child from Gang Influence
Dennis J. Nordfelt
- 18 Outnumbered
Paolo Martin N. Macariola
- 19 **BOOK OF MORMON PRINCIPLES**
Earthly Choices, Eternal Consequences
Elder D. Chad Richardson
- 22 Book of Mormon Times at a Glance,
Chart 2: Alma through Mormon and Moroni
- 29 Parties, Picnics, and Potlucks
- 34 One Million in Mexico
Don L. Searle
- 43 How Could This Happen to Me?
Name Withheld
- 46 Edward Hunter: Generous Pioneer, Presiding Bishop
LaRene Porter Gaunt
- 52 **BOOK OF MORMON PRINCIPLES**
Submitting Our Will to the Father's
Elder Benjamin De Hoyos
- 56 Search and Rescue
Shanna Butler
- 61 **VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE**
Feeling the Love of the Lord through Prayer
- 62 **LATTER-DAY SAINT VOICES**
- 66 **RANDOM SAMPLER**
- 68 From the Crossroads of the West
Lisa Ann Jackson
- 74 **NEWS OF THE CHURCH**



8 *Be Strong in the Lord*

AN OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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Miracles of Faith

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

Some 50 years ago I received an invitation to meet with President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), a counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, a statesman of towering stature, and a scholar of international renown. My profession then was in the field of printing and publishing. President Clark made me welcome in his office and then produced from his old roll-top desk a large sheaf of handwritten notes, many of them made when he was a law student long years before. He proceeded to outline for me his goal of producing a harmony of the Gospels. This goal was achieved with his monumental work *Our Lord of the Gospels*.

In my library is a personally inscribed, leather-bound copy of this classic treatment of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. As I have perused its pages, I have paused at the section entitled “The Miracles of Jesus.”

I remember as though it were yesterday President Clark asking me to read to him several of these accounts while he sat back in his large leather chair and listened. That was a day in my life never to be forgotten.

President Clark asked me to read aloud the account found in Luke concerning the man filled with leprosy. I proceeded to read:

“And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

“And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him” (Luke 5:12–13).

He asked that I continue reading from Luke concerning the man afflicted with palsy and the enterprising manner in which he was presented for the attention of the Lord:

“And, behold, men brought in a bed a man



My heart fills with gratitude to the Lord for His divine intervention to relieve the suffering, heal the sick, and raise the dead. I grieve for the many, similarly afflicted, who knew not how to find the Master.

which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

“And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

“And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee” (Luke 5:18–20).

There followed in the scriptural account snide comments from the Pharisees concerning who had the right to forgive sins. Jesus silenced their bickering by saying:

“What reason ye in your hearts?

“Whether [it] is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

“And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God” (Luke 5:22–25).

When I had read these scriptural stories aloud, President Clark removed from his pocket a handkerchief and wiped the tears from his eyes. He commented, “As we grow older, tears come more frequently.” After a few words of good-bye, I departed from his office, leaving him alone with his thoughts and his tears.

As I reflect on this experience with President Clark, my heart fills with gratitude to the Lord for His divine intervention to relieve the suffering, heal the sick, and raise the dead. I grieve, however, for the many, similarly afflicted, who knew not how to find the Master, to learn of His teachings, and to become the beneficiaries of His power. I remember that President Clark himself suffered heartache and pain in the tragic death at Pearl Harbor of his son-in-law Mervyn S. Bennion, captain of the battleship *West Virginia*. That day there had been no ram in the thicket, no steel to stop the shrapnel, no miracle to heal the wounds of war. But faith never wavered, and answered prayers provided the courage to carry on.

His Help Is Near

So it is today. In our lives, sickness comes to loved ones, accidents leave their cruel marks of remembrance, and tiny legs that once ran are imprisoned in a wheelchair. Mothers and fathers who anxiously await the arrival of a precious child sometimes learn that all is not well with this tiny infant. A missing limb, sightless eyes, a damaged brain, or the term “Down syndrome” greets the parents, leaving them baffled, filled with sorrow, and reaching out for hope.

There follows the inevitable blaming of oneself, the condemnation of a careless action, and the perennial questions: “Why such a tragedy in our family?” “Why didn’t I keep her home?” “If only he hadn’t gone to that party.” “How did this happen?” “Where was God?” “Where was a protecting angel?” *If, why, where, how*—those recurring words—do not bring back the lost son, the perfect body, the plans of parents, or the dreams of youth. Self-pity, personal withdrawal, or deep despair will not bring the peace, the assurance, or help which are needed. Rather, we must go forward, look upward, move onward, and rise heavenward.

It is imperative that we recognize that whatever has happened to us has happened to others. They have coped and so must we. We are not alone. Heavenly Father’s help is near.

The Example of Job

Perhaps no other has been so afflicted as the man Job, who was described as “perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” (Job 1:1). He prospered by every measurement. Then came the loss of literally everything: his wealth, his family, his health. At one time the suggestion was made that he “curse God, and die” (Job 2:9). Job’s summation of his faith, after ordeals demanded of few others, is a testimony of truth, a proclamation of courage, and a declaration of trust:

“Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!



“That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

“And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

“Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another” (Job 19:23–27).

Let me share with you a brief look into the lives of others, to learn that after the tears of a day of despair, a night of sorrow, “joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).

The Coming of Joy

Some years ago, Brigham Young University honored with a presidential citation Sarah Bagley Shumway, a truly remarkable woman of our time. The citation contained the words: “It is often within our homes and among our own family members that the eternally significant—but usually

“I never realized [my father] was blind because he talked about the birds and other things. I always thought he held my hand because he loved me more than other fathers loved their children.”

unheralded—dramas of daily living occur. The people in these plain but important places bring stability to the present and promise to the future. Their lives are filled with struggle and deep feeling as they face circumstances that rarely fit neatly within the formulae of plays, films, and newscasts. But their victories, however slight, strengthen the boundaries through which the history of future generations must pass.”

Sarah married H. Smith Shumway, then her “friend and sweetheart of nine years,” in 1948. The courtship was longer than most because Smith, an infantry officer in World War II, had been blinded and severely wounded by a land-mine explosion in the advance on Paris, France. During his long rehabilitation, Sarah learned Braille so that she could correspond with him in privacy. She couldn’t tolerate the idea of others reading her letters aloud to the man she loved.

Something of the spirit of this young couple comes to us in the simple candor of Smith Shumway’s proposal of marriage. Finally home in Wyoming after the war, he told Sarah, “If you will drive the car and sort the socks and read the mail, I will do the rest.” She accepted the offer.

Years of study led to a successful career, eight accomplished children, a host of grandchildren, and lives of service. Along life’s pathway, the Shumways faced problems of a child with severe deafness, a missionary son developing cancer, and a twin granddaughter injured at birth.

My family and I had the privilege of meeting the entire Shumway clan at a summer vacation camp. Each wore an identifying T-shirt on which was a map depicting the location of each child and family, along with the names of all. Brother Shumway, with justifiable pride, pointed to the location on his shirt of his precious ones and beamed the smile of gladness. Only then did I ponder that he had never seen any of his children or grandchildren. Or had he? While his eyes had never beheld them, in his heart he knew them and he loved them.

At an evening of entertainment, the Shumway family was on the stage. The children were asked, “What was it

like growing up in a household with a sightless father?" One daughter smiled and said, "When we were little, occasionally we felt Daddy should not have too much dessert at dinner, so without telling him, we would trade our smaller helping with his larger one. Maybe he knew, but he never complained."

One child touched our hearts when she recounted, "When I was about five years old, I remember my father holding my hand and walking me around the neighborhood, and I never realized he was blind because he talked about the birds and other things. I always thought he held my hand because he loved me more than other fathers loved their children."

Though Sarah has passed away now, she and Smith Shumway and their family offer examples of rising above adversity and sorrow, overcoming the tragedy of war-inflicted impairment, and walking bravely the higher roadway of life.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, the poetess, wrote:

*It is easy enough to be pleasant,
When life flows by like a song,
But the man worth while is one who will smile,
When everything goes dead wrong.*

*For the test of the heart is trouble,
And it always comes with the years,
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth
Is the smile that shines through tears.¹*

I am moved by the inspiring example of Melissa Engle of West Valley City, Utah. Melissa was featured in the August 1992 issue of the *New Era*. She told her own story:

"When I was born I only had a thumb on my right hand because the umbilical cord got wrapped around my fingers and [severed them]. My dad wanted to find something I could do to strengthen my hand and make it useful. Playing the violin seemed like a natural because I wouldn't have to finger with both hands, like you would with a flute. . . .



A benefactor's grant enabled young Melissa to attend a music camp for the intensive training she desired in her heart. "That, to me, was a miracle," she said.

"I've been playing for about eight years now. I take private lessons, and I have to work at things like a paper route to help pay for them. I get to [my violin] lessons by riding a bus across town. . . .

"A highlight [of my life] was Interlochen, located on a lake in Michigan, one of the best music camps in the world for [youth]. I sent in my application for the eight weeks of intensive music

training and couldn't believe I [was] accepted.

"The only problem was money. It cost thousands of dollars, and there was no way I [could] make that much before the deadline. So I prayed and prayed, and about a week before I had to send in the money, I was called into the office of a man who had a grant for someone with a handicap who was pursuing the arts. That, to me, was a miracle, and I'm really grateful for it."²

Melissa, when she received the grant, turned to her mother, who had been anxious not to see her daughter disappointed and had thus attempted to curb her enthusiasm and hope, and said, "Mother, I told you Heavenly Father answers prayers, for look how He has answered mine."

He that notes a sparrow's fall had fulfilled a child's dream, answered a child's prayer. Melissa has since gone on to earn a college degree and to serve a full-time mission in Croatia.

A Precious Promise

To all who have suffered silently from sickness, to you who have cared for those with physical or mental impairment, who have borne a heavy burden day by day, year by year, and to you noble mothers and dedicated fathers—I salute you and pray God's blessings to ever attend you. To the children, particularly those who cannot run and play and frolic, come the reassuring words: "Dearest children, God is near you, / Watching o'er you day and night."³

There will surely come that day, even the fulfillment of the precious promise from the Book of Mormon:

"The soul shall be restored to the body, and the body to the soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame. . . .

"And then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of God" (Alma 40:23, 25).

From the Psalm echoes the assurance:

"My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. . . .

". . . He that keepeth thee will not slumber.

"Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:2–4).

Through the years the Latter-day Saints have taken comfort from the favorite hymn remembered from our youth:

*When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings; name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done. . . .*

*Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings; ev'ry doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by. . . .*

*So amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged; God is over all.
Count your many blessings; angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.⁴*

To any who from anguish of heart and sadness of soul have silently asked, "Heavenly Father, are you really there? . . . Do you hear and answer ev'ry . . . prayer?"⁵ I bear my witness that He is there. He does hear and answer every prayer. His Son, the Christ, burst the bands of our earthly prisons, and heaven's blessings await us. ■

NOTES

1. "Worth While," in *The Best Loved Poems of the American People*, sel. Hazel Felleman (1936), 144.
2. "Something You Really Love," *New Era*, Aug. 1992, 30–31.
3. "Dearest Children, God Is Near You," *Hymns*, no. 96.
4. "Count Your Blessings," *Hymns*, no. 241.
5. "A Child's Prayer," *Children's Songbook*, 12–13.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After you prayerfully prepare, share this message using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach.

1. Ask family members if they or someone they know has been healed in spirit, letting go of anger or discouragement or some past hurt. Talk about how faith in Jesus Christ makes this kind of healing possible. Even though the Lord does not immediately heal every soul suffering afflictions, how does He extend His concern and blessing?

2. Ask family members if they know someone—such as the young violinist in this message—who has triumphed in spite of a physical defect that might have been a disability. Discuss the role that faith in Jesus Christ plays in this kind of healing.

3. Some of Heavenly Father's children carry physical, mental, spiritual, or emotional burdens that might not be taken away in this life. What can others do to help lighten these heavy loads for the individual and his or her family?

BE STRONG IN THE LORD

How do we put on the whole armor of God so that we may, as Paul promises, “be able to withstand in the evil day”?



It has been my experience that there is not one great and grand thing we can do to arm ourselves spiritually. True spiritual power lies in numerous smaller acts woven together in a fabric of spiritual fortification that protects and shields from all evil.

BY ELDER M. RUSSELL BALLARD

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Long before the world was formed, Satan and those who followed after him raged against the forces of good and tried to overthrow the work of God. That struggle has not ended, only shifted battlegrounds. It is ruthless and relentless, and the objective of the battle is your eternal soul and mine.

The Apostle Paul spoke of how to arm ourselves for this conflict in these very graphic terms:

“Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day” (Ephesians 6:10–13).

How do we put on the whole armor of God so that we may, as Paul promises, “be able to withstand in the evil day”?

I like to think of this spiritual armor not as a solid piece of metal molded to fit the body but more like chain mail. Chain mail consists of dozens of tiny pieces of steel fastened together to allow the user greater flexibility without losing protection. I say that because it has been my experience that there is not one great and grand thing we can do to arm ourselves spiritually. True spiritual power lies in numerous smaller acts woven together in a fabric of spiritual fortification that protects and shields from all evil.

It is a common expression to talk about the “chinks” in a person’s armor. The definition of the word *chink* is “a small cleft, slit, or fissure.”¹ Should an arrow strike exactly one of the chinks in one’s armor, a fatal wound can result.

I would like to suggest to you six ways we may protect ourselves by eliminating any chinks or gaps in our personal spiritual armor.



1. Rely on the Protective Power of Prayer

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches, “Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work” (D&C 10:5).

What a wonderful promise! In this spiritual

warfare that rages over individual souls, that is what we want more than anything else—to conquer Satan and to escape the hands of evil men and women who carry out his work. I cannot stress too highly the protective power that comes into our lives through earnest, humble, consistent, yearning prayer.

I know you believe that, but in the hectic, pressure-filled schedules you face, I also know how easy it is to let prayer slip. Some of you hit the snooze button on your alarm clocks, thinking you can eke out just another minute or two of sleep; then jerk awake, realizing that you are going to be late for school or work. On such mornings, prayer gets pushed aside, perhaps with a feeble promise to yourself that you will do better tomorrow. Put the alarm clock where you can't reach it from bed; that will solve this problem. Sometimes you return home late at night, exhausted and eager to collapse into bed. You may go through the motions of prayer in a perfunctory and superficial manner, but that is not the kind of prayer that helps us conquer Satan.

You need to find a time and place where you can be alone with Heavenly Father and pour out your heart to Him, that you might add strength and power to your spiritual lives. Every honest and sincere prayer adds another piece to chain-mail armor.

Perhaps there are some of you who have slipped into patterns of behavior that you know in your heart are displeasing to the Lord. "I'll repent first," you say to yourselves, "and then I'll begin saying my prayers again." I tell you with all soberness that those thoughts are not from the Lord but from the evil one. Nephi said it very clearly: "The evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray" (2 Nephi 32:8).

It is when we are lost in the mists of darkness and cannot find our way that we most desperately need the influence of the Lord. Nowhere in all of the scriptural injunctions on prayer do we find the suggestion that we must first be perfect in order to communicate with God.



Make sure that prayer—earnest, sincere, consistent prayer—is a part of your daily lives.

My friends, one of the most important ways to clothe yourselves in the armor of God is to make sure that prayer—earnest, sincere, consistent prayer—is part of your daily lives.

2. Rely on the Protective Power of the Scriptures

When Nephi's brothers asked him what the meaning of the rod of iron was, Nephi "said unto them that it 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).

Isn't that the protective power that we all seek? Knowledge gained through our study of the scriptures teaches us how to get protection from the devil for ourselves.

Note the choice of verbs Nephi used. He did not talk about merely reading the scriptures. He did not suggest that we only study the word of God. He said that we must "hearken" to the word of God and "hold fast" to it. How do we "hold fast" to the word? This implies much more than a cursory, occasional reading. Not only do we need to read and study and learn the scriptural content; we must hearken to it, follow the principles taught therein, and cling to those principles as though our very lives depended on it—which, if we are speaking of spiritual life, is literally true.

Here are some practical suggestions that I hope will help you derive greater power from your study of the scriptures:

- If possible, set a consistent time and place to study when you can be alone and undisturbed.
- Always have a marking pencil ready as you study. Make notations in the margins. Write cross-references. Make the scriptures yours by marking them.
- Commit yourself to study for a set amount of time rather than to just read a chapter or a certain number of pages.

- Study topically as well as chronologically. Both approaches have merit, but we need to go to the Topical Guide or the index from time to time and read all that the Lord has said on repentance, faith, or some other principle.
- Take time to ponder, reflect, meditate, and pray about what you read. Ask yourselves questions such as “What can I learn from this passage that will help me come unto Christ and be more like Him?”

Let us then go to the Lord in prayer, pleading for help or answers, and those answers will come as we open the scriptures and begin to study them.

3. Draw on the Merciful Grace of God

The Lord promised us through the prophet Moroni: “If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

There are several interesting things about this scripture. First is that the Lord gives us weaknesses—not sin, but weaknesses—so that we may be humble. Think about that for a moment. If we were perfect in every respect, it would be hard to be humble. Even in specific things, humility comes harder to those who are very strong in one area or another. The woman or man who is remarkably beautiful or handsome can easily become



proud of her or his appearance. A brilliant scholar may look down in condescension on those less intellectually blessed. Our weaknesses help us to be humble.

Then comes the promise. If we are willing to humble ourselves, then, as it says, “my grace is sufficient.” In the Bible Dictionary, *grace* is defined as an “enabling power” (697). Can you see the significance of that promise?

One of the signs of our day is how frequently we use the word *addiction* to describe destructive behavior. We talk about being addicted to alcohol, to drugs, to pornography. These are all insidious and powerful evils. Jesus warned His disciples that “whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (John 8:34). Alma used a similar metaphor when he warned us about the “chains of hell” (Alma 12:11).

One of the most devastating effects of sin is that it weakens you, binds you, brings you down to slavery. The grace of God and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the answer to that predicament. If you will but humble

Not only do we need to read and study and learn the scriptural content; we must hearken to it, follow the principles taught therein, and cling to those principles as though our very lives depended on it—which, if we are speaking of spiritual life, is literally true.

yourselves and turn to Them, then Their grace, Their enabling power, can not only help you throw off the chains of sin but actually turn your weaknesses into strengths.

Brothers and sisters, how I long to have the reality of that promise sink into your hearts. Are you struggling with some sin or weakness? It can be something as simple as not having the willpower to rise in the morning early enough to have time for scripture study and prayer. It can be something so powerful, such as Internet pornography or lack of moral self-control, that you feel you have been pulled down into an abyss and there is no hope for you. Do you find yourself hating what you are doing but not able to find the willpower to turn away from it? Then reach out and humble yourself. The Lord's enabling power is sufficient to change your heart, to turn your life, to purge your soul. But you must make the first move, which is to humble yourself and realize that only in God can you find deliverance.

4. Watch Yourself

In his last great address to his people, King Benjamin said: "If ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, . . . ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not" (Mosiah 4:30).

I have thought much about what King Benjamin meant by the phrase "watch yourselves." Here are some of the things that I have concluded:

Often in the scriptures the Lord speaks of watchmen on the towers and of watchtowers themselves (see, for example, D&C 101:12, 43–62). A watchtower is generally raised so that someone can climb to the top and see a greater distance. In this way, they are alerted to danger or threat much sooner than they would otherwise be.

The same principle holds true in our lives. We can raise



One of the most devastating effects of sin is that it weakens you, binds you, brings you down to slavery. The grace of God and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the answer to that predicament. If you will but humble yourselves and turn to Them, then Their grace, Their enabling power, can not only help you throw off the chains of sin but actually turn your weaknesses into strengths.

watchtowers that help us deal with threats before they actually descend upon us. Let me give some examples.

Bishops often hear in confessions of moral transgression a statement something like this: "I was so sure that I would never be caught in this problem. Somehow, we got carried away, and then it was too late." The physical and emotional drives associated with physical affection are powerful, lowering the will to resist and often sweeping people on to things they will later deeply regret.

It is not enough to simply say, "I will never do that." This is an excellent example of where we need to "watch ourselves." The wise dating couple will build watchtowers to protect themselves from being swept away. These are simple things, such as limiting the time they are alone together; strictly avoiding dark, isolated places; and setting strict limits on the bounds of their physical affection. To wait until you are caught up in the passion of the moment to start building

watchtowers is to wait until the enemy is upon you, and often it is too late.

I know that some of you are struggling with the tenacious power of Internet pornography. You come away from such encounters ashamed and sickened, vowing that you will never again allow yourself to give in to such temptation. Such determination is good, but you need to take intervening action when you are calm and away from the influence of those images. Move your computer into a room where there is always the possibility of someone walking in on you. Make sure the monitor faces the room so that others can see what is on the screen at any time. There are inexpensive software programs that help screen out pornographic sites and unsolicited pornographic e-mail. Take action when you are strong so that if you are tempted you will have armed yourself and it will be much

more difficult to fall.

It is such a logical thing to prepare for danger or discomfort in the natural world. Mountain climbers are very careful to pack the proper gear. Arctic explorers do not wait until the blasts of subzero winds strike them to decide what clothing they need. So why don't we do the same in our spiritual lives? Remember: "It is better to prepare and prevent than it is to repair and repent."²

5. Don't Waste the Days of Your Probation

We read in 2 Nephi: "Wo unto him that has the law given, . . . that wasteth the days of his probation" (2 Nephi 9:27).

How does one waste the days of his or her probation? Turning to sin is surely part of it, but there is another, more subtle way, a way that may not seem evil at all.

In the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord gave a similar warning in these words: "Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent that it may not be known" (D&C 60:13). Why would I speak of that with you? Because one of the ways Satan lessens your effectiveness and weakens your spiritual strength is by encouraging you to spend large blocks of your time doing things that matter very little. I speak of such things as sitting for hours on end watching television or videos, playing video games night in and night out, surfing the Internet, or devoting huge blocks of time to sports, games, or other recreational activities.

Don't misunderstand me. These activities are not wrong in and of themselves (unless, of course, you are watching salacious programs or seeking out pornographic images



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

on the Internet). Games, sports, recreational activities, and even television can be relaxing and rejuvenating, especially in times when you are under stress or heavily scheduled. You need activities that help you to unwind and rest your minds. It is healthy to go onto the soccer field or the basketball court and participate in vigorous physical activity.

But I speak of letting things get out of balance. It is not watching television, but watching television hour after hour, night after night. Does not that qualify as idling away your time? What will you say to the Lord when He asks what you have done with the precious gift of life and time? Surely you will not feel comfortable telling Him that you were able to pass the 100,000-point level in a challenging video game.

One devastating effect of idling away our time is that it deflects us from focusing on the things that matter most. Too many people are willing to sit back and let life just happen to them. It takes time to develop the attributes

The wise dating couple will build watchtowers to protect themselves from being swept away. They will not wait until they are caught up in the passion of the moment when it is often too late.

It is not watching television, but watching television hour after hour, night after night. Does not that qualify as idling away your time? What will you say to the Lord when He asks what you have done with the precious gift of life and time? Surely you will not feel comfortable telling Him that you were able to pass the 100,000-point level in a challenging video game.



that will help you to be a well-balanced person.

We hear of young people, both male and female, who are so focused on academic success or moving up the career ladder that they “don’t have time for dating.” We hear some say that they will postpone marriage or having children until they can afford them. Let me tell you as a father of seven children, you will never be able to afford them. So just trust in the Lord as Sister Ballard and I did. Somehow it works, with His help.

Remember, you *can* be exalted without a college degree. You *can* be exalted without being slender and beautiful. You *can* be exalted without having a successful career. You *cannot* be exalted without an eternal mate. So focus the best that you can on those things in life that will lead you back to the presence of God—keeping all things in their proper balance. There are those who may never marry in mortality. But *all* of God’s blessings will ultimately come to those who are righteous and true to the gospel.

Oh, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the day of your probation. Do not waste this time away. Plan and prepare and then do.

6. Remember That Reverence

Invites Revelation

A lack of reverence not only opens up chinks in our chain-mail armor but creates great gaps of vulnerability.

In the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord declared that “your minds in times past have been darkened because . . . you have treated lightly the things you have received” (D&C 84:54). That is a recurring theme in the revelations. “Trifle not with sacred things,” the Lord warned Oliver Cowdery (D&C 6:12).

In a time of peril and danger, the last thing we need is to have our minds darkened. And yet we have seen a great increase in how the world treats lightly and often offensively things of deep value. The media jokes and pokes fun at even the most sacred things. Television sitcoms show people constantly engaging in crude, rude, immoral, and cruel banter.

When we speak of reverence, we are talking about much more than mere quietness at our meetings. Reverence is an attitude of mind and heart. It involves a keen sense of God’s majesty and infinite goodness and our unworthiness and our need for Him and His redeeming grace. It includes a profound sense of the sacred and a desire to honor and protect it.

President Boyd K. Packer said: “Reverence invites revelation. . . . No one of us can survive in the world of today, much

less in what it soon will become, without personal inspiration. The spirit of reverence can and should be evident in every organization in the Church and in the lives of every member.”³

As leaders, we see some patterns related to reverence that, if not corrected, may open up chinks in your spiritual armor. For example, we have noticed a growing trend in the Church to arrive late at sacrament meeting, priesthood, and other meetings. Bishops and stake presidents report some members coming in as late as half an hour after the meeting has started. Occasionally there may be a legitimate excuse for not arriving on time (such as having an emergency appendectomy), but in most cases it is because you simply plan poorly or do not care enough. The ideal would be to arrive five or ten minutes early so you can sit in the chapel quietly listening to the prelude music and preparing yourselves to worship. Our sacrament meetings belong to the Savior. When you arrive late, it not only interrupts the reverence of others, but it is a sign of your own disrespect and apathy.

Far too often we see Church members who persist in whispering during the administration of the sacrament. Their minds and hearts are obviously not focused on the emblems of which we partake. It is hard for me to comprehend how anyone who has an understanding and an appreciation for the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ could allow this to happen.

Again, by carefully cultivating an attitude of reverence, you will strengthen the power and the influence the Spirit has in your life. Remember, “reverence invites revelation.”

Add to Your Armor Each Day

The Lord has given us specific doctrines and principles that show us how to clothe ourselves in the armor of God so that we can stand against the powers of evil. I have suggested a few ways to incorporate gospel principles into your lives. In most cases, we are not talking about massive



Reverence is an attitude of mind and heart. It includes a profound sense of the sacred and a desire to honor and protect it.

changes of behavior. As with chain mail, you need simply to add small, individual pieces of armor each day through prayer, scripture study, focusing on things that matter, and acting in a reverent manner.

Let us go forward, keeping the commandments of God and following the admonition of the Apostle Paul:

“Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:10–11). ■

From a talk given at a Church Educational System fireside at Brigham Young University on 3 March 2002.

NOTES

1. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. (1993), “chink,” 199.
2. Ezra Taft Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (1988), 285.
3. “Reverence Invites Revelation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 22, 23.



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Show the pictures of armor in this article. Discuss chain mail and chinks—those small gaps in our armor that could let evil get through. List the six “smaller acts” Elder Ballard says can protect us from evil. Divide the suggestions among family members and ask them to use this article to prepare and teach a short lesson on their assigned topics. Invite them to share a personal story of how they have been blessed by following any of these suggestions.

2. Study and mark the scriptures mentioned in this article. Read and discuss what Elder Ballard said about each scripture. Read or sing “Hope of Israel” (*Hymns*, no. 259). Invite family members to set some personal and family goals to better win the battle against evil. Consider planning a follow-up discussion to evaluate your progress.

3. Make six paper signs of Elder Ballard’s suggestions and scripture references. Place the signs in places appropriate for remembering his counsel. (For example, you could place the sign with suggestion 5 near a television.)

PROTECTING YOUR CHILD FROM GANG INFLUENCE

BY DENNIS J. NORDFELT



On 11 February 1999 the First Presidency began a letter to Church members throughout the world with the following statement: “All about us we see evidence of the corrosive elements targeted to injure our youth.”¹ When I served as the police chief of West Valley City, Utah, I discovered that one of the most corrosive elements in the world today is the influence of gangs.

By definition, a gang is any group of three or more people who form an allegiance to the exclusion of others and engage in unlawful or criminal behavior. The impact of gang influence is reflected by recent studies that

show two crime trends moving in opposite directions: adult crime is decreasing while youth violence is increasing. The most common denominator in the commission of violent crime by young people is gang membership.

Since young people who join gangs come from every neighborhood, race, religion, culture, and economic level, parents need to know how to most effectively protect children from this menace. The following are signs that might indicate your child is identifying with or has become part of a gang:

- Wearing of gang-style clothing. Styles change often; police or local antigang organizations can help you

There are
positive things
YOU CAN DO
to steer
your child away
from gangs.

know what is currently in style.

- Gang-style doodling on homework, notebooks, bedroom walls, or personal property. Look especially for a “moniker” (a gang nickname).
- Significant changes in behavior and attitude, including withdrawal,

secrecy, and disrespect for authority.

- Association with a new group of friends and rejection of relationships with longtime friends and acquaintances.
- Use of hand signs and monikers and a different style of language.
- An interest in gangster rap or heavy metal music.
- Increased contact with law enforcement officers, beginning with truancy, curfew violations, graffiti marking or vandalism, or possession of drugs or alcohol.

If you suspect your child is a gang member or in danger of becoming one, don’t make the mistake of denying your suspicions. Your feelings are probably right; you know this child better than anyone else. Talk with your child, and express your love. But don’t feel you have to deal with the problem alone. Let your bishop or branch president know, and ask him to solicit the help of youth leaders. Take advantage of community agencies,

groups, and school programs that can offer you and your child support, encouragement, and even gang intervention.

You can begin while your children are small to protect them from future gang involvement by strengthening your family. In their letter, the First Presidency urged “parents to

devote their best efforts to the teaching and rearing of their children in gospel principles which will keep them close to the Church.” In fact, every-

thing you do to strengthen the family can help protect your children against the influence of dangerous groups. Every individual has a basic need to belong. If the family—the basic unit of society—isn’t fulfilling that need, something else will. Sometimes, even in strong families, children will make poor choices. But if parents do everything possible to make the family the most attractive option, most children will use their agency wisely.

Efforts to educate your children about gang problems may need to start earlier than you think. Experts advise letting your children know as early as their preschool years that there are people who are not good for them and that gangs are bad. With older children, discussing issues surrounding gangs and violence can be vital to preventing their involvement or to intervening if they are already



involved. If you are not sure how to begin, help may be available. Some communities have organizations or police officers who can offer assistance in combating gang influence.

As with all “corrosive elements targeted to injure our youth,” the most effective way to steer a child away from gang influence is through teaching and applying gospel principles. In their letter, the First Presidency counseled “parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities.” At times it may not seem that these have any effect, but they will. And young people who can be persuaded to be involved in seminary, Sunday meetings, and Church youth programs are more likely to avoid the misery, wasted opportunities, transgression, physical injury, or even death that may come with gang involvement.

Even when parents have done their best, children sometimes become involved with the wrong group. Do not dilute your values or lower your expectations, but be patient and maintain your efforts to communicate. Gang-involved youth usually place a very high value on personal respect. While you must let them know their inappropriate behavior is not acceptable, you must also let them know that you love them and are concerned for them as individuals.

Whatever choices our children might make, our Father in Heaven expects us never to give up on them, just as He will never give up on us. “Children are an heritage of the Lord” (Psalm 127:3), and helping them avoid the pitfalls of the world is worth the best and most inspired efforts all of us can give. ■

Dennis J. Nordfelt is a member of the Jordan North Third Ward, Salt Lake Jordan North Stake.

NOTE

1. See “Letter from the First Presidency,” *Liabona*, Dec. 1999, 1; “Policies, Announcements, and Appointments: Keeping Children Close to the Church,” *Ensign*, June 1999, 80.

BY PAOLO MARTIN N. MACARIOLA

On Monday morning I went to school, where I am one of only five Church members among 1,200 students. A group of boys approached me and invited me to be a member of their group. I was outnumbered. They had body piercings and were taller and bigger than most kids. They bullied those who didn’t join them.

I’m also bigger than most kids, and I considered joining the group because I am shy. I thought that being part of a group would make up for my shyness. I asked



OUTNUMBERED

them, “Can I think it over first?” They said yes.

I asked my parents for their opinion. They said I should pray and read the scriptures. Before I went to sleep, I read the scriptures and *For the Strength of Youth*. It says, “Choose friends who share your values so you can strengthen and encourage each other in living high standards” ([2001], 12). I also prayed for help: “Are they the right friends for me?”

The next morning during class, I opened my wallet-size *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet. I read it again and knew what I had to answer. When they asked me, “So now will you join our group?” I said, without a doubt, “No.”

They asked me why not, and I simply said I didn’t want to get body piercings or to use my strength to hurt others. I said I wanted to be nice to everybody by following Jesus Christ. They looked at me as if to say, “You are wasting an opportunity to have popular friends.”

Today I have a group of friends who are different from that gang. My friends are good students, look clean, and behave well. Now I know that if I seek our Heavenly Father’s help, He will help me. ■

Paolo Martin N. Macariola is a member of the Tangub Ward, Bacolod Philippines South Stake.

When they asked me to join their group, I felt outnumbered. Then I took the matter to the Lord.



Earthly Choices, Eternal Consequences



BY ELDER D. CHAD RICHARDSON

Area Authority Seventy
North America Southwest Area

A wonderful line from the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Carousel* proclaims, “Walk on, walk on with hope in your heart, and you’ll never walk alone.”¹ Hope, a faithful companion, sustains us through life’s trials.

The Book of Mormon powerfully teaches about hope. Mormon, for example, taught that hope is related to our own resurrection: “Ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal” (Moroni 7:41). Alma linked the hope of the Resurrection to the Judgment. He asked, “Do you look forward with an eye of faith, and view this mortal body raised in immortality . . . to stand before God to be judged according to the

deeds which have been done in the mortal body?” (Alma 5:15).

Our ability to have hope in the Resurrection depends upon the choices we make. According to Jacob, our resurrection will bring either joy and peace or misery and fear. If we are unrepentant, “we shall have a perfect knowledge of all our guilt, and our uncleanness, and our nakedness.” The righteous, in contrast, “shall have a perfect knowledge of their enjoyment, and their righteousness, being clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness” (2 Nephi 9:14).

Joy or Misery

Alma personally experienced these two extremes during his own conversion. He



Our ability to have hope in the Resurrection depends upon the choices we make.

explained, “The very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror.

“Oh, thought I, that I could be banished and become extinct both soul and body, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my deeds” (Alma 36:14–15).

In anguish, he cried out to Jesus Christ, who rescued him. “And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!” (Alma 36:20).

Alma’s anguish lasted three days. Those who delay their repentance risk misery similar to his, but for a much longer time—perhaps the entire Millennium (see D&C 76:85, 106; 88:100–106). Eventually, “every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess . . . that he is God” (Mosiah 27:31). Those who have procrastinated, however, will by then have lost the opportunity to believe by faith. In consequence, they will have forfeited priceless blessings. Procrastination invites disaster.

Amulek explained why: “*This* life is the time . . . to prepare to meet God. . . . Behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed. . . . For that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world” (Alma 34:32–34; emphasis added).

Choosing to Follow Him

What will we be like and what company will we keep in “that eternal world”? It all depends upon our choices. Alma escaped Satan’s captivity by choosing to come unto Christ. We can make the same choice. Christ took upon Himself our sins. He bore our temptations. He carried our infirmities and our sicknesses (see Alma 7:11). “He was bruised for our iniquities . . . and with his stripes we are healed” (Mosiah 14:5;

Isaiah 53:5). He offers to deliver us from temptations, cleanse our filthiness, and free us from addictions. He is our hope.

Though His grace is sufficient to save us, He requires that we do all we can (see 2 Nephi 25:23). This means we must follow His example (see 2 Nephi 31:12). In Gethsemane and again on the cross, He submitted to His Father’s will, keeping His flesh subject to the Spirit (see Mosiah 15:5). And throughout His life He was consistent in placing the love of God over worldly enticements (see, for example, Matthew 4:1–10). We can come unto Christ by choosing to follow His example in these two ways. Let’s briefly consider each.

Subjecting the Flesh to the Spirit

We, like the Savior, are precious spirit sons and daughters of God. Our spirits have been clothed in mortal tabernacles. If we let desires of the flesh dominate our spirit, we become carnally minded. Jacob stated, “To be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal” (2 Nephi 9:39). Abinadi taught that people who persist in their carnal nature rebel against God and give the devil power over them (see Mosiah 16:5). Sadly, we see this captivity today among those who indulge in drugs, pornography, immorality, rage, and other sins of the flesh.

Many of God’s commandments, including the commandments to be morally clean, to fast, to control our anger, and to obey the Word of Wisdom, help us break the power of Satan. As we willingly obey, we follow Christ in subjecting carnal desires to the will of the Spirit.

Loving God More Than the World

Lehi’s vision of the tree of life beautifully illustrated the second choice God’s children must make. The tree represented the love of God, while a great and spacious building symbolized the pride of the world. Lehi witnessed two groups who sought the tree and eventually tasted its fruit. Sadly, one group, after tasting the fruit,



THE CONVERSION OF ALMA, BY GARY L. KARP

Alma, with the sons of Mosiah, experienced both misery and joy during his conversion.

became embarrassed because richly dressed people in the great and spacious building ridiculed them. Lehi said, “They fell away into forbidden paths and were lost” (1 Nephi 8:28). What a tragedy! After finding God’s love, they lost it by caring too much about worldly opinion.

Today, the world increasingly ridicules the Church’s standards of morality, modesty, spirituality, honesty, missionary service, and family roles. Lehi said, “We heeded them not” (1 Nephi 8:33). We must do likewise. Church members who set carnal appetites and popularity with the world above gospel standards betray the love of God and give the devil power over them (see 2 Nephi 2:29).

Becoming “Holy, without Spot”

Moroni beautifully concludes the Book of Mormon by inviting all to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32). To do so, we must deny ourselves of all ungodliness, especially unchecked carnal appetites. We must love God with *all* our might, mind, and strength, putting Him above worldly approval. We will then be sanctified through the grace of Christ. If we continue faithful, Christ will declare at our resurrection that we are “holy, without spot” (Moroni 10:33; see also 3 Nephi 27:16). This is our hope. It becomes reality through good choices. If we choose Christ, we will always walk on with hope in our hearts. If we endure, we will *never* walk alone. ■

NOTE

1. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, “You’ll Never Walk Alone” (1945).



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Discuss what family members think is the meaning of the title of this article. Ask them what eternal blessings they hope for. What earthly choices do we need to make to receive these blessings? Testify of the hope and joy we can have by following Christ.
2. As you read this article, make a list of the eternal principles referred to and their opposites. (For example, you could list *hope* and its opposite.) Discuss earthly choices that will naturally lead to each of the ideas on the list. (For example, what earthly choices lead us to hope? To its opposite?) Invite family members to tell of times when the consequences of their earthly choices led them to experience true happiness.
3. Read the “Choosing to Follow Him” section. Discuss Elder Richardson’s two ways for coming unto Christ. What choices do we often make that separate us from eternal happiness?

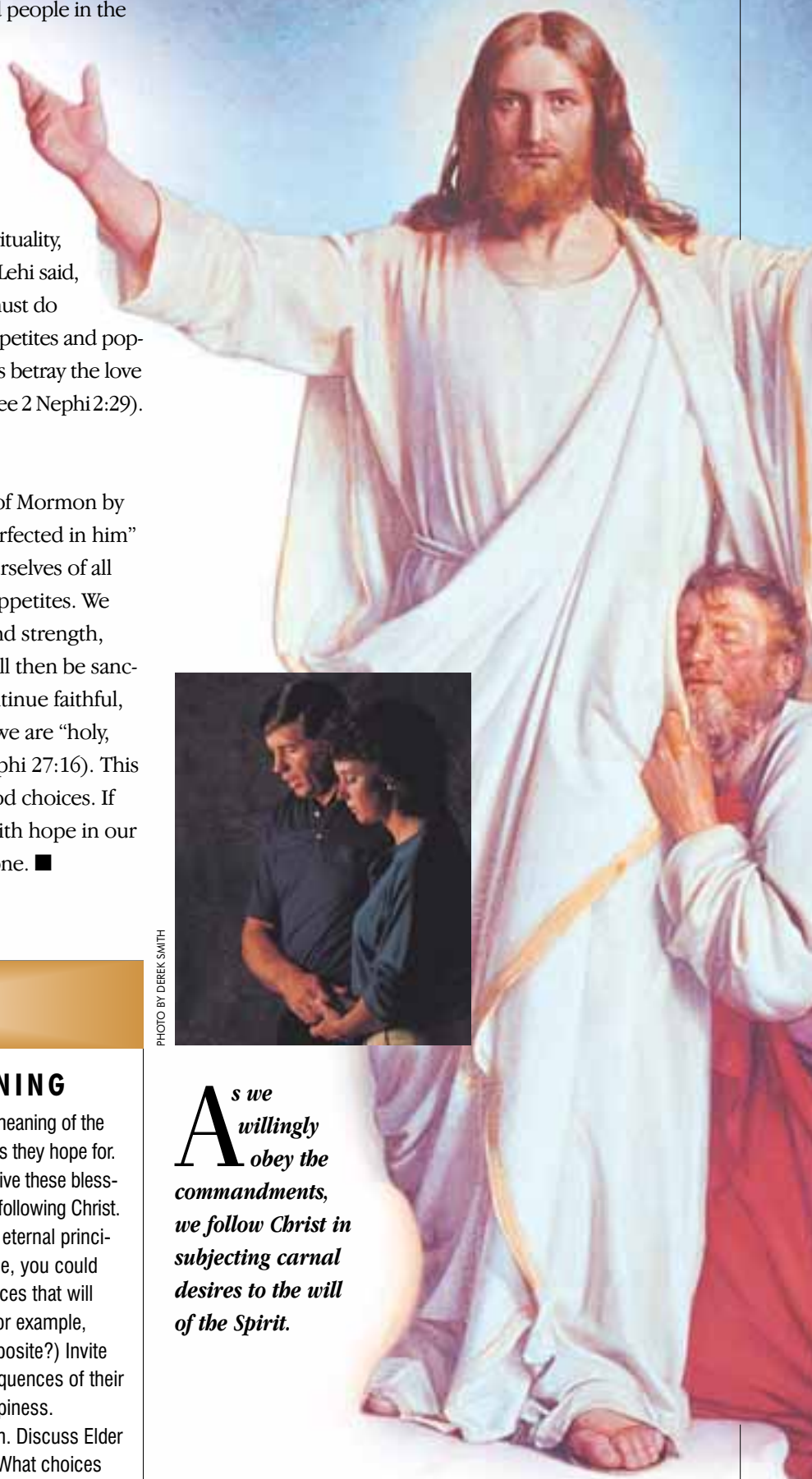


PHOTO BY DEREK SMITH

As we willingly obey the commandments, we follow Christ in subjecting carnal desires to the will of the Spirit.

BOOK/CHAPTERS	MOSIAH 28–29	ALMA 1–44			
AUTHOR/ENGRAVER	MORMON	MORMON			
REIGN OF THE JUDGES			2	5	7
DATE (Some dates are approximate.)	B.C. 92	91	90	87	85

Book of Mormon

TIMES AT A GLANCE

NEPHITES

- King Mosiah gave his sons and others permission to preach the gospel among the Lamanites. They left on a mission lasting approximately 14 years (see Mosiah 28:1–9).
- The people began to measure their years according to the reign of the judges. Alma and King Mosiah died (see Mosiah 29:44–47; Alma 1:1).
- Amlici's petition to be king was rejected by the voice of the people. A civil war erupted, and Amlici and his supporters were defeated (see Alma 2:1–19).
- Strengthened by the Lord, the Nephites defeated the Lamanites in two great battles (see Alma 2:27–3:27).
- Nehor, a false priest who endorsed priestcraft, was executed for his crimes. The Church prospered despite internal contention and persecution from unbelievers (see Alma 1).

LANANITES

- The sons of Mosiah separated in the land of the Lamanites. Ammon went to the land of Ishmael, and Aaron went to the city of Jerusalem (see Alma 17:6–19; 21:1–2).
- The Lamanites, joined by the Amlicites, went to war against the Nephites (see Alma 2:20–26).

ANTI-NEPHI-LEHIES

The converted Lamanites called themselves Anti-Nephi-Lehies and became friendly with the Nephites (see Alma 23).

- Ammon became a servant to King Lamoni. The king was miraculously converted, many of his people were baptized, and the Church was established (see Alma 17:20–19:36; 21:18–23).

- Aaron and his brethren preached without success and were cast into prison (see Alma 21:1–14).



- Ammon and King Lamoni met Lamoni's father, king over all the Lamanites. Aaron and his brethren were rescued from prison (see Alma 20; 21:14–17).

- Aaron taught the gospel to Lamoni's father, who was miraculously converted and proclaimed religious liberty (see Alma 22–23:3).

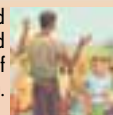
MAJOR TEACHINGS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

SOME STATEMENTS OF GOSPEL PRINCIPLES

(See chart on page 28.)

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Alma the Younger asked the people if they had been spiritually born of God (see Alma 5).



1 3 5 7
2 4 6 8 9

10
82



12
80



15
77



18
74



Korihor, an anti-Christ, ridiculed Christ, the Atonement, and the spirit of prophecy. He was struck dumb by God and died (see Alma 30).

Alma the Younger led a mission to reclaim the apostate Zoramites. Many poor among them were converted (see Alma 31–34).

Alma and Amulek continued to preach repentance. Peace and righteousness were established (see Alma 16:12–21).

Nephite armies under Captain Moroni defeated the army of Zerahemnah (see Alma 43–44).



Alma the Younger and Amulek were imprisoned and miraculously delivered (see Alma 14).

Zoram, a Nephite captain, defeated the Lamanites in a horrific battle. The prophecy of Abinadi was fulfilled (see Alma 16:4–11; 25:3–12).

The Anti-Nephi-Lehies began to live among the Nephites and became known as the people of Ammon (see Alma 27:25–30).

The Anti-Nephi-Lehies buried their swords, covenanting never again to destroy human life (see Alma 24:1–19).

One thousand and five Anti-Nephi-Lehies were killed without resisting. Impressed by this valiancy, more Lamanites were converted, and the war ended (see Alma 24:21–30; 25:1).

Because of threats, Ammon and the Anti-Nephi-Lehies decided to petition the Nephites for protection (see Alma 27:1–15).

Some Lamanites went to battle against the Anti-Nephi-Lehies (see Alma 24:20).



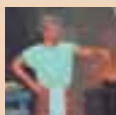
The Lamanites went to war against the Nephites and destroyed the city of Ammonihah (see Alma 16:1–3; 25:2).

Lamanites continued to be converted. Ammon gloried in the Lord for the success of the mission among the Lamanites (see Alma 25:13–26:37).

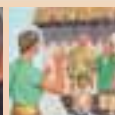
The Lamanites went to war against the Nephites. Tens of thousands on both sides died (see Alma 28).

The wicked Zoramites and Lamanites joined in a war against the Nephites (see Alma 35:10–13).

Alma the Younger prophesied of Christ and His Atonement (see Alma 7).



Alma the Younger taught of entering the rest of the Lord (see Alma 12–13).



Alma the Younger taught how to acquire faith (see Alma 32–33).



Amulek explained the need for the great and last sacrifice (see Alma 34).



Alma the Younger told his sons of his conversion (see Alma 36–42).



11 13 15 17 19 21 23
10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24

25

26 27

28 29

30 31

33 35 37 39 41 43 45 47
32 34 36 38 40 42 44 46 48

BOOK ALMA 45–63
AUTHOR MORMON

JUDGES	19	20	26	27	28	29
DATE	B.C. 73	72	66	65	64	63
	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲

NEPHITES

- Amalickiah conspired to be king. Captain Moroni raised the title of liberty, and Amalickiah fled to the Lamanites (see Alma 45:20–46:41).
- Alma the Younger was taken up by the Spirit (see Alma 45:1–19).
- A dispute caused by Nephite dissenter Morianton led to civil war. Captain Moroni and Teancum ended the disturbance by force. Pahoran became the chief judge (see Alma 50:25–40).
- King-men caused dissension by seeking to change the law to set up a king. Captain Moroni swiftly ended the rebellion (see Alma 51:1–21).
- Teancum stopped the northward march of Amalickiah and killed him as he slept (see Alma 51:28–37).
- The Nephites recaptured the city of Mulek (see Alma 52:4–40).
- The western city of Antiparah was retaken. Miraculously none of the 2,000 young warriors was killed (see Alma 56:11–57:5).
- The western city of Cumeni surrendered to Helaman’s forces. A Lamanite army attempted to retake it but was defeated in a great battle. Again, none of Helaman’s valiant young warriors was killed (see Alma 57:6–36).
- Captain Moroni refused to exchange prisoners. His forces retook the eastern city of Gid and freed the Nephite prisoners without bloodshed (see Alma 55).

During a period of peace, Captain Moroni and Helaman prepared the people for war (see Alma 48:7–25).



ANTI-NEPHI-LEHIES

Helaman led a group of 2,000 young warriors to defend along the western front (see Alma 53:10–23; 56:2–10).



LAMANITES

Amalickiah attacked the Nephites again and captured many cities along the eastern seashore (see Alma 51:22–27).



Amalickiah murdered the Lamanite king, placed himself on the throne, and incited the people to war (see Alma 47:1–48:6).

A great Lamanite army attacked the Nephites but was defeated in a terrible battle at the city of Noah (see Alma 49).

● Ammoron, Amalickiah’s brother, became king. The Lamanites retreated to the city of Mulek (see Alma 52:2–3).

Ammoron attacked along the western seashore and captured many cities (see Alma 53:8–9; 56:12–15).

● Ammoron sent a letter to Captain Moroni requesting an exchange of prisoners (see Alma 54).

MAJOR TEACHINGS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

GOSPEL PRINCIPLES
(See chart on page 28.)

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

49 50

51

FROM LEFT: COME FORTH, BY WALTER RANE, FROM BY THE HAND OF MORMON, MAY NOT BE COPIED; DEATH OF AMALICKIAH, BY MINERVA K. TEICHERT, MAY NOT BE COPIED; TWO THOUSAND STRIPLING WARRIORS, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG; THEY PUT THEIR TRUST IN GOD, BY WALTER RANE, FROM BY THE HAND OF MORMON, MAY NOT BE COPIED; CAPTAIN MORONI AND THE TITLE

HELAN 1-5 MORMON

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62
▲

39
53
▲

42
50
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62
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- Captain Moroni wrote an angry letter to Pahoran, demanding more support. Pahoran wrote back asking for military aid to put down an uprising by the king-men in Zarahemla (see Alma 53:8-9; 60-61).

- Captain Moroni sent aid to Helaman's army, gathered other forces, and joined Pahoran to put down the king-men's rebellion (see Alma 62:1-12).

- Captain Moroni and Pahoran retook the eastern city of Nephihah. The Lamanites were driven out of the land (see Alma 62:14-42).



- Captain Moroni retired and Helaman returned to preaching. The people prospered and were righteous (see Alma 62:43-52).



- Many Nephites departed to the land northward. Hagoth sailed with many into the west sea. Helaman, son of Helaman, took possession of the sacred records (see Alma 63:1-13).

- Pahoran, son of Pahoran, was elected chief judge, but he was murdered by Kishkumen. Pacumoni was elected chief judge (see Helaman 1:1-13).



- Helaman, son of Helaman, was elected chief judge (see Helaman 2:1-2).

- The people prospered and lived in peace. The Church grew and was strengthened. Nephi, son of Helaman, became the chief judge (see Helaman 3).

- Contention weakened the Church. Nephi dissenters stirred up the Lamanites to war (see Helaman 4:1-4).

Moronihah recaptured half of the lost lands. But the spiritually weak Nephites were often defeated because of wickedness (see Helaman 4:9-26).

- Nephi resigned as chief judge. With his brother Lehi, he preached repentance to the Nephites and the Lamanites (see Helaman 5:1-19).

GADIANTON ROBBERS

- Kishkumen tried to assassinate Helaman but failed. Gadianton's secret band fled into the wilderness (see Helaman 2:3-14).

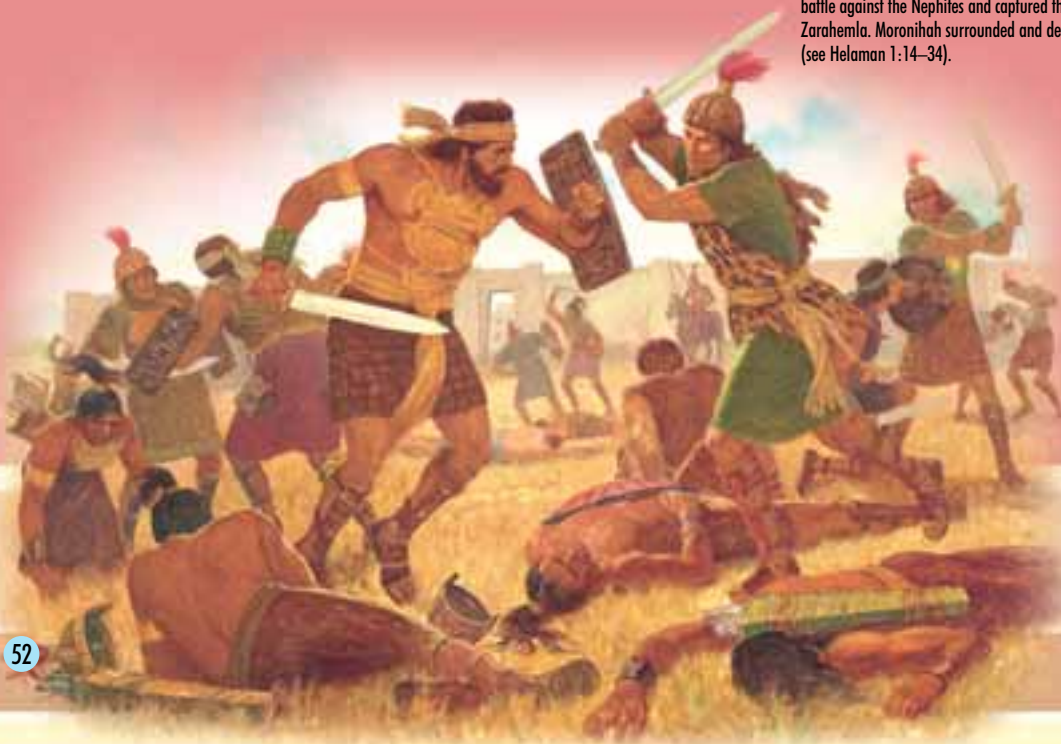


- The Lamanites conquered the eastern city of Nephihah (see Alma 59).

- Lamanites, stirred by dissenting Nephites, went to war against the Nephites and were defeated by Moronihah, son of Captain Moroni (see Alma 63:14-17).

- Coriantumr, a Nephite dissenter, led the Lamanites to battle against the Nephites and captured the city of Zarahemla. Moronihah surrounded and defeated him (see Helaman 1:14-34).

- The Lamanites and Nephite dissenters captured many Nephite lands (see Helaman 4:5-8).



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BOOK	HELANAN 5–16		3 NEPHI 1–30			
AUTHOR	MORMON		MORMON			
JUDGES	63	69	86	91		
DATE	B.C. 29	23	6	A.D. 1	30	34
	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲

NEPHITES

Because of the increasing threat of the Gadianton robbers, Nephi told the people to repent or perish. He announced the murder of the chief judge and revealed his killer (see Helaman 7–9).

The Lord gave Nephi the sealing power. Nephi asked the Lord to send a famine. The people repented, and peace was restored for a short time (see Helaman 10:1–11:23).

The Nephites again became prideful and wicked (see Helaman 11:36–38).



Samuel the Lamanite prophesied of the destruction of the Nephites and the signs of Christ’s birth and death (see Helaman 13–16).

Nephi, son of Nephi, took possession of the sacred records. The sign of Christ’s birth was given, and the people began to measure time from this event. Many repented and were baptized (see 3 Nephi 1:1–26; 2:5–8).

Satan led many to forget or deny the signs of Christ’s birth (see 3 Nephi 2:1–4).

The Nephites and the converted Lamanites became one people and called themselves Nephites (see 3 Nephi 2:14–19).

Lachoneus, the governor, and Gidgiddoni, the chief captain, led a successful campaign to destroy the robbers. The people forsook their sins and served God (see 3 Nephi 3–5).

Corrupt leaders secretly murdered the prophets and took over the government. The people divided into tribes, thus destroying the government. Nephi boldly preached repentance, but few were converted to the Lord (see 3 Nephi 6–7).

The signs of Christ’s death were given. Many cities and people were destroyed (see 3 Nephi 8).

Jesus Christ appeared from heaven and taught His gospel. He gave authority and organized His Church, then ascended into heaven (see 3 Nephi 9–18).

Jesus Christ again appeared, taught the people, and ascended. His disciples ministered and baptized in His name (see 3 Nephi 19–26).

Jesus Christ showed Himself to His disciples and taught them concerning His Church and gospel. He promised three disciples they could remain on earth until His Second Coming. They were then translated (see 3 Nephi 27–28).

GADIANTON ROBBERS

The Gadianton robbers enticed the Nephites to corruption and murder. The Lamanites refused to support the robbers (see Helaman 6:15–41).

A new group of Gadianton robbers caused great havoc for the Nephites and the Lamanites (see Helaman 11:24–27).

The Gadianton robbers became so numerous and powerful that they threatened the safety and rights of all people (see 3 Nephi 2:11–13).

LAMANITES

Nephi and Lehi were cast into a Lamanite prison, then miraculously freed. A voice commanded the people to repent, and many were converted (see Helaman 5:20–52).



The Lamanites were firm and steadfast in the faith (see Helaman 13:1; 15:4–10).

Lamanite missionaries were sent to preach to the Nephites. Both peoples enjoyed peace, prosperity, and spiritual strength (see Helaman 6:1–14).



MAJOR TEACHINGS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Samuel the Lamanite prophesied of the signs of Christ’s birth and death (see Helaman 14).



Jesus Christ taught the Nephites His gospel (see 3 Nephi 11–18).



Jesus Christ expounded all things (see 3 Nephi 19–26).



GOSPEL PRINCIPLES

(See chart on page 28.)

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BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

New Testament Gospels and Epistles

35

231

321

400

1823–1830

ONE PEOPLE

- The Nephites and the Lamanites were all converted to the Church of Christ. The people had all things in common among them and lived in peace and joy, having no wickedness among them (see 4 Nephi 1:1–23).

- Great pride and wickedness spread across the land. Many false churches arose, and the Saints were persecuted (see 4 Nephi 1:24–34).

The people divided into two groups. Nephites were the true believers in Christ, and Lamanites were those who rejected the gospel (see 4 Nephi 1:35–41).



NEPHITES

- Ammaron, great-grandson of Nephi (one of the Savior's disciples), hid the sacred records (see 4 Nephi 1:47–49).

- Ammaron instructed Mormon regarding the sacred records (see Mormon 1).

Mormon, an army general and spiritual leader, led his people to many victories over the Lamanites (see Mormon 2:1–3:16).

- Mormon took possession of the sacred records at age 24 (see Mormon 1:2–4; 2:17).

- Mormon compiled a short version of the approximately 1,000-year history of his people (see Words of Mormon 1:3–5, 9–11; Mormon 3:17–4:23).

- Mormon led his people in their last battles. Mormon turned over the sacred records to his son Moroni and was killed. The Nephite nation was destroyed (see Mormon 5–8:6).

GADIANTON ROBBERS

- A new group of Gadianton robbers gained support and spread throughout the land (see 4 Nephi 1:42–46).

LAMANITES

- Moroni finished the record of his father, abridged the Jaredite record, and wrote the book of Moroni. He hid the records (see Mormon 8–9; Moroni).



Moroni appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and gave him the sacred records. They were translated by the gift and power of God and published to the world as the Book of Mormon (see Book of Mormon title page; Joseph Smith—History 1).



Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to build the Church upon His gospel (see 3 Nephi 27).

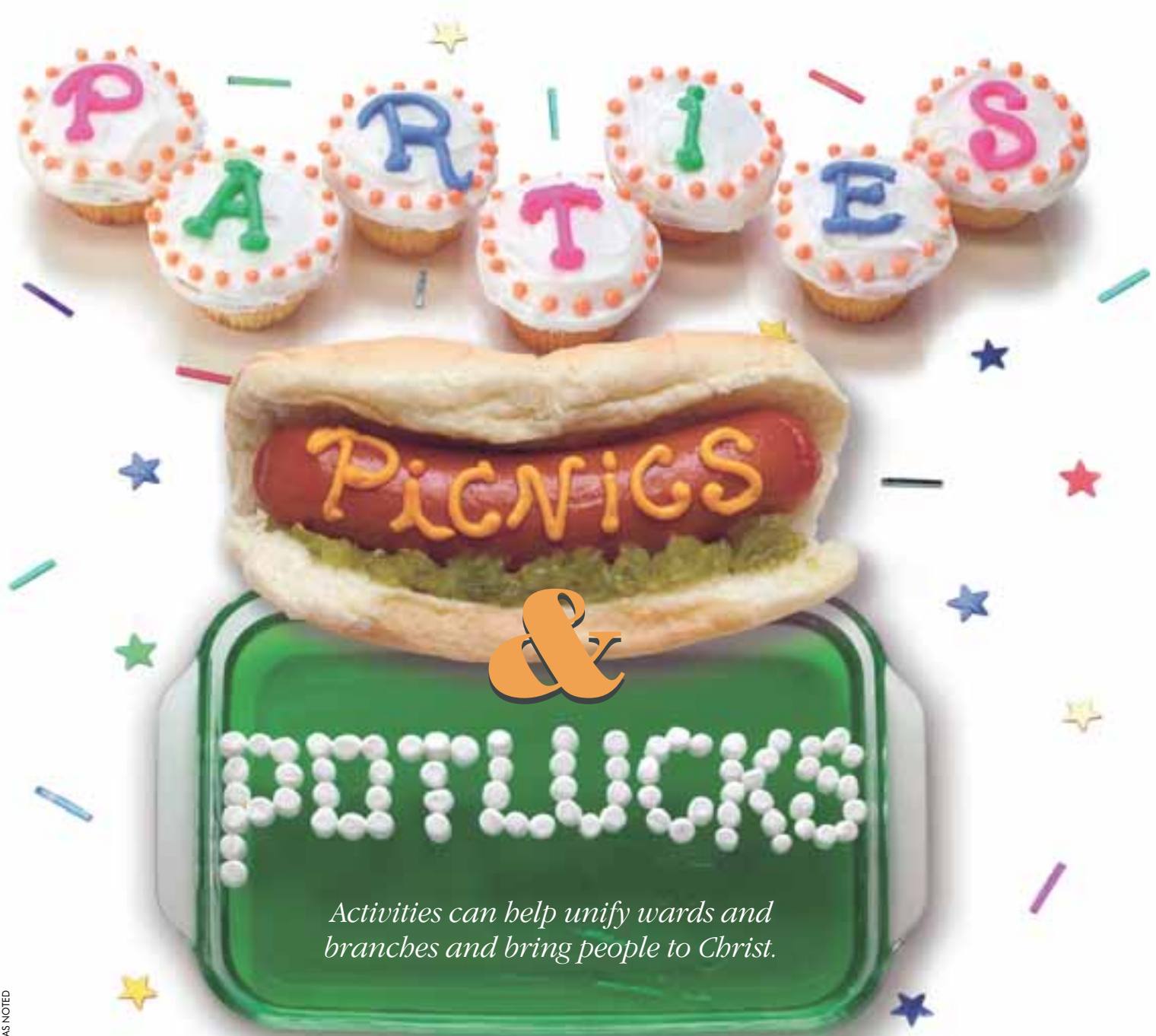
Mormon wrote that all little children are alive in Christ (see Moroni 8).

Moroni exhorted all to come unto Christ and be perfected in Him (see Moroni 10).

Book of Mormon Times at a Glance

Some Statements of Gospel Principles

Reference	Principle	Reference	Principle
1 Alma 1:25–30	We can experience continual peace even when there is great persecution.	37 Alma 32:27–43	A testimony comes from exercising faith in and experimenting with—obeying—the word of God.
2 Alma 17:2–3	Searching the scriptures and giving ourselves to much fasting and prayer invite the blessings of the Holy Ghost into our lives.	38 Alma 33	Searching the scriptures, praying, and believing in the Son are ways to develop testimony.
3 Alma 17:11	Being patient in afflictions sets a good example and allows us to be instruments in the Lord's hands.	39 Alma 34:27–29	We are not only to pray for the poor but to visit them and impart of our substance.
4 Alma 17:25; 18:17	Desiring to be of service to others is an important part of teaching them the gospel.	40 Alma 34:32–35	This life is the time to prepare to meet God.
5 Alma 18:9–10	When we serve others, we should serve with distinction.	41 Alma 36:3	Those who trust in God will be supported in their trials and troubles.
6 Alma 18:16, 34	We can teach with power only when filled with the Spirit of God.	42 Alma 36:17–19	By our repentance and the mercy of the Savior, we are freed from the pain of our sins and no longer distressed by their memory.
7 Alma 18:40–41; 19:6	Those who believe and then repent and cry unto Him for mercy will be filled with light.	43 Alma 37:6	Small and simple things can bring about great things.
8 Alma 19:36	The Lord's arm is extended to all people who will repent and believe on His name.	44 Alma 37:37	When we counsel with the Lord in all our doings, He will direct our paths.
9 Alma 3:19	The condemnation of God comes upon us only as the result of our unwise choices.	45 Alma 38:12	When we bridle all our passions, we will be filled with love.
10 Alma 4:19; 31:5	The preaching of the word of God can pull down the pride, craftiness, and contentions of people.	46 Alma 39:13	Those who have led others astray by their example are to return and admit their faults and wrongdoing.
11 Alma 5:7–9	Our souls can be illuminated by the light of the everlasting word and loosed from the chains of hell.	47 Alma 40:6, 11–14	Upon death all enter the spirit world—the righteous to paradise and the wicked to outer darkness.
12 Alma 5:11–14	By faith in the living God and in the words of the prophets, we can have a mighty change of heart, receive His image in our countenance, and be born of God.	48 Alma 41:10	Wickedness can never result in happiness.
13 Alma 5:21–25	We can be saved in the kingdom of God only by being cleansed from the stain of sin through the blood of Christ.	49 Alma 45–47	Defending country, family, and church, preserving rights and freedoms, and supporting others in these ideals are justifiable reasons for war.
14 Alma 5:33–60	We are the sheep of the Good Shepherd only as we hearken to His voice.	50 Alma 48:14–16	We are not to give offense or to cause war but are justified in defending ourselves at the Lord's command.
15 Alma 5:61–62	As prophets often do, Alma spoke by way of command to Church members and by way of invitation to others.	51 Alma 53:8–9	Enemies can gain control when there are internal dissensions and iniquity.
16 Alma 7:7–13	The birth, ministry, atoning sacrifice, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ are of greatest importance.	52 Alma 60:23	The inward vessel should be cleansed first, then the outer vessel.
17 Alma 7:14–16	When we have faith in the Savior, are baptized unto repentance, washed from our sins and born again, lay aside the sins which easily beset us, and keep the commandments of God, we shall have eternal life.	53 Helaman 4:24–26	When we sin, we lose the Spirit and become weak.
18 Alma 7:23	A follower of Christ is humble, submissive, gentle, easy to be entreated, patient, long-suffering, temperate, diligent, prayerful, and thankful.	54 Helaman 5:12	When we build upon the rock of our Redeemer, no power can drag us down to the gulf of misery and endless woe.
19 Alma 9:23; 24:30	Those who knowingly transgress against God are in a worse state than those who have no knowledge of Him.	55 Helaman 15:3	The Lord chastens those He loves.
20 Alma 11:37–46; 12:19	Teaching and bearing testimony of Christ, His Atonement, and His judgment can convict and even astonish people.	56 3 Nephi 7:15–22	Signs or miracles are not a sufficient basis of faith or conversion.
21 Alma 12:9–11	The mysteries of God—the greater portion of His word—are given to us according to the heed and diligence we give to Him.	57 3 Nephi 11:29	The spirit of contention is of the devil.
22 Alma 12:30–32	God first revealed the plan of redemption; then He gave His commandments.	58 3 Nephi 12:1–2	Those with humility and faith who are baptized with water and receive the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost receive a remission of sins.
23 Alma 13:1–13	God teaches us through those who are called after His holy priesthood so that by our faith, repentance, and righteousness, we can enter His rest.	59 3 Nephi 12:23–24	When we desire to come unto Christ, we must first be reconciled with others.
24 Alma 14:11; 60:13	The Lord sometimes allows the wicked to destroy the righteous; the exercise of His judgment is just.	60 3 Nephi 13:14–15	If we forgive others, God will forgive us.
25 Alma 15:3–11	The realization of guilt for our sins can cause great anguish of mind and body and can impel us to faith and repentance.	61 3 Nephi 13:19–21	Set your heart upon and seek those heavenly treasures that endure forever.
26 Alma 24:27	The Lord works in many ways to bring about the salvation of His people.	62 3 Nephi 13:33	Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.
27 Alma 26:11–12	Through the Lord's strength we may bring about much righteousness.	63 3 Nephi 14:24–27	If we follow the teachings of Christ, we will not fall when the storms of life come.
28 Alma 27:18	Exceeding joy comes to the truly penitent and humble seeker of happiness.	64 3 Nephi 18:32	We are to continue to minister to the unrepentant.
29 Alma 28:13–14	Sin is the cause of great inequality among humankind. Those who labor for the Lord help rectify this inequality.	65 3 Nephi 26:6–10	If we believe the Book of Mormon, God will manifest even greater things to us.
30 Alma 29:4–5	God grants unto us according to our desires, whether they be unto good or evil.	66 3 Nephi 27:10	If the Church is called in the Lord's name and built upon His gospel, the Father will show forth His works in it.
31 Alma 29:6–9	We should desire to perform the specific work God has called us to do.	67 4 Nephi 1:15–16	When the love of God dwells in the hearts of a people, there will be no divisions or evils but they will be children of Christ and heirs to the kingdom of God.
32 Alma 30:40–44	All things denote there is a God.	68 Moroni 6:4	Church members are to be nourished by the good word of God to keep them in the right way.
33 Alma 30:60	The devil will not support his children at the last day.	69 Moroni 7:6–10	When we offer a gift grudgingly or without real intent, it is not counted unto us for righteousness.
34 Alma 31:38	The Lord gives strength to the righteous and their afflictions are swallowed up.	70 Moroni 7:16–17	Whatever invites us to do good and to love God is of God. Whatever invites us to do evil is of the devil.
35 Alma 32:13–16	Blessed are those who are compelled to be humble. More blessed are those who are humble because of the word of God.	71 Moroni 7:40–48	Faith in Christ, hope, and charity are essential for salvation in the kingdom of God.
36 Alma 32:21	Faith is not a perfect knowledge but a hope for true things which are not seen.	72 Moroni 8:8–22	Little children are redeemed through the Atonement of Christ and do not need baptism.
		73 Moroni 10:3–5	When we read, remember the Lord's mercy, ponder, and pray in faith about the Book of Mormon, the Holy Ghost will reveal the truth of it to us.
		74 Moroni 10:32–33	When we come unto Christ and are perfected in Him, deny ourselves of all ungodliness, and love God, His grace is sufficient to sanctify us.



Activities can help unify wards and branches and bring people to Christ.

Why do wards and branches have activities? Can a ward dinner, talent show, or softball game really help fulfill the mission of the Church—to invite all to come unto Christ?

The answer is yes, if approached in the right spirit. Here members explain their insights into the purpose of ward activities, as well as sharing practical ideas for activities that have been successful. While most of these comments are directed to those planning activities for their entire ward or branch, the concepts can be applied by anyone involved in planning a Church activity, whether it be for the Primary, Young Men and Young Women, the Relief Society, or a priesthood quorum.

A Spiritual Calling

When I was first called and set apart to be the activities chair in my ward, my bishop said in the blessing that this calling was a spiritual one and was meant to strengthen individuals and families in our ward. I was surprised. I remember thinking, “How can planning parties be spiritual?” But I took this concept to heart, and I learned a lot along the way.

Our activities helped the members of our ward to love and care for one another and share each other’s burdens. People were unified and talents were multiplied as service was rendered with love. I learned how the Lord works through people to touch others in need. I saw examples again and again at something as simple as a ward potluck

dinner. And now I understand why the calling is first and foremost a spiritual one. I know it was for me.

Pattie Moss, Dimple Dell Ward, Sandy Utah Crescent Stake

Dispelling Some Myths

To help activities committees plan successful and unifying ward activities, we need to eliminate the myths that currently haunt some wards:

Myth 1: A successful activity requires an abundance of food to be served. Where possible, all ward members should be able to enjoy the activities and not be trapped in the kitchen. Simple refreshments such as rolls and chili at a pioneer activity or punch and cookies at a family dance are perfectly acceptable refreshments.

Myth 2: It is impossible to reach the needs and interests of all ward members. To help unify a ward, we must make an effort to help all members feel included.

THE SUCCESS OF AN ACTIVITY



"We should bear in mind that the success of a given activity cannot always be judged by its size. Rather, it must be judged by its effect on the lives of those participating."

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Strengthening the Inner Self," Ensign, Feb. 2003, 4.

Having a variety of activities will enable this to happen. For example, a regular sporting activity could make some feel excluded, but with a little creativity, this doesn't need to be the case. You might plan to have the activity at a park where there is playground equipment for

the children, grassy areas where mothers can spread blankets, and shady areas where the elderly can set up lawn chairs. Provide megaphones and pom-poms to the spectators, and ask them to make up cheers. Let other spectators act as judges or referees.

Myth 3: The youth can always serve, clean up, or provide child care. Use youth sparingly. We should most often encourage them to participate in fun and testimony-building ward activities rather than always asking them to serve in the kitchen or to babysit.

Myth 4: The longer an activity, the better. Some of



**Well-planned activities
can increase unity and
strengthen relationships
among families and
ward members.**



the following ideas may help limit the time a ward activity takes: Start the activity promptly. Have the structured, quiet, or spiritual part of the activity either first or last—right after

the opening prayer or just before the closing prayer. Keep the activity flowing without long waiting periods between the program, games, speakers, or refreshments. Have a specific ending time and stick to it so that those involved in the cleanup can get home at a reasonable hour.

Myth 5: The only activities that bring people to Christ are firesides, spiritual programs, and temple trips.

An activity that nourishes the spirit, strengthens the body, or enlightens the mind can be an appropriate activity. Appreciating cultural arts, developing talents, celebrating holidays and seasons, and learning to work together, serve one another, and enjoy your ward family can help bring people to Christ.

Katbryn Taylor Quist, Fort McMurray Ward, Edmonton Alberta North Stake

Ward Traditions

As ward activities chair, one thing I found to be particularly beneficial in keeping a ward close was to have traditional activities. Just as traditions bind families together, traditional activities can do the same for wards.



In our ward, traditional activities include our annual chili cook-off (a tasty competition between the high priests and elders quorums), a pioneer picnic on the 24th of July, the annual “ice cream dip”

(an ice cream party held at the neighborhood swimming pool), and regular service projects.

One tradition that has been particularly successful in strengthening ward bonds has been the organizing of ward dinner groups. Two to three times a year, the ward is divided into eight to ten groups. Hosts are assigned and given a list of members to invite. The activities committee usually chooses a theme such as “soup and salad night,” “international cuisine,” or “anything goes.” Food assignments are given to the guests so the load is not too heavy on the host families. Mixers are also planned that allow those attending the dinner to become better acquainted with one another. These dinner groups allow ward members to associate with those they might not otherwise know and to mingle on a smaller scale.

Thebissa Y. Zollinger, Willow Creek Ward, Denver Colorado Stake

Fellowshipping through Activities

While serving as senior missionary companions, we have been involved in planning activities to help our small branch grow and become more unified. We have found it doesn’t cost much money to have fun. We often have potluck suppers, which save on cost and cleanup time. Our activities have included a talent show, a Valentine’s dance, and a game night. We have been able to fellowship those who are less active or are not members, and we have seen the attendance in our little branch grow.

Mary Hall Walker and Gayle Robinson, Barnsley Branch, Sheffield England Stake



Scheduling

As the ward activities committee chair, I schedule dates for ward activities with the ward council about six months in advance and then schedule the building, park, or homes of members. We always encourage members to bring friends, neighbors, and visiting and home teaching families. At activities where children are included, I try to have a table of coloring or crafts for them to work on while the activity is getting started.

While most of our ward activities are for the entire family, it is also good to plan adults-only activities to let adults have time to visit without the distraction of children. In our ward we hold a separate pizza party for the children and youth so couples don't have to get baby-sitters and so the children and youth have a fun event to attend as well.

Cynthia P. Kofford, Crescent 10th Ward, Sandy Utah Crescent Stake

Spotlight Nights

In my ward, we occasionally planned "special expertise spotlight nights." We would invite someone with a special expertise to give a brief lecture on that topic. Lectures on travel, local history, wills, and so on were well attended. We usually had these events in an individual's home, and people of other faiths were invited to attend. We also asked people who

were not members to help us plan activities. I believe we greatly increased the feeling of unity in our area and brought more people to Christ.

Gordon Wilson, Ensign First Ward, Salt Lake Ensign Stake

Feeling the Spirit

Our activities committee had two major goals for our activities: First, we tried to make each one enjoyable so that members would want to be there and would want to invite their friends. Second, we tried to make sure there was always an opportunity to feel the Spirit. Here are two of the many successful activities we planned:

International dinner. At this activity, several returned missionaries entertained us with songs and skits. We ate dishes with international flavor and ended the evening with excerpts from the Church video *An Ensign to the Nations* (item no. 53980; U.S. \$6.00, available at distribution centers), which explains how the gospel was introduced into nations around the world.

Potluck/carnival. Our potluck supper was followed by carnival-style activities, including a mini golf putt and a bean bag toss, which had been set up around the cultural hall. Toward





the end of the activity, ward members gathered for a short Church video on families, such as *Together Forever* (53411; U.S. \$4.00) or *On the Way Home* (53062; U.S. \$4.00). It was wonderful to have fun together and then end

the evening with the opportunity to feel the Spirit.

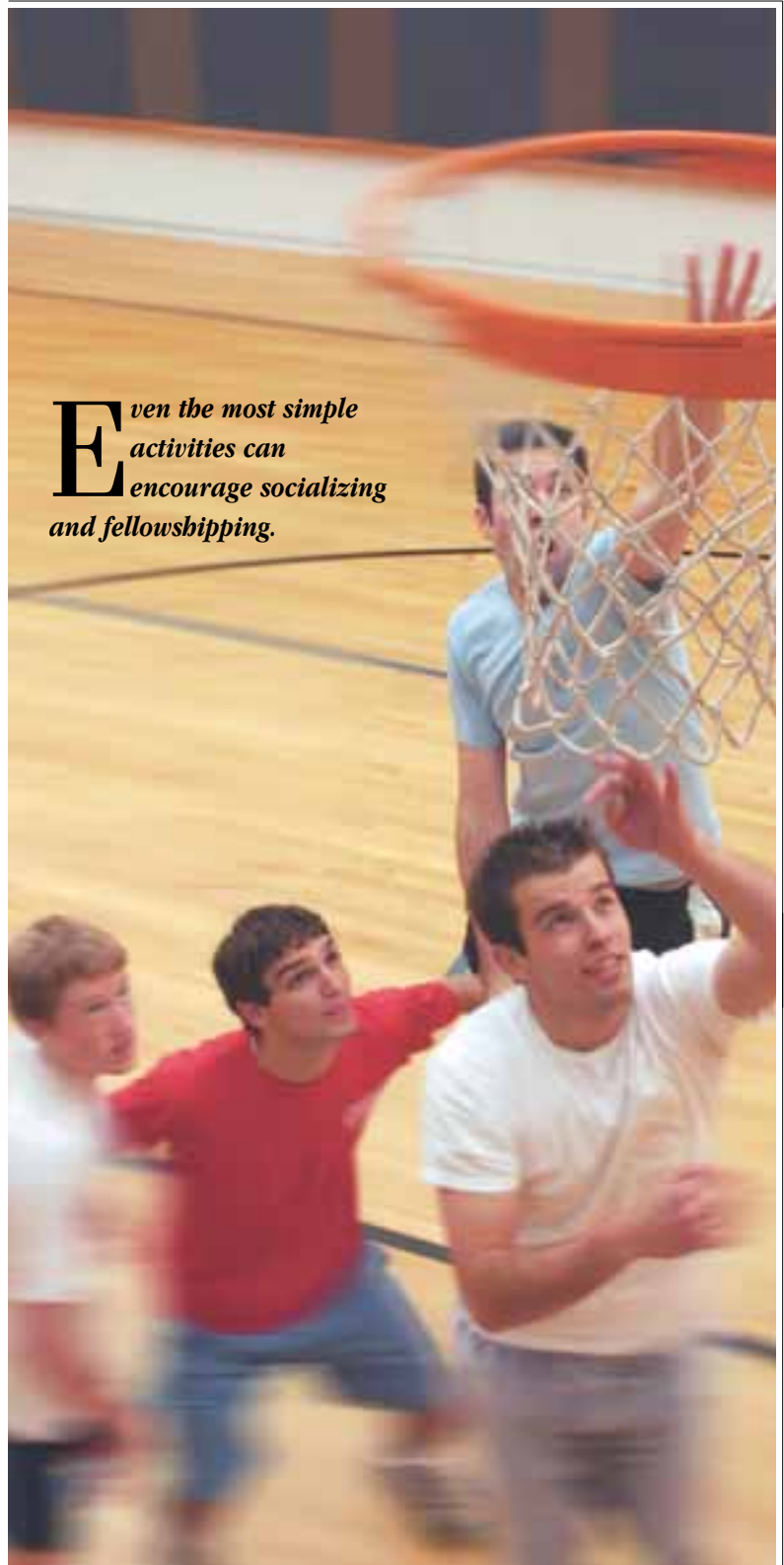
Kristy Sawtelle, Buffalo Ridge Ward, Phoenix Arizona Deer Valley Stake

Simple Activities

Over the years I have observed that the best ward activities seem to be simple ones that emphasize service, strengthening testimonies, missionary work, and activation. Often all it takes to turn a service project into a fun activity is to provide refreshments and some structure to encourage socializing and fellowshiping.

These are several of my favorite activities:

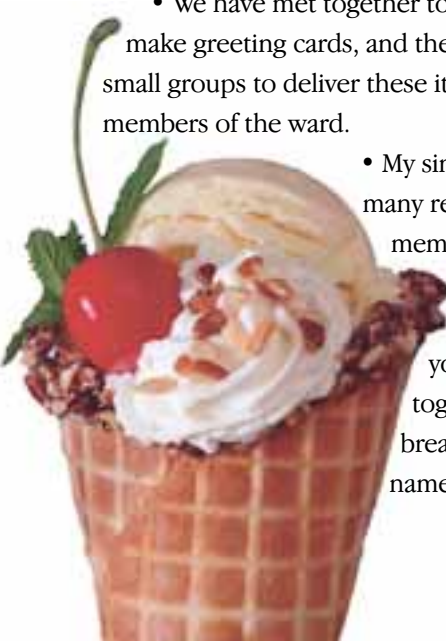
- We have had socials where the entire ward has been invited to meet new converts, less-active members, investigators, and those who have recently moved into the ward. The guests of honor are then spotlighted or in other ways introduced to the group.
- We have met together to bake cookies and make greeting cards, and then we break into small groups to deliver these items to less-active members of the ward.
- My singles ward often had many records of less-active members with whom no one had had contact for some time. The young adults would meet together for breakfast and then break into pairs with lists of the names and addresses of these



Even the most simple activities can encourage socializing and fellowshiping.

members. We would visit them, see if their addresses were correct, and welcome them to the ward. We would then meet back together to share the information. This activity greatly assisted our fellowshiping efforts. ■

Kimberley Hirschi, San Diego 12th Ward, San Diego California North Stake







One Million in Mexico

As Mexican members reach a milestone in history, their faith and examples are influencing more and more lives in their country.

BY DON L. SEARLE
Church Magazines

Sometime this year, if it has not happened already, Mexico will become the first country outside the United States to reach the significant membership milestone of 1,000,000 Latter-day Saints.

This milestone is indicative of the way the Church has blossomed in Mexico and Central and South America in recent years. While preaching of the gospel began well over 100 years ago in Mexico (see “Important Events for the Church in Mexico,” p. 42), Church growth accelerated beginning in the 1950s and 1960s. When President Spencer W. Kimball became the 12th President of the Church in 1973, there were just over 3.3 million members throughout the world; now Mexico and Central and South America alone have more members than that.

Many members bear testimony that the growth has come as fulfillment of prophecy or in answer to the prayers of the righteous. They express deep gratitude for

the blessings this growth has brought. One example: for decades members in Mexico had to travel to the United States to visit a temple. It was thrilling for them when a temple was dedicated in Mexico City in 1983. Today Mexico has 12 temples, 20 missions, and 199 stakes.

Church membership is diverse, ranging from professional people living in the urban megalopolis of Mexico City to farmers and laborers in isolated rural areas. What ties them together is a testimony of Jesus Christ and a desire to serve others as He might direct. It would be impossible to depict in words or photographs the full richness of Latter-day Saint life in Mexico, but the words and pictures that follow provide a window into the lives of representative members.

The Wedding They Really Wanted

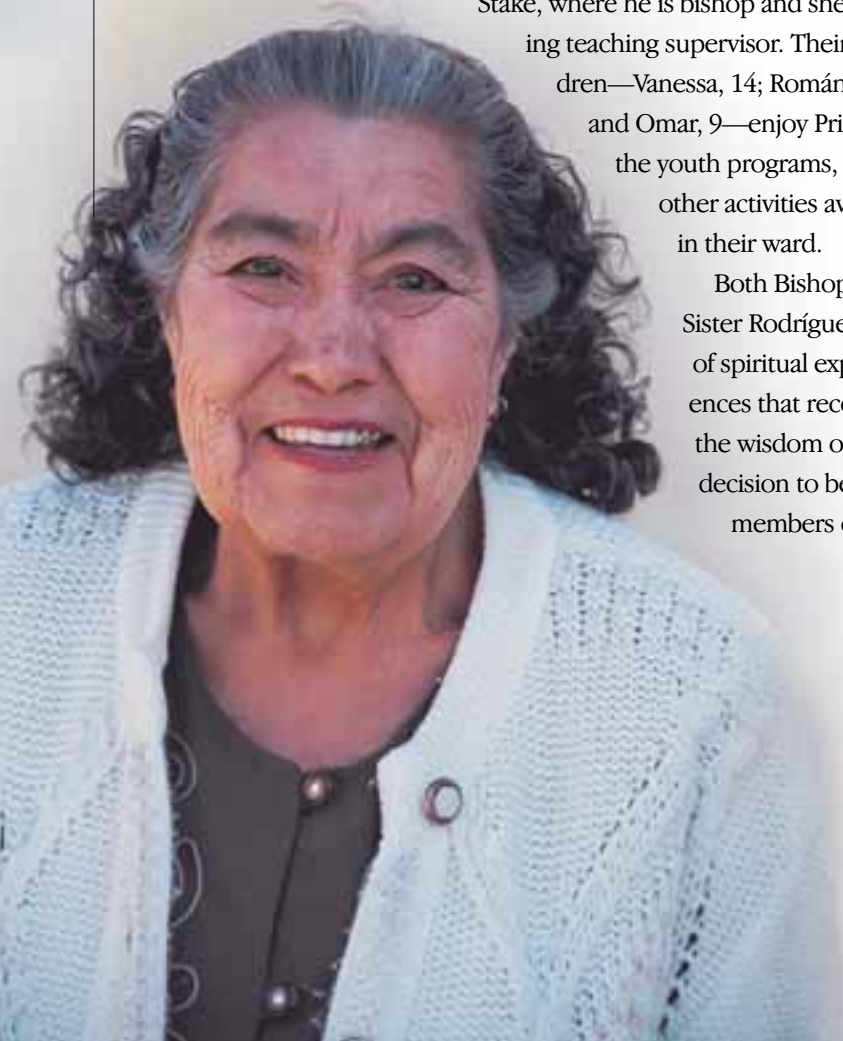
The Monterrey Mexico Temple stands prominently on a hill next to a major highway. It is impossible to pass without noting the majesty of the building and its setting. When Román and Norma Rodríguez first passed the temple, there were signs announcing an open house. Feeling drawn to it, they stopped and went in with their family.

Originally married in a civil ceremony as required by law, they were, after 15 years and three children, involved in planning the impressive church wedding they had never had. But during their visit to the Monterrey temple, they felt something they had never felt before. There was a peace and joy Román could not explain. Norma felt it too.

Grandparents and parents who pioneered in the Church left a spiritual legacy for members like Isaías Martínez of the Chalco Mexico Stake; his wife, María; son, Isai; and daughter, Jatsiri.



Like the statue of Moroni atop the Monterrey Mexico Temple, members are fast becoming standouts in Mexico.



They agreed that they had to learn more about the teachings of the church that had built this temple, so they left their names and a request for the missionaries to visit.

"I remember when we were preparing for that other wedding," Sister Rodríguez says. "I kept wondering if we were doing the right thing. I prayed to the Lord to help me, and I feel my prayer was answered as we learned about eternal marriage."

On 15 May 2003, just one year and eight days after their baptism, Brother and Sister Rodríguez and their daughter and two sons returned to the house of the Lord for the kind of wedding they really wanted—their eternal sealing as a family. They are members of the Santo Domingo Ward, San Nicolás Mexico

Stake, where he is bishop and she is visiting teaching supervisor. Their children—Vanessa, 14; Román, 11; and Omar, 9—enjoy Primary, the youth programs, and the other activities available in their ward.

Both Bishop and Sister Rodríguez tell of spiritual experiences that reconfirm the wisdom of their decision to become members of the



PRESIDENT KIMBALL'S DREAM

"When I was in Mexico in 1946, . . . I had a dream of your progress and development. . . .

". . . Instead of working for others I could see you getting the management of the positions of responsibility. . . .

"I saw the people of Lehi as engineers and builders. . . .

"I saw many of your sons becoming attorneys and helping solve the world's problems. I saw your people as owners of industries and factories. . . .

"I saw doctors as well as the lawyers looking after the health of your people. I saw young Mexican men and women becoming great lecturers, owners of newspapers with their influence on public affairs. I saw great artists among you. . . .

"I saw the Church growing with rapid strides, and I saw them organized in wards and stakes. . . . I saw a temple of God and expect to see it filled with men and women and young people. . . .

"Now, that was my dream. Maybe it was a vision. Maybe the Lord was showing to me what this great people would accomplish."

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), in Conference Report, Mexico City Area Conference 1977, 31.





Opposite page, left to right: Amalia Estrada Catero, Mexico City; members of the Noriega family on their farm near Guadalajara; two staff members at the Church's employment resource center in Monterrey. This page, top: Students from the Church's Benemérito School in Mexico City prepare wheelchairs to be given to people in need. Above: A class at the Missionary Training Center in Mexico City.

Church. Before, Bishop Rodríguez says, they were running after the common things of life. Now they see with real depth and spiritual clarity. "I feel like our life is beginning to come together," he says.

The Way It Used to Be

Latter-day Saint pioneers from different areas of Mexico share stories of similar experiences: years of isolation, sometimes persecution, slow growth, and more recently—as Church members have become more visible in Mexican society—acceptance and respect.

Francisco and Estela Magdaleno of Las Aguilas Ward, Guadalajara Mexico Moctezuma Stake, were baptized in the mid-1960s. The area where they live is strongly traditional with regard to religion. At first, neighbors wanted little to do with them or their faith. The Magdalenos continued to live their religion and tried their best to maintain

good relationships with those around them. They and their three children have all served missions in Mexico. The Magdalenos have lived to see the day when neighbors turn to them for advice on questions of faith.

Sixta María Martínez of the Aeropuerto Ward, Mérida Mexico Centro Stake, was already 62 when she was baptized in 1974. She quickly learned to love temple work and made several long trips on temple excursions from southern Mexico to Mesa, Arizona, in the United States. She delighted in a later opportunity to visit the temple in Salt Lake City. Over the years Sister Martínez has completed temple ordinances for her own family back five generations. She has lived to see a temple built just a few kilometers away in Mérida. At 92, she tries to go there once a week. "It is my joy. It is my life," she says.

Amalia Estrada Catero of the Narvarte Ward, Mexico City Ermita Stake, grew up as a member of the Church. Her grandparents joined in the late 1880s. But in her youth, she and her family were the only members in their small town. Sister Estrada was not able to be fully active in the Church until she moved to Mexico City in 1956, in her mid-30s. She first went to the temple on an excursion to Mesa in 1963. Now she goes to the nearby Mexico City temple as often as possible. A teacher by training, Sister Estrada has taught in all of the Church auxiliaries and has been Relief Society president. In her early years in that small town, there was pressure for her to follow the dominant faith. Now she too has lived to see the day when neighbors come to her with questions on how to live a better life. As one young man in the neighborhood put it after a visit with her, "I talked to the teacher."

Strengthening the Stakes

"I was telling my husband just a short time ago how blessed our children are," says María Hernández de Martínez of the Huitzilzingo Ward, Chalco Mexico Stake. As a convert, she is grateful for a temple sealing and all the blessings the gospel brings to her family.

Isaías Martínez, her husband, says, "Every time I look at the pictures of my grandparents, I'm filled with gratitude for what they did as members of the Church." They were

baptized in the 1940s. His grandfather and father both served as local priesthood leaders. Brother Martínez, called as a bishop at age 25, now serves as stake clerk.

Brother Martínez is an electronics engineer, and his wife was trained as an educator. In a way, he says, they represent what happened to members because grandparents and parents struggled to provide education for their offspring. As a result, many members of the current generation of Church leaders in Mexico are visible symbols in their communities of personal growth through following gospel principles.

Armando and Claudia Galíndez of the Culhuacán Ward, Mexico City Tlalpan Stake, are examples. A lawyer, he also owns a company that offers employee training to businesses. Sister Galíndez, trained in tourism management, works with him in his company. Successful in Mexico, Brother Galíndez resists the lure of greater prosperity to the north. Though he might be able to establish a business in the United States, he chooses to stay in Mexico to help build up the Church. He says he wants to help fulfill President Spencer W. Kimball's dream of the roles of members in Mexican society (see "President Kimball's Dream," p. 36).

Even before their marriage, Armando and Claudia made gospel-centered goals for themselves and their family. Brother Galíndez uses a number of gospel-based principles in the training he offers, including this one: "The only thing

we need to do to move from ordinary to extraordinary is to understand who we are."

As in other areas of the world, there are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Mexico who drift away weeks or years after baptism, some never to return. Yet priesthood leaders who have followed President Gordon B. Hinckley's counsel—making sure that every member has a friend, a responsibility in the Church, and spiritual nourishment with the word of God—say it is very effective in reaching out and bringing back many who are not enjoying the blessings of full activity. And some members return on their own when a spiritual whisper or insight reminds them of how much the gospel has to offer.

Yolanda Elsie Díaz de Vega of the Jardines Ward, Guadalajara Mexico Reforma Stake, recalls staying up late to study the gospel with her husband after they were baptized in 1979: "It was as though we hungered for the scriptures." But after seven months as a member of the Church, she felt that she was criticized unfairly by an older member and that she could not go to the next meeting. For four years the Vegas did not go to church—until concern for the blessings their family was missing led them back.

The Vegas have been active for many years now,



Left: Carlos and Iliana Moreira with their young son, Carlos, in Monterrey. Above: Opening of a sacrament meeting in Guadalajara; members in a Mexico City Sunday School class. Opposite page (top): The Mario Martínez family of Monterrey.



sharing strength with their family, their ward, and their neighbors. There have been great blessings in learning how to be a better couple and in serving others, Brother Vega says. The gospel “changed our way of thinking, our way of living.” Their children have grown up learning and living the gospel, and now grandchildren are enjoying the same spiritual opportunities through Church activity. “I’m proud of our children because we’ve never had to worry about people knowing we are members of the Church,” Sister Vega says. Their four children respond that they live the way they do because of parental example.

Sharing the Blessings

Eleven-year-old Samuel Briones of the Primavera Ward, Guadalajara Mexico Moctezuma Stake, helped interest his school-teacher in the gospel by inviting her to the open house for the Guadalajara temple. After her visit, she began meeting with the missionaries. The man who taught karate to Samuel and his 12-year-old brother, José Julio, became interested in the gospel because of his association with the two boys; he was baptized and now serves as stake executive secretary.

Roots in Mexico

As early as the mid-1870s, President Brigham Young sent emissaries to Mexico looking for places to colonize, both as a refuge from persecution in the United States and as a way to introduce the gospel in Latin America. The first Latter-day Saint colonists arrived in 1885, and eventually seven colonies were established on the Casas Grandes River in northern Chihuahua and two more on the Bavispe River in northern Sonora.

Despite the hardships of pioneering in the desert, the colonies thrived in peace for some years. In 1895 the first stake in Mexico was organized at Colonia Juárez. Anglo colonists were driven out of Mexico during the revolution that began in 1910, but some later returned to reclaim their homes and lands. Most of the colonies faded away, but Colonia Dublán and Colonia Juárez in northern Chihuahua are still home to many descendants of the early colonists.

Many names of the Anglo colonists are well known in Church history: Bowman, Brown, Call, Eyring, Hatch, Ivins, Romney, Smith, Taylor, Turley, and others. President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency, was born there. So too were siblings Camilla and Henry Eyring, respectively wife of President Spencer W. Kimball and father of Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Those early settlers



performed well their duty to implant the gospel, and today the descendants of Anglo pioneers are outnumbered in local congregations by members of Mexican ancestry.

Colonia Juárez is now the home of one of the Church’s temples in Mexico; the Colonia Juárez Chihuahua Mexico Temple was dedicated in 1999. ■



Above: Members visit at a ward social in Mérida.

Far right: The Mérida Mexico Temple.

“Many are looking for the truth, but they don’t know where it is,” says the boys’ father, also José Julio. It is easy to share beliefs with people when we, as members, are attentive enough to the Holy Ghost to know their need, Brother Briones says. His wife, Josefina, learned that the seeds we plant may take time to sprout, then grow quickly. She had shared her beliefs with one couple who seemed ready to listen but declined her invitations to attend Church meetings because of conflicts in their schedule. When they finally were able to attend with her, even she was surprised at how readily and quickly they accepted the gospel.

Mauro Gil of Mérida, who served as president of the Mexico Torreón Mission from 1999 to 2002, says the example of members is probably the major factor in the reception missionaries receive. Reflecting on the influence of exemplary members, he says, “I think the gospel is going to make a greater nation of Mexico.” He has witnessed steady progress in the lives of members in the Yucatán Peninsula over the past 20 years not only

spiritually but also temporally as they have obeyed principles of the gospel, including the law of tithing.

The temples in Mexico, he says, are just one visible symbol of the blossoming and growth among members. “They are going to bless the lives of people. They are going to bless our children.”

The Temple Effect

Members who recall the era of weeklong excursions to the temple in Mesa, Arizona, rejoice at having a temple now within a day’s drive from almost any point in their country. On a typical Saturday, the parking lots of temples in Mexico accommodate several buses bringing members from outlying areas.

Some rejoice in simply helping to clean the house of the Lord. In Guadalajara, Alfredo Gómez, second counselor in the temple presidency, greets a member who is leaving after a shift of cleaning the temple. President Gómez asks if the man is tired. Yes, the man replies—but it is a good kind of tired, and he is leaving strengthened.

“The value of the temple to members here is incalculable,” President Gómez says. Some from outlying areas will even skip necessities, such as food, to pay the cost of the trip. “Members know



Above: Manuel García, Guadalajara, with booklet from a 1968 stake conference; Carlitos, Carlos, and Aracely Burgos of Mérida. Left: Sisters María Teresa Solís de Hercila and María Anastacia Solís of Mérida.



it is *their* temple. They have made it theirs when they come here to perform ordinances—or even to clean.”

Local leaders encourage and support them in this work, he explains. “If I may say it this way, President Hinckley’s plan was to take the temples to the members and then to take the members to the temples.”

Throughout Mexico, members are taking to temple worship and the blessings that flow out of it. From Matamoros and Ciudad Victoria to Mazatlán and Guaymas, from Puebla and Campeche to Acapulco, there are members who rejoice in blessings received through temples that are now within reach of their homes.

In Monterrey, there was much opposition to the building of the temple. And yet there are members who can testify that they saw it in dreams and knew it would be there, says temple president Eran A. Call, a member of the Seventy from 1997 to 2000. Here too members speak of it as *our* temple. There are no missionaries serving in it, President Call says—all the workers are local members. Many in the temple district have caught the spirit of the work. Not long ago a stake group came bringing 3,000 names of deceased persons for whom they would perform temple ordinances.

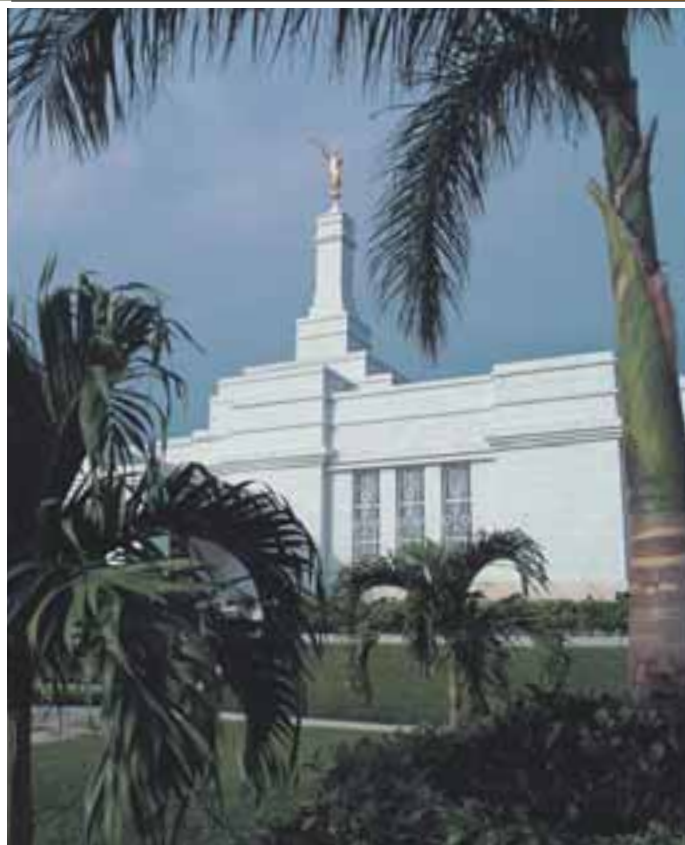
Hope for Eternity

The first meetinghouse built by the Church in Mérida was very significant for members who helped build it—and, as was the policy then, pay for it—recalls Saidy Castillo de Gaona of the Zacil-Ha First Ward, Mérida Mexico Stake. “The members paid our half with our work—pure hard labor,” she says. Young Saidy learned to operate the brick-making machine while she worked on the project. And it was there that she met her future husband, Noé, a labor missionary helping to construct the building.

“When they knocked that building down, it was very emotional for me,” Saidy continues. “But the important thing was that they built something of greater value.” The Mérida Mexico Temple now occupies that site.

As a teenager, Saidy had seen herself in a dream in a temple in Mérida. “I knew there was going to be a temple. I asked the Lord to let me live long enough to see it.”

She and her husband were married more than 35 years



ago. They were sealed in the temple in Mexico City shortly after it was dedicated. Through the years they supported the Church faithfully in a wide variety of priesthood and auxiliary callings. When the Mérida temple was dedicated in 2000, the Gaonas were prepared to serve there too; they were the first two temple workers set apart.

He was serving in the temple on the day he died suddenly in late 2002. Saidy says it was only her knowledge of the eternal nature of marriage that allowed her to cope with the loss of her companion. “I think if it hadn’t been for the gospel, I would have wanted to die. The knowledge of the gospel gives me strength to go on. The gospel is everything for me. It was everything for my husband too.”

She turned once more to service in the gospel for help in healing the hurt of her loss. In addition to serving in the temple, she found solace in giving of herself to her five children and grandchildren and also in her Church callings. “I think I’m happiest when I’m working,” she explains.

That may well be true for every member in Mexico. Those who seem happiest are those who are working to serve others and spread the gospel. Perhaps without even thinking about it, they are helping day to day to fulfill President Kimball’s dream of a vital, growing Church membership in Mexico. ■

Important Events for the Church in Mexico



The San Pedro Mártir meetinghouse was dedicated in 1938.

July 1847: Latter-day Saint pioneers led by President Brigham Young arrive in the Salt Lake Valley, which is within Mexican Territory.

1874: President Brigham Young calls Daniel W. Jones to translate the Book of Mormon into Spanish, but Brother Jones does not have a command of the language. Melitón G. Trejo, a Spaniard, comes to Salt Lake City, and with his help selections from the Book of Mormon are published.

6 January 1875: The first Latter-day Saint missionaries enter Mexico.

1876: A second missionary effort begins—in the state of Sonora. The first members are baptized.

15 November 1879: The first LDS missionaries arrive in the capital city: Elder Moses Thatcher of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Melitón G. Trejo, and James Z. Stewart.

November 1879: The first branch is organized in Mexico, with Plotino Rhodakanaty as president.

25 January 1880: Mexico is first dedicated for missionary work by Elder Thatcher, in a hotel room in Mexico City.

6 April 1881: At Popocatepetl, Elder

Thatcher again dedicates Mexico for the preaching of the gospel and establishment of settlements. Eight others join him on the slopes of the volcano for the first Church conference in Mexico.

1885: The initial attempt by Anglo Latter-day Saints to colonize in Mexico begins. Seven colonies are eventually established in Chihuahua and two in Sonora.

1886: Melitón G. Trejo and James Z. Stewart finish the Spanish translation of the complete Book of Mormon, and it is published.

Mid-1889: All missionary efforts in Mexico are temporarily closed because of persecution of the Church in Utah.

9 December 1895: The Juárez Stake is organized in the LDS colonies of Chihuahua, with Anthony W. Ivins (later a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles) as president.

8 June 1901: The Mexican Mission is reopened.

September 1907: Rey Lucero Pratt (later a member of the Seventy) is called to preside over the Mexican Mission. His tenure will last 24 years. Between 1901 and 1910 the Mexican Mission expands to include the states of Mexico, Hidalgo, Morelos, and the Federal District.

29 August 1913: The Mexican Revolution, which began in 1910, forces President Pratt and his missionaries to abandon Mexico, closing the mission. The revolution causes great suffering among members. Some are killed; Rafael Monroy and Vicente Morales, executed in 1915, become known among members as

martyrs for their faith. The war spurs an exodus of members from the colonies.

1922: Missionaries from the United States return to Mexico.

1937: The Mexican Mission begins publishing the magazine *In Yaotlapiyoui*, forerunner of the *Liahona*.

1960: An LDS Church school system is established in Mexico. Benemérito de las Américas, a preparatory school established in Mexico City in 1964, has become known for the quality of its students.

3 December 1961: The first stake among Saints largely of Mexican ancestry is formed in Mexico City. It is the first Spanish-speaking stake in the Church.

1967: The Mexico City Stake is divided, and the Mexico City North Stake is organized, with Agricol Lozano Herrera as president—the first stake president of Mexican ancestry.

1972: Membership in Mexico reaches 100,000.

2 December 1983: The Mexico City Temple and Visitors' Center are dedicated.

25 July 1989: Mexico becomes the first country outside the United States to reach 100 stakes, with the creation of the Tecalco Mexico Stake. Membership in Mexico is estimated at more than half a million.

11 December 1994: Visiting Mexico, President Howard W. Hunter creates the Church's 2,000th stake, the Mexico City Mexico Contreras Stake.

2004: Mexico, with 2 administrative areas, 12 temples, 20 missions, and nearly 200 stakes, reaches 1,000,000 members. ■

Courtesy of El Museo de Historia del Mormonismo en Mexico, A. C.

*I never thought I would find myself attracted to a married man.
What could I do to overcome my feelings?*

No one could have been more surprised than I was by what had happened. I, a faithful Latter-day Saint woman, realized I had developed a strong attraction for a man who was happily married to someone else.

He was a coworker of mine, and we worked on several projects together. Over time, we became friends. But soon I realized I was having feelings that went beyond friendship—feelings that tempted me to do what I clearly knew was wrong.

I was shocked. I was embarrassed. The direction my feelings wanted me to go was unthinkable. I thought to myself, “Things like this don’t happen to staunch Latter-day Saint women!” I could not believe I was in this situation. What was I going to do? I was tempted to rationalize, to say I had “fallen in love.” But I knew that was just an excuse.

HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN TO ME?

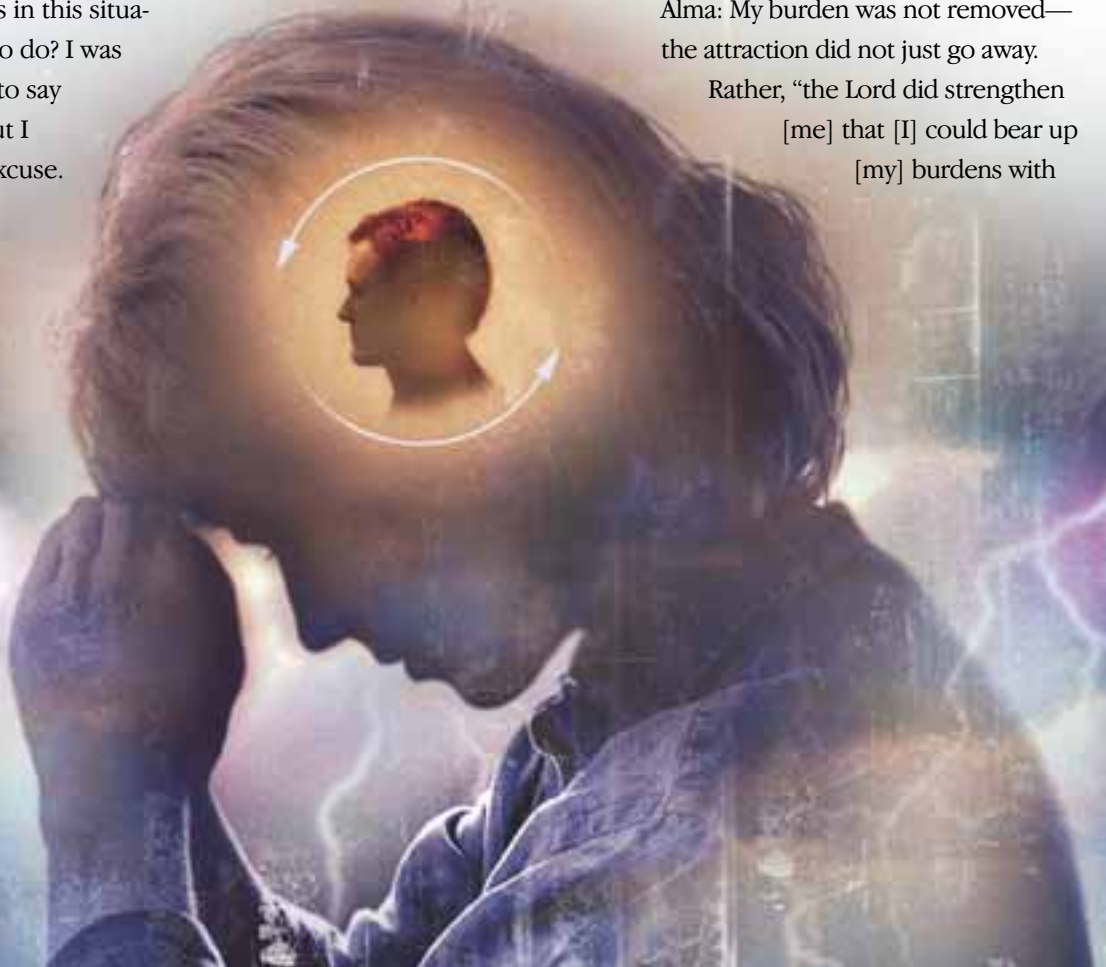
NAME WITHHELD

In my struggle I found solace, direction, and strength in several different ways. Here are some of the things that helped me the most.

Prayer

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “When God placed man on the earth, prayer became the lifeline between mankind and God.”¹ I cannot express how much prayer meant to me during this time. It literally was my lifeline. I spent morning and evening on my knees. During the day I kept a prayer in my heart, asking for the strength I needed to behave appropriately and to do what was right. Many times I felt I could identify with the people of Alma: My burden was not removed—the attraction did not just go away.

Rather, “the Lord did strengthen [me] that [I] could bear up [my] burdens with



YOU CAN OVERCOME TEMPTATION



"You can be obedient. You can defeat Satan and overcome temptation. God 'will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it' [1 Corinthians 10:13]. The Lord does not expect anything of you that you cannot do."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Live in Obedience," *Ensign*, May 1994, 40.



ease" (Mosiah 24:15). In other words, the Lord gave me the strength I needed not to act on my feelings.

Virtuous Thoughts

The scriptures teach us to "let virtue garnish [our] thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45). Because of my strong feelings, the temptation was great to entertain romantic thoughts about my coworker. Yet I did everything I could to avoid this. As we have been counseled by various General Authorities, I mentally sang hymns, recited memorized scriptures, and taught myself sermons to keep my mind where it was supposed to be, not where I was tempted to let it wander.

The Scriptures

Each day the scriptures were an integral part of my life. I discovered the truth of these words by Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy: "As a person studies the words of the Lord and obeys them, . . . the power to resist temptation increases, and spiritual weaknesses are overcome."² While the scriptures I studied were not always directly related to the problem I was dealing with, the spirit that accompanied my daily scripture study gave me great strength.

The Temple

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote: "Temple work is not an escape from the world. . . . Being in the Lord's house can help us to be different from the world in order to make more

difference in the world."³ The world teaches—through romance novels, television programs, and movies—that a person in my situation can act on any romantic feelings regardless of the consequences. In the temple, as I pondered sacred covenants I had made, I was reminded that I needed to hold myself to a higher standard.

Priesthood Blessings

One of my greatest comforts was the counsel and direction of a priesthood blessing. In a sacred, confidential setting, a faithful Melchizedek Priesthood holder laid his hands on my head and uttered inspired words. Some things I expected to hear; some I did not. From this blessing I received the comfort and guidance I needed to press forward, to learn from the experience, and to continue to work to overcome the temptation.

Lessons Learned

I learned valuable lessons as I tried to deal righteously with this temptation. First, "the natural man *is* an enemy to God" (Mosiah 3:19; emphasis added). Anyone—male or female, married or single—can find themselves in a situation similar to mine, but through diligence, the natural man can be put off "through the atonement of Christ" (Mosiah 3:19). Prayer, the scriptures, the temple, and many other resources helped me take hold of the power of the Atonement and deal appropriately with my "natural man" feelings.

Another important thing I learned was to be more vigilant. While it is certainly appropriate for men and



women who work together to be friends, whether in professional or Church settings, I have learned not to be too naive. Care must be taken to keep suitable boundaries around these relationships so they will not lead to potentially heartbreaking incidents.

The greatest lesson I learned was that I can rely on the Lord to help me through all my temptations and trials, no matter what those temptations are. In the book of Isaiah we read, “Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am” (Isaiah 58:9). I needed the Lord during this time more than ever before, and He was a great comfort to me.

I am happy to say I was able to overcome my feelings for my coworker. He never learned what I felt, and nothing happened between us. The experience was painful, but the process of working to overcome this temptation helped me grow in significant ways. The experience also increased my appreciation for the Savior’s response to temptation: “He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them” (D&C 20:22). The Lord in His mercy gave me the

strength I needed to eventually “give no heed” to the temptation I was facing, and for that I will be eternally grateful. ■

NOTES

1. “The Lifeline of Prayer,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 59.
2. “Coming unto Christ by Searching the Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 28.
3. *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, ed. Cory H. Maxwell (1997), 339.

Basic gospel principles and practices, such as temple attendance, priesthood blessings, prayer, and scripture study, helped me overcome my feelings for my coworker.





Prior to serving as Presiding Bishop for 30 years, Edward Hunter opened the way for missionaries in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

BY LARENE PORTER GAUNT
Church Magazines

When the schoolhouse in Chester County, Pennsylvania, burned to the ground in 1833, wealthy Quaker Edward Hunter offered to replace it on land he would donate if residents “would allow all persons and persuasions to meet in it to worship God.”¹ This requirement was included in the articles of agreement for the donated land and building. The finished building was called the West Nantmeal Seminary.

Quaker and Scotch-Irish Presbyterian farmers populated Chester County, which is located about 12 miles west of Philadelphia. In the spring of 1839, Latter-day Saint missionaries Elijah H. Davis and Lorenzo Barnes arranged to use the West Nantmeal Seminary building to teach the gospel. When residents became outraged, Edward Hunter reminded them of the agreement made in 1833 allowing people of every religion to have the privilege of meeting there to worship God. He told the people that the “Mormons” would have

their rights or he would take the building back. Such were the circumstances that surrounded the first visit of the missionaries to the valley that would eventually become known as “Mormon Hollow,” circumstances that prepared Edward Hunter to be an advocate for these early Saints.

An Ancestor’s Influence

Born on 22 June 1793 in Newtown Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, Edward Hunter was the second son and seventh child born to Edward and Hannah Maris Hunter (p. 227; see note 1 for complete reference). As a youth, he was strongly influenced by stories of his stalwart ancestors from England and Ireland. Of particular influence was the story of his second great-grandfather, Robert Owen of North Wales, also a man of wealth and power. Ancestor Robert was imprisoned for five years because he refused to take the oath of allegiance when Charles II was restored to the British throne. After his release, Robert immigrated to America and purchased land in Philadelphia amid other Quakers such as himself.

As an adult, strong-willed and tenacious, Edward Hunter was fond of referring to this incident in the life of his ancestor. He would tell the story and then end by repeating, “Oath of allegiance—yes, yes—refused to take it—imprisoned for five years.” Then, lifting up his hands, throwing back his head, and half shutting his eyes in a sort of dreamy ecstasy, he would exclaim, “Beautiful! beautiful!” (p. 228).

No doubt Edward drew upon this example of integrity shown by his ancestor when he stood firm in behalf of the Latter-day Saint missionaries in 1839.

PHOTO BY LARRY C. PORTER



Remodeled into a home, the West Nantmeal Seminary building still stands in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Light Filled the Room

Soon after the missionaries taught the gospel in 1839 in the West Nantmeal Seminary building, Edward heard that missionary Elijah H. Davis was going to speak in Locust Grove, a few miles away, and that there were plans to treat him badly. He mounted his horse and rode over to Locust Grove. Of Elijah Davis and his teachings, Edward said: “He was a humble young man, the first one that I was impressed was sent of God. . . . He spoke well on the subject [of the Atonement], but before he was through [Robert] Johnson interrupted him and ordered him to quit preaching. I sprang up and said: ‘He is a stranger and shall have justice shown him and be respected; we will hear him and then hear you speak.’ I was informed that there were many present opposed to the ‘Mormons,’ but I resolved as I lived that Mr. Davis should be protected, if I had to meet the rabble on their own ground. I kept my eye on them and determined to stand by him at the risk of person and property. I had friends, though Mr. Davis had none. Mr. J. Johnson, brother to Robert



Orson Hyde (above) baptized Edward Hunter in 1840.

Orson F. Whitney (below) wrote of Bishop Hunter’s honesty, generosity, and integrity.



Johnson, came to me as I was going out and apologized for his brother's conduct. I walked out of the crowd, got on my horse and rode home alone" (p. 229).

After going home and retiring for the night, Edward lay awake for some time thinking about what had taken place. "My reflections were," he said, "why have I taken such a decided stand for those strangers, and I asked the Lord: 'Are those Mormons thy servants?' Instantly, a light came in the room at the top of the door, so great that I could not endure it. I covered my head with the bed-clothes and turned over to the wall. I had exerted my mind and body much that day and soon fell asleep" (p. 229).

Baptisms in Chester County

On 8 October 1840, Edward Hunter was baptized by Elder Orson Hyde. Edward's wife, Ann, was also baptized. Of Edward's baptism, neighbor H. W. Vallette said, "I only felt that if a man like Edward Hunter, whose name was a synonym of upright probity, of sound sense and discernment, could be brought to believe in these things, what right had I or others of less understanding to . . . ridicule them."²

Hearts were softened among these Quaker residents, and soon about 200 were baptized, sometimes at the rate of eight to ten a week. The Prophet Joseph Smith stopped in "Mormon Hollow" for about two weeks in January 1840 in connection with a trip to Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. The Prophet spoke to the Saints at the West Nantmeal Seminary and stayed with the Hunter family. During the autumn of 1840, Hyrum Smith visited Edward. They attended conference in Philadelphia, and Brother Hunter "subscribed liberally to the building of the Nauvoo House and the Temple" (p. 229).

On a subsequent visit, Hyrum walked with Edward along the banks of the Brandywine River, and Edward

told Hyrum about the death of his young son George Washington Hunter. Hyrum taught him of the plan of salvation. This brought great comfort to Brother Hunter, who had been "devotedly attached" to his son. About a year later, Brother Hunter had a dream wherein he saw his young son. "In appearance he was more perfect than in natural life—the same blue eyes, curly hair, fair complexion, and a most beautiful appearance," said Edward.

Edward begged him to remain, but George said "in his own familiar voice" that he had many friends in heaven (p. 230).



The original home of Edward Hunter is located not far from the West Nantmeal Seminary building.

PHOTO BY LARRY C. PORTER

Exodus to Nauvoo

Edward had found financial success from the time he was a young man because of his hard work and good business sense. But he was also generous. In September 1841 Brother

Hunter visited Nauvoo, Illinois, and purchased a farm and several town lots. He then returned to Chester County and sold two of his farms. In June 1842 the Hunter family moved to Nauvoo. Once there, he cheerfully donated \$7,000 in cash and nearly \$5,000 in goods to the Prophet Joseph for the building of Zion. He continued to donate generously, so much so, that the Prophet Joseph Smith told him he had done enough and to reserve the rest for his own use (p. 230).

In Nauvoo, as persecution against the Saints began to mount, Brother Hunter was arrested with others on the charge of treason and taken to Carthage Jail in June 1843. Now Edward had been wrongfully imprisoned as had his ancestor. Fortunately, the imprisonment was short, and all were soon sent free.

When the Prophet was put on trial in Springfield, Illinois, Brother Hunter was there. After the Prophet's acquittal, Edward offered his home to the Prophet as a place of safety. Loyal and devoted, Edward became one

of Joseph's bodyguards. During this time, Brother Hunter enjoyed the confidence and friendship of the Prophet.

Among the revelations the Prophet received in the Hunter home were sections 127 and 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants concerning baptism for the dead. Of this time, Brother Hunter said, "The two years I was in Nauvoo with Joseph, it was one stream of revelations."³

As a member of the Nauvoo City Council, Edward voted to put an end to the *Expositor*, a libelous paper created by apostates and enemies of the Saints to encourage mob

Amid persecution in Nauvoo in late 1842, the Prophet found refuge in the Hunter home. From here he sent counsel to the Saints that included sections 127 and 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

violence. Soon after the destruction of the press, the Prophet Joseph asked Brother Hunter to go to Springfield to represent the Church's position to the governor.

"You have known me for several years," said the Prophet to Edward. "Say to the governor, under oath, everything good and bad you know of me" (p. 230).

Brother Edward and two other men did so. They returned to Nauvoo late in the afternoon on 27 June 1844—about the same time Joseph and Hyrum were killed at Carthage Jail. Of the events following the Martyrdom, Edward wrote: "Next day, [Joseph and Hyrum's] bodies were brought from Carthage to Nauvoo. We formed two



Edward Hunter and his young family moved to a lush valley in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in about 1832. This area became known as Mormon Hollow because of the large number of Latter-day Saint converts living there between 1839 and 1846.



PAINTING BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

lines to receive them; I was placed on the extreme right, to wheel in after the bodies, and march to the Mansion. As we passed the Temple, there were crowds of mourners there, lamenting the great loss of our Prophet and Patriarch. The scene was enough to almost melt the soul of man. Mr. Brewer, myself and others took brother Joseph's body in to the Mansion House. . . . At midnight [we] carried the body of Joseph from the Mansion House to the Nauvoo House, and put him and Hyrum in one grave. Their death was hard to bear. Our hope was almost gone, not knowing then that Joseph had prepared for the Kingdom to go on, by delivering the keys to the Twelve and rolling off the burden from his shoulders on to theirs" (p. 231).

Ordained a Bishop in Nauvoo

Five months after the Martyrdom, President Brigham Young, assisted by Elder Heber C. Kimball and Presiding Bishop Newell K. Whitney, ordained Edward Hunter a high priest. He was then set apart as a bishop of the Nauvoo Fifth Ward. When he was promised that he should "have power to raise up the drooping spirit," he felt simultaneously "a remarkable sensation thrilled through his

THE POSITION OF PRESIDING BISHOP

The Presiding Bishopric consists of three men—the Presiding Bishop and his two counselors—who make up one of the presiding councils of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These General Authorities, who each hold the office of bishop, serve in their positions under the direct supervision of the First Presidency. Since its formation, the Presiding Bishopric has been responsible for many of the temporal affairs of the Church. These have included involvement in receiving, distributing, and accounting for member tithes, offerings, and contributions; administration of programs to assist the poor and needy; design, construction, and maintenance of places of worship; and auditing and transferring records of membership. Men chosen to be Presiding Bishops have been recognized for their business and management skills as well as their religious commitment.

By scriptural designation the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Presiding Bishopric constitute the Council on the Disposition of Tithes (see D&C 120). This council monitors the receipt of tithes and controls the expenditure of funds. It considers matters of financial importance and authorizes budgets for Church organizations and departments. (See Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 3:1129.)

Below: The current Presiding Bishopric: H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop (center); Richard C. Edgley, First Counselor (left); and Keith B. McMullin, Second Counselor (right).



being, confirming the truth of the speaker's words" (p. 231).

Elder Orson F. Whitney wrote of Bishop Hunter's character: "Honest, straightforward in his dealings, and candid even to bluntness in his speech, his heart overflowed with kindness and he enjoyed the love and confidence of all. Childlike and humble, he was nevertheless shrewd and discerning. He was charitable and open-handed to all. . . . He was a great exhorter to faithfulness, particularly in

the payment of tithes and offerings. His familiar speech at the Bishop's meetings: 'Pay your tithing and be blessed,' has passed into a proverb" (p. 232).

When the Saints were forced from

Nauvoo, Bishop Hunter and many of the "Mormon Hollow Saints" left together in the spring or summer of 1846 and joined the main body of Latter-day Saints in Winter Quarters. Bishop Hunter had suffered from sickness in Iowa, but upon arrival at Winter Quarters, he again served as bishop.

Winter Quarters to Salt Lake Valley

As the hard winter of 1846–47 ended and the exodus to the Salt Lake Valley began, President Young appointed Bishop Hunter captain of 100 wagons. The



group arrived on 29 September 1847. Once in the valley, Bishop Hunter again served as bishop.

In the fall of 1849 President Young sent Bishop Hunter back to the Missouri River to supervise the immigration of the poorer Saints to Zion. Bishop Hunter played an integral part in the implementation of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF). Under the direction of the First Presidency and as a member of the PEF committee, he helped “set in motion the vast emigrating enterprise which has peopled with souls from two hemispheres the mountain vales of Utah” (p. 231). Bishop Hunter’s generous donation of \$5,000 of his own money literally helped build Zion.

On 7 April 1851, following the death of Newell K. Whitney, second Presiding Bishop, Edward Hunter was sustained as the third Presiding Bishop of the Church. At the time, “they were responsible for Church temporal affairs, for local bishops, and for stake Aaronic Priesthood quorums. Bishop Hunter met every two weeks with northern Utah bishops to coordinate efforts regarding public works, tithes, resources, immigration and immigrants, and the needy. However, the First Presidency, not the Presiding Bishopric, made finance and resource policy and called and released bishops.”⁴

Two years later, during general conference on 6 April 1853, he laid the southwest cornerstone of the Salt Lake Temple.

Bishop Hunter’s Death

For 62 years Bishop Hunter watched over the temporal workings of the Church. He succeeded in his desire to magnify his calling in the Church and was a loyal and loving husband and father to his wife and children. He once said he hoped his life’s work was acceptable “in the sight of God and those who preside over me in this Latter-day work” (p. 232).

Bishop Hunter died on 16 October 1883 after a long illness. According to Elder Whitney: “His health had been feeble for a long time, though his mind was unimpaired, and for the last month he had frequently been absent from his office. Among those who visited his bedside during his illness were President John Taylor and Apostle Erastus Snow. So passed from this stage of action, where for over 90 years he had acted well and faithfully every part assigned him, a man of God as noted for his uprightness and integrity, as for his genial nature and overflowing kindness of heart. His memory will live as long as the great work with which he was identified, and which he labored so long and faithfully to establish” (p. 232). ■

NOTES

1. In Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (1901–36), 1:228. Unless otherwise noted, all citations are from this source, and pages will be noted parenthetically in the text.
2. Letter from H. W. Vallette, in Earl H. Peirce, “Mormon Hollow” (Provo, Utah: 1999, photocopy), 6.
3. Susan Easton Black, comp., *Early LDS Membership: LDS Collectors Library* (Provo, Utah: Infobase, 1996).
4. In Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 1:120.

Bishop Hunter and the Mormon Hollow Saints spent the winter of 1846–47 together in Winter Quarters (top). In the spring, as captain of 100 wagons, Bishop Hunter traveled to the Salt Lake Valley. Later, he played an integral part in the implementation of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF), which helped Saints come by handcart and wagon train (below).



Submitting

Our Will to the Father's



BY ELDER BENJAMIN DE HOYOS

Area Authority Seventy
Mexico South Area

Abinadi helps us understand how bringing our desires into harmony with God's will can bring us spiritual power.

Without a doubt, one of the great sermons in the Book of Mormon is found in the powerful words of the prophet Abinadi. With great clarity, he gives expression to the doctrine of the Atonement of Christ and its effects upon all humankind.

One aspect of the Atonement made clear by Abinadi has to do with the power we receive as we follow the Savior's example and submit the desires of the flesh to the will of God. The prophet Abinadi describes this characteristic:

"I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.

"And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son. . . .

"And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people. . . .

"Yea, even so he shall be led, crucified, and



ABINADI APPEARING BEFORE KING NOAH, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father" (Mosiah 15:1–2, 5, 7).

Seeking a Mighty Change

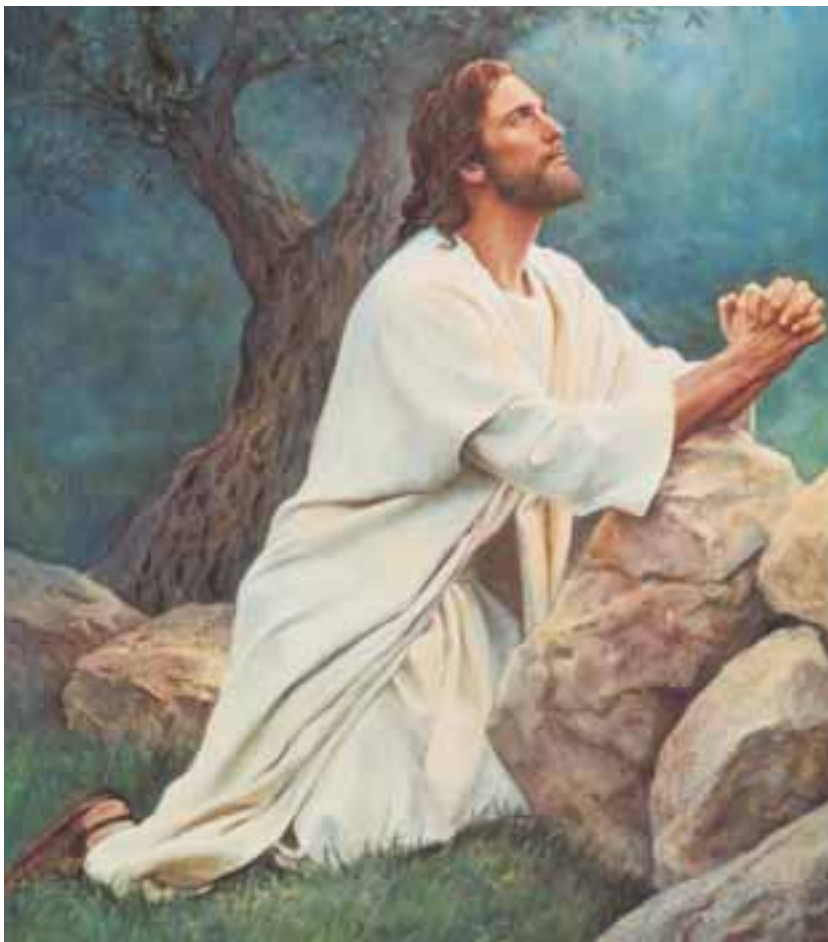
As we read the scriptures daily, searching the inspired words that lead many to know of their surety and to live accordingly, the



Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent can work a mighty change in our hearts. At the conclusion of King Benjamin's powerful address, his people declared "that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually" (Mosiah 5:2). They had obtained the ability, surely after persistent effort, not only to renounce all that is evil, but to incorporate

all that is good into their words, their works, and their thoughts (see 2 Nephi 9:39; Mosiah 4:30; Alma 12:14). Is there any desire of the heart greater than this?

As we ponder the words of Abinadi and seek to obtain that great desire of the heart, which is to put off the natural man and become "a saint through the atonement of



Jesus Christ's example of subjecting the flesh to the will of the Father is particularly evident in His atoning sacrifice. His suffering and plea to the Father in Gethsemane reveal the great love both He and His Father have for each of us.

Christ" (Mosiah 3:19), we see that the prophet is telling us about one of the principles that gave Jesus Christ power to make intercession for the children of men: the subjection of His flesh and the subjection of His will to the will of the Father (see Mosiah 15:8). We realize that in our Heavenly Father's plan, everything was provided so that the natural man could be overcome. The words of the prophet Mormon express this truth: "Yea, we see that whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked" (Helaman 3:29).

Following the Savior's Example

Jesus Christ's example of subjecting the flesh to the will of the Father is particularly

evident in His atoning sacrifice. His great suffering and His plea to the Father in Gethsemane—"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39)—reveal His great willingness to open the way for us and the great love both He and His Father have for each of us.

As we follow the Savior's example of humility in facing opposition in all things, we know He will always sustain us (see Alma 36:3). How often have we felt what Nephi expressed in his psalm? He wrote:

"Nevertheless, notwithstanding the great goodness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works, my heart exclaimeth: O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities.

"I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me. . . .

"And why should I yield to sin, because of my flesh? Yea, why should I give way to temptations, that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my peace and afflict my soul? Why am I angry because of mine enemy? . . .

"O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm" (2 Nephi 4:17–18, 27, 34).

One of the many qualities that each of us needs to incorporate into our lives as Latter-day Saints and that the prophet Abinadi stressed is a willingness to submit our flesh to the will of the Father by becoming disciples of Christ.

Submitting through Service

Latter-day Saints have the opportunity to serve each other through our callings in the Church. Since we do not have a professional clergy, we are all called to serve, administer, and minister to each other. This opportunity requires time, effort, an open heart, and submission to the will of God—which is communicated to us through inspiration and through His authorized servants.

The following are just a few ways we can submit our flesh to the will of the Father as we serve with all our “heart, might, mind and strength” (D&C 4:2). We can lay aside the temporal things in our daily lives to go to the house of the Lord and perform saving work for others. We can regularly and devotedly attend sacrament meeting to partake of the sacrament, that we may always have His Spirit to be with us (see D&C 20:77, 79). By keeping ourselves pure and morally clean, we can serve as part of the greatest generation of missionaries, missionaries who teach by the Spirit. We can fast regularly, drawing near to our Heavenly Father, sharing our bread with the hungry, clothing the naked, and seeking out the needy. Fasting helps loose the bands of wickedness, undo heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free, breaking every yoke (see Isaiah 58:6–7).

We can submit our flesh to the will of the Father when we forget our own needs and relinquish our own comfort; when we make time to visit others, including new converts who need to be “nourished by the good word of God” (Moroni 6:4); or when we “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5).

We can submit our flesh and our will to God when we are “anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of [our] own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness” (D&C 58:27). Indeed, we should be “willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [us]” (Mosiah 3:19). And perhaps more than at any other time, we can bring our will into harmony with the Father’s

when we are building our families on the foundation of the gospel of Christ.

Understanding the Nature of Happiness

Submitting to the will of God is easy when we assign a proper value to the things around us because we understand the eternal nature of our existence. It is said that once the Greek philosopher Socrates stopped to admire many kinds of magnificent merchandise in the marketplace. He

said, “How many things I can do without!”

In our hurry to find happiness, we often find ourselves yearning after things that are completely useless and even destructive. But in our desire for self-mastery, we must invest our time in those things that are indispensable to our goal.

Happiness does come to those who follow the Father’s counsel. King Benjamin said: “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” (Mosiah 2:41).

Everything in the kingdom of God, or in His Church, is structured in such a way that the weakest of the Saints can follow Jesus Christ. We can, in fact, submit our flesh and will to the will of God and gain the power to become the sons and daughters of Christ (see Mosiah 5:7).

To become true disciples of Christ, we need to remember the inspired message of Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that the only possession we have that we can give our Father is our will.¹ Our Savior’s Atonement and Redemption make it possible for us, even in our weakness, to overcome the opposition of the flesh little by little and line upon line—until we become even as He is. ■

NOTE

1. See “Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 24.



We should be willing to lay aside the temporal things in our daily lives to go to the house of the Lord.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

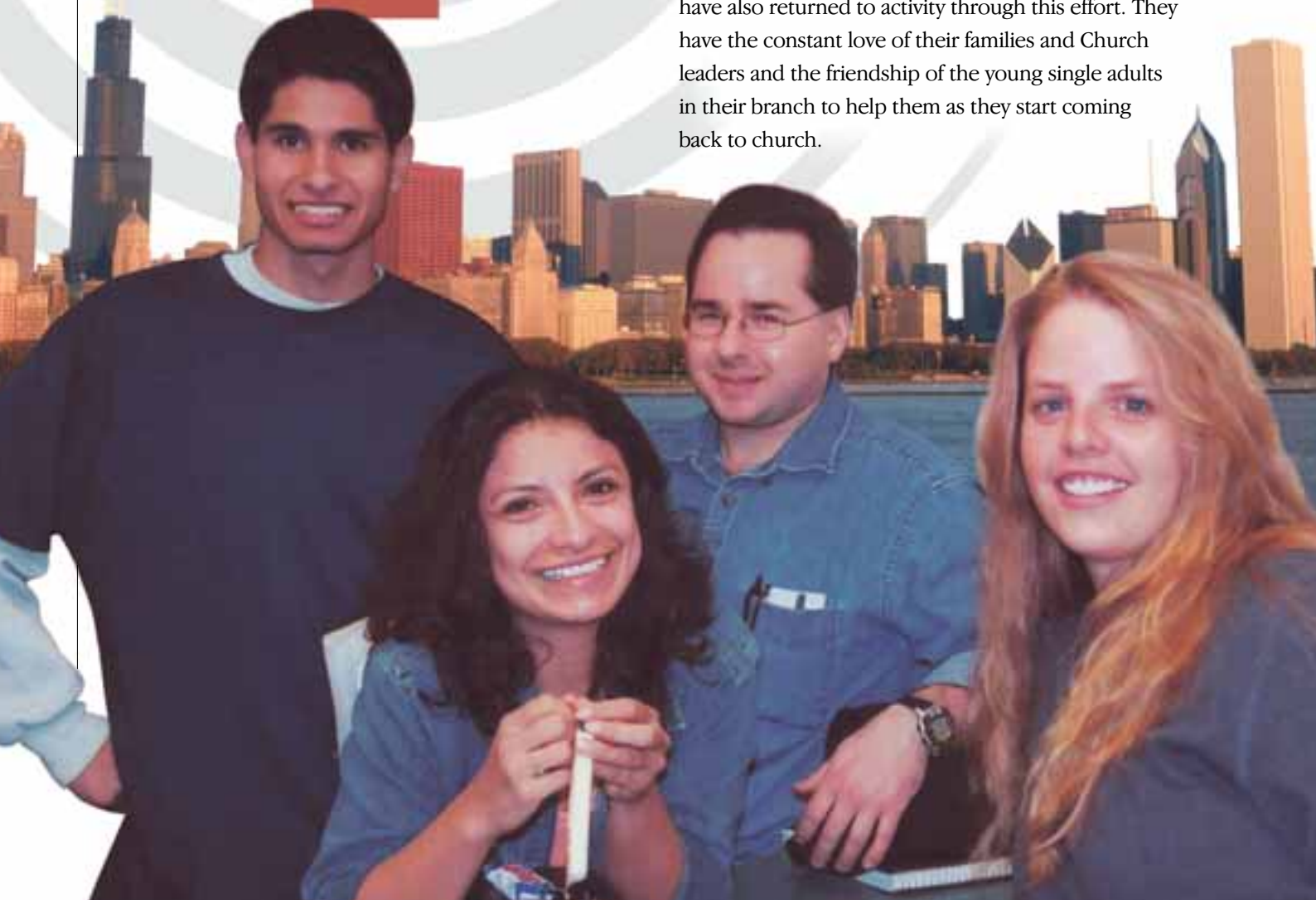
BY SHANNA BUTLER

Church Magazines

The combined efforts of Chicago-area stakes are bringing young single adults back to church.

JD Wood grew up a member of the Church but wanted to investigate Christianity for himself. He went from church to church, searching for something that felt right, until he decided to take the missionary discussions. "I didn't feel that it was about numbers with them. They really respected what I was doing in my search," he says.

JD and the missionaries found each other as part of an effort in the Chicago, Illinois, area to activate and fellowship young single adults. Many other young people there have also returned to activity through this effort. They have the constant love of their families and Church leaders and the friendship of the young single adults in their branch to help them as they start coming back to church.



Sending out an SOS

Leaders in the eight Chicago-area stakes saw a growing need to focus on this group, so under the direction of the Area Presidency, they organized a “search and rescue.” The effort began in October 2002 with the challenge for every stake to locate and contact all the young single adults on record within its boundaries by Christmas—only three months away. It was a tall order, but it was largely accomplished through the efforts of many bishops, priesthood leaders, Relief Society leaders, home and visiting teachers, missionaries, and other ward members.

“It’s like many other things in the Church,” says Marvin P. Evans, president of the Buffalo Grove stake and the one assigned to oversee this effort. “A sincere, honest effort with faith usually nets some pretty good results.”

Of the 25,000 Church members in Chicago, about 3,000 are young single adults. Only 600 of that number were actively attending church before the effort began—a much lower activity level when compared with other age groups in the area. “We concluded there was a real opportunity to focus on young single adults, to reach out to these young people and invite them back,” President Evans says.

The Search

Under the direction of the stake presidencies and with help from local Church Educational System coordinators, welcome packets were created which included information on times and locations for Church and institute classes and activities. Members visiting the young single adults gave them these packets and asked them to complete a short survey to



Members of the young single adult branch in Buffalo Grove (above and left) welcome other young single adults back to church with open arms.

better assess their needs. The survey helped members gather basic information such as permanent addresses, how long the young adults planned on staying in the area, and if they were in school or where they were working.

“The survey was just a tool,” says James Linford, the Buffalo Grove stake high council representative with responsibility for the young single adults. “The real process was talking to these people and going out and meeting them.” The process has been effective, he says. “Those who have been found are saying, ‘Church members do care.’ So they do come back. And it has worked. I think it’s because we’re doing what we were asked to do by our prophet.”

The Guidance of the Spirit

The knowledge that every soul is of worth is what moved these Saints from their comfort zones to seek out those who were not enjoying the full blessings of their membership in the Church. The search-and-rescue effort was supervised by the bishops of each ward, and much of the legwork was done by inspired and caring members.

President Evans explains: “It was very much a principle-based approach. We really wanted each bishop to let the Spirit direct him in terms of who would be the best person to contact a given young single adult, to give that individual the best chance of being found and brought back into activity.”

The institute program is another resource the stakes have drawn upon. When contacted, many of the young adults were invited to attend institute, and enrollment has greatly increased. Nancy Jackson, the



As a new member, Sarah Lynn Alderfer (below) says fellowshipping others helps give her a sense of responsibility and worth.

institute stake supervisor, says that once the young single adults are invited to institute, they keep coming because of the Spirit they feel there when others share their testimonies. “All the programs in the world can’t give them that, but the institute program invites them and brings them in so they can partake,” she says. “Once they partake, they don’t want to lose that again in their lives. You watch the faces. There is weeping, and there’s joy in others’ eyes. And people linger after class. They don’t want to leave. They want to stay and rejoice in that feeling. That’s really what this effort is all about.”

The Rescue

The success stories of the Chicago area’s search-and-rescue program are numerous—but some people have declined the invitation to come back. President Evans says that although the search is largely complete, the rescuing process is far

from over. He’s not giving up on anyone.

More than 200 of the young single adults who were not attending church have become active, making a 33 percent increase in sacrament meeting attendance and Church activity among the single adults since the search-and-rescue effort began. The statistics are encouraging, but the members know the objective is to get to know the person behind the number, says JD.

Sarah Lynn Alderfer is another member of the Buffalo Grove young single adult branch who is finding great meaning in this effort. Sarah was baptized less than a year ago, and, she says, “This effort has given me a sense of responsibility and a sense of worth. Being able to focus on all these other people and to give of myself really strengthens me—to see one of them come back into activity is very rewarding.”

Sarah, along with many others in the singles branch, has spent hours looking for and visiting other young single adults to let them know they are cared about and needed.



Ginger Henrie and Jim Papp (above) both say they have enjoyed uplifting experiences through participation in the Chicago stakes’ search-and-rescue efforts.



OUR FATHER'S WORK



"There are tens of thousands . . . in this Church whose hearts are touched and who are brought back into activity by a great sense of concern, a quiet expression of love, and a challenge to serve from bishops and others. But there are many, many more who need similar attention.

"This work of ours is a great work of redemption. All of us must do more because the consequences can be so remarkable and everlasting. This is our Father's work, and He has laid upon us a divine injunction to seek out and strengthen those in need and those who are weak. As we do so, the homes of our people will be filled with an increased measure of love; the nation, whatever nation it be, will be strengthened by reason of the virtue of such people; and the Church and kingdom of God will roll forward in majesty and power on its divinely appointed mission."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "What This Work Is All About," Ensign, Aug. 2002, 7.

President Evans says: "We discovered and continue to discover how readily many of these young single adults come back when invited in a sincere way. There's some feeling of testimony in their hearts."

The Work Continues

The Chicago stakes have come a long way, but the members realize there is much more work to be done. The work is slow and demanding, with the miracles of quick returns to full activity being rare. Leaders in each stake keep working at it, though, and at the same time they are making sure they do a better job of keeping young single adults active in the first place.

Robert Ripley, president of the Buffalo Grove young single adult branch, says young single adults are difficult to keep track of because they lead relatively transient lives, moving frequently with life changes such as going to school, going on missions, and getting married. Another reason they sometimes become less active, Brother Linford adds, is a lack of knowledge on the part of soon-to-be young single adults that institute is a valuable program and that they are welcome in the adult classes of the Church.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE MCCONKIE

Enrollment in Chicago-area institute classes (top) has greatly increased because of efforts to reach young single adults.

Above: Chicago skyline.

"We've got to reach out to them," says Sister Jackson, "and make them feel we want to be their friends and that there is a place for them." She says each ward needs to step in and make the young single adults feel a part of the ward family.

As they come to recognize what they need to do to encourage young single adult activity, the stake presidencies and bishoprics in Chicago have committed to have an active young single adult committee in every ward. And at each seminary graduation in each stake, graduating seniors are being encouraged to attend institute.

Another way for ward members to put their arms around the young single adults, President Evans suggests, is for bishops to interview every young single adult annually. "If we would just do that one thing, I believe we wouldn't lose very many," he says. "We just need to be vigilant about focusing on each one and taking advantage of opportunities to stay in touch with them."

It is also helpful for home ward bishops to see that

THE BASICS

The eight Chicago-area stakes completed a few basic steps to implement and maintain their young single adult search-and-rescue effort:

- After recognizing the need to focus on the young single adults and receiving instruction from the Area Presidency, the stake presidents organized the search and rescue in the wards with the help of CES coordinators.
- The search began with an invitation to bishops to have every young single adult contacted within a three-month time period. Welcome packets, including a short survey, were created to aid the contacting members in this process.
- A database for tracking the young single adults was created and updated regularly.
- When a contact was made, the young single adult was asked to complete the survey and invited to church, an activity, or institute.
- If the young adult decided to accept the invitation, he or she was fellowshipped. If he or she decided not to, the member who made the initial contact continued to help the young single adult feel welcome.



PHOTOGRAPH BY DON O. THORPE

Young single adults gather frequently at the Chicago Illinois Temple (above) to strengthen bonds of friendship and their love for Heavenly Father.

when their members leave for college or work, they have the name of their new ward and bishop, the location and times of meetings, and information about the closest institute.

Reaching the One

All this might seem like a lot of work—and it is. But ward leaders and members are happy to do it. President Evans points out that as large as the Church gets, it will always function on a branch or ward level. “And that always gives us the ability, through priesthood leadership, to reach the *one*.”

As one of those touched by the loving efforts of his own family and his ward family, JD is enjoying his activity in the Church. He and others in the Chicago area stakes know that the worth of a soul truly “is great in the sight of God” (D&C 18:10). ■



Feeling the Love of the Lord through Prayer

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.

In What Ways Have You Felt the Love of the Lord through Prayer?

D&C 19:38: “Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing.”

Kathleen H. Hughes, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: “One of the most sublime experiences is to feel in prayer the warmth of the Spirit—a clear manifestation to us that Heavenly Father hears us and loves us. Equally sweet is the recognition as we go about the activities of our lives that a prayer has been answered, that we have experienced a miracle in our lives. Once again we have received a manifestation of His love for us.”

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “Learning the language of prayer is a joyous, lifetime experience. Sometimes ideas flood our mind as we listen after our prayers. Sometimes feelings press upon us. A spirit of calmness assures us that all will be well. But always, if we have been honest and earnest, we will experience a good feeling—a feeling

of warmth for our Father in Heaven and a sense of his love for us. I have felt sorrow because some of us have not learned the meaning of that calm, spiritual warmth, for it is a witness to us that our prayers have been heard. And since our Father in Heaven loves us with more love than we have even for ourselves, it means that we can trust in his goodness, we can trust in him; it means that if we continue praying and living as we should, our Father’s hand will guide and bless us” (“Pray Always,” *Tambuli*, Mar. 1982, 5; see *Ensign*, Oct. 1981, 5).

How Can You Improve Your Prayers to Better Feel the Love of the Lord?

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “If you . . . begin to do what you covenanted with God to do, I can promise you that you will feel more love for God and more of His love for you. And with that, your prayers will come from the heart, full of thanks and of pleading. You will feel a greater dependence on God. . . . You will pray always. And you will not forget Him. . . . He loves us. He hears our prayers, and He answers with what is best for us.



As we come to know Him through His words and in His service, we will love Him more” (“Prayer,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2002, 19; *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 17).

Moroni 7:48: “Pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“There is nothing that we are enduring that Jesus does not understand, and He waits for us to go to our Heavenly Father in prayer. I testify that if we will be obedient and if we are diligent, our prayers will be answered, our problems will diminish, our fears will dissipate, light will come upon us, the darkness of despair will be dispersed, and we will be close to the Lord and feel of His love” (“Behold, We Count Them Happy Which Endure,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 77). ■

My Child Is Drowning!

By Hirofumi Nakatsuka

Our Sunday School teacher once asked if any of the returned missionaries in the class would like to share a story about hardships we experienced on our missions. I had not experienced any particular hardships on my mission, but I decided to share the following story about one of my senior companions, a hard-working zone leader.

My companion's shoes had worn out, and as a result of our street contacting, his foot had developed many blisters. One day we had to return to the house early for lunch to change his shoes. When we left our house after lunch that day, I expected that we would walk to an area nearby because of his blistered foot. But instead my companion felt impressed to tract in a distant area.

As we were walking along a riverbank, a woman and several children ran toward us. The woman screamed, "Please help! My child is drowning!" He had fallen into the river, and they were not able to find him because the water was so muddy. We watched the river for a few minutes and finally saw something floating on the water. My companion dived into the dirty water and was able to catch the child and pull him out. The child's lips had lost their color, he wasn't breathing, and he appeared dead.

Our attempts to revive him had no effect. When at last the paramedics arrived and tried resuscitating him, the child finally threw up some water and started breathing again. By then many people surrounded us, and when they saw him breathing, they were moved to tears.

This experience was a great lesson for me. The Lord taught me that missionaries do for people's spirits the same thing my companion had done for this boy physically. It was our calling to save people spiritually.

When I finished telling this story in the Sunday School class, a member who had recently returned from his mission asked me where I had served.

"In the Japan Sapporo Mission," I answered.



When we finally saw something floating on the water, my companion dived in.

“Was it in Asahikawa that you helped this child?” he asked.

“Yes,” I answered.

Then he said, “The child in your story was baptized by my companion. One week after the baptism, I was transferred to Asahikawa and I met him. He mentioned that a missionary had saved him from drowning in a river.”

The Lord guides us in miraculous ways. It was not mere chance that my companion felt inspired to work in a

distant area that afternoon despite his difficulty with walking or that we walked along the river at just the right moment.

Now the young man who was saved wants to be a missionary, just like the one who saved him. I thought I had completed my mission 14 years ago, but when this young man goes on a mission, in a sense my mission will continue. ■

Hirofumi Nakatsuka is a member of the Yonago Ward, Okayama Japan Stake.

had given to my family. The only difference was that where our table had pegs, the Johnsons’ table had holes! I then realized that, seeing our need, this charitable man had cut his kitchen table in half and had built two new legs for each half.

It was obvious that the Johnson family could not fit around this small piece of furniture—they probably didn’t fit comfortably around



Two-of-a-Kind Table

By Son Quang Le, as told to Beth Ellis Le

Having fled Vietnam just three days before the takeover of Saigon in 1975, five members of my large family and I found ourselves living in a small trailer home in Provo, Utah. We had been allowed to bring only a small bag in our flight, and as refugees we were just learning English. Some of my sisters had joined the Church in Vietnam, and I was a recent convert. Now ward members saw to many of our needs, and a close-knit community pooled its resources to make life comfortable for us newcomers.

As a member of the priests quorum, I was assigned to home teach with Brother Johnson, who lived nearby with his large family. One day Brother Johnson noticed that our family had no kitchen table. He appeared the next day with an odd-looking but very functional table that fit nicely

against the trailer wall across from the kitchen sink and counters. I say odd-looking because two of the table legs matched the tabletop and two did not. Also, several small wooden pegs stuck out along one edge of the worn surface.

Soon we used this unique table daily for food preparation and for eating some quick meals. We still ate our family meals while we sat on the floor—with food, bowls, and chopsticks spread on a cloth in true Vietnamese fashion.

One evening I stood inside Brother Johnson’s front door as I waited for him before a home teaching appointment. There in the nearby kitchen—I was surprised to see it—was a table practically identical to the one they

it when it was whole. I like to imagine that the

Johnsons

learned to eat their family meals on the floor, just as we did, in true Vietnamese fashion.

Throughout my life this kind act has been a powerful reminder of true giving. ■

Son Quang Le and Beth Ellis Le are members of the Park Glen Ward, Hurst Texas Stake.

Two of the table legs matched the tabletop and two did not. Also, several small wooden pegs stuck out along one edge of the worn surface.

She Was My Answer

By Dori Wright

It was on an overcast day years ago that my friend called and asked me to attend the Jordan River Utah Temple with her. I wasn't sure I wanted to go out, as that day the things of the world were weighing heavily upon my soul. I felt I had little self-worth, and among other things, I didn't feel needed in my ward.

But after some hesitation, I accepted my friend's invitation with a prayer in my heart that if I would go and do the Lord's work, He would help me find peace of mind and an answer to my prayers.

At the temple I enjoyed the session but felt no particular answer to my plea for help. After I had prepared to leave and was waiting for my friend, a woman in a wheelchair bumped into me. As I bent down to rub the pain in my leg, I heard her say in a sweet voice, "Oh, I am so sorry. Please forgive me." She gently touched my head. "Are you OK, dear sister?"

I looked up into an angelic face of pure love. She then looked me in the eye and, with a squeeze of the hand, said, "This Church needs you, and there are so many that need your love. Reach out to others, and they will reach out to you. You are needed, wanted, and loved in the Lord's kingdom."

Tears filled my eyes,

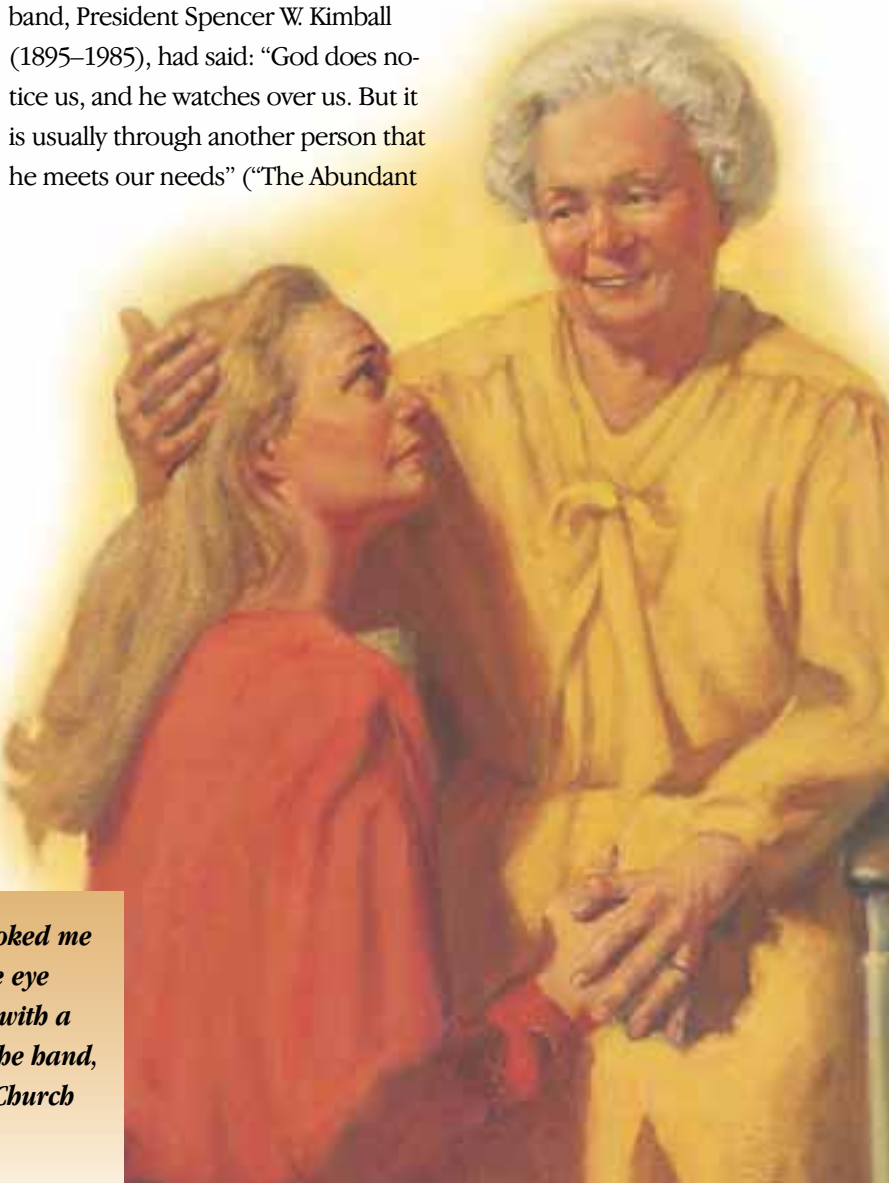
and I cried for a few minutes as she held my head against her. When I regained control, I wiped away tears of joy and replied, "You have answered my prayer."

I realized I was speaking to Camilla Eyring Kimball, whose husband, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), had said: "God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs" ("The Abundant

Life," *Tambuli*, June 1979, 3; *Ensign*, July 1978, 4).

I then found the strength to go home with joy and to give love from that day forward. I shall never forget how I was given peace and an answer to my prayer in an unexpected way on that glorious day in the house of the Lord. ■

Dori Wright is a member of the Lakeview Ward, Tooele Utah East Stake.



She looked me in the eye and, with a squeeze of the hand, said, "This Church needs you."

Reaching Spencer

By Emma Jo Anderson

As the prelude music began, I silently offered a prayer: “Heavenly Father, help me reach Spencer today. Help me be able to sign, and help him to understand.”

I had been called to sign in Primary for eight-year-old Spencer. He was deaf and confined to a wheelchair. A stomach tube provided all nourishment for his 35-pound body. A trachea tube pumped oxygen into his lungs.

Spencer was learning to sign, and it had been years since I’d taken sign language classes. For the last few months I had struggled as I tried to communicate with him. When he did understand, his face lit up in delight. Other times he clapped his hands in frustration as if to say, “What are you saying? Help me understand.”

The last few weeks had been especially frustrating. His bright, intelligent eyes had seemed to say, “Can’t you do better than this?” In turn I had studied harder, but the signs I tried to communicate with were signs he didn’t comprehend.

Today I hoped things would be better. As singing time began, the chorister told a story of a little boy who, lost for days in a cave, had sung the song we were about to sing and was comforted by it.

The room was quiet as she repeated the words of the Primary

song. They had such a powerful message I caught my breath as I silently prayed for guidance to know how to convey that message to Spencer. Then I began to sign:

*Heavenly Father, are you really there?
And do you hear and answer ev’ry
child’s prayer?*

*Some say that heaven is far away,
But I feel it close around me as I pray.
Heavenly Father, I remember now
Something that Jesus told disciples
long ago:*

*“Suffer the children to come to me.”
Father, in prayer I’m coming now to
thee.*

(“A Child’s Prayer,” *Children’s Songbook*, 12)

As we sang the first line, I held up a picture of the First Vision. Pointing to Heavenly Father I signed *Heavenly Father*. Suddenly Spencer’s eyes seemed to come alive. Understanding seemed to light his face.

Breathlessly we sang on. Spencer watched my every move. As we sang “Something that Jesus told disciples

Suddenly Spencer’s eyes seemed to come alive as I signed. Understanding seemed to light his face.

long ago: ‘Suffer the children to come to me,’ ” I held up a picture of Jesus blessing little children.

As we began to sing the first verse again,

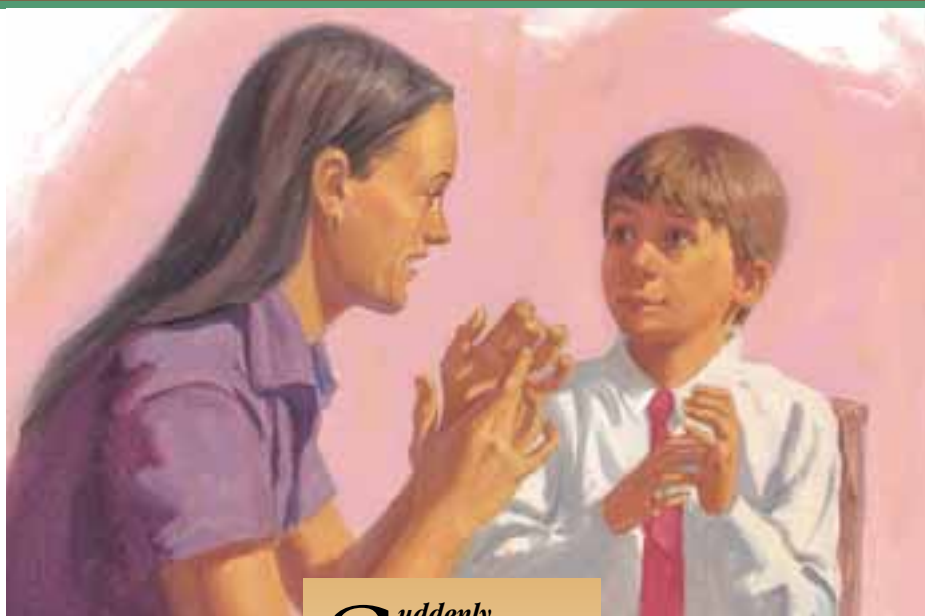
Spencer signed with me. Over and over again we sang. Joy shone from his eyes as his tiny hands signed in unison with mine. Tears filled my eyes as we started the second verse:

*Pray, he is there;
Speak, he is list’ning.
You are his child;
His love now surrounds you.*

As we sang the last few words, we were no longer communicating by our hands through sign but by our spirits through the Holy Spirit.

As the last lilting notes of the piano faded, I glanced across the room. As evidenced by the tears coursing down her face, Spencer’s mother, a Primary teacher, had witnessed the answer to prayer. Spencer’s Heavenly Father loved him, and now Spencer knew. ■

Emma Jo Anderson is a member of the Gilbert Ninth Ward, Gilbert Arizona Val Vista Stake.



Summer Surprise Days

During the summer before the birth of our fifth child, my husband was going to school and money was tight. Despite our busy lives, we felt it important to spend time together as a family every week. To save money and to provide some variety in our family outings, I began a weekly activity called “surprise day.”

One day a week we planned a surprise

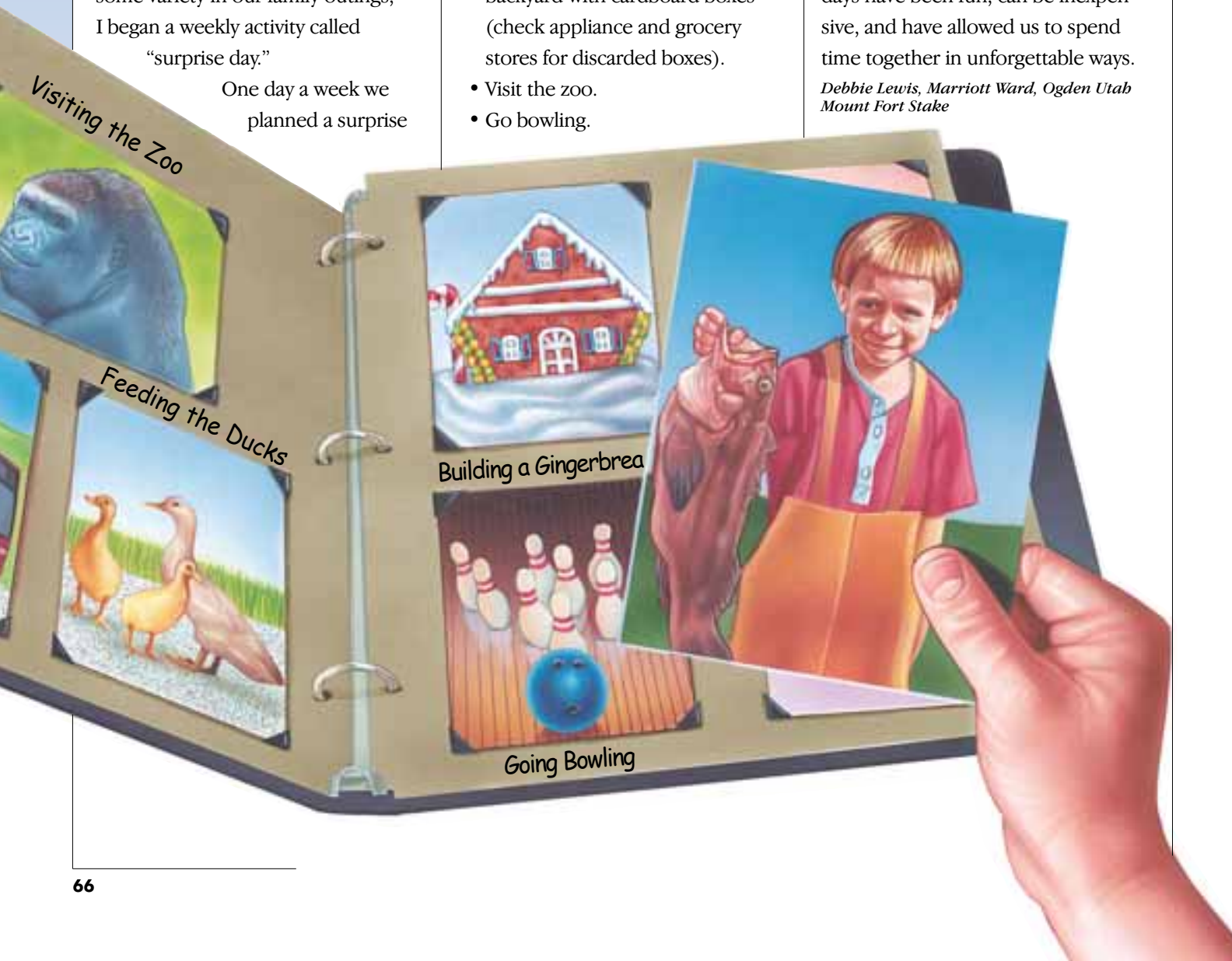
activity for our children. Half of their excitement came from anticipating what we were going to do. We have done numerous activities; here are a few that may work for your family:

- Fish at a trout farm.
- Make gingerbread (graham cracker) houses.
- Ride the public bus system to a park and feed the ducks.
- Create a village of houses in your backyard with cardboard boxes (check appliance and grocery stores for discarded boxes).
- Visit the zoo.
- Go bowling.

- Go on a treasure hunt.
- Go to the library and help each child check out a book.
- “Kidnap” Grandma and take her to get a treat.

When we drive to our activity, my husband loves to travel a different route while the children try to figure out where we are going. We have had many summers of these weekly adventures, and the excitement is still there for our children. Surprise days have been fun, can be inexpensive, and have allowed us to spend time together in unforgettable ways.

*Debbie Lewis, Marriott Ward, Ogden Utah
Mount Fort Stake*



Our Family on Film

While my husband attended meetings before church, I needed to keep our five young children content until it was time for us to go. Amusing them with books, puzzles, and games offered limited success. Finally, one Sunday I stumbled across an effective activity—showing a home video. To my delight, the children were so excited to see themselves and other family members on television that they actually sat still for an entire hour! I continued the activity the following Sunday and soon realized that more than watching themselves they loved seeing relatives who live far away. Through this simple Sunday activity my children can feel close to family members they don't often see in person. And I enjoy having a peaceful hour to get everyone ready for church.

Melissa Wall, Midland First Ward, Midland Michigan Stake

Party by Post

Some 30 years ago my mother started a long-distance, absentee baby shower tradition, beginning with my expectant sister who lived in another state. Just before the due date, Mother held a baby shower in her home, inviting all the



Award-Winning Family Home Evenings

A few years ago our daughter started working on what was then the Gospel in Action Award. To help her achieve one of her goals, we began family night by reciting the Articles of Faith, focusing on one each month. Then when our son became a Cub Scout, we started integrating some of his requirements into our lessons and activities. We soon realized that several of our children's goals could be accomplished concurrently, yet still result from their own efforts.

Together we have achieved a variety of

goals, such as serving others, preparing for emergencies, and discussing finances.

The current Faith in God Award, for children ages 8 through 11, continues to offer flexibility for working on goals individually, in groups, or as a family.

Awards for the Young Women and Young Men programs can also be worked on together. Parental involvement is key to your children's success. As you become familiar with their goals, you'll soon discover a variety of ideas to enhance their efforts as well as your family's home evenings.

Carolyn Staley, South Bluff Ward, Syracuse Utah South Stake



nearby relatives without telling my sister. Mother asked everyone to bring their gifts unwrapped so we could admire them at the shower before wrapping them with materials she supplied. We also played shower games, ate refreshments, and had a wonderful time visiting. Mother then packaged everyone's presents in a large box and sent it to my sister. Since my sister lived in a rural town where purchasing needed baby items was a challenge, the surprise package was a much-needed blessing as well as a loving reminder that we were

thinking of her. In recent years we have photographed and videotaped our long-distance baby showers to add an even more personal touch. We have also welcomed adopted children into the family by hosting our party after their adoptions have been finalized. This activity would also work well for bridal showers, birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and many other occasions. It's also a great way to gather family to prepare that occasional missionary package.

KonaDee Thomas, Heritage Branch, Bountiful Utah South Stake

BY LISA ANN JACKSON

Music and the Spoken Word has been inspiring audiences for 75 years.

It's 6:30 on a Sunday morning. The midsummer sky turns pink with the rising sun. Mountain shadows stretch long across the valley. The Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square is quiet and empty as bleary-eyed camera operators arrive to set up. Clinks and clangs begin to echo through the building as workers prepare for the weekly live broadcast and recording of *Music and the Spoken Word*.

Within 45 minutes the morning calm turns to bustle, 360 voices strong. It is 7:15 A.M., and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir has arrived for rehearsal. Producers, directors, stage managers, sound technicians, engineers, and assistants are all taking their posts in the Tabernacle and the Conference Center.

At 8:30 A.M. the dress rehearsal begins, and the buzz turns to intensity as all players practice their parts in unison. The director cues each camera in turn. A pair of producers time each note and every word. The choir, soloists, and announcer perform the entire program from beginning to end.

The rehearsal concludes, and they have 30 minutes to make last-minute tweaks. At 9:30 A.M. sharp it is time to go live, and the pace becomes frenetic. As the choir sings, continuous chatter on an audio system travels among groups, and somehow individuals hear the messages meant for them: "Standby on five"; "Ten seconds short"; "Light on Lloyd." Producers busily keep pace with the music. The director calls out camera shots. There is a microphone problem on announcer Lloyd D. Newell, and technicians quickly address it. There are two



FROM THE CROSSROADS OF THE WEST



Above: The Mormon Tabernacle Choir in 1920; a baton used by former conductor J. Spencer Cornwall.

Top right: The choir today. Right: An early cabinet-style radio set.



songs left, then one. Then the program is over.

“Perfect,” a producer declares. Twenty-seven minutes and fifty-six seconds exactly, and all the audience heard was beautiful music and inspiring words. It was calming, soothing, and otherworldly.

“The purpose of this broadcast is to give comfort, to give peace,” says Brother Newell. In July, *Music and the Spoken Word* has been doing so for 75 years. As the oldest continuously running network broadcast in the world, it has been a constant and stable force for good for the millions who have tuned in each week during the last three-quarters of a century.

From the Beginning

The broadcast began in the late 1920s with an idea that came to Earl J. Glade, founder and manager of what would



become Salt Lake City radio station KSL. It struck him that an emerging technology—network radio signals—could be used for a musical broadcast featuring the Tabernacle Choir and organ. Brother Glade convinced the choir, and the first broadcast aired on 15 July 1929 to 30 stations.

The scene was somewhat different from the highly technical and frenzied pace of today's broadcasts. On a Monday afternoon the choir gathered in the Tabernacle under the direction of Anthony Lund. A single microphone was strung from the ceiling, and a tall ladder was placed beneath it. Nineteen-year-old Ted Kimball, son of Tabernacle organist Edward P. Kimball, climbed the ladder to announce the songs. He stayed on his perch for the entire broadcast. The starting time cue was telegraphed in from New York City, and the broadcast was a success. *Music and the Spoken Word* was set in motion.

In June 1930 Richard L. Evans was named the official announcer. The broadcast, which started on NBC, was picked up by the CBS Radio Network, which still carries it today. The voice of Brother Evans, who became Elder Evans with his calls to the Seventy and later the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, rang out for 41 years on *Music and the Spoken Word*. He became a household name, and some not of his faith claimed him as their spiritual leader.

"I belong to the Richard L. Evans church," one elderly gentleman told missionaries who knocked on his door. Robert D. Monson of Ogden, Utah, was one of those elders. "We could not convince him that the church we represented and the church of Richard L. Evans were one and the same," Brother Monson wrote in a letter to the choir. "After repeated attempts to convince him, we presented him a copy of the Book of Mormon and parted friends."

Top: The choir in front of the Tabernacle, 1926.

Right: A choir member's dress from 1965; a cape that was once part of a conductor's outfit; a dress from 2001.



Above: A historic sketch of the choir's first radio broadcast. Right: Elder Richard L. Evans of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, long time announcer for the choir.

Far right: One of the choir's early records, and a magazine cover featuring the choir at the 1965 U.S. presidential inauguration.





75 YEARS OF MUSIC AND THE SPOKEN WORD

15 July 1929

First *Music and the Spoken Word* radio broadcast airs.

June 1930

Richard L. Evans is chosen as the announcer for the broadcast.

1959

The broadcast is voted in a national listeners' poll as America's most popular classical and religious program.

1962

Music and the Spoken Word begins broadcasting on television.

1 November 1971

Richard L. Evans passes away at age 65. His final message was broadcast the previous day.

21 February 1972

J. Spencer Kinard is named announcer of *Music and the Spoken Word*.

15 February 1987

3,000th broadcast of *Music and the Spoken Word*.

November 1990



Lloyd D. Newell becomes only the third official announcer to do *Music and the Spoken Word*.

18 July 2004

75th anniversary broadcast airs live from Salt Lake City at 9:30 A.M.



Elder Evans's tenure came to an end with his unexpected passing on a fall night in 1971. His final broadcast had aired just hours before.

"Richard L. Evans didn't just belong to this Church; he belonged to the world, and they claimed him as such," said President Harold B. Lee, then First Counselor in the First Presidency, at the April 1972 general conference.

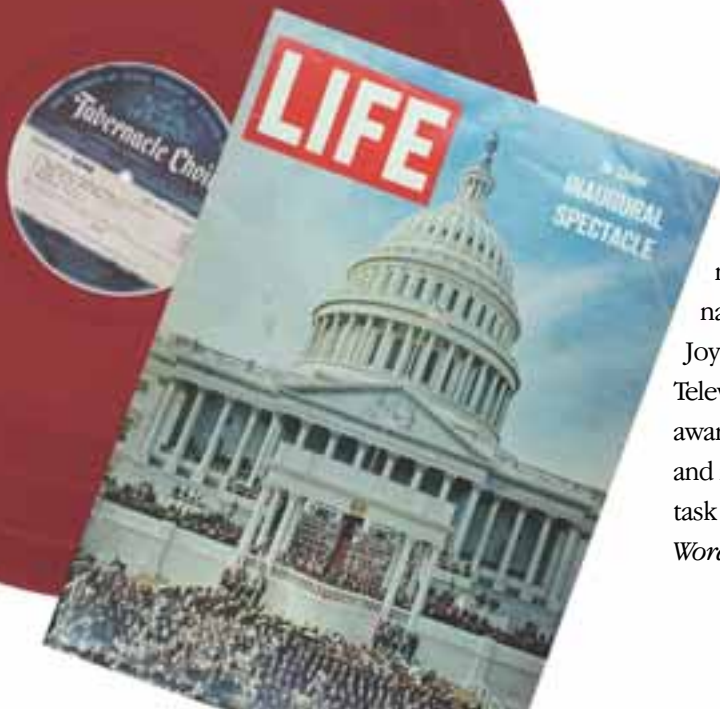
In 1972 J. Spencer Kinard was selected to be Elder Evans's successor. Brother Kinard served for 18 years, and in 1990 Lloyd D. Newell became only the third official announcer of the program. Brother Newell continues to serve as announcer, working closely with music director Craig Jessop and producer Ed Payne.

"When you think of what went before, when you think of the history of the broadcast and how beloved this program is, you recognize that it's part of the American culture. The Tabernacle Choir is so beloved," says Brother Newell.

Something Extraordinary

During its 75 years, *Music and the Spoken Word* has received numerous awards; it has received the highest honors and the strongest accolades from peers and industry professionals; it is consistently rated number one in its category in the Nielsen ratings; it has been featured in *Life* magazine, the *Wall Street Journal*, and countless other media outlets; and it has been inducted into the National Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame.

All of that is validating and even humbling. But it does not tell the whole story. "It takes something extraordinary for a program to have longevity in our industry," said Joyce M. Tudryn, president of the International Radio and Television Society, when presenting the program with an award in July 2003. "Using the airwaves to truly serve hearts and minds in a richly inspiring and uplifting way is no easy task in this day and age, and yet [*Music and the Spoken Word*] . . . has provided the quintessential example of how





Above: The choir in appearances at the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games (left) and in Moscow. Top insets (from left): Music director Craig Jessop; associate music director Mack Wilberg; organists John Longhurst, Clay Christiansen, and Richard Elliott. Right: Certificate and medal presented to the choir by the president of the United States.

a program can have a profoundly inspirational and positive impact on audiences throughout the world.”

Music and the Spoken Word is broadcast on 2,000 radio, television, cable, and satellite stations on four continents. Iain McKay, director of international media for distributor Bonneville Communications, works with international stations to air *Music and the Spoken Word*—a program provided at no cost in exchange for airtime. Through his work he has seen an interesting phenomenon: stations will cancel the program in order to sell the time slot to a commercial program, “but then a month or so later they call me up, cap in hand, and say, ‘Is it possible for us to get the choir back? We’ve had an outcry from our audience,’ ” Brother McKay says.

“I sometimes think we members of the Church don’t really appreciate the power of the choir because we hear the choir all the time at conference,” says Brother Newell. “And frankly, I was that way 15 years ago. But now being associated with them, I realize the power and the strength of the choir beyond the Church.”

Brother Newell and others have had experience after experience of meeting people and receiving letters in which listeners share their personal stories of peace, comfort, and even conversion as a result of *Music and the Spoken Word*.

Mary R. Jurgaitis of Neillsville, Wisconsin, wrote to the choir and shared an experience from her first day of marriage: “We were married on Saturday, June 25, 1966. Well, at 7:30 A.M. on June 26, [I was] rudely awakened on a Sunday morning with a radio between us on the pillow. My husband of one day explained to me that he had listened to [*Music and the Spoken Word*] for years and planned to continue to do so.”

Incensed, Mary banished her new husband to the nether parts of the house so his program would not interrupt her Sunday morning sleep, and they went on that way for a year until they moved and lost the broadcast. However, *Music and the Spoken Word* had ignited a curiosity about the Church that led them to visit Temple Square in Salt Lake City and the Hill Cumorah in New York. At their request, missionaries eventually visited their home, and they were baptized.

“Now my relationship with the broadcasts of *Music and the Spoken Word* is very different. . . . I am the one who sets the alarm, and I am the one who makes sure [the radio] is on the right station every Sunday morning.”

When former CBS anchor Walter Cronkite was invited to be a special guest at the Mormon Tabernacle Choir’s annual Christmas concert in December 2002, he canceled everything on his schedule to attend. *Music and the Spoken Word* was among his parents’ favorite programs, and he shared with the audience his cherished memories of listening to the broadcast with his parents on their old crystal radio. To share a stage with a choir he loves because of *Music and the Spoken Word* was “a thrill in a thrill-filled life,” Mr. Cronkite said.

For Myrna Fuller of Preston, Idaho, a particular broadcast had a profound impact in the midst of a bitter trial. Sister Fuller and her husband, Steven, awoke one September Sunday morning to find their six-week-old son lying still and



cold in his bed. The couple and Sister Fuller's father took the child to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead. "It was difficult for all of us, including the doctor," Sister Fuller wrote to the choir. "We left with heavy hearts. But as we entered my father's van, still clutching the lifeless form, the beautiful strains of 'I Know That My Redeemer Lives,' sung by your choir, came over the radio. We listened in silence as we drove home, but all three of us felt the same feeling of peace come over us. The longer you sang, the more intensely we felt the bitter sorrow replaced with the sweet.

"We will always believe that someone was inspired to choose that hymn that day."

This Day and Always

As the creators of *Music and the Spoken Word* look forward to another 75 years of broadcasting, they consider how to honor the tradition that has made the program what it is while staying relevant, fresh, and current.

Looking back, longtime listeners have heard changes over the years in music, message, and technology. The broadcast has gone beyond the Tabernacle to originate from places such as Royal Albert Hall in London, the

A VOICE THROUGH THE AGES

11 June 1944

Five days after D-Day, World War II; given by Richard L. Evans.

"May our sons and our brothers out there be protected and comforted and sustained. And after they have done that which they have to do, may the wounds of the world be healed as men make peace with themselves by setting in order their own lives."

24 November 1963

Two days after United States president John F. Kennedy was assassinated; given by Richard L. Evans.

"With a sorrowing America, we join this day in mourning the passing of the president. John Fitzgerald Kennedy is mourned by unnumbered multitudes, not only here but wherever there are knowing human hearts."

31 October 1971

The last message given by Richard L. Evans. It had been prerecorded a short time before his unexpected death on 1 November 1971. "There is more built-in strength in all of us than we sometimes suppose. And what once we said we couldn't do or couldn't live with or couldn't carry, we find ourselves somehow doing and enduring, as time, reappraisal, readjustment, and sometimes sheer necessity, modify our sense of values and our attitudes, and we find strength and endurance and hidden resources within ourselves."

15 February 1987

3,000th broadcast of Music and the Spoken Word; given by J. Spencer Kinard.

"Music speaks a universal tongue, for song is every person's native language. Beyond words, above speech, transcending even thought, is music. Like the towering spires of Gothic cathedrals, music's prayerful hymns point our hearts toward the billowing heavens, and to God."

26 March 2000

The turn of the century and the peak of the technology revolution; given by Lloyd D. Newell.

"Vision and faith go hand-in-hand. The Lord taught, 'All things are possible to him that believeth' (Mark 9:23). When we have the humility to look to Him and live, we're blessed with a belief in others and in life; we recognize humanity's potential for greatness; and we see beyond the here and now. With faith, we cultivate the art of the possible."

16 September 2001

Five days after terrorists attacked the United States; given by Lloyd D. Newell. "We are 'one nation under God,' and we turn to Him for peace and hope. He is the balm that will heal the wound. He is the calm in the midst of the storm. He has comforted His people through the ages. To Joshua of old, and to each of us today, His promise is sure: 'I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. . . . Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed' (Joshua 1:5, 9).

Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, and the Opera House in Sydney. "But the format and the guiding principles have not changed from the very beginning," says Brother Jessop.

Going forward, the program will stay its course as "a trusted friend—steady, reliable, and strong," says Brother Newell.

"*Music and the Spoken Word* is an anchor," concludes Brother Jessop. "Through good times, through bad times, it is an anchor that people can turn to for inspiration." ■

Lisa Ann Jackson is the Internet content specialist for the Church Curriculum Department.

For more information, see Richard L. Evans, J. Spencer Kinard, and Lloyd D. Newell, Messages from Music and the Spoken Word (2003); www.musicandthespokenword.com; and www.mormontabernaclechoir.org.



With the creation of the Sixth Quorum of the Seventy, areas in the United States and Canada are divided between the Fifth and Sixth Quorums.

First Presidency Announces Creation of the Sixth Quorum of the Seventy

The First Presidency has announced the formation of the Sixth Quorum of the Seventy, effective immediately.

The creation of the quorum is the direct result of a growing Church. With the new calls extended at the April 2004 general conference, the number of members of the Fifth Quorum of the Seventy exceeded 70—a full quorum.

The areas of the Church in the United States and Canada—which is where members of the Fifth Quorum have been serving—have been divided between the two quorums.

Forty-four Area Authority Seventies serving in the North America Northwest, North America West, Idaho,

Utah North, Utah Salt Lake City, and Utah South Areas will be members of the Fifth Quorum.

Thirty-four Area Authority Seventies serving in the North America Central, North America East, North America Northeast, North America Southeast, and North America Southwest Areas will be members of the Sixth Quorum.

Areas served by the Third Quorum (whose members live in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Pacific) and the Fourth Quorum (whose members live in Mexico, Central America, and South America) are unaffected by the change.

Area Authority Seventies continue their regular employment, reside in their own homes, and serve in their

areas on a Church-service basis. Though they are not designated as General Authorities—as are the members of the First and Second Quorums of the Seventy—Area Authority Seventies are also called to preach the gospel and to be special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. As assigned, they train stake presidencies, serve in Area Presidencies, tour missions, train mission presidents, and complete other assigned duties.

For changes to U.S. and Canada Area Presidencies and new Area Presidency assignments worldwide, see the “New Area Presidency Assignments” chart and accompanying story in the August 2004 issue of the *Ensign*. ■

New Mission Presidents Begin Service

On 1 July 2004, 116 new mission presidents and their wives began their assignments. There were no changes to mission boundaries. The Chile Santiago South Mission was renamed the Chile Rancagua Mission.

Mission—New President

Alabama Birmingham

Douglas R. Johnson

Albania Tirana

W. Bryan Colton

Argentina Buenos Aires North

Alan L. Wilkins

Argentina Buenos Aires South

Stephen C. Record

Argentina Córdoba

Ronald D. Gardner

Argentina Neuquén

Patrick R. Casaday

Arizona Mesa

W. Tracy Watson

Arizona Tempe

Gerald A. Butters

Armenia Yerevan

Lamar B. Bartholomew

Australia Brisbane

James E. Phillips

Australia Melbourne

Paul R. Coward

Australia Melbourne West

Joel W. Warner

Australia Perth

Leslie M. Albertson

Australia Sydney North

David D. Vincent

Bolivia La Paz

Rómulo V. Cabrera De Mello

Bolivia Santa Cruz

J. Stephen Cranney

Brazil Campinas
N. Eugene Shawcroft

Brazil Curitiba
David R. Webster

Brazil Goiânia
Edward L. Platt

Brazil João Pessoa
Silvio Geschwandtner

Brazil Londrina
Jerold E. Burns

Brazil Santa Maria
Roger W. Mack

California Carlsbad
Brian D. Garner

California Long Beach
Ronald W. Evans

California Los Angeles
Richard F. Raymond

California San Bernardino
Kent C. Wilson

Canada Edmonton
David M. Randall

Canada Toronto West
Alan C. Ashton

Cape Verde Praia
Romeo A. Piros

Chile Antofagasta
Francis C. Alder

Chile Concepción
James C. Kougioulis

Chile Rancagua
Kenneth L. Openshaw

Chile Santiago West
Lon D. Packard

Colombia Barranquilla
Julio R. Dávila Durán

Colorado Denver South
Roger B. Wright

Czech Prague
G. Fred Yost Jr.

Denmark Copenhagen
H. James Williams

Ecuador Guayaquil South
Keith B. Caldwell Jr.

England Leeds
James H. Woodward

Florida Jacksonville
Ralph J. Marsh

Florida Orlando
Kent W. Farnsworth

Florida Tallahassee
William L. Ertel

Germany Hamburg
Lowell C. Barber

Ghana Accra
Robert C. Gay

Hawaii Honolulu
Ronald K. Hawkins

Honduras San Pedro Sula
Adrián Ochoa Quintana

Idaho Boise
R. Brent Ririe

Illinois Chicago South
Albert E. Haines III

Illinois Peoria
Brent L. Top

India Bangalore
Brent R. Bonham

Indiana Indianapolis
Darrell G. Simmons

Indonesia Jakarta
Dean C. Jensen

Iowa Des Moines
M. Dirk Driscoll

Ireland Dublin
Steven R. Chapman

Italy Milan
Rodney B. Boynton

Italy Rome
Robert C. Rhien

Japan Nagoya
Gary E. Stevenson

Kenya Nairobi
John M. Barger

Korea Daejeon
Norman R. Nemrow

Korea Seoul West
Michael T. Ringwood

México Chihuahua
Guillermo Torres Saunders

México Culiacán
Juan M. Vázquez Mata

México León
Abraham Martínez Cerón

México Mérida
Fernando Lagunes Victor

México México City East
S. Shane Littlefield

México México City West
Craig R. Dixon

México Monterrey North
John R. Taylor

Michigan Detroit
William S. Winegar

Missouri St. Louis
Gary F. Gessel

Mongolia Ulaanbaatar
Steven J. Sorensen

New Hampshire Manchester
Douglas M. Rees

New Jersey Cherry Hill
Michael W. Cottle

New Mexico Albuquerque
Brent H. Koyle

New York Rochester
Alan S. Layton

Nicaragua Managua
Ricardo Valladares Banegas

Nigeria Enugu
Jerry L. Nelson

Nigeria Ibadan
B. Taylor Harper

Nigeria Lagos
Russell K. Booth

Nigeria Uyo
Stanford B. Owen

Ohio Cincinnati
Richard C. Bramwell

Oklahoma Oklahoma City
Richard L. Bracha

Panama Panama City
R. Michael Duffin

Paraguay Asunción North
James W. Weipert

Pennsylvania Philadelphia
Robert F. Fillmore

Perú Arequipa
L. Gino Galli Coxola

Perú Lima North
Dan W. Morris

Perú Trujillo
Lane D. Ward

Philippines Cagayan de Oro
Benson E. Misalucha

Philippines Ilagan
Loren G. Burton

Philippines Naga
Russell K. Harris

Philippines Quezon City
David R. Labrum

Poland Warsaw
David J. Barnett

Puerto Rico San Juan
David H. Crane

Russia Moscow
Glenn W. Beus

Russia Novosibirsk
Steven C. Smith

Russia Samara
Mikhail M. Davydik

Russia St. Petersburg
Paul B. Pieper

Russia Vladivostok
Dallas W. Rhyne

South Africa Durban
Danny R. Brock

Spain Málaga
Lindon J. Robison

Switzerland Zurich
Brent L. Buckner

Taiwan Taichung
Scott R. Watterson

Texas Fort Worth
Dennis L. Crockett

Texas San Antonio
Derrill C. Larkin

Tonga Nuku'alofa
Siaosi E. Moleni

Utah Salt Lake City
J. Michael Moeller

Utah Salt Lake City South
Brad K. Risenmay

Virginia Richmond
Spencer F. Kirk

Washington DC North
William D. Price

Washington Everett
Stephen K. Ashton

Washington Kennewick
Roger C. Connors

Washington Seattle
Kevin R. Pinegar

Wisconsin Milwaukee
Bruce L. Hunt ■

Significant Issues of *Ensign*, *New Era* Coming This Fall

Subscribers to the *Ensign* and *New Era* will receive special issues of the magazines this fall. To be assured of receiving these issues, new subscriptions to the *Ensign* and *New Era* need to be entered by 15 August. In the United States and Canada, subscriptions may be submitted online at ldscatalog.com or by phone at 1-800-537-5971.

Subscriptions are available at any Church distribution center or by sending a check for U.S. \$8 (\$12.80 Canadian) made out to "CPB" to Distribution Services, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Ensign

The *Ensign* will carry a new DVD produced by the Church that focuses on the Restoration. It will give members an opportunity to share some basic teachings regarding the Church's origin and doctrine. The new DVD includes a feature on Joseph

Smith's First Vision, short features on the Apostasy and the Restoration, and information for those who wish to find out more about the Church.

The DVD is intended to provide members another way to share the gospel with acquaintances. It will also be helpful for families and for use in home teaching and fellowshiping. The DVD

will not be mailed with magazines sent to the Philippines and to parts of Mongolia and Africa, but it can be ordered through distribution centers serving those areas.

New Era

The October *New Era* will be a special issue on courtship and marriage. "This is always a topic of great interest for teens," says Val Johnson, managing editor. "And, because of the potential pitfalls, as well as the importance of preparing for the temple and for

marriage, it is a topic of great concern for the parents and leaders of teens, too."

The issue will give practical advice on dating, temple preparation, and temple marriages, and discuss issues such as dating etiquette and finding a spouse.

"This will be a must-read issue for teens and those who care for them," says Brother Johnson. "It will provide great material for family home evening and classroom discussions." ■

Church History Site Adds Features

Since its launch in 2003, the Church History Web site (www.lds.org/churchhistory) has been updated and expanded. Its three newest features include information on the pioneers, biographical information on the Presidents of the Church, and a new index to gospel-related articles and articles about the Church.

Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel

Just in time for the 2004 celebration of the pioneers entering the Salt Lake Valley, this online database allows users to search for names of individual pioneers and browse company listings chronologically or alphabetically. The site also offers narratives about each company and posts citations of publications that provide additional information.

"This site allows people to

get to know their ancestors better, not just in terms of birth or death dates, but it gets them involved in the experiences their ancestors had throughout their lives, particularly during the pioneer trek,"

says Kevin Nielson, manager of the Church History Web site.

Compiled over the last two decades, the Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel database currently includes some 40,000 names, and the



The Church recently added new features to the Church History Web site, including information on pioneers and Presidents of the Church.



numbers and depth of information constantly increase because the site invites visitors to submit documented supplementary information to add to the database. Brother Nielson says that the site is currently receiving 30 submissions per day.

He also notes that the addition of the database has doubled the Church History Web site's traffic each day to more than 1,500 visitors.

Presidents of the Church

This site features biographical information on all 15 Presidents of the Church. A section on basic facts is available for those seeking minimal information, such as birth and death dates, term of presidency, or a short biographical sketch. For researchers wanting more in-depth information, the site also features timelines highlighting significant events in the prophets' lives, their testimonies, quotations, images and multimedia clips, and citations of additional resources about or by each prophet.

The site also contains links to already-existing Church resources such as curriculum materials and institute manuals.

Index to Church Articles in Periodical Literature

Formerly known as "Index to Church Articles," this updated index provides searchers with key articles about specific topics. Moreover, instead of merely offering the source citations, the site immediately links visitors to the magazine article in the Gospel Library

section of the Church's Web site.

The index also refers to articles about the Church in external sources such as news magazines, newspapers, and other media.

In addition to these three newly introduced tools, the

Church History Web site also has offerings related to the general history of the Church, Church historical sites, Museum of Church History and Art, the Church History Library, Church Archives, and BYU resources. ■

Saints Celebrate Sailing of the *Brooklyn*

July marks the 158th anniversary of the landing of the *Brooklyn* in Yerba Buena (now San Francisco), California. The *Brooklyn*, a 125-foot (38-m) ship carrying approximately 240 members of the Church, launched from Manhattan on 4 February 1846 and arrived at Yerba Buena on 31 July 1846. It was the first civilian ship to round Cape Horn and logged the longest recorded sea voyage of religious pioneers, covering 20,000 miles (32,000 km).

A plaque commemorating the sailing of the ship was dedicated on 7 February 2004 at Manhattan's Old Slip, the New York City pier from which the ship sailed.

The ship's passage included 11 deaths and two births, one during the Atlantic and one during the Pacific portions of the journey.

Among the supplies these religious pilgrims carried with them in the small hold (the living space for the passengers was only 2,500 square feet [232 sq m]) were materials for two sawmills and a gristmill,

tools for 800 farmers, two cows, 40 pigs, and a printing press that would later publish *The California Star*, California's first English-language newspaper.

The dedication of the plaque at Old Slip was followed by a screening of *Forgotten Voyage*, Scott Tiffany's award-winning documentary about the *Brooklyn*. ■



The Brooklyn carried members of the Church 20,000 miles (32,000 km) around Cape Horn 158 years ago. Members in New York commemorated the event with the dedication of a plaque in Manhattan's Old Slip.

Cadet Choir Offers Testimony, Patriotism

By Melissa Merrill,
Church Magazines

Like other cadets, John Spillane was overwhelmed by his first week of Basic Cadet Training (dubbed "Beast Week") at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The regimen, he says, was "intense and intimidating," and by the time Sunday rolled around, Brother Spillane felt very alone.

As he descended into the basement of the Cadet Chapel where the Latter-day Saint cadets meet, he heard the strains of "Come, Come, Ye Saints" (*Hymns*, no. 30) and was overcome by feelings of comfort. "I sat . . . and cried, wishing I could stay there forever," Brother Spillane explains.

So when he heard about the LDS Cadet Choir at the Academy, he knew he needed to join. Brother Spillane says, "The hymns of Zion could bring me the peace I needed."

Brother Spillane is now a senior at the Academy and the assistant cadet-in-charge of the choir. For him and 36 other Latter-day Saint cadets, the weekly practices and performance tours aren't just a break from the rigors of studying. In addition to gaining personal peace and direction, choir members are able to express their testimonies to others, show their



The U.S. Air Force Academy's LDS Cadet Choir performs at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building in Salt Lake City, Utah.

patriotism, and build strong friendships. The choir, which was organized in 1995, performs at a variety of Academy events and tours throughout the western United States.

"We are not a professional choir, and in fact, the rigorous Academy schedule leaves cadets very little time to rehearse," says Major Dan Gillespie, an instructor of military strategic studies at the Academy and the officer-in-charge of the choir. "Many of them have to bring their dinner to rehearsal and eat between numbers. And yet as I listen to the cadets there is a power there. The Spirit is with the choir and takes their message to the listeners."

Colonel Parris C. Neal, senior military professor in the department of electrical engineering and bishop of the Colorado Springs 14th (YSA) Ward, Colorado Springs Colorado North Stake, notes that the influence of the Latter-day Saint cadets is a powerful one. "The small group [is] well known and respected across the institution. . . . They are known as hard-working [and] honest and [as having] a level of maturity that is above the norm."

For the cadets, the choir

is more than just singing. "Sharing the message of the gospel through song is a powerful experience," freshman Andrew Groberg says. "The cadets are proud to be serving our Heavenly Father and serving the nation." ■

In the News

Interfaith Relations Strengthened by BYU Records Preservation

After he heard about Brigham Young University's Dead Sea Scrolls database project, Bishop Mar Bawai Soro of the Assyrian Church of the East approached the school's Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts about digitizing 33 ancient Christian texts housed at the Vatican Library. In May, that proposal came to fruition as BYU and the Vatican Library released a DVD with some 14,000 pages of Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic) texts dating back to the fifth and sixth centuries.

The texts include the writings—many of them previously unpublished—of early Christian writers. The texts contain the theologies of the Syriac Christian churches and

chronicles their emerging culture. "These manuscripts really tell our 'lost' story," says Bishop Soro.

But wide-scale records preservation isn't the only thing the seven-year project has created. The effort has also established relationships among the Church, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Vatican, introducing the possibility of similar collaborations in the future.

"This was somewhat of a pilot project to demonstrate how the different parties could work together," says Kristian Heal, a research associate for the institute and a specialist in Syriac studies. "When the Assyrian Church put us forth as the party to collaborate with, the Vatican was initially reticent because they had no prior relationship with us. However, as they asked around, they received very positive comments about us as a people and about the credibility of our work."

This particular project focused on the writings of a branch of Christians who lived in what is modern-day Iraq. Although they faced heavy taxation and pressure to assimilate with their Muslim neighbors, they struggled to retain their identity as followers of Christ.

Brother Heal explains, "This project [has given] us an opportunity to get to better know some of the Christian groups, and in particular, . . . a group of people who have been resolutely Christian under difficult circumstances. . . . There has to be something good and

useful and true and inspiring in their story."

The project has generated significant scholarly enthusiasm. Lucas Van Rompay, a noted Syriac Christian scholar and professor at Duke University, says he was impressed by the quality of the digital images. "I haven't seen anything of the same level, of the same expertise, and of the same breadth," Professor Van Rompay says.

Church Recognized for Humanitarian Contributions

For the first time, the Church was invited to participate in the International Aid & Trade Europe 2004 Conference & Exhibition, held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 28–29 January.

While Church representatives had attended the annual exhibition before, this was the first time the Church was asked to formally present information about its programs, said Garry R. Flake, director of the Church's humanitarian emergency response.

During the conference, Brother Flake made several presentations outlining the Church's focus on emergency response and its other major humanitarian initiatives. In addition, the show provided an opportunity to learn about other agencies' causes and to form potential alliances. One particular benefit from the conference was interacting with the World Health Organization, headquartered in Geneva. The Church and the WHO had previously formed a partnership to help eliminate measles through inoculation, Brother Flake said.



Full-time missionaries answered questions at the Church's booth in the recent International Aid & Trade Europe 2004 Conference & Exhibition, held in Geneva, Switzerland.

Besides offering financial assistance from the Church, Brother Flake hopes to provide field support later this year in the form of members helping with vaccination campaigns, especially in regions where immunization levels are low.

Anchorage Week of the Family

The first-ever Week of the Family in Anchorage, Alaska, was held in April, promoting the belief that healthy family relationships are a benefit to communities and nations.

"[Families are] your first place to learn about human relationships. It's your jumping-off point," Felicia Paskett, one of the presenters, told the *Anchorage Daily News*. The family unit allows children to learn values and traditions while flourishing as individuals, she added.

The seven-day conference included a series of seminars on topics such as creating a stable family and building a support network.

The Family Fair kickoff, held at a Latter-day Saint meetinghouse, was attended

by Anchorage mayor Mark Begich. Booths at the fair were staffed by members of the Church and other local groups and included information on topics such as self-reliance, family home evening, and combating rape.

Aid Effort a Highlight of Women's Conference

An estimated 17,000 attendees at Brigham Young University's 2004 Women's Conference rolled up their sleeves and assembled more than 44,052 hygiene kits, 16,138 school kits, and 5,016 newborn kits during the conference, held on 29–30 April. They also made 1,000 topical sore bandages, painted 1,000 toys, tied 210 quilts, and stuffed and sewed 350 teddy bears.

Some attendees crocheted quilt squares in the Marriott Center at BYU while listening to such speakers as Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and BYU President Elder Cecil O. Samuelson of the Seventy and his wife, Sharon. Others prepared kits, tied quilts, made greeting

cards, assembled toys, and completed fleece blankets in various areas around the BYU campus.

In two major service projects, conference attendees were also asked to cut out patterns for children's clothing and to use old airline seat covers to make school bags for children.

The quilts were to be sent to Chile as part of a request from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to send 4,000 quilts to the poor citizens of the country, where many families have only one blanket. The kits with bandages will be sent to Africa to help those suffering from leprosy to cover their sores.

Baseball Team Welcomes Saints to "Pioneer Night"

More than any other church, foundation, school, or corporation, members of the Church are the single largest group-ticket client the Los Angeles Dodgers has.

To celebrate this relationship, the Dodgers organization will be hosting "Pioneer Night at Dodger Stadium" on 23 July. All Latter-day Saint families, wards, and stakes will be able to buy tickets for that evening's game at a discounted rate.

The event is intended to honor the Church and the role that Latter-day Saint pioneers played in the settlement of California. Latter-day Saints settled San Bernardino County, and the Mormon Battalion helped build roads and settle other parts of California.

At the game, fans will be

able to visit a display including pioneer crafts, costumes, and historical documents. A tribute to the pioneers and salutes to outstanding members of the Church will take place during the pre-game activities and game-time breaks.

"Our hope is that there will be a greater awareness of the Latter-day Saint community in the Los Angeles area, and [awareness] that we are good neighbors," says Elder R. Randall Huff, Area Authority Seventy.

Church Invites Youth to Monthly Devotional on Temple Square

Devotionals for youth and their parents and leaders will now be held monthly on Temple Square. Following the success of the April devotional featuring Elaine Dalton, Second Counselor in the Young Women general presidency, and Brazilian singer Liriel Domiciano, a similar event will be held each month in the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

In May, Charles W. Dahlquist II, Young Men general president, and Eclipse, a popular a capella performing group, participated in the devotional.

Upcoming devotional dates are 14 July, 10 August, and 1 September. Speakers and performers had not been announced at press time. Tickets are required but can be obtained free of charge. For tickets or more information about upcoming devotionals, call the Conference Center ticket office at 1-801-240-0080 or go online at www.lds.org/events. ■



MAKING THE MOST OF THIS ISSUE

J U L Y 2 0 0 4

Putting on the Armor of God

“True spiritual power lies in numerous smaller acts woven together in a fabric of spiritual fortification that protects and shields from all evil,” Elder M. Russell Ballard points out as he discusses how we can protect ourselves with the armor of God. See “Be Strong in the Lord,” page 8.

Protecting Your Child

Are you concerned about the friends your children spend time with? Find tips for steering them away from gangs and for helping them select good friends in “Protecting Your Child from Gang Influence,” page 16.

Unity— with Dessert on the Side

Have you ever been asked to bring cookies or a cake to a ward dinner? Maybe you’ve served on the

activities committee and know the challenge behind planning an event to bring the ward together. Find out how enjoyable activities can help bring individuals and families to Christ in “Parties,

Picnics, and Potlucks,” page 29.

Milestone in Mexico

Mexico will reach a historic one-million-member milestone this year. Read about how the Church is changing lives there in “One Million in Mexico,” page 34.

Power to Resist

What can a woman do if she finds herself attracted to a man who is married to someone else? See “How Could This Happen to Me?” page 43.

Celebrating 75 Years

Did you know that the Mormon Tabernacle Choir has been broadcasting weekly performances for 75

years? *Music and the Spoken Word* is the longest continuously running network broadcast in the world. See how it has been done in “From the Crossroads of the West,” page 68.

Home Teachers, Visiting Teachers

Find your monthly messages on pages 2 and 61.

Book of Mormon Stories

If you’re preparing for a Sunday School lesson, studying individually, or reading the Book of Mormon with your family, you’ll find this final section of a Book of Mormon historical chart is filled with helpful information putting the stories in context. Read of dates, key events, teachings



about the Savior, and gospel principles. See “Book of Mormon Times at a Glance, Chart 2,” page 22.

Don’t Miss the Feast

Quick! When does your subscription to the *Ensign* run out? Do you know whether you’ll receive the next conference issue?

You say you’ve been meaning to subscribe or to give someone a gift subscription, but you don’t know how to do it?

You could renew, subscribe, or buy a gift subscription right now

and be done in 10 minutes if you live in the United States or Canada. Just go to www.lds.org on the Internet and click on “Order Church materials,” then “Magazine Subscriptions.” (Hint: If you want to know whether it’s time to renew your subscription, the expiration date is printed on the mailing label on your magazine.) You can also call 1-800-537-5971 to subscribe or renew.

If you live in other areas, you can easily subscribe to or renew the *Ensign* through your nearest distribution center. And if you

do it now, you will still be able to enjoy the spiritual feast in that next conference issue.

GOSPEL TOPICS

Activation, 56	Hope, 19
Activities, 29, 66, 67	Inspiration, 62, 64
Afflictions, 2	Jesus Christ, 65
Agency, 19, 43	Media, 68
Atonement, 52	Mexico, 34
Bishops, 46	Missionary Work, 62
Book of Mormon, 22	Morality, 19, 43
Charity, 63	Mormon Tabernacle Choir, 68
Church Growth, 34	Music, 65, 68
Church History, 46	Obedience, 8, 52
Faith, 2	Prayer, 8, 61, 64
Faith in God	Repentance, 43
Award, 67	Reverence, 8
Family, 66, 67	Sabbath, 67
Family Home	Sacrifice, 63
Evening, 67	Scripture Study, 8, 22
Fellowshipping, 29	Strength of Youth, 18
Friends, 18	Strengthening Families, 16
Gangs, 16	Young Single Adults, 56
Healing, 2	
Heavenly Father, 65	
Holy Spirit, 65	



COURTESY OF WALT AND KATE GASSER, MAY NOT BE COPIED

Crossing the Sweetwater, by David Koch

In 1856 J. D. T. McAllister wrote a happy tune for the handcart pioneers: "For some must push and some must pull, / As we go marching up the hill; / So merrily on our way we go / Until we reach the Valleyo" (Children's Songbook, 220). Here pioneers cross the Sweetwater River.



Front cover: The Vega family of Guadalajara, Mexico (foreground) and the Mexico City Mexico Temple (background). Back cover, top left: The Julio César González family of Monterrey. Top right: The historic San Pedro Mártir meetinghouse in Mexico City. Above: The Monterrey Mexico Temple. Right: The new Madero meetinghouse, Mérida Mexico Centro Stake.