

Ensign

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a red and white robe, is shown in profile, looking upwards with an expression of awe or prayer. A hand from another person, wearing a tan robe, is reaching towards her face. The background is dark and textured.

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**Women of
the New
Testament**
p.40

**The Quest for Spiritual
Knowledge, p. 30**

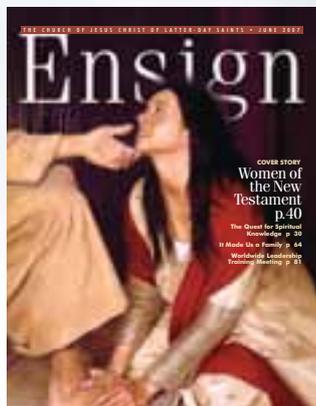
It Made Us a Family, p. 64

**Worldwide Leadership
Training Meeting, p. 81**



**Anna the Prophetess,
by Elspeth Young**

Anna, a widow and a prophetess of the tribe of Asher, was 84 years old at the time of Christ's birth. She "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day" (Luke 2:37). She was one who greeted the infant Jesus at His presentation in the temple.



ON THE COVER

Front: *For She Loved Much*, by Jeffrey Hein. Back: *Jesus Said to Her, "Mary,"* by William Whitaker.



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The Ensign invites you to share your testimony of family home evening. What kinds of lessons and activities have generated love and positive behavior? How do you successfully have family home evening with young children, with teenagers, with no children, or when family members are separated by distance? Please send us your ideas and success stories, labeled "FHE," by July 15.

We also welcome other submissions that show the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. Publication criteria are posted at www.lds.org under Gospel Library.

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Ensign

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

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To subscribe: By phone, call 1-800-537-5971 to order using Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card, or American Express. Online, go to ldscatalog.com. By mail, send \$10 U.S. check or money order to Distribution Services, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Distribution Services, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431



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USING THIS ISSUE

Teaching—even without a formal teaching assignment.

After reading “Teaching and Being Taught” (p. 36), attend your next meetings prepared to share your insights. Consider how your learning is enhanced by your own reflection and by others’ comments.

Organizing family home evening. After reading “It Made Us a Family” (p. 64), talk with your spouse or children about possible themes for future family home evening lessons. You can use the Church’s online resources to prepare these. From www.lds.org select Prepare a Lesson; then explore reference materials listed under Home and Family.

Recognizing the Atonement in your life. After reading “Gratitude for the Atonement” (p. 15), think about what the Savior’s sacrifice means to you. It may help to record your feelings in a journal.

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- Facing the future with faith—even amid frightening world events.
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An Unending Conflict, a Victory Assured



We are engaged in a great eternal struggle that concerns the very souls of the sons and daughters of God.

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

Nearly 10 decades have passed now since my birth, and for the better part of that time, there has been war among mankind in one part of the earth or another. No one can ever estimate the terrible suffering incident to these wars across the globe. Lives numbered in the millions have been lost. The terrible wounds of war have left bodies maimed and minds destroyed. Families have been left without fathers and mothers. Young people who have been recruited to fight have, in many instances, died while those yet alive have had woven into the very fabric of their natures elements of hatred which will never leave them. The treasure of nations has been wasted and will never be recovered.

The devastation of war seems so unnecessary and such a terrible waste of human life and national resources. We ask, will this terrible, destructive way of handling disagreements among the sons and daughters of God ever end?

But there is another war that has gone on since before the world was created and that is likely to continue for a long time. It is a war that reaches beyond questions of territory or national sovereignty. John the Revelator speaks of that struggle:

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

“And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7–9).

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The Continuing Struggle

That war, so bitter, so intense, has never ceased. It is the war between truth and error, between agency and compulsion, between the followers of Christ and those who have denied Him. His enemies have used every stratagem in that conflict. They've indulged in lying and deceit. They've employed money and wealth. They've tricked the minds of men. They've murdered and destroyed and engaged in every kind of evil practice to thwart the work of Christ.

Murder began on the earth when Cain slew Abel. The Old Testament is replete with accounts of the same eternal struggle.

It found expression in the vile accusations against the Man of Galilee, the Christ, who healed the sick and lifted men's hearts and hopes, He who taught the gospel of peace. His enemies, motivated by that evil power, seized Him, tortured Him, nailed Him to the cross, and spoke in



mockery against Him. But by the power of His godhood, He overcame the death His enemies had inflicted and through His sacrifice brought salvation from death to all men.

That eternal war went on in the decay of the work He established, in the corruption which later infected it, when darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people (see Isaiah 60:2).

But the forces of God could not be vanquished. The Light of Christ touched the heart of a man here and a man there, and vast good came to pass notwithstanding much of oppression and suffering.

There came a time of renaissance, with struggles for liberty—struggles for which much of blood and sacrifice was paid. The Spirit of God moved upon men to found a nation wherein freedom of worship and freedom of expression and freedom of agency were protected. There followed then the opening of the dispensation of the fulness of times with a visit to earth of God the Eternal Father and His Beloved Son, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. This glorious event was followed by visits of angels restoring the ancient keys and priesthood.

But the war was not over. It was renewed and redirected. There was contempt. There was persecution. There were drivings from one place to another. There was the murder of the young prophet of God and of his beloved brother, 163 years ago this month.

The Latter-day Saints fled their comfortable homes, their farms, their fields, their shops, their beautiful temple built at such tremendous sacrifice. They came to mountain valleys, thousands of them dying along the way. They came to the kind of place that President Joseph Smith had instructed



the Twelve to find, “where the devil cannot dig us out.”¹

But the adversary has never stopped trying. In the October conference of 1896, President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98), then an aged man, stood in the Tabernacle on Temple Square and said:

“There are two powers on the earth and in the midst of the inhabitants of the earth—the power of God and the power of the devil. In our history we have had some very peculiar experiences. When God has had a people on the earth, it matters not in what age, Lucifer, the son of the morning, and the millions of fallen spirits that were cast out of heaven, have warred against God, against Christ, against the work of God, and against the people of God. And they are not backward in doing it in our day and generation. Whenever the Lord set His hand to perform any work, those powers labored to overthrow it.”²

President Woodruff knew whereof he spoke. He had then only recently passed through those difficult and perilous days when the government of the nation had come against our people, determined to destroy this Church as an organization. Despite the difficulties of those days, the Saints did not give up. In faith they moved forward. They put their trust in the Almighty, and He revealed unto them the path they should follow. In faith they accepted that revelation and walked in obedience.

The Pattern of Conflict

But the war did not end. It abated somewhat, and we’re grateful for that. Nonetheless, the adversary of truth has continued his struggle.

That war, so bitter, so intense, has never ceased. It is the war between truth and error; between agency and compulsion, between the followers of Christ and those who have denied Him.

Notwithstanding the present strength of the Church, it seems that we are constantly under attack from one quarter or another. But we go on. We must go on. We have gone forward, and we will continue to go forward. In some seasons the issues are major. At other times they are only local skirmishes. But they are all part of a pattern.

Opposition has been felt in the undying efforts of many, both within and without the Church, to destroy faith, to belittle, to demean, to bear false witness, to tempt and allure and induce our people to practices inconsistent with the teachings and standards of this work of God.

The war goes on. It is as it was in the beginning. There may not be the intensity, and I am grateful for that. But the principles at issue are the same. The victims who fall are as precious as those who have fallen in the past. It is an ongoing battle. The men of the priesthood, with the daughters of God who are our companions and allies, are all part of the army of the Lord.

We must be united. An army that is disorganized will not be victorious. It is imperative that we close ranks, that we march together as one. We cannot have division among us and expect victory. We cannot have disloyalty and expect unity. We cannot be unclean and expect the help of the Almighty.

The young men of the priesthood, the deacons, teachers, and priests, have had laid upon them in their priesthood offices the duty to preach the gospel, to teach the truth, to encourage the weak to be strong, to “invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59). The young women of the Church have no less a responsibility to be obedient



to the commandments of God and to serve as examples of faith and virtue.

No son or daughter of our Heavenly Father can afford to partake of things that will weaken the mind, the body, or the eternal spirit. These include drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and pornography. You cannot be involved in immoral activity. You cannot do these things and be valiant as warriors in the cause of the Lord in the great, everlasting contest that goes on for the souls of our Father's children.

The men of this Church cannot be unfaithful or untrue to their wives, to their families, to their priesthood responsibilities if they are to be valiant in moving the work of the Lord forward in this great battle for truth and salvation. They cannot be dishonest and unscrupulous in temporal affairs without tarnishing their armor. The women of this Church, be they wives, mothers, or sisters who have not found companions, cannot be unfaithful or untrue to their covenants and blessings and serve as the bulwark in the kingdom that they are meant to be.

In our meetings, we occasionally sing an old hymn:

Who's on the Lord's side? Who?

Now is the time to show.

We ask it fearlessly:

Who's on the Lord's side? Who?

We wage no common war,

Cope with no common foe.

The enemy's awake;

Who's on the Lord's side? Who?²³

A Call to Commitment

Some years ago a friend told me of a conversation he had had with another member of the Church. My friend had asked whether his associate felt close to his Heavenly Father. The man replied that he did not feel close. Why not? He said, "Candidly, because I don't want to." Then he went on to say, "If I were close to Heavenly Father, He would probably want some commitment from me, and I am not ready for that."

Think of it—a man who has taken upon himself the name of the Lord in baptism, a man who has renewed his covenants with the Lord in his sacrament meetings, a man who has accepted the priesthood of God and yet has said that if he were close to his Heavenly Father, some commitment might be expected of him, and he was not ready for that.

In this work there must be commitment. There must be devotion. We are engaged in a great eternal struggle that concerns the very souls of the sons and daughters of God. We are not losing. We are winning. We will continue to win if we will be faithful and true. We *can* do it. We *must* do it. We *will* do it. There is nothing the Lord has asked of us that in faith we cannot accomplish.

I think of the children of Israel when they fled Egypt. They camped beside the Red Sea. Looking back, they saw Pharaoh and his armies coming to destroy them. Fear gripped their hearts. With the armies behind them and the sea before them, they cried out in terror.

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew

W*e are not losing. We are winning. We will continue to win if we will be faithful and true. We can do it. We must do it. We will do it. There is nothing the Lord has asked of us that in faith we cannot accomplish.*



to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

“The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, . . . speak unto the children of Israel, *that they go forward*” (Exodus 14:13–15; emphasis added).

The sea parted, and the children of Israel moved to their salvation. The Egyptians followed to their own destruction.

Shall we not also in faith move forward? He who is our eternal leader, the Lord Jesus Christ, has challenged us in words of revelation. Said He:

“Wherefore, lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins, and take upon you my whole armor, that ye may be able to withstand the evil day. . . .

“Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which I have sent mine angels to commit unto you;

“Taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked;

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of my Spirit, . . . and be faithful until I come, and ye shall be caught up, that where I am ye shall be also” (D&C 27:15–18).

A Bright Future

The war goes on. It is waged across the world over the issues of agency and compulsion. It is waged by an army of missionaries over the issues of truth and error. It is waged in our own lives, day in and day out, in our homes, in our work, in our school associations; it is waged over questions of love and respect, of loyalty and fidelity, of obedience

and integrity. We are all involved in it—child, youth, or adult, each of us. We are winning, and the future never looked brighter.

May our God bless us in the work that is so clearly laid out before us. May we be faithful. May we be valiant. May we have the courage to be true to the trust God has placed in each of us. May we be unafraid. “For [to quote the words of Paul to Timothy] God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Timothy 1:7–8). ■

NOTES

1. *History of the Church*, 6:222.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (2004), 220.
3. “Who’s on the Lord’s Side?” *Hymns*, no. 260.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerfully studying this message, share it using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. Following are some examples:

1. Use the article to review the history of the war of good and evil that has been going on since before the Creation of the world. Explain that the Light of Christ represents hope in a dark world. Read the section “A Bright Future.” Suggest actions we can take to win the war between good and evil.

2. Write the words of 2 Timothy 1:7–8 on a card for each family member. Invite family members to write on the back of the card a personal goal to be a more committed disciple of Jesus Christ. Ask family members to post the card in a place where they will see it daily.

3. Bring a hymnbook as you visit each family. Invite family members to use the index to find hymns that inspire commitment. Choose one hymn to sing or read aloud. Compare these words to portions of President Hinckley’s talk. Conclude by reviewing President Hinckley’s call to commitment and his testimony of the bright future for those who serve faithfully on the Lord’s side.



A Firm Foundation in a Shaky World



*Don't let something you don't know
shake your faith in something
you do know.*

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

On the morning of November 1, 1755, a massive earthquake leveled many Lisbon, Portugal, neighborhoods, unleashed a devastating 5- to 10-meter-high tsunami that surged into the seaport city, and started a fire that raged for more than three days. The disaster killed thousands.

But the devastating earthquake shook far more than just buildings. Because the catastrophe occurred as Christians gathered to observe a major religious holiday, All Saints' Day, it also shook the faith of believers across the continent.

Such spiritual shaking can occur in life just as unexpectedly as any seismic activity and has the potential to do just as much damage.

"We often face things that can shake our faith," says Patricia Moreira,

a member of the Lisbon Portugal Stake who says she has faced such things in the 20 years since she joined the Church alone. "They could be questions from nonmembers, attacks from those opposed to the Church, or even just things we don't understand."

When questions that don't seem to have answers build stress along the fault line between the world and the gospel, the resulting quake can cause casualties of faith among those whose foundations are weak.

How Firm a Foundation

In spiritual tectonics, it is not our proximity to the epicenter that determines the quake's effect on our testimony but our proximity to God.



“We often face things that can shake our faith. . . . [In those moments] our foundation makes all the difference.”

— Patricia Moreira, at Castelo São Jorge, restored upon its original foundation after the 1755 Lisbon earthquake

“Our foundation is Jesus Christ and His gospel” (see Luke 6:47–48), says Sister Moreira in a conversation on the topic with some of her single adult friends in the stake.

“We have no foundation without Him,” adds Darryl Nequetela, a convert of just over a year. “Some foundations are weak, but His is sure and true” (see Helaman 5:12).

No flood of doubts, no philosophical fire, no earthshaking skepticism of any magnitude can destroy the rock of our Redeemer, the Chief Cornerstone, our true foundation, Jesus Christ.

“I know I’m safe when I’m built on His foundation,” Brother Nequetela says.

When the Shaking Starts

These Latter-day Saints are familiar with Satan’s ground shaking.

At work, Francisco Lopes (who has since married) was subjected to frequent spiritual tremors. “Some of the people I worked with were skeptical of my beliefs and criticized me for what I believed in,” he says. “They often questioned me, using science that seemed to conflict with our faith.”

Brother Lopes recalls discussions about evolution, DNA, and more. “They did their best to convince me the Church is false,” he says of the questions for which he had few answers. “I had to rely upon my testimony of God and His gospel. I am grateful for that foundation.”

But as Brother Lopes can testify, once the ground starts shaking, it’s too late to begin preparing.

“We will need to have developed and nurtured faith in Jesus Christ long before Satan hits us,”¹ said Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.



OUR DAY OF TESTING

“What we will need in our day of testing is a spiritual preparation. It is to have developed faith in Jesus Christ so powerful that we

can pass the test of life upon which everything for us in eternity depends. . . . We will need to have developed and nurtured faith in Jesus Christ long before Satan hits us, as he will, with doubts and appeals to our carnal desires and with lying voices saying that good is bad and that there is no sin. Those spiritual storms are already raging. We can expect that they will worsen until the Savior returns.”

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Spiritual Preparedness: Start Early and Be Steady,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 37, 38.

Build upon the Rock

How do we make Christ our foundation?

Elder Eyring has taught: “We are safe on the rock which is the Savior when we have yielded in faith in Him, have responded to the Holy Spirit’s direction to keep the commandments long enough and faithfully enough that the power of the Atonement has changed our hearts. When we have, by that experience, become as a child in our capacity to love and obey, we are on the sure foundation.”²

It takes faith. It takes obedience and repentance. And it takes time.

“We need to nurture our faith with daily prayer, daily scripture study, service in our callings, keeping the commandments, doing our best to become better people,” says Sister Moreira, whose mother and sister have joined the Church since she first began building upon the rock. “I believe we need to follow the advice of President Monson to fill our minds with truth, fill our hearts with love, and fill our lives with service.”³

“We can prepare ourselves for trials by getting to know the Lord and how He helps His children



[see 1 Nephi 2:12]. The scriptures help us with that,” says Brother Nequetela. “We develop our faith by walking the path of righteousness.”

Finding Answers to Tough Questions

Sometimes, as with Brother Lopes, members are faced with questions to which they don't have answers. But he didn't let something he *didn't* know shake his faith in something he *did* know.

“There are things that I don't know yet. But I don't question those things because I know that in time God will reveal what I need to know,” Brother Lopes says, “not in my time or when I want it, but when He thinks that it needs to be revealed.”

What does one do when faced with tough questions that don't seem to have answers?

“Most of our answers are in the scriptures,” says Brother Lopes, who has faced questions not only from friends and co-workers but from his parents, who questioned his decision to join the Church at age 14. “But finding and understanding those answers depends on personal revelation. I can also go to my Church leaders or ask God directly. I'm grateful for the Holy Ghost and a caring Father in Heaven.”

Patience in Revelation

When searching through praying, reading the scriptures, and studying the words of our leaders doesn't turn up an answer, we wait (see D&C 101:16).



“We are here to walk by faith, but we forget that . . . faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of all things. And our faith must be tested.”

— Darryl Nequetela, overlooking parts of Lisbon rebuilt after the earthquake



“I seek to be patient,” says Brother Nequetela, who came from Angola in 2000 to study in Portugal. “Even though I don’t have an answer, the Holy Ghost comforts us with the answer that we should be patient, that God gives line upon line, precept upon precept, and that we should accept the firm decree of a just God. He knows what’s best for us, and He reveals everything in His own time.”

Patience in revelation is the story of the Restoration. The Church has been restored upon the original foundation—the gospel of Jesus Christ. But it did not occur all at once. According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, answers to gospel questions came “line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!” (D&C 128:21) and will continue to do so.

“We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (Articles of Faith 1:9).

Latter-day Restoration

High above modern Lisbon, Brother Nequetela looks over the city from the battlements of Castelo São Jorge (St. George Castle) and considers the restoration work that has taken place since the 1755 disaster.

The rebuilt city is again thriving; the castle—severely damaged in the quake—has been restored using the surviving foundation. And through the Restoration of the gospel, the people are learning how and where to establish faith that will stand firm regardless of the source of the shaking. ■

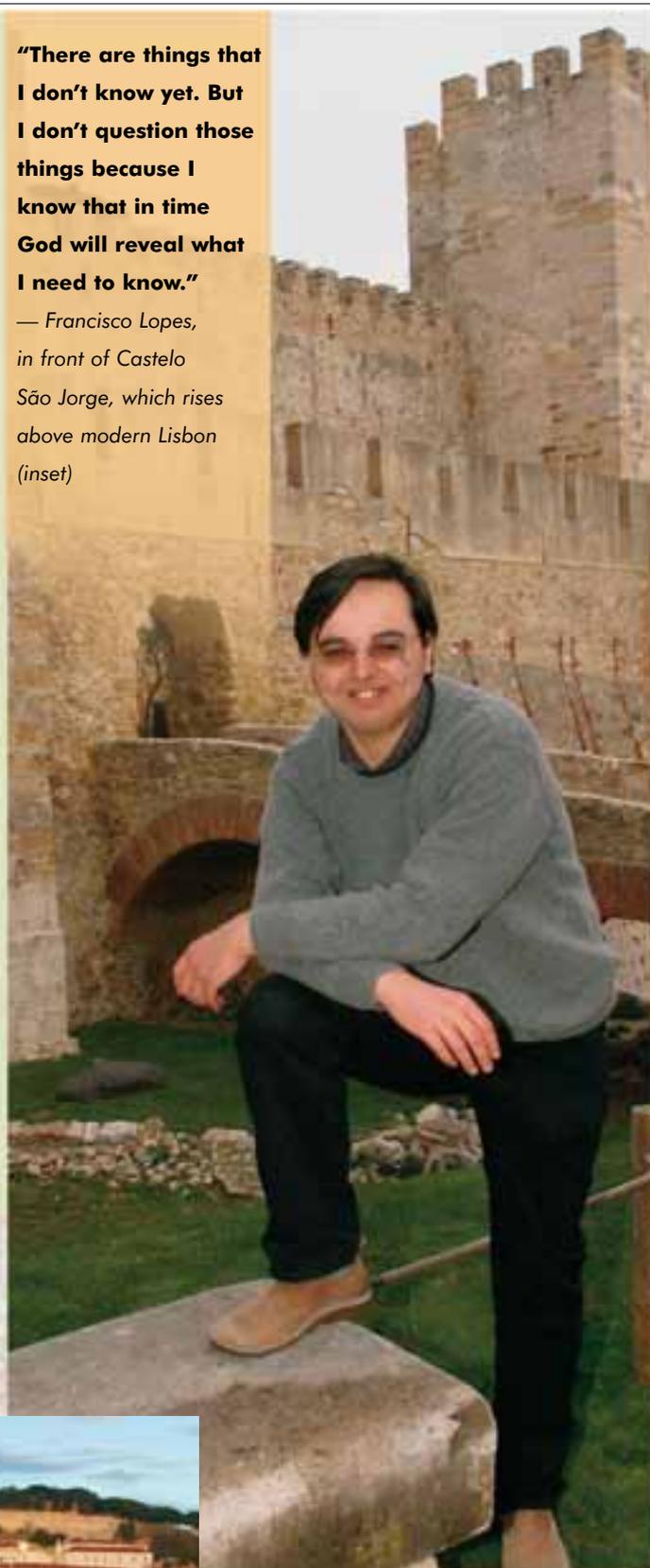
NOTES

1. “Spiritual Preparedness: Start Early and Be Steady,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 38.
2. “As a Child,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2006, 15–16.
3. See Thomas S. Monson, “Formula for Success,” *Liabona*, Aug. 1995, 7; *Ensign*, Mar. 1996, 6.



“There are things that I don’t know yet. But I don’t question those things because I know that in time God will reveal what I need to know.”

— Francisco Lopes,
in front of Castelo
São Jorge, which rises
above modern Lisbon
(inset)





Gratitude for the Atonement

BY ELDER WOLFGANG H. PAUL

Of the Seventy

Near the end of His earthly ministry, the Savior went with His disciples to the Mount of Olives, to the Garden of Gethsemane.

We read in Luke, in the New Testament:

“And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

“And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

“And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

“Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

“And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:39–44).

It was there that the Savior paid the price for all the sorrows, sins, and transgressions of every human being who ever lived or

ever will live. There He drank the bitter cup and suffered so that all who repent may not suffer. Following this dreadful experience, He was taken to Golgotha and was nailed to a cross, which was another brutal and painful torture He had to go through in bringing about the Atonement for all humankind.

No human being can imagine what the Savior really suffered when He took this heavy burden upon Him. In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith in March 1830, we get a glimpse of this suffering when the Savior declared:

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

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

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

“Nevertheless, glory



If we understood the great love the Savior had for us when He atoned for our sins, we would always love Him, be grateful to Him, and keep His commandments.



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

Ultimately, our lives can be healed only through the Atonement. A member described his feelings as he went through the repentance process and discovered the healing power of the Atonement: “The time between transgressing and confessing was terrible. I constantly lived in the knowledge of the terrible thing I had done. I was in a state of deep darkness, depressive and lethargic, first

hopeless and tortured by fears, however, never doubting the truth of the gospel and the saving power of the Atonement. I knew that for me there was only one way to get healed.

“To confess to my wife and my children what I had done was the most difficult thing that I ever did in life. Thereafter, the further way of repentance, to confess before my bishop and the stake president, was not so difficult. Finally, I could relieve myself of the burden which I had brought upon

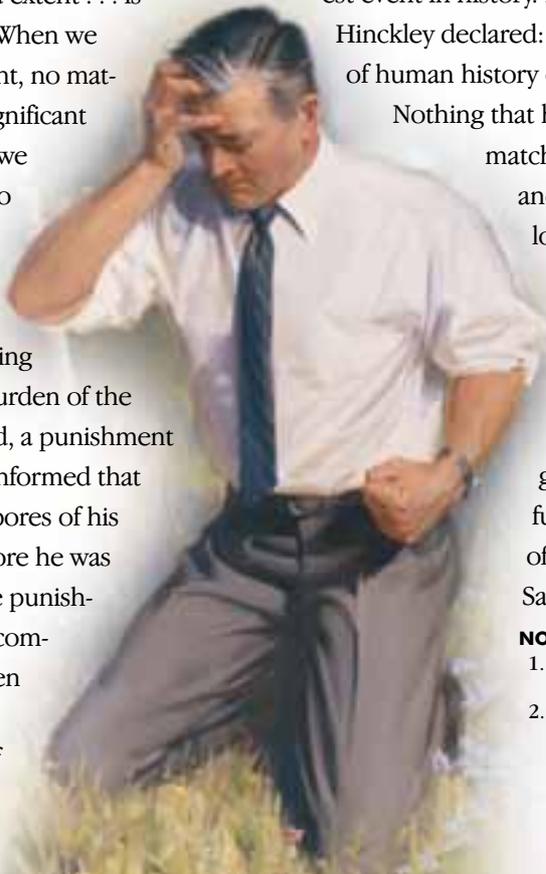
myself. I felt relieved with the excommunication and the resulting perspectives.

“What joy it was when I was permitted to be baptized and again could have the Holy Ghost with me. Finally, the promise of the Atonement was fulfilled in the clearest and most beautiful way when my blessings were restored again.

“During the course of years, my wife and I experienced that the Atonement brings relief and healing not only to the sinner, but further than that, it has the power to heal and restore the victim as well. Of this I testify with deep gratitude.”

If we understood the great love the Savior had for us when He atoned for our sins, we would always love Him, be grateful to Him, and keep His commandments.

As President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) observed: “One of the greatest sins, both in magnitude and extent . . . is the sin of ingratitude. When we violate a commandment, no matter how small and insignificant we may think it to be, we show our ingratitude to our Redeemer. It is impossible for us to comprehend the extent of his suffering when he carried the burden of the sins of the whole world, a punishment so severe that we are informed that blood came from the pores of his body, and this was before he was taken to the cross. The punishment of physical pain coming from the nails driven in his hands and feet, was not the greatest of



his suffering, excruciating as that surely was. The greater suffering was the spiritual and mental anguish coming from the load of our transgressions which he carried. If we understood the extent of that suffering and his suffering on the cross, surely none of us would wilfully be guilty of sin. We would not give way to the temptations, the gratification of unholy appetites and desires and Satan could find no place in our hearts. As it is, whenever we sin, we show our ingratitude and disregard of the suffering of the Son of God by and through which we shall rise from the dead and live forever. If we really understood and could feel even to a small degree, the love and gracious willingness on the part of Jesus Christ to suffer for our sins we would be willing to repent of all our transgressions and serve him.”¹

The Atonement of the Savior is the greatest event in history. President Gordon B. Hinckley declared: “No other act in all of human history compares with it.

Nothing that has ever happened can match it. Totally unselfish and with unbounded love for all mankind, it became an unparalleled act of mercy for the whole human race.”²

May we always be grateful for this wonderful gift, the Atonement of the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer. ■

NOTES

1. *The Restoration of All Things* (1945), 199.
2. “At the Summit of the Ages,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2000, 87; *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 73.



The Atonement of the Savior is the greatest event in history. Ultimately, our lives can be healed only through the Atonement.

Gifts of the Spirit for Hard Times



BY ELDER HENRY B. EYRING
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Despite our uniqueness, we all have some things in common. We are all in the probationary test of mortality. And, wherever we live, that test will become increasingly difficult. We are in the last dispensation of time. God's prophets have seen these times for millennia. They saw that wonderful things were to happen. There was to be a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The true Church was to be brought back with prophets and apostles. The gospel was to be taken to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Most marvelous of all, the true Church and its members were to become worthy for the coming of the Savior to His Church and to His purified disciples.

But the true prophets also saw that in the last days Satan would rage. There would be wars and rumors of wars, which would inspire fear. The courage of many would fail. There would be great wickedness. Satan would deceive many.

Yet, happily, many would not be overcome. And many would not be deceived. My purpose is to teach you how you can reach that happy and glorious goal.

The Holy Ghost Is the Key

The key for each of us will be to accept and hold the gift we have been promised by God. As a member of the true Church of Jesus Christ, you will remember that after you were baptized, authorized servants of God promised you that you could receive the Holy Ghost. Some of you may have felt something happen when that ordinance was performed. Most of you have felt the effects of that promise being fulfilled in your lives. I will tell you how to recognize that gift, how to receive it every day, and how it will bless you in the days ahead.

You have felt the quiet confirmation in your heart and mind that something was true. And you knew that it was inspiration from God. For some of you it may have come as the missionaries taught you before your baptism. It may have come during a talk, lesson, or hymn in church. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Truth. You feel peace, hope, and joy when He speaks to your heart and mind that something is true. Almost always I have also felt a sensation of light. Any feeling I may have had of darkness is dispelled, and my desire to do right grows.

Of all the things to which the Holy Ghost testifies, none is more precious than that Jesus is the Christ, the living Son of God. And nothing is so likely to make us feel light, hope, and joy.



RIGHT, PHOTOGRAPH © HENRIK A.S. INSET, DETAIL FROM CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG RULER, BY HENRICH HOHMANN, COURTESY C. HARRISON CONROY CO., INC.

The Lord promised that having those experiences would be true for you. He said:

“And now, verily, verily, I say unto thee, put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously; and this is my Spirit.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy” (D&C 11:12–13).

The Lord also promised that those who have accepted the gift of the Holy Ghost in their lives would not be deceived. He spoke reassuringly to you and to me, who live in the times when the Church is being made ready for when He comes again. Here is the promise from the Doctrine and Covenants:

“And at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins.

“For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day” (D&C 45:56–57).

Manifestations of the Spirit

These words paint a picture of the day when we might be with the Savior and have His glory upon us. Of all the things to which the Holy Ghost testifies, none is more precious than that Jesus is the Christ, the living Son of God. And nothing is so likely to make us feel light, hope, and joy. It is not surprising that when we feel the influence of the Holy Ghost, we also can feel that our natures are being changed because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We feel an increased desire to keep His commandments, to do good, and to deal justly.

Many of you have felt that effect from your frequent

experiences with the Holy Ghost. For instance, in the mission field you were given words by the Holy Ghost when you surrendered your heart to the Lord’s service. If you will think back on those times and ponder, you will also remember that the increase in your desire to obey the commandments came over you gradually. You felt less and less the tug of temptation. You felt more and more the desire to be obedient and to serve others. You felt a greater love for the people.

From that faithful service to the Master, you not only had the witness of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, but you also saw evidence in your own life that the Atonement is real. Such faithful service, which brings the influence of the Holy Ghost, is an example of planting a seed, as described in Alma 32:33–37.

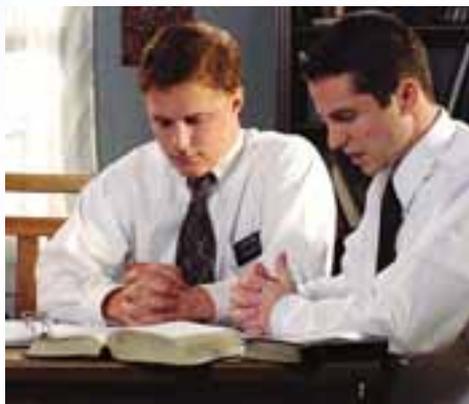
Receiving Revelations Daily

You have felt some of the things I have described, and the Holy Ghost has touched your heart and mind from time to time. But you will need that influence consistently if you are not to be overcome or deceived. Is that possible, and what will it take to receive that blessing?

Yes, it is possible. Whenever I need that reassurance—and I need it from time to time too—I remember two brothers. Nephi and Lehi faced fierce opposition. They were serving in an increasingly wicked world. They had to deal with terrible deceptions. So I take courage—and so can you—from a verse in Helaman:

“And in the seventy and ninth year there began to be much strife. But it came to pass that Nephi and Lehi, and many of their brethren

who knew concerning the true points of doctrine, having many revelations daily, therefore they did preach unto the people, insomuch that they did put an end to their strife



In the mission field, you were given words by the Holy Ghost when you surrendered your heart to the Lord’s service. From that faithful service to the Master, you not only had the witness of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, but you also saw evidence in your own life that the Atonement is real.



in that same year” (Helaman 11:23).

They had “many revelations daily.” So, yes, it is possible to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost sufficiently to have many revelations daily. It is not easy, but it is possible. What it will require will be different for each person because we start from where we are in our unique set of experiences in life. For all of us there will be at least three requirements. None of them can be gained and retained from a single experience. All of them must be constantly renewed.

Have Faith in God

First, receiving the Holy Ghost takes faith in our Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ. The memory of a great spiritual experience in which that truth was confirmed to you won’t be sufficient. You will need to be sure of your faith in the moment of crisis, which may come at any time, day or night,

when you plead for the influence of the Spirit. You must then be unshaken in your confidence that God lives, that He hears your cry for help, and that the resurrected Savior will do for you what He promised to do for His servants in His mortal ministry:

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (John 15:26).

The record shows that Nephi and Lehi knew concerning the true points of doctrine. Of all the true doctrine, nothing is more important to you and me than the true nature of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. For that, I return again and again to the scriptures. For that, I return again and again to prayer. For that, I return again and again to partaking of the sacrament. And, above all, I come to know God and Jesus Christ best by keeping the commandments

Most of us have callings as home and visiting teachers. Because those callings offer great opportunity to grow in faith, the Lord sends the Holy Ghost to His humble servants. That builds faith and renews our faith in Him.



The path to receiving the Holy Ghost is to exercise faith in Christ unto repentance. We can become clean through qualifying for the effects of the Savior's Atonement. The covenants offered in baptism by authorized servants of God bring that cleansing.

and serving in the Church. By diligent service in the Church we come not only to know the character of God but also to love Him. If we follow His commands, our faith in Him will grow and we may qualify to have His Spirit to be with us.

Vibrant faith in God comes best from serving Him regularly. Every member has a multitude of opportunities to serve God. For instance, for years we have heard the phrase, "Every member a missionary." Similarly, each member is to care for the poor among us and around us. That is why we have fast offerings and service projects. Our choice is to decide whether to join with the Lord and His disciples in our day as He and His disciples did during His mortal ministry.

Most of us have callings as home and visiting teachers. Because those callings offer great opportunity to grow in faith, the Lord sends the Holy Ghost to His humble servants.

That builds faith and renews our faith in Him.

I received a phone call from a distraught mother who told me that her unmarried daughter had moved to another city far from home. She sensed from the little contact she had had with her daughter that something was terribly wrong. The mother feared for the moral safety of her daughter. She pleaded for help.

I found out who the daughter's home teacher was. I called him. He was young, yet he and his companion had awakened in the night with not only concern for the girl but also with inspiration that she was about to make choices that would bring sadness and misery. With only the inspiration of the Spirit, they went to see her. They pleaded with her to repent and to choose to follow the path the Lord had set out for her and that her mother and father had taught her to follow. She realized as she listened that the only way they

could have known what they knew about her life was from God. A mother's prayer had gone to Heavenly Father, and the Holy Ghost had been sent to home teachers with an errand.

Your faith will grow as you serve the Lord in caring for Heavenly Father's children as the Lord's teacher to their home. You will have your prayers answered. You will come to know for yourself that He lives, that He loves us, and that He sends inspiration to those with even the beginnings of faith in Him and with the desire to serve Him in His Church. Stay close to the Church if you want your faith in God to grow. And as it grows, so will your ability to claim the promise you were given that you can receive the gifts of the Spirit.

Be Clean

A second requirement for frequent companionship and direction from the Holy Ghost is to be clean. The Spirit must withdraw from those who are not clean. You remember the sad illustration of that in the Book of Mormon:

"And because of their iniquity the church had begun to dwindle; and they began to disbelieve in the spirit of prophecy and in the spirit of revelation; and the judgments of God did stare them in the face.

"And they saw that they had become weak, like unto their brethren, the Lamanites, and that the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them; yea, it had withdrawn from them because the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples" (Helaman 4:23–24).

The path to receiving the Holy Ghost is to exercise faith in Christ unto repentance. We can become clean through qualifying for the effects of the Savior's Atonement. The covenants offered in baptism by authorized servants of God

bring that cleansing. We renew our pledge to keep those covenants each time we partake of the sacrament. The peace we all seek is the assurance that we have received forgiveness for our sins of omission or commission.

The Savior has been given the right to grant that forgiveness and to give that assurance. I have learned that the Lord gives that assurance at the time He chooses, and He does it in His own way. And I have learned to ask for it in prayer. One way He grants that assurance is through the Holy Ghost. If you have difficulty in feeling the Holy Ghost, you might wisely ponder whether there is anything for which you need to repent and receive forgiveness.

If you have felt the influence of the Holy Ghost today, you may take it as evidence that the Atonement is working in your life. For that reason and many others, you would do well to put yourself in places and in tasks that invite the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Feeling the influence of the Holy Ghost works both ways: the Holy Ghost only dwells

in a clean temple, and the reception of the Holy Ghost cleanses us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. You can pray with faith to know what to do to be cleansed and thus qualified for the companionship of the Holy Ghost and the service of the Lord. And with that companionship you will be strengthened against temptation and empowered to detect deception.



We renew our pledge to keep our covenants each time we partake of the sacrament. The peace we all seek is the assurance that we have received forgiveness for our sins of omission or commission.

Have a Pure Motive

A third requirement for the companionship of the Holy Ghost is pure motive. If you want to receive the gifts of the Spirit, you have to want them for the right reasons.

Your purposes must be the Lord's purposes. To the degree your motives are selfish, you will find it difficult to receive those gifts of the Spirit that have been promised to you.

That fact serves both as a warning and as helpful

instruction. First, the warning: God is offended when we seek the gifts of the Spirit for our own purposes rather than for His. Our selfish motives may not be obvious to us. But few of us would be so blind as Simon, who sought to purchase the right to the gifts of the Spirit:

“But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

“Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. . . .

“Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me” (Acts 8:20–21, 24).

Apparently Simon recognized his own corrupt motives. It may not be so easy for each of us. We almost always have more than one motive at a time. And some motives may be mixtures of what God wants as well as what we want. It is not easy to pull them apart.

Consider yourself on the eve of a school examination or an interview for a new job. You know that the direction of the Holy Ghost could be of great help. I know from my own experience, for example, that the Holy Ghost knows the mathematical equations used to solve problems in thermodynamics. I was a struggling physics student studying in a book that I still own. Halfway down a page, in the middle of some mathematics, I had a clear confirmation that what I was reading was true. It was exactly the feeling that had come to me before as I had pondered the Lord’s scriptures and that I have had many times since. So I knew that the Holy Ghost understood whatever was true in what I might be asked on an examination in thermodynamics.

You can imagine that I was tempted to ask God to send me the Holy Ghost during the examination so I wouldn’t

need to study further. I knew that He could do it, but I did not ask Him. I felt that He would rather have me learn to pay a price in effort. Always there is the possibility that we may have a selfish purpose that is less important to the Lord.

For instance, I may want a good grade in a course, when He prefers that I learn how to work hard in the service of others. I may want a job because of the salary or the prestige, when He wants me to work somewhere else to bless the life of someone I don’t even know yet. I may desire to entertain or impress a congregation, but I try to suppress my desire and surrender to His.

Pure Love of Christ

I surely don’t understand all the meaning of the scriptural words “the pure love of Christ” (Moroni 7:47). But one meaning I do know is this: It is a gift we are promised

when the Atonement of Jesus Christ has worked in us. The gift is to want what He wants. When our love is the love He feels, it is pure because He is pure. And when we feel our desire for people is moving toward being in line with His, that is one of the ways that we can know that we are being purified. When we pray for the gifts of the Spirit—and we should—one for which I pray is that I might have pure motives, to want what our Father wants for His children and for me, and to feel, as well as to say, that what I want is His will to be done.

I pray with all the energy of my heart that you will have your prayers answered to meet the requirements to receive the Holy Ghost. And I

pray that you will endure faithful to the end and that, for you, it will be glorious. ■

From a Church Educational System fireside address given at Brigham Young University on September 10, 2006.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW REEB

When we pray for the gifts of the Spirit—and we should—one for which I pray is that I might have pure motives, to want what our Father wants for His children and for me, and to feel, as well as to say, that what I want is His will to be done.

ON YOUR OWN BUT NOT ALONE



BY KIMBERLY
WEBB
Church Magazines

How I learned to deal with roommates, late nights, and pitfalls of living on my own.

As I prepared to go to college, I happily anticipated living away from home for the first time. One of my best friends was going to be my roommate, and I imagined cooking meals, making friends, and studying hard in a place that felt like home.

I had a rude awakening. In my apartment I often overheard shocking conversations and discovered how different my other roommates' standards were from mine. This environment was definitely not the type of home I was used to.

Whether your first experience away from home is uplifting, challeng-

ing, or both, thriving spiritually should be your top priority. Here are ways I learned to find joy while living on my own.

Attend institute. President Gordon B. Hinckley has counseled, "Every college and university student should take advantage of the institute program."¹ I can attest to the value of this counsel. As I attended classes and activities, both my classmates and my teachers influenced me. They helped me feel the Spirit and bolstered my resolve to uphold Church standards. When you are living in unfamiliar surroundings, institute can be a spiritual haven.

Turn to the Lord. Pondering the Lord's words in the scriptures, recording notes in a scripture study journal,

and prayerfully applying what I read helped me forge a stronger relationship with our Heavenly Father. Because I attended school near a temple, I often walked the two miles there and performed baptisms for the dead or simply experienced the peaceful feelings on the grounds. I know that as we adopt solid personal scripture study habits, pray often, and—when possible—attend the temple, we’ll find peace wherever we are.

Nurture family ties. I’m grateful my mother reminded me to keep nurturing relationships as she often called me and sent cards. Communicating with people who love us can dispel loneliness and offer security while we are adjusting to a new place. Even when surrounded by friends, we can remember the eternal nature of family relationships and give them a high priority by keeping in touch.

Do your part—and then some. As most people living with roommates discover, it is harder to keep a place clean when no one is “in charge.” Roommates should cooperate to assign jobs fairly and follow through on their responsibilities. Failing to do your part may not only damage roommate relationships but also contribute to a chaotic and depressing environment. I quickly learned that



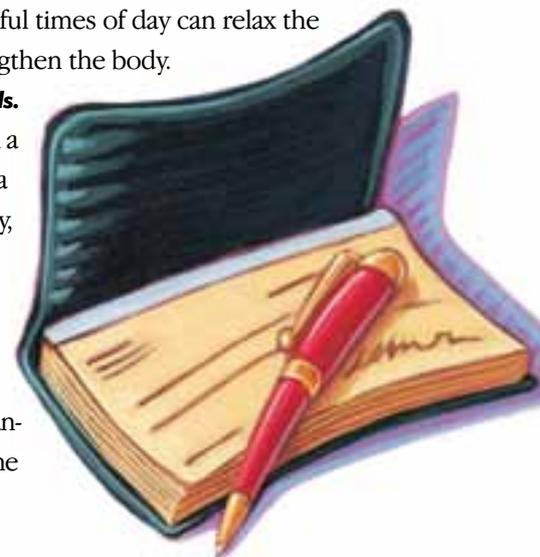
satisfaction from a tidy living space was worth the time spent achieving it, even if it meant I sometimes pitched in out of turn. I could study better, sleep more deeply, and feel happier when my apartment was orderly.

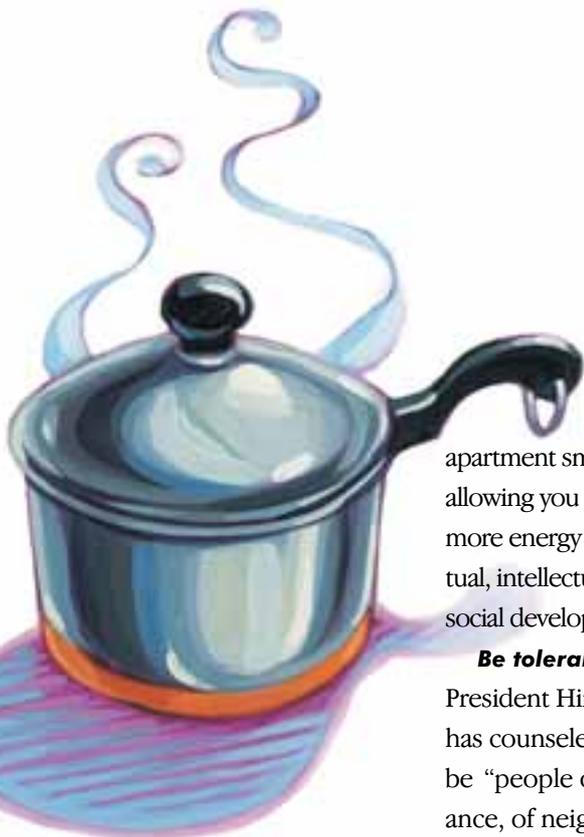
Practice healthy habits. Maintaining spiritual strength, especially in challenging circumstances, requires the cooperation of the body. When you are exhausted, it is easy to become spiritually complacent and physically ill.

Many exciting social opportunities for young single adults occur in the evenings, and I’ve learned to take advantage of them in moderation. The counsel in Doctrine and Covenants 88:124 applies even to college students: “Retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated.”

Regularly getting outdoors invigorated me too, whether I went jogging, Rollerblading, or hiking. Students may spend a lot of time scurrying to class, but additional exercise at less stressful times of day can relax the mind as well as strengthen the body.

Learn practical skills. I learned to live within a strict budget, balance a checkbook, do laundry, and cook a few meals before I moved away from home. It helped! Preparation in these areas can make the transition from home to the

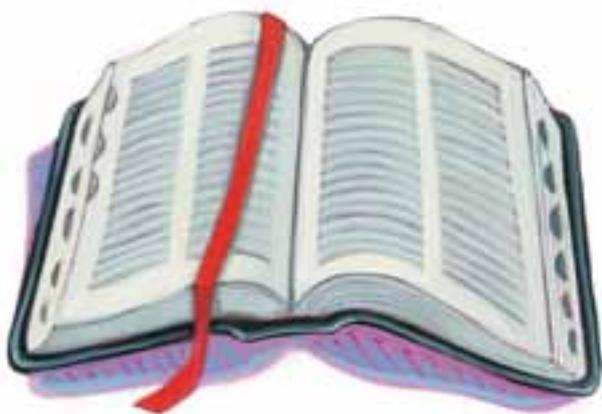




apartment smoother, allowing you to focus more energy on spiritual, intellectual, and social development.

Be tolerant.

President Hinckley has counseled us to be “people of tolerance, of neighborliness, of appreciation and kindness toward others.”² Not everyone we associate with through our educational or professional endeavors will live by standards we accept, but we can appreciate everyone’s strengths and good qualities. Though my roommates were sometimes offensive, at other times they opened my eyes in a positive way to different backgrounds, perspectives, and life experiences. I hope I did the same for them as we discussed my beliefs. Despite our differences, I loved my roommates and appreciated their diversity.



Tolerance does not mean accepting sinful behaviors or ignoring problems. In extreme circumstances, it may be necessary to change living arrangements and find a more wholesome environment. But in most cases, we can generally try to understand a roommate’s viewpoint and receive the same respect in return. Building a foundation of

respect with others makes it easier to address problems in the right spirit when they arise.

Reach out.

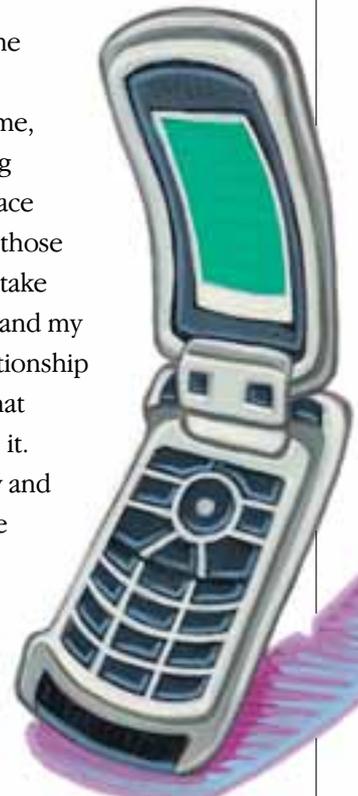
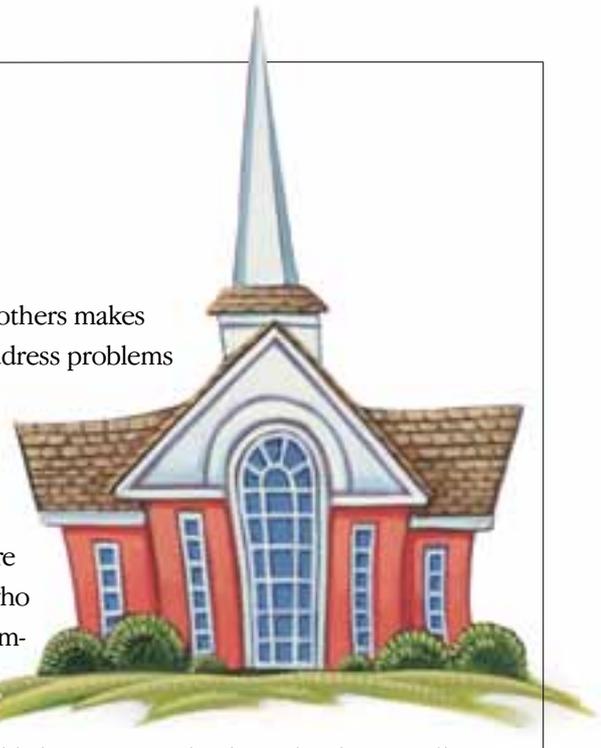
I always admire newcomers who introduce themselves and make an effort to quickly become involved. It takes being willing to abandon our self-consciousness to thrive in a new place. We can introduce ourselves to others at church, work, or class, and we can express a willingness to serve. The Church callings we receive might be different from the ones we’ve fulfilled in our home wards, and we can welcome the opportunity for growth.

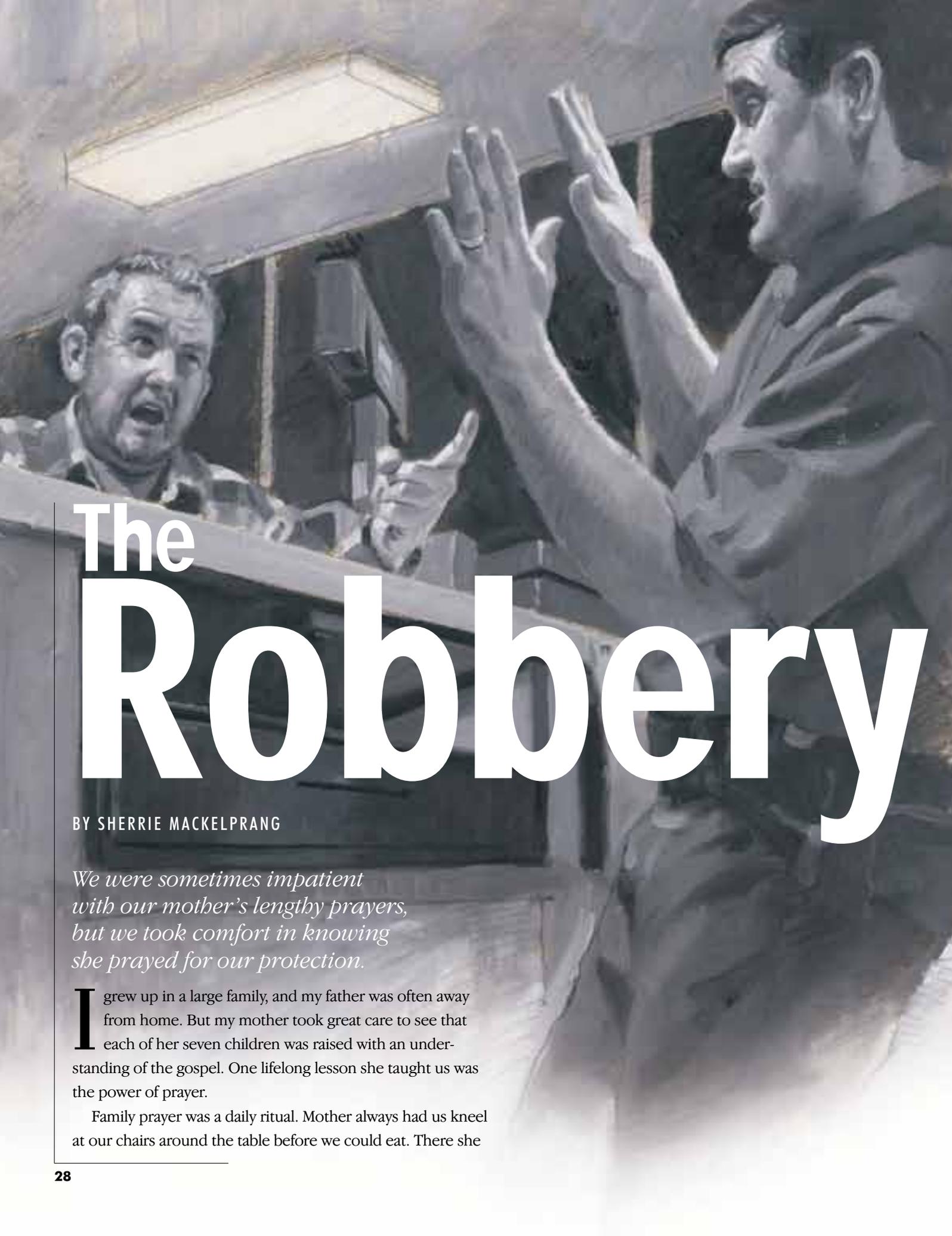
As we take the time to serve and be friendly, we’ll not only support others but also build a network of support for ourselves. Make others feel at home, and soon you’ll feel at home in your new place.

Before I moved away from home, I imagined cooking meals, making friends, and studying hard in a place that felt like home. Eventually all those things happened. As I learned to take care of myself, my surroundings, and my relationships—especially my relationship with Heavenly Father—I found that home can be wherever you make it. If you prepare yourself practically and spiritually, you’ll discover valuable experiences in your home away from home. ■

NOTES

1. “Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1995, 67.
2. “The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 81.





The Robbery

BY SHERRIE MACKELPRANG

We were sometimes impatient with our mother's lengthy prayers, but we took comfort in knowing she prayed for our protection.

I grew up in a large family, and my father was often away from home. But my mother took great care to see that each of her seven children was raised with an understanding of the gospel. One lifelong lesson she taught us was the power of prayer.

Family prayer was a daily ritual. Mother always had us kneel at our chairs around the table before we could eat. There she

would give thanks and ask for blessings on our family.

I remember squirming on my knees with my head resting on my folded arms, waiting for Mother to finish the prayer. It seemed as if she prayed for every person she had ever known, including all her children. Even though we were sometimes impatient, we all seemed to take comfort in knowing she prayed for us.

I know it was my mother's faith in prayer that got her through those challenging years when our father was seldom home. I have many memories of walking past my mother's open bedroom door and seeing her kneeling in reverent prayer. I used to wonder if she would run out of things to pray for.

As the years went by, the practice of family prayer around the table continued in spite of the changes in our family. After my oldest brother, John, married and started a family of his own, he and his family moved to California for work. He was working two jobs to take care of his family. One of those jobs was a night shift in a gas station convenience store. My mother always included him and his little family in our family prayers.

Late one night we received a phone call from John's wife. She told us that a desperate man had come into the convenience store where John was working. He was a rough looking man who showed no fear. He threatened John, telling him that he would take his life if he didn't do as told. He motioned for John to show his hands and move away from the panic button that was under the counter. My brother obeyed.

Guided by the Spirit, John calmly began to talk to this man. He struck up a gentle conversation, as if he were talking to a frightened child. He told the man that life really wasn't so bad. He asked the man if he was hungry, and he warmed up a burrito for him. Then John handed the man all of the money out of the cash register.

The frightening man began to mellow around my brother. He seemed to like John. He invited John to meet him around the back of the store where they could split the cash.

My brother thanked him but declined. He knew that going behind the store with the man would be dangerous. The man bid John farewell and slipped around the back of the store, disappearing into the night. John quickly went behind the counter and hit the panic button to notify the police. He went outside, stood under the floodlights by the gas pumps, and waited until the police arrived. When they arrived, the gravity of the situation settled in on John. He knew he was blessed to be alive and uninjured.

The police marveled at my brother's clarity of mind in talking to the man. They were impressed that John didn't panic and make a bad situation worse. The police checked around the building, and to their surprise they discovered that the desperate man had left a portion of the money behind the building.

That day my mother had prayed for John's protection, as she had done for years. She worried about his working alone at night, and she pleaded with Heavenly Father to protect her son.

While not all prayers will be answered just the way we would like, I firmly believe that the power of prayer saved my brother's life that night. I'm sure I will never know just how many times my mother's prayers have been answered with a blessing for each of her children.

Now I am grown and have children of my own. I look to the example of my mother and pray each day for the welfare of the souls who have been entrusted to me. I know that earnest prayer can bring strength and protection to those we love. ■



That day my mother had prayed for John's protection, as she had done for years. She worried about his working alone at night, and she pleaded with Heavenly Father to protect her son.

THE QUEST

FOR SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE



BY ELDER ROBERT S. WOOD
Of the Seventy

We can establish for ourselves an unshakable intellectual and spiritual foundation that will transform our very lives.

I remember returning home from a social activity one Friday evening when I was 16 years old, very much awake and not ready to go to bed. Lying on my nightstand was a copy of the Book of Mormon that my mother always placed there in the hope that I would read it. I had read from the Book of Mormon but had not *really* read it. Indeed, the only phrase I remembered was “I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents.” That evening, thinking I had nothing better to do, I began to read.

The next morning at 11:00 a.m., my parents thought I was sleeping in, since I did not have to be at work until that afternoon. However, I was very much awake. I was reading the concluding words of Moroni. I then knelt by my bed and put to the test the promise he had made: “And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with

real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:4).

That Saturday morning I received a witness of the Holy Ghost more clearly and powerfully than any other knowledge I had ever received. It became the foundation from which my most important convictions arose.

At school the following Monday, I spoke with a good friend, not a member of the Church. He said he had a list of 50 anachronisms in the Book of Mormon that demonstrated the book was a nineteenth-century invention. An anachronism refers to something that is chronologically out of place, a bit like saying Julius Caesar drove his SUV into Rome. Well, I told my friend that he was too late, for I had received a witness of the truth of the Book of Mormon. But I said to him, “Give me your list, and I will keep it.” I did keep that list, and over the years, as more research was done by various academics, one item after another dropped off the list.



A few years ago when I was speaking to a group at Cornell University, I mentioned my list and noted that, after these many years, only one item remained. After my presentation a distinguished professor said to me, “You can remove your last item, for our studies indicate that it is not an anachronism.”

What would my life have been like had I withheld my conviction of the Book of Mormon until I resolved all the questions my friend had given me?

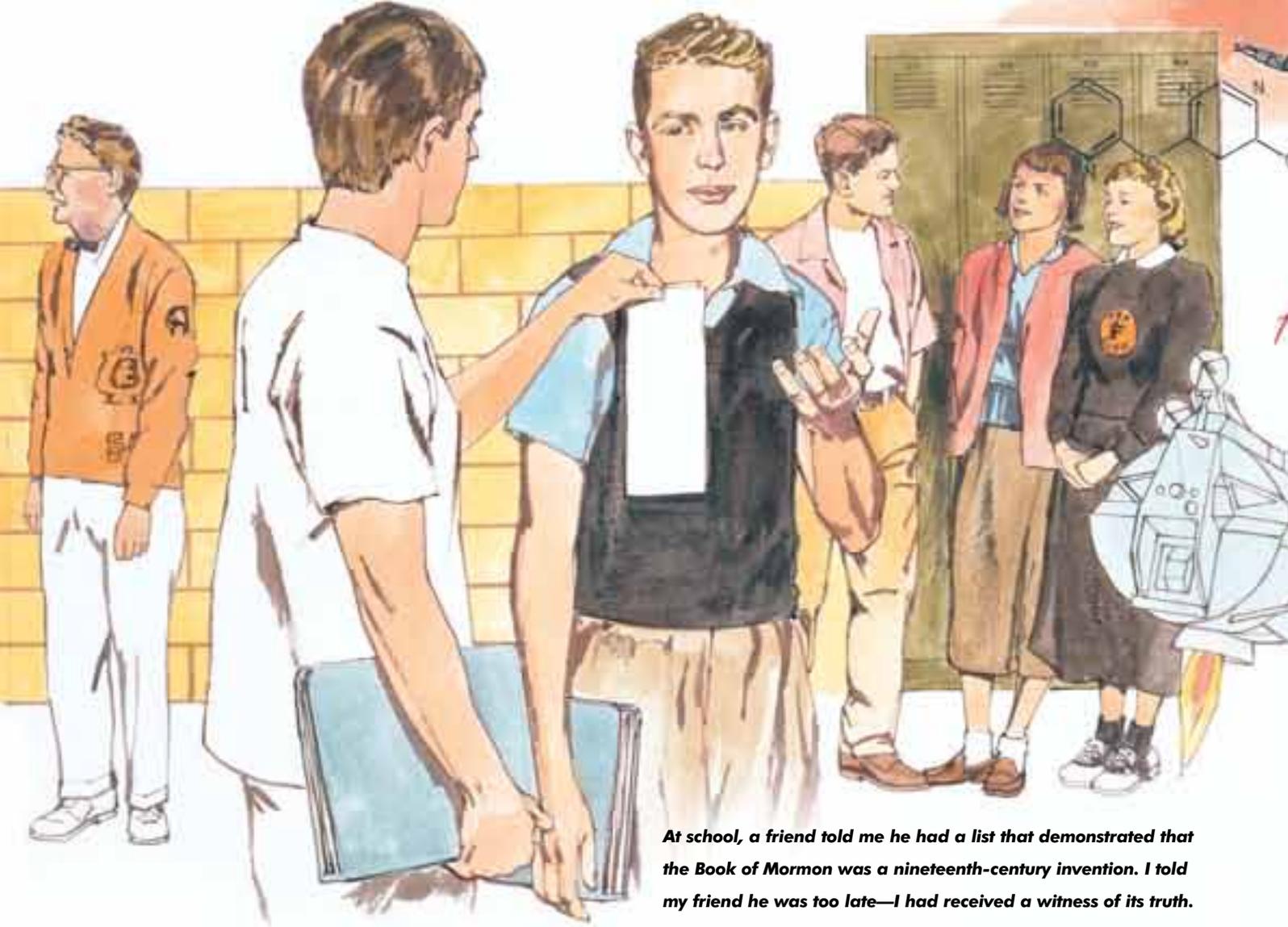
I have often said that when it comes to the most fundamental truths, I have no doubts—although I may have some questions. There are some things for which we must have a certitude that transcends our incomplete understanding and immediate questions.

Prove What Is Good

How do we receive spiritual knowledge? And how should this knowledge affect our lives?

In his epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul wrote:

“Ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,



At school, a friend told me he had a list that demonstrated that the Book of Mormon was a nineteenth-century invention. I told my friend he was too late—I had received a witness of its truth.

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. . . .

“Be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Ephesians 4:17–18, 23).

He also wrote to the Romans:

“Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

Paul distinguishes between a human nature distorted by disobedience and false beliefs and one subject to God and renewed by the Holy Spirit. Only when this renewal begins to take place do we even know what the right questions are and for what we should pray. As the Spirit works in us, we have a readiness of mind prepared to discern truth.

Alma states that as we submit our will to the Father through faith in Christ, our understanding “doth begin to be enlightened, and [our] mind doth begin to expand” (Alma 32:34).

From Information to Knowledge

Because of computers, the Internet, television, and so on, we are said to be in the midst of an information revolution. But though we are inundated with information, many are drowning in ignorance.

Paul spoke of those who are “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7).

The Lord has commanded that we serve Him with all our minds (see D&C 4:2) and that we seek learning by study and by faith (see D&C 88:118). He has promised that as we do so, we will be enlightened by the Spirit (see D&C 11:13). We “shall know the truth, and the truth shall make [us] free” (John 8:32). Free of what? Free of ignorance, sin, and the pangs of death. The Lord states further, “If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal” (D&C 42:61).



The Character of Spiritual Knowledge

In every field of intelligence, almost every proposition can be subjected to the question *why*. Every parent understands this. But after a lengthy series of *whys*, you reach a point where the only answer is “Well, that’s just the way it is.” In effect, we are saying that it is just the way the world is put together. But we also know that at times even some “basic truths” are overthrown by additional evidence. Such are the revolutions in the history of science.

Is there nothing that cannot be finally established without awaiting further experience? Yes. In this life there are certain truths so fundamental that they can be established firmly in our minds and hearts and no further proof is required. To meet the tests of mortality, Heavenly Father has provided a certain witness of those crucial understandings within which we can fit the additional light and knowledge we may later receive. We may not know all the answers; indeed, we may not comprehend all the questions—but we will have established in our lives a certain framework of understanding that not only will provide an unshakable intellectual and spiritual foundation but will transform our very lives.

What is the witness that gives us knowledge that transcends the understanding of the senses? The witness of the Holy Ghost. The understanding received from the Holy Ghost has three key aspects: first, it concerns the most critical and transcendent truths; second, it is definitive in its certainty; and third, it changes behavior.

The Most Critical Truths

Three certitudes have been identified as necessary for us to endure the trials of life in faith: a knowledge that God exists; an understanding of His nature, attributes, and perfections; and a conviction that the course of life we are pursuing is in accordance with His will.¹

As a college student, I learned that the original premise of a syllogism, or logic train, is critical. Sophisticated lines of reasoning may seem compelling at each step in the logic, but if the original premises are faulty or incomplete, the whole line of reasoning will be flawed.

For instance, if we begin with the premise that life arose by chance and that its development is largely random, we will interpret physical, biological, and social information in

a certain way—a way that will distort our understanding. Such thoughts will have consequences for how our society operates and how we act individually. If, on the other hand, we begin with the premise that mortal life arose according to a plan and will develop according to eternal law, we will understand the bits and pieces of information in a different way. We will see the interconnectedness and wholeness of life. We will see patterns and purpose where others see disorder and chance.

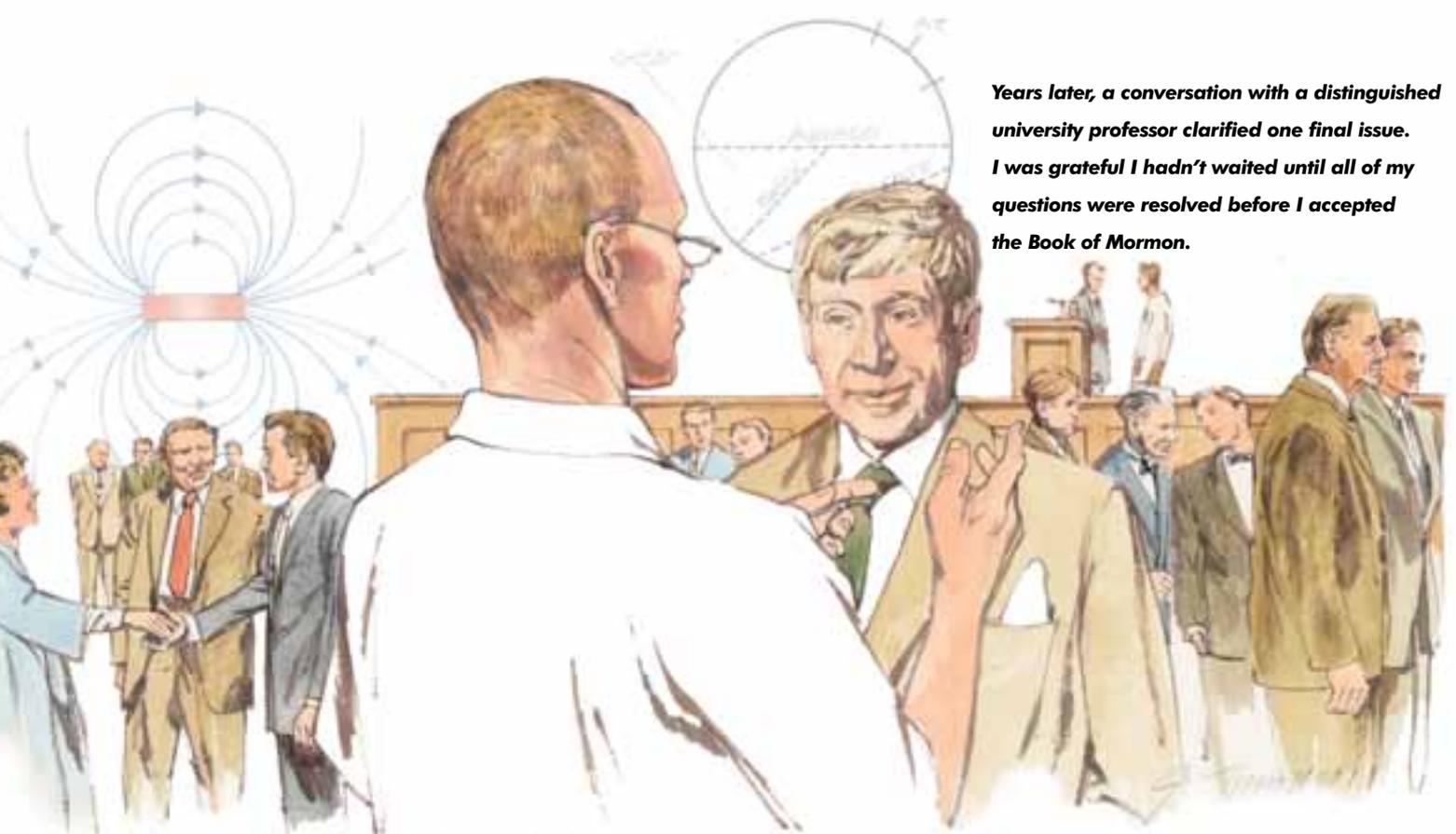
When people preach for established truth the transitory doctrines of men, they risk seeing, as Paul expressed it, only puzzling expressions in a mirror. But we are summoned by our Heavenly Father to see Him “face to face.” Then, our knowledge will be whole, like God’s knowledge of us (see 1 Corinthians 13:12).

For these reasons, the prophets have counseled us to plumb the depths of the scriptures and the words of the living prophets in faith and prayer. The scriptures constitute the true guide to the perplexed.

As already stated, spiritual knowledge is definitive. Our experiences may lead us to certain conclusions, but they cannot lead to the conviction that dispels doubt and motivates endurance—not the way that knowledge received through the Spirit does. As Paul wrote, “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Can you see why it is a fearful thing to deny the witness of the Holy Ghost? Unlike other evidence, this witness ends

The Lord states, “If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal.”



Years later, a conversation with a distinguished university professor clarified one final issue. I was grateful I hadn't waited until all of my questions were resolved before I accepted the Book of Mormon.

argument. Such verification by the Spirit leads to a certainty unknown in any other area of thought.

Once a person has sought and received the witness of the Holy Ghost, he or she assumes a life-changing obligation. This understanding of the Spirit changes behavior. Paul wrote that he and the Saints had “the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16). The people of King Benjamin declared that they had “no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2). Having received the witness of the Spirit, they were called by and responded to the Spirit. Knowing Christ through the Spirit, we love Him and keep His commandments—and we are further comforted and taught by the Spirit, until, as Mormon declared, “when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure” (Moroni 7:48; see also 1 John 3:1–3).

Obtaining Spiritual Knowledge

How do we obtain such comprehensive, definitive, and transforming knowledge? Let us consider four requirements: (1) an urgent search for the truth, (2) a willingness to obey the truth we discover, (3) a disposition to bear witness to the truth in all places and at all times, and (4) a motivation to serve others in truth.

To meet these requirements, we must first be open to teaching and be diligent in our pursuit of the learning of the Spirit. Such a pursuit requires more than a casual interest in the answers we seek. The Lord has declared that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled with the Holy Ghost (see Matthew 5:6; 3 Nephi 12:6).

The opposite of this hungering and thirsting is what the prophets call “hardness of heart,” an inability to see what really is, to hear what is truly being said, and to feel with an openness of heart. C. S. Lewis, in his final volume of the Narnia tales, recounts how, after the forces of the White Witch have been defeated by Aslan the lion (a representation of Christ) and his followers, the prisons and chains with which she had bound so many disappeared. Within a prison stable, a group of dwarfs had been chained in a circle. Suddenly the stable and their chains disappeared and they were free. But they refused to believe their own liberation and stayed within their closed circle, not feeling the fresh air, seeing the sun, or smelling the flowers. Even as Aslan growled in their ears to arouse them, they mistook the growl for a machine or a trick.² On another occasion Aslan observed, “Oh Adam’s sons, how cleverly you defend yourselves against all that might do you good!”³

As Nephi so plaintively wrote, “And now I, Nephi, . . . am left to mourn because of the unbelief, and the wickedness, and the ignorance, and the stiffneckedness of men; for they will not search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in plainness, even as plain as word can be” (2 Nephi 32:7).

Many cannot hear the whisperings of the Spirit or find the truth, because their explaining of apparently miraculous events becomes explaining away. Some studies of Christ seek to explain His mission and influence by explaining away His divine Sonship, and others seek to explain the Prophet Joseph Smith by explaining away his prophetic calling. As Jacob so wisely observed:

“O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

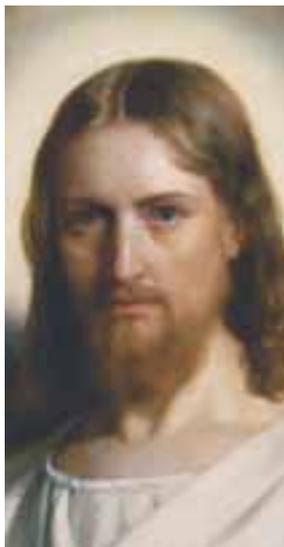
“But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God” (2 Nephi 9:28–29).

To be taught wisdom by the Spirit, we must be prepared to invest everything we are in its pursuit, a study accelerated by much prayer and fasting.

Obedience

Alma speaks of awakening and arousing our faculties—that is, our heart and mind—so as to experiment upon the word (see Alma 32:27). This refers not to passive learning but to active doing. The Apostle John decried those who say they know Christ but fail to follow His counsel: “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4).

DETAIL FROM CHRIST WITH BOY BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH



Sanctified by the things we know, we attain the certitude that banishes doubt and fear. And we shall know that nothing “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Such seeking and obedient following may also require patient waiting upon the Lord. As He declared to the Nephites: “When they shall have received this, which is expedient that they have first, to try their faith, and if it shall be so that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them. . . . I will try the faith of my people” (3 Nephi 26:9, 11).

This diligent seeking, learning, and following, accompanied by patient waiting, was well expressed in the words of John Henry Newman: “I do not ask to see the distant scene—one step enough for me.”⁴

Witnessing and Serving

When we discover truth in Christ, we must be willing “to stand as [a witness] of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9). Additionally, we must be willing to serve and to bear one another’s burdens. The integrity demonstrated in such a life of truth speaking and well doing opens ever wider the horizons of truth. The promise of the Lord is then fulfilled in our lives:

“Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

“The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion” (D&C 121:45–46).

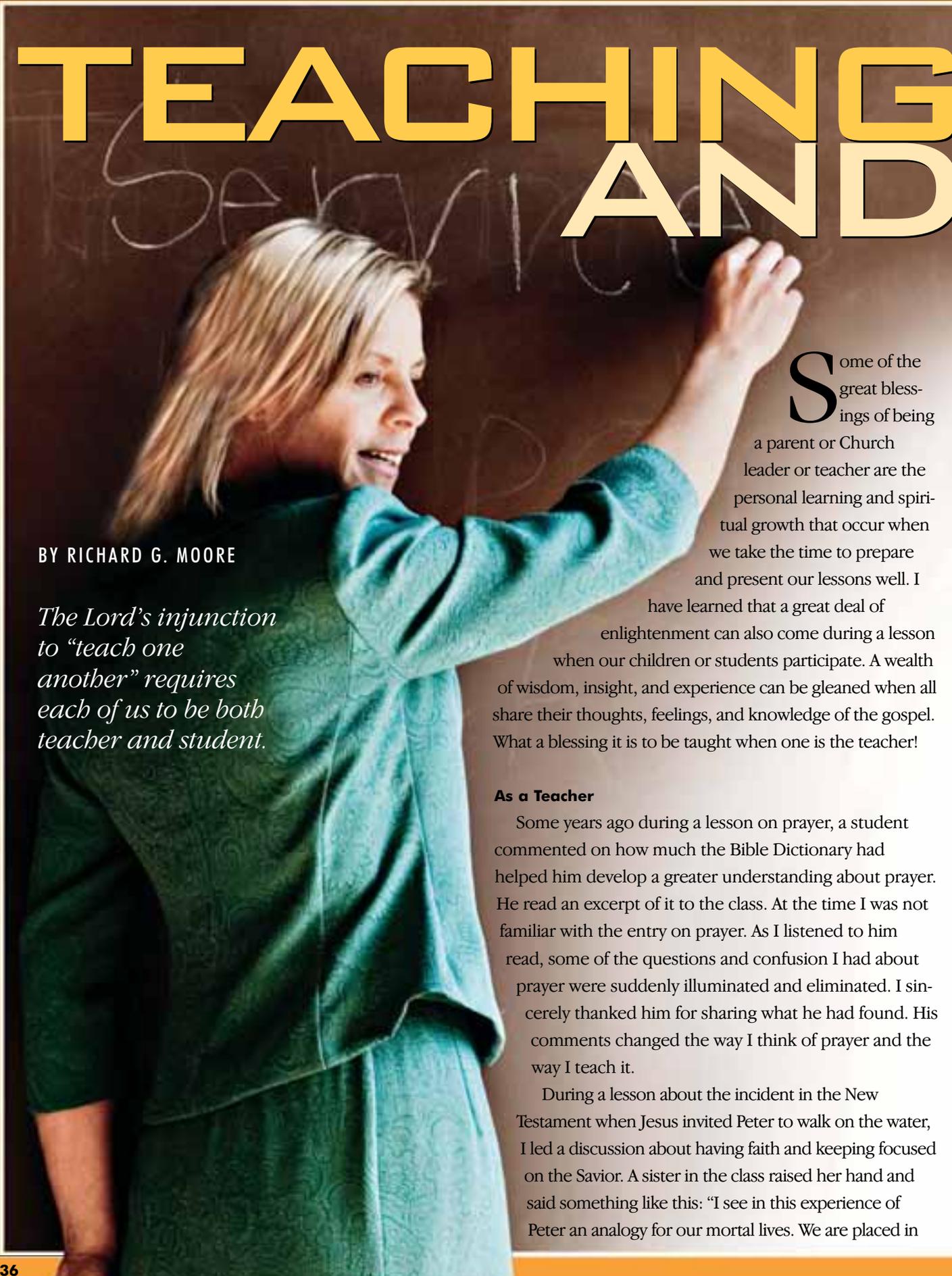
Sanctified by the things we know, we attain the certitude that banishes doubt and fear. We may confront the challenges of life with “a perfect brightness of hope” (2 Nephi 31:20). And we shall know that nothing “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39). ■

Sanctified by the things we know, we attain the certitude that banishes doubt and fear. We may confront the challenges of life with “a perfect brightness of hope” (2 Nephi 31:20). And we shall know that nothing “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39). ■

NOTES

1. See *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 38.
2. *The Last Battle* (1956, 1984), 156–70.
3. *The Magician’s Nephew* (1955, 1983), 185.
4. “Lead, Kindly Light,” *Hymns*, no. 97.

TEACHING AND



BY RICHARD G. MOORE

The Lord's injunction to "teach one another" requires each of us to be both teacher and student.

Some of the great blessings of being a parent or Church leader or teacher are the personal learning and spiritual growth that occur when we take the time to prepare and present our lessons well. I have learned that a great deal of enlightenment can also come during a lesson when our children or students participate. A wealth of wisdom, insight, and experience can be gleaned when all share their thoughts, feelings, and knowledge of the gospel. What a blessing it is to be taught when one is the teacher!

As a Teacher

Some years ago during a lesson on prayer, a student commented on how much the Bible Dictionary had helped him develop a greater understanding about prayer. He read an excerpt of it to the class. At the time I was not familiar with the entry on prayer. As I listened to him read, some of the questions and confusion I had about prayer were suddenly illuminated and eliminated. I sincerely thanked him for sharing what he had found. His comments changed the way I think of prayer and the way I teach it.

During a lesson about the incident in the New Testament when Jesus invited Peter to walk on the water, I led a discussion about having faith and keeping focused on the Savior. A sister in the class raised her hand and said something like this: "I see in this experience of Peter an analogy for our mortal lives. We are placed in

the midst of a fallen world where we are tossed about by the waves of life. Like Peter, we have been invited by Jesus to come unto Him. Peter learned, as all of us must, that we can't make it without the help of our Savior. Like Peter, we need to remember that our best efforts will fall short, but the Savior is there to save us." As she finished her comment, there was a sweet feeling in the room. Her insight changed the way I look at and teach that story from the life of Christ.

During a discussion about little children who die before age eight being "saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven" (D&C 137:10), a student suggested these children die while under "celestial warranty."

I liked that thought.

In addition to the doctrinal insights of class members, I have often been moved by their personal experiences and testimonies. Many times students have volunteered a powerful example of how to live a gospel principle. When moved by the Holy Ghost to impart their thoughts, students often provide a clearer way of explaining the principle under discussion.

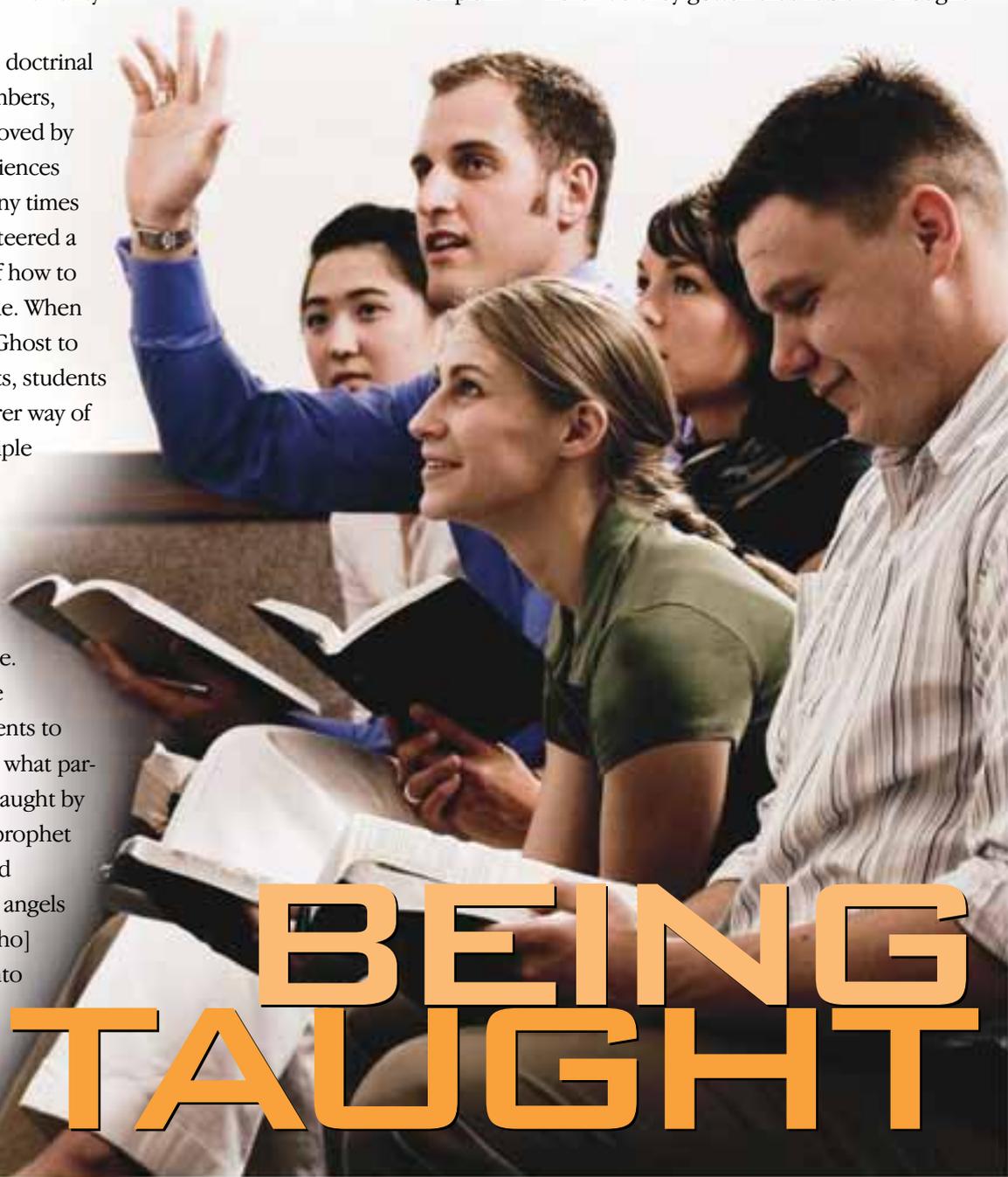
As a Parent

What is true in the classroom is also true in the home. Even though it is the responsibility of parents to teach their children, what parents have not been taught by their children? The prophet Alma taught that God imparts His word by angels to "little children [who] have words given unto them many times, which confound the wise and the learned" (Alma 32:23).

One evening after reviewing some Book of Mormon stories with my five- and three-year-old boys, I suggested they could be like Nephi and Sam. I was startled when my five-year-old replied that they had decided to be like Laman and Lemuel. "You've got the wrong guys," I assured them. "You want to be like Nephi and Sam."

"No, Dad, we've talked about it. Laman and Lemuel like to gripe. We like to gripe, so we've decided we want to be like Laman and Lemuel."

I went to bed that night quite concerned. Was I raising a Laman and Lemuel? I remembered that they did tend to complain. "Where had they gotten that habit?" I thought.



BEING TAUGHT



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

Most *Ensign* articles can be used for family home evening discussions, personal reflection, or teaching the gospel in a variety of settings.

1. Invite family members to share things they have learned from a favorite teacher, classmate, or relative. Consider telling several experiences Brother Moore had as a teacher and a parent. List some things you can do to be better prepared for a lesson and discuss why doing these things will make a difference in the learning experience. Think about setting a goal for family members to be better prepared to learn as well as teach a lesson.

2. Consider applying the suggestions contained in the article as you create a teaching and learning experience in your own family setting. For example, you could ask each family member to teach a simple chore such as tying a shoe, brushing teeth, tying a tie, combing hair, etc. Have them give step-by-step instructions while someone follows their instructions. Discuss what was learned about being a teacher or a student.

I had to admit that my tendency to grumble and complain was influencing my children. This “wise and learned” parent had been confounded.

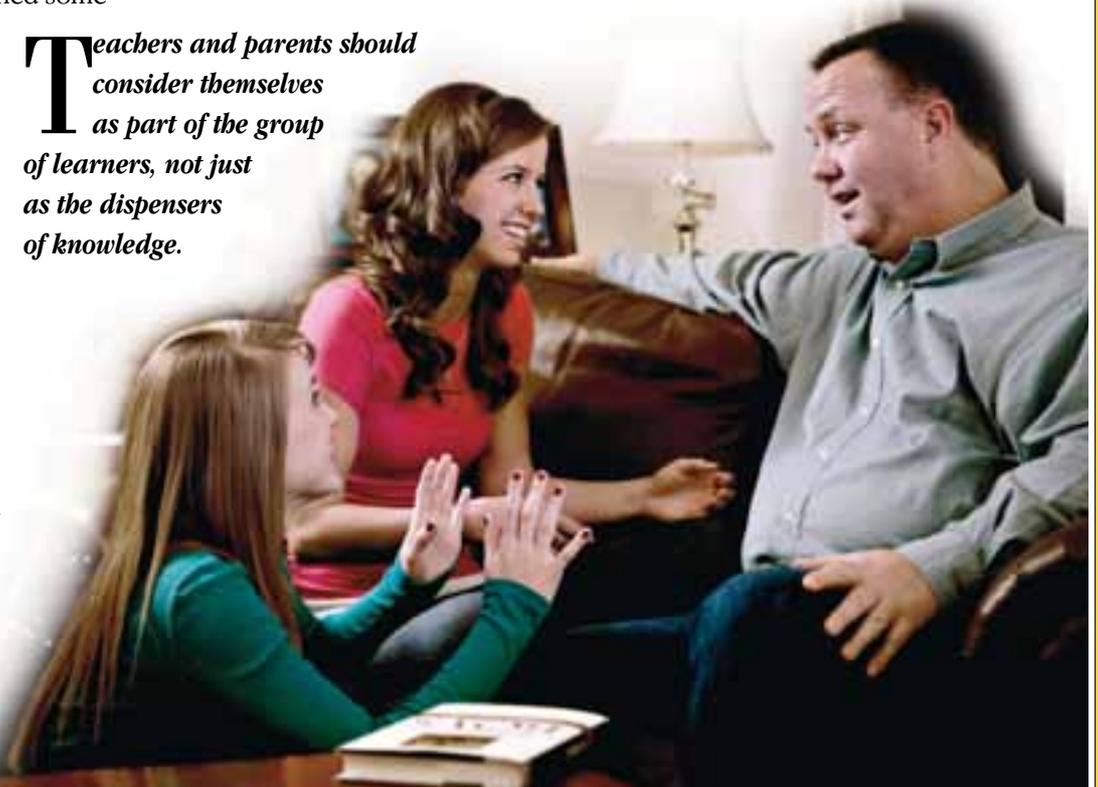
On another occasion I was struggling with writing a draft or even coming up with a topic for a talk in a stake youth conference. I prayed and pondered, but as the day approached I still didn’t know what to say. While I was sharing my dilemma with my wife, my teenage daughter overheard our conversation and said, “Dad, do you want me to help?” I wasn’t trying to be rude, but I said, “No, thanks. I’m sure I’ll be able to come up with something.”

She responded, “I’m a teenager, Dad. I’ll be at the conference with my friends. I know what they’re going through and how they think and feel. I think I have some good ideas of what you could talk about.” I listened and learned some things about my daughter and about how Heavenly Father can answer our prayers through our children.

Being Edified

Teachers and parents should consider themselves as part of the group of learners, not just as the dispensers of knowledge. If there is no discussion or sharing of thoughts and feelings in our classes and homes, we are missing out on many glorious opportunities to learn

Teachers and parents should consider themselves as part of the group of learners, not just as the dispensers of knowledge.



from each other. When we ask sincere questions, we should not be surprised when the particular answer we are looking for does not come. In fact I believe we should hope for the unexpected answer, the one that gives us new insight into something we are struggling to know or better understand.

It is not uncommon for me to write notes in my scriptures during class and family home evening about the things I learn. I seek out opportunities to glean ideas, impressions, and feelings. I am grateful for students who come to class prepared not only to be taught but also to teach. I am grateful to children who tell parents how they feel and share their experiences. As a result, I have been greatly edified by the Holy Ghost (see D&C 88:122). ■

I was introduced to the gospel and baptized during my time as a university student in Washington, D.C. I subsequently served a mission, but toward the end of it, I needed to decide whether to return to school or to go home to Kamloops, British Columbia, where my father and brother lived. Because I am deaf and because I am the only member of the Church in my family, I was worried about finding a place to attend church where I could communicate with my brothers and sisters in the gospel.

I told my mission president my concern, and he was able to get the address of the Vernon British Columbia stake president. I wrote to him and within a few weeks received a reply telling me there was a woman, Sharon Hara, in the Kamloops Second Ward who knew sign language. Sister Hara had learned to sign years earlier as a university student. She had been taught sign language by a woman who served as an interpreter for two deaf sisters in their ward. I later learned that Sister Hara and her husband had also taken two deaf foster children into their home.

I wrote to Sister Hara, who seemed excited to meet me. She even invited me to live with her family. After praying about where to go, I decided to move to British Columbia and live with the Haras.

Soon after my arrival, Sister Hara decided to start sign language classes in her home so other people could communicate with me. I started teaching too, and the class became so well attended that we moved it to the ward meetinghouse. Eventually, we had two separate classes—one for adults and one for children. Later, teaching a sign language class became part of my calling, and we extended the class to the whole community, not just the ward.

I enjoyed teaching the one-hour, weekly classes and did so for almost five years. Several of the class members became proficient enough to serve as interpreters in Sunday School and Relief Society when Sister Hara wasn't available because of other callings. All of us who were involved with the class gained from the experience.

I later moved in with the Davy family, who all learned sign language and also became my close friends. I am now married and live in Alberta, Canada.

Teaching sign language was a challenge for me at times, and I am sure learning sign language was a challenge for others. But I am grateful for their efforts, and I know that being able to communicate with each other is a blessing that has helped us become friends in the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

Signs of Friendship

BY MELINDA
RIDDLE
KOWALSKI



“For She Loved Much” (Luke 7:47)



Above: *She Shall Bring Forth a Son*, by Liz Lemon Swindle. “Behold, a virgin [Mary] shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:23; see vv. 18–25).

Above right: *Living Water*, by Simon Dewey. “Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water” (John 4:10; see vv. 6–30).

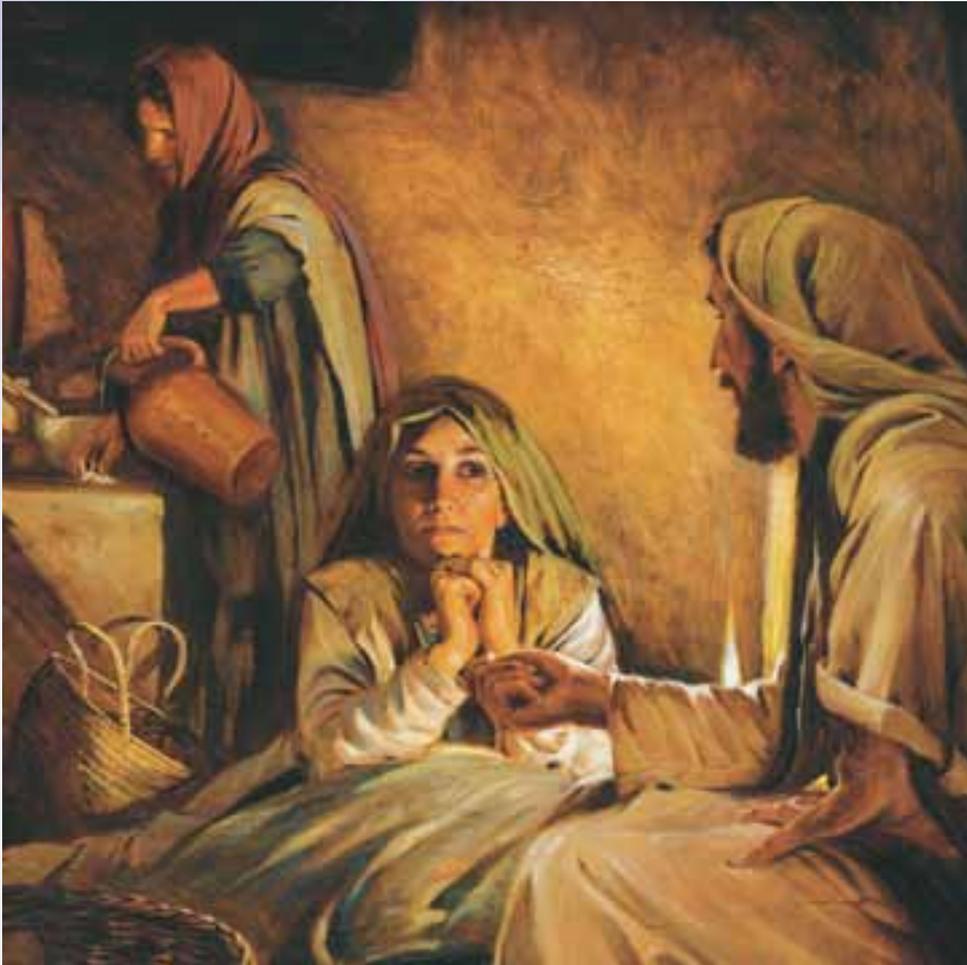


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WOMEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



Left: *Peace, Not as the World Giveth*, by Michael T. Malm. “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. . . .

“The wise [virgins] took oil in their vessels with their lamps” (Matthew 25:1, 4; see vv. 1–13).

Above: *Mary Heard His Word*, by Walter Rane. “And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

“But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41–42; see vv. 38–42).



Above: *Forsaking All*, by Elspeth Young.

Priscilla and her husband, Aquila, were exiled Jews living in Corinth, Greece. The Apostle Paul stayed with them during his second missionary journey. Like many other believers during New Testament times, Aquila and Priscilla forsook all for the gospel’s sake. Here Priscilla contemplates leaving Corinth for Ephesus. (See Acts 18:1–3, 18–19; Romans 16:1–3.)

LEFT: ©WALTER RANE; RIGHT: ©ELSPETH YOUNG, MAY NOT BE COPIED



Above: *That Good Part*, by Elspeth Young. Siblings Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, of Bethany, were all devoted disciples of the Savior. On one occasion, “Martha received [Christ] into her house.

“And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word” (Luke 10:38–39).

Of this, Christ said, “Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42).



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Left: Detail from *The Widow's Mite*, by Liz Lemon Swindle. “And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

“And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all” (Luke 21:2–3; see vv. 1–4).



Above left: *Why Seek Ye the Living among the Dead?* by Jan Astle. “Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they [Mary Magdalene and other women] came unto the sepulchre, . . .

“And they found the stone rolled away. . . .
 “. . . Behold, two men stood by them in shining garments [and]
 “. . . said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

“He is not here, but is risen” (Luke 24:1–2, 4–6; see vv. 1–13).

Above: Detail from *Touch of Faith*, by Simon Dewey. “And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

“For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole” (Matthew 9:20–21; see vv. 18–22). ■



Oil in Our Lamps

BY ELDER LYNN G. ROBBINS
Of the Seventy



Being worthy of a temple recommend is a wise way to prepare to meet the Lord.

While Coy Manning was in the hospital with cancer, her temple recommend expired. She knew she had only days to live and realized she would never visit the temple again in this life. Still, she told her physician, who was a member of the Church, that she wanted to have a current temple recommend when she died. He replied, perhaps in jest, “I don’t think they use them over there.” Of course her bishop and stake president were happy to visit her. With her renewed recommend she was content knowing that she had been judged worthy by the Lord’s earthly representatives to enter the temple, or symbolically to enter into His presence. She was at peace for the journey that came just a few days later.¹

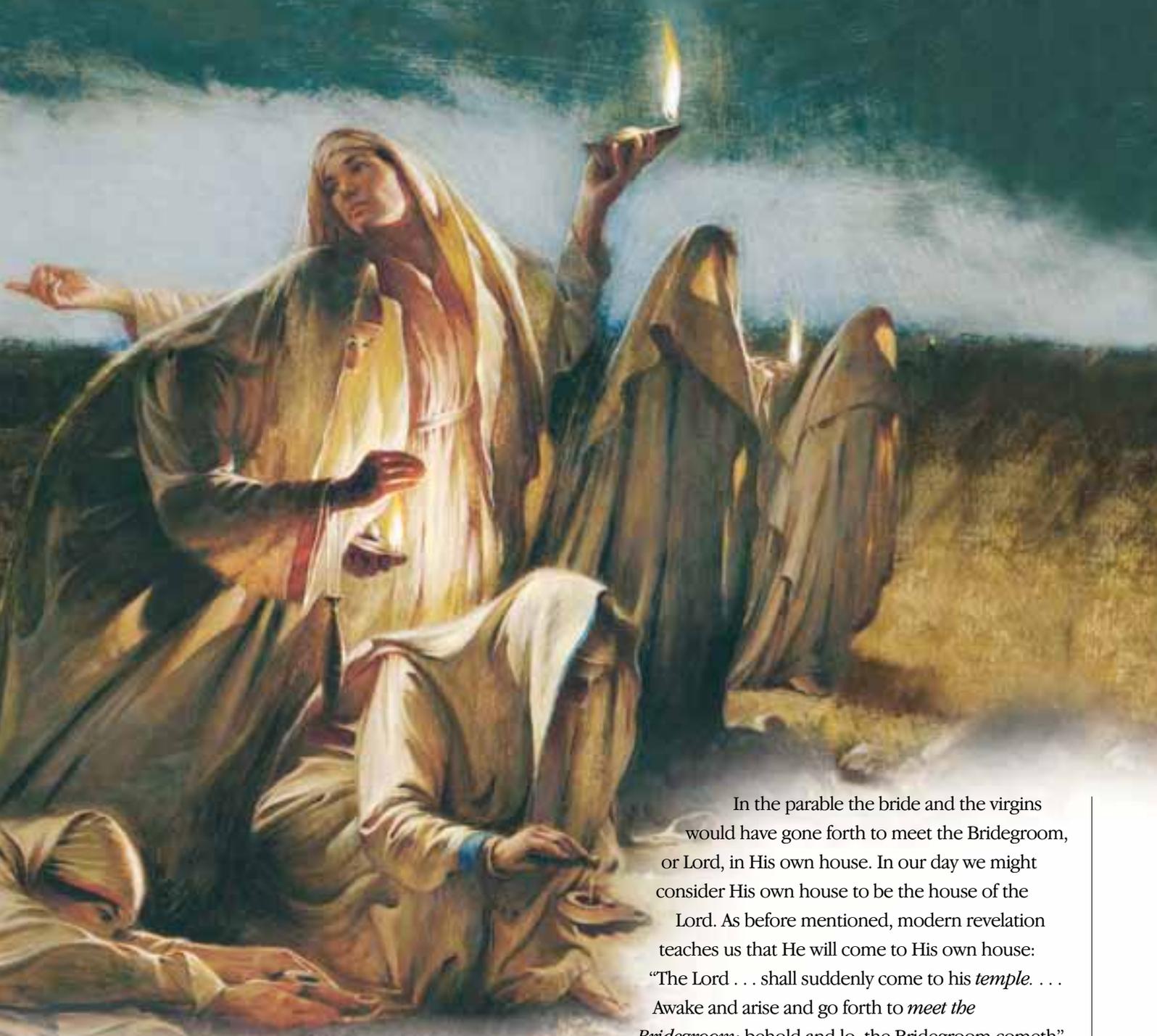
Parables of Preparation

When speaking of His Second Coming, the Lord has said, “I will suddenly come to my

temple” (D&C 36:8; see also D&C 42:36; 133:2; Malachi 3:1; 3 Nephi 24:1). Because He will come to His temple, we would be wise to prepare to meet Him by being temple worthy.

Could the importance of temple worthiness be one of the Lord’s messages to us in the parables of the ten virgins (see Matthew 25:1–13) and the marriage of the king’s son (see Matthew 22:2–14)? These parables have more than one possible interpretation. However, one wise way to “liken [these parables] unto us” (1 Nephi 19:23) is to study them with the temple in mind. This perspective reminds us of the urgent need to have and to be ever worthy of a current temple recommend.

In the scriptures the Savior uses His title “the Bridegroom” (D&C 33:17) in reference to His Second Coming: “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to



FIVE OF THEM WERE WISE BY WALTER RANE. COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART

meet the bridegroom” (Matthew 25:1).

In biblical times the destination of those who “went forth to meet the bridegroom” was the bridegroom’s home. Under the heading “Marriage” in the Bible Dictionary, we read: “On the marriage day, the bride was escorted to her [bridegroom’s] home by a procession consisting of her own companions and the ‘friends of the bridegroom,’ or ‘children of the bride-chamber.’ . . . When she reached the house, words such as ‘Take her according to the law of Moses . . .’ were spoken, . . . and a marriage deed was signed. After the prescribed washing of hands and benediction, the marriage supper was held” (728–29).

In the parable the bride and the virgins would have gone forth to meet the Bridegroom, or Lord, in His own house. In our day we might consider His own house to be the house of the Lord. As before mentioned, modern revelation teaches us that He will come to His own house: “The Lord . . . shall suddenly come to his *temple*. . . . Awake and arise and go forth to *meet the Bridegroom*; behold and lo, the Bridegroom cometh” (D&C 133:2, 10; emphasis added).

In the parable the Savior used a marriage ceremony in the *Bridegroom’s home* to teach about qualifying for the kingdom of heaven. In our day a marriage ceremony in the Lord’s house is the qualifying ordinance for family life in the celestial kingdom (see D&C 131:1–3).

Filling Our Lamps

The parable of the ten virgins teaches us about how to prepare wisely to meet the Lord at His Second Coming. “*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins*” (v. 1).



In the parable the virgins were not able to enter the door without oil. In our day neither can we enter the door of the temple without a recommend.

The ten virgins, according to Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,

“represent those church members who are looking for the Bridegroom to come; and the oil-filled lamps are symbolic of the Holy Spirit which lights the way before the saints.”²

“And five of them were wise, and five were foolish” (v. 2).

Elder McConkie further explains that this parable is not about “good and bad, not righteous and wicked, but *wise* and *foolish*. That is, all of them have accepted the invitation to meet the Bridegroom; all are *members of the Church* . . . but only five are valiant therein.”³

In the parable, only those with oil in their lamps were able to enter the house of the bridegroom. In modern times, only those worthy of a temple recommend may enter the house of the Lord.

“They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them;

“But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps” (vv. 3–4).

In biblical times constant effort was needed to ensure

that an adequate amount of oil was maintained in lamps. In our day we must exert constant effort to remain temple worthy. In the parable the virgins were not able to enter the door without oil. In our day neither can we enter the door of the temple without a recommend.

The Lord commanded the children of Israel anciently to use “pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually” (Leviticus 24:2). According to *The Guide to the Scriptures*, olive oil is a symbol of purity and of the presence and influence of the Holy Ghost.⁴ In modern times a temple recommend is an affirmation of a person’s purity or worthiness.

“While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

“And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him” (vv. 5–6).

Elder McConkie explains that “from evening to midnight there was no direct word from the bridal party. At midnight, the most unlikely of all hours for a joyous celebration to begin, the cry goes forth to a sleeping world.” Likewise, the Lord’s Second Coming will be “more distant than the early saints supposed.”⁵

The Lord will come again in a dark “midnight” hour when the world is ripe in iniquity and when for the “elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:22). In such a dark time, what a truly stunning moment it will be when the Light of the World appears and darkness is banished!

“Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps” (v. 7).

They all thought they were ready. Outwardly, they all appeared prepared.

“And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out” (v. 8).

In the parable oil could not be loaned to someone else. In our day we cannot loan our temple worthiness to someone else.

“But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves” (v. 9).

The Keeper of the Gate

“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut” (v. 10).

The closed door is a poignant reminder that “this life is the day for men to perform their labors” (Alma 34:32). It would be foolish to procrastinate the day of our repentance until the midnight hour or to leave this life without oil. Just as oil is not purchased at midnight, neither is righteousness developed in an instant.

“Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us” (v. 11).

The fact that the five foolish virgins knocked, *expecting*

to enter the marriage supper, indicates one of two things: (1) they thought they could prepare themselves *after* the Bridegroom came, or (2) knowing that they at first had not been prepared to enter, they were hoping for mercy. Either way, the door was shut.

“But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not” (v. 12).

Our Lord, on the other hand, knows each one of us,



The Lord will come again in a dark “midnight” hour when the world is ripe in iniquity and when for the “elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

even the thoughts and intents of our heart (see Alma 18:32). Joseph Smith’s inspired revision of the scriptures places responsibility for being prepared right where it belongs: “Ye know me not” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 25:11). In this parable it was the bridegroom himself who answered the door. In the Book of Mormon we learn that “the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; . . . for he cannot be deceived” (2 Nephi 9:41). He is the one who will symbolically be checking recommends at the door to the kingdom of heaven.

Church doctrine teaches us that Judgment Day will go beyond a recommend interview. The “Gatekeeper” has taught us that there are additional requirements, such as being humble, forgiving our fellow men, having charity, and so forth. Having a recommend may not be a guarantee, but worthily obtaining one would be a wise way to prepare for

the kingdom of heaven. Logically, if we are not worthy to enter the house of the Lord here on earth, common sense tells us that we will not be worthy to enter His celestial home either, the one being symbolic of the other.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

The Wedding Garment

In symbolism that could parallel that of the oil in the parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the marriage of the king's son uses the "wedding garment" as a prerequisite to participation (see Matthew 22:11–14; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 22:14). The book of Revelation teaches us that the garment represents righteousness: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready . . . arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the *righteousness* of saints" (Revelation 19:7–8; emphasis added). In our day, the temple garment is clothing we always wear as a reminder of sacred temple covenants.

The final verse of the parable of the marriage of the king's son states, "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). Joseph Smith added a key phrase in his inspired revision of the Bible: "For many are called, but few are chosen: wherefore all do not have on the *wedding garment*" (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 22:14; emphasis added).

HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

Visuals enhance learning. Consider showing or having family members make an object discussed in the article. Following are two suggestions.

1. Share the parable of the ten virgins. Invite each family member to mold clay into the shape of a small bowl that fits inside your cupped hand. The resulting bowl is similar in size and shape to the ancient lamps used by the ten virgins. While you are doing this, consider discussing some of the requirements to enter the kingdom of heaven. During the coming week place a pebble or a marble in your "lamps" each time someone makes a good choice, such as reading the scriptures, praying, being kind, or giving service.

2. Show a passport or driver's license to the family. Discuss briefly how to obtain it and what privileges it allows you to have. Then show a temple recommend. Discuss what you must do to obtain one and what privileges it allows you to have. Share Sister Manning's story from the article. Consider discussing the relationship between our being worthy of a temple recommend and the ten virgins' being prepared to "meet the bridegroom."

Reminders of Covenants

Parables can have layered or multiple meanings. The similarities between the biblical parables mentioned and our preparation to enter modern temples should motivate us to "liken [the] scriptures unto us" (1 Nephi 19:23) and to desire to be temple worthy.

The temple recommend isn't just a record; nor is the garment just an emblem of past behavior. They are reminders of covenants made concerning future behavior—a promise to endure to the end. Being worthy of a temple recommend—just as Sister Coy Manning was—is a *wise* way to prepare to meet the Savior and to prepare for the spiritual journey we call death. It isn't the piece of paper that matters but the worthiness it represents. It would certainly be unwise, or *foolish*, not to be worthy of one.

"Wherefore, be faithful, praying always, having your lamps trimmed and burning, *and oil with you*, that you may be ready at the coming of the Bridegroom" (D&C 33:17; emphasis added). ■

NOTES

1. Sister Coy C. Manning is the sister of Elder Joe J. Christensen, emeritus member of the Seventy, who shared this story.
2. *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (1966–73), 1:684.
3. *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:685; emphasis added.
4. See *The Guide to the Scriptures* (1993), 182.
5. *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:685.

Become an Instrument in the Hands of God by Standing Strong and Immovable



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

What Does It Mean to Be Strong and Immovable?

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “It is so tremendously important that the women of the Church stand strong and immovable for that which is correct and proper. . . . [You] must begin in [your] own homes. [You] can teach it in [your] classes. [You] can voice it in [your] communities” (“Standing Strong and Immovable,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 2004, 20).

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918): “After we have done all we could do for the cause of truth, and withstood the evil that men have brought upon us, . . . it is still our duty to stand. We cannot give up; we must not lie down. . . . To stand firm in the face of overwhelming opposition, when you have done all you can, is the courage of faith. The courage of faith is the courage of progress. [Those] who possess that

divine quality go on; they are not permitted to stand still if they would. They are not simply the creatures of their own power and wisdom; they are instrumentalities of a higher law and a divine purpose” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 107–8).

How Can the Lord Use Me When I Stand Strong and Immovable?

D&C 84:106: “If any man among you be strong in the Spirit, let him take with him him that is weak, . . . that he may become strong also.”

Anne C. Pingree, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: “The Lord explained that those who ‘shall be received by baptism into his church’ would be, in part, those ‘willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end.’ That means remaining ‘steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works’ each day of our lives. . . . We will be asked to do

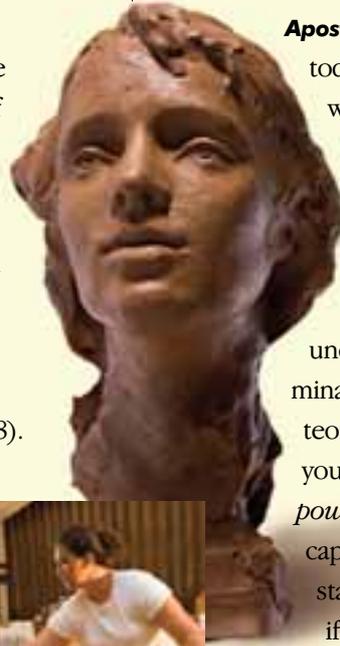
all we can, in some cases, even more than we know how to do” (“To Grow Up unto the Lord,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2006, 74–75, 76).

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve

Apostles: “You cannot today remotely imagine what that decision to be unwaveringly obedient to the Lord will allow you to accomplish in life. Your quiet, uncompromising determination to live a righteous life will couple you to *inspiration* and *power* beyond your capacity now to understand. . . . You can qualify through that divine

power to be instruments in the hands of God to accomplish what you could not do alone” (“Making the Right Decisions,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 34–35).

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency: “I commend each of you for your day-to-day works of righteousness. Even though your works may be known to only a few, they are recorded in the Lamb’s book of life, which one day will be opened to witness of your dedicated service, devotion, and deeds as ‘instruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work’ [Alma 26:3]” (“Instruments in the Hands of God,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 114). ■



An Honored and



BY NAIDA STEPHENS TIMS

My marriage was over. Despite temple covenants, after almost 20 years and 4 children, the strife and contention had driven a wedge between us that I could no longer live with. I consulted a lawyer. He acknowledged the grounds for divorce and outlined various legal steps to be taken. He asked me if my husband

and I had seen a counselor. No, we had not. It was his custom, he said, to have his clients visit with a counselor prior to initiating legal proceedings. Would I consider doing that? Of course I would. Nothing anyone could say to me would alter my intention of getting out of this misery. But this was going to be costly. I asked if my clergyman would be acceptable. Yes, that would be fine.

I made an appointment with my bishop. He listened

Invited Guest

I was set on divorce until our stake president counseled us to invite the Holy Ghost into our home.

and said he would like us to see our stake president. I was irritated and angry as I stomped up the steps to President Leatham's front door. I knew he was going to tell us it was Satan who was destroying our marriage. I did not need to hear that. I knew exactly who was destroying our marriage. It was my husband, Ken. I could no longer tolerate the criticism, the lack of consideration, the constant bickering. If he would show more thought and care, everything would be just fine.

President Leatham greeted us and invited us into his living room. I was immediately impressed with a feeling of peace and calm. He listened to us attentively. Then he proceeded to tell us exactly what I had expected. In the peacefulness of his home, however, the Spirit touched me. President Leatham reminded us that we had made sacred covenants with the Lord, and having done so, we were a covenant family. What we did not know was that as a covenant family we were literally at war with Satan and his angels. Our home was under attack, and Satan was winning. I couldn't argue with that. He told us we didn't need to succumb to grievous temptations for Satan to win. He said we had allowed the spirit of contention to invade our home, and it had destroyed love, respect, and honor. It had eroded the principles of the gospel in our family.

Then he told us what to do about it. We were to go home and gather our children about us and explain to them what was happening to us and why. He told us to gather every morning and invite the Holy Ghost into our home and ask Heavenly Father to bless us with a spirit of love and affection for one another. Then each of us should behave toward other family members as we would if an honored and invited guest were in our home. At the end of the day we were to kneel together and thank Heavenly Father for His blessings of that day and ask Him to fill our home with His Spirit as we slept.

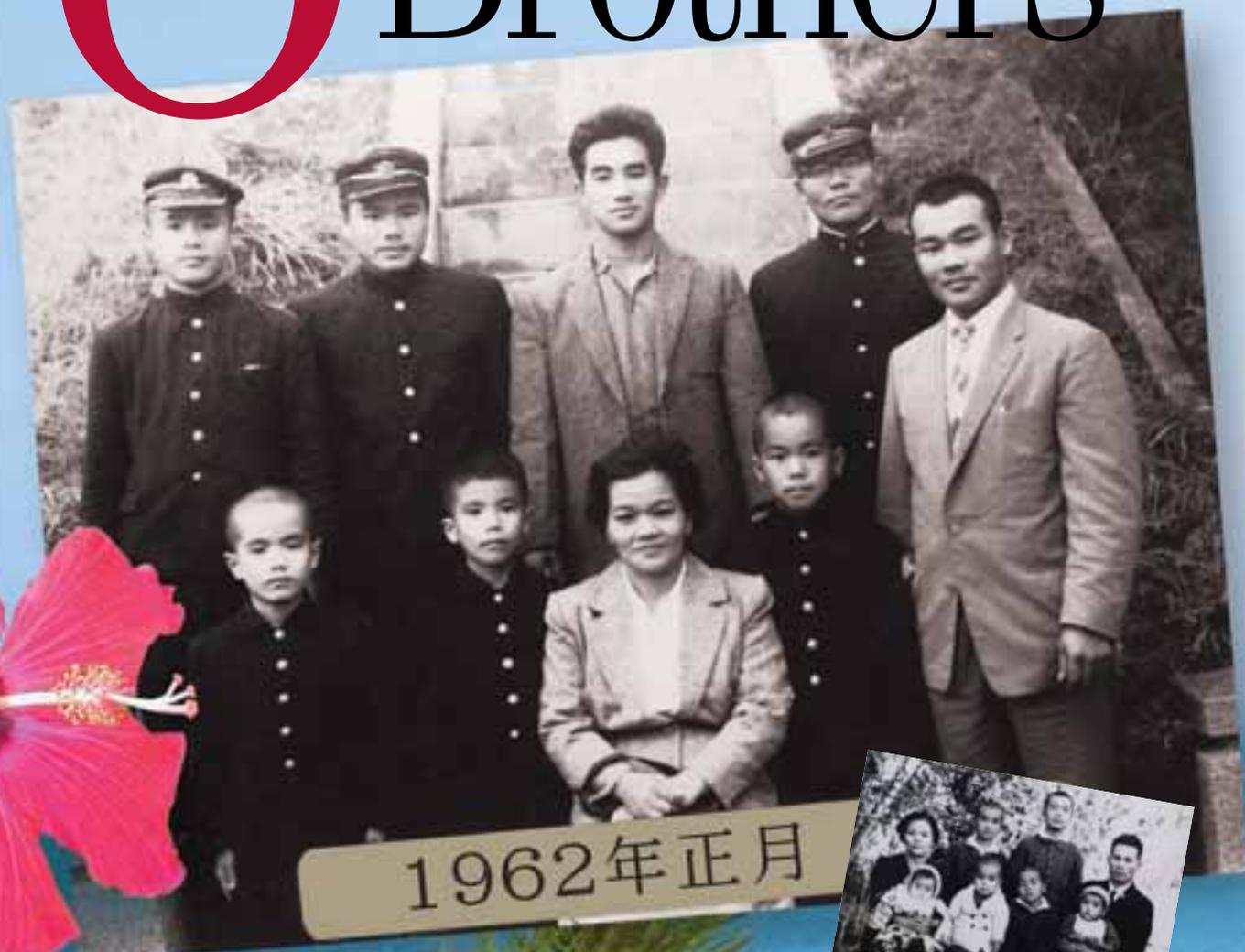
We sat silent on the way home, pondering what we had learned. I was remembering our hands across the altar—Ken's, mine, two toddlers', and the three-month-old baby fist, like a pink rosebud on top. Where had it all gone? I knew I was as responsible as Ken. I reached over and took his hand. "I'm willing to try if you are," I said. He looked at me, searching my face; then he smiled. "I am, I am!" he said.

The purpose of morning and evening prayer took on new meaning as we followed President Leatham's counsel. Things began to change immediately. The children were horrified to learn that I was considering divorce and readily agreed to participate in our plan. We took turns inviting the Holy Ghost into our home and thanking Heavenly Father at night. The spirit of contention began to wither and die.

One morning I was downstairs and heard my teenage daughters shouting at each other upstairs. Recriminations and names were flying. I hurried to the stairs and took the first step on my way to quell this outburst in my usual way—by outshouting the offenders. Then suddenly it became very quiet. I stopped on the stair and heard my oldest daughter say: "Wait a minute! You know what we're doing, don't you?" Her sister whispered, "Yes." It was quiet again. Then, "Let's kneel down and pray." I heard the rustling of their clothing as they knelt. I didn't hear the whispered prayer, but there was rustling again as they stood. Then, "I love you, Sissy." "I love you too." I heard rustling as they embraced and sniffles as the tears flowed. I backed down the stair and went to a quiet corner alone and thanked Heavenly Father for being there.

That was more than 30 years ago, and we are still together as a family. There have been many battles with that spirit of contention invading our home, but knowing the enemy and recognizing his presence has made us strong in knowing what our armor is and how to protect and respect our honored and invited guest. ■

8 Japanese Brothers



Sister Haru Kina with her eight sons in 1962. Right: Sister Kina and her husband, Gen-ei, with six of their children.

BY TADASHI KINA

My parents had nine children—eight sons and a daughter. The only girl died as a small child in World War II during the battle of Okinawa. Following the war, my father established a successful automotive repair shop in Nago, located in the northern part of the main island of Okinawa. In 1954, when my youngest brother was 2 and my oldest brother was 17, our father died, and my mother became a widow at the age of 40. Mother could not accept Father's death. Sometimes, in her sorrow, she wanted to follow after him, but she had eight boys she could not leave behind.

Up until that time, my mother, Haru, had relied upon our father to be the breadwinner; but having lost him, she was now forced to work. She tried to forget her sorrow by working and then coming home and caring for her children. She struggled to raise her eight rowdy boys alone. When I was old enough to understand, I realized I never knew when my mother got up or when she went to sleep.

Teach My Children about God

Ten years after the death of my father, as if guided by the Spirit, Mother left Nago amid the opposition of friends and relatives and moved to Naha, the capital of Okinawa. A few years later, about 1967, the missionaries knocked on our door. At that time our house was isolated and surrounded by sugarcane

fields and a graveyard. The road to the house was in poor condition, and few people ever called on us. The missionaries were Elder Jackson and Elder Fuchigami, a second-generation Japanese-American from Hawaii. The missionaries asked, "May we speak with you about God?" Mother had been concerned about her sons' education and thought we might learn something good from the missionaries, so she invited the elders in and said, "Please teach my children about God."

Mother found peace as she learned about the gospel. She was impressed that the missionaries paid their own way and that Elder Jackson was serving a mission, even though he had lost his parents in an automobile accident when he was younger and had struggled along with an older sister. As she listened to the missionaries, Mother shed tears for the first time since my father's death. She felt the Lord's love and the Spirit through the discussions. She knew that this was the church our family had been searching for.

To set an example for her sons, Mother was baptized first. She was touched by the missionaries' message and by their loving, kind behavior. She began to think that the greatest education she could give her children would be for us to learn



Because of our mother's faith in the missionaries' message, the gospel is blessing our family and many others throughout Japan.

Below, left to right: Elder Fuchigami, one of the missionaries who taught Sister Kina the gospel. Sister Kina at age 85. Sister Kina with her son Toshimitsu and her grandson at the Laie Hawaii Temple in 1970.





This monument in Mabuni, Okinawa, lists the names of victims of the battle of Okinawa. Tadashi Kina points to the name of his sister, Fumiko, who died at age two. Below: Missionary Tadashi Kina (right) at a baptism. Below right: The youngest Kina son, Akira, on his mission in 1972.

the gospel and become missionaries. Mother always told the missionaries, “There are eight boys in our family. Please come to our house and teach the gospel to them. When they are all converted, there will be eight more priesthood holders at church. And they may be missionaries in the future.”

Serving Missions

Most of my brothers and I were influenced by our mother and joined the Church one after another. As we attended church, our lives changed through the gospel and the help extended to us from the brothers and sisters at church. We became better sons and brothers. We started helping one another more and found life to be enjoyable. Four of us later preached the gospel as missionaries in various parts of Japan. When one of my older brothers, who had moved away from Okinawa, saw the fine stature of one of his younger brothers who was serving a mission, he said, “I can’t believe this is my younger brother

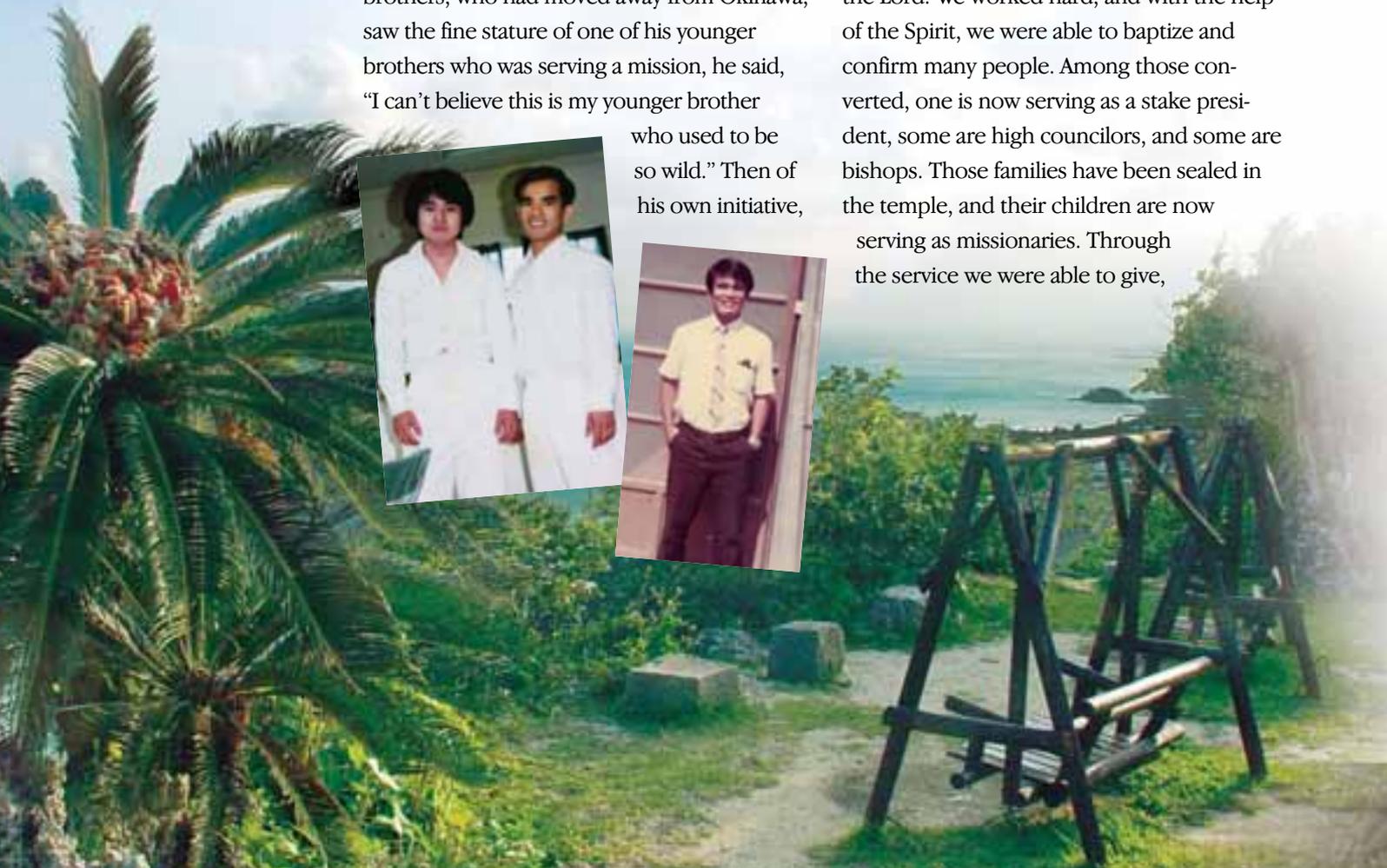
who used to be so wild.” Then of his own initiative,



he sought out the Church and was soon baptized and confirmed.

Before another of my older brothers was baptized at the age of 27, he had no idea how to live. He was troubled and would drink and party. He caused his family and the people around him much grief. When this brother learned about the purpose of life through the gospel, he was baptized and confirmed and eventually married a wonderful woman in the Church. He found joy in life and began feeling a purpose in being alive. He shared the gospel with friends and was a good influence to many. My brothers who were on missions could hardly believe it when they heard that this brother had joined the Church.

As missionaries, my brothers and I received assistance from our mission presidents and companions as well as Church members and the Lord. We worked hard, and with the help of the Spirit, we were able to baptize and confirm many people. Among those converted, one is now serving as a stake president, some are high councilors, and some are bishops. Those families have been sealed in the temple, and their children are now serving as missionaries. Through the service we were able to give,





Sister Kina (center) sits surrounded by family members at a family reunion in 2002.

gospel seeds have been planted all around Japan and are starting to bloom. Mother's dream to have her children be missionaries came true.

Building the Kingdom

Through serving in callings, my brothers and I have grown spiritually. Each brother who has joined the Church has been sealed in the temple and is now raising a happy family. Mother was sealed in the Laie Hawaii Temple to our father and sister and those of us who have been converted. She was able to realize the fulness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ as she received the blessings of the temple. She later visited relatives, diligently seeking for information that would help her with her family history work. My mother has served in the Relief Society and Young Women programs and as a seminary teacher.

The Kina family now includes daughters-in-law, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren: a total of 66 family members. Of these, 51 are members of the Church and 10 are returned missionaries. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren will continue going out on missions as they become of age. We feel that it is the duty of those who have received the blessings of the gospel to do so.

Kina family members have served or are serving in the following callings: two in the stake presidency (or district presidency), three as high councilors, seven in bishoprics (or branch presidencies), four as high priests group leaders,

eight in elders quorum presidencies, six as mission leaders, and seven in Relief Society presidencies. We feel blessed that we have had these opportunities to serve others.

Mother's Testimony

Mother received a strong testimony as she watched her children's lives change for the better through the gospel of Jesus Christ. She had a desire to share the gospel with those she loved. She introduced friends and relatives to the missionaries and often held family meetings at home. Through this she was instrumental in bringing many into the Church, including 50 of her relatives.

Mother, now 90, once bore the following testimony: "As a mother, I would gladly sacrifice myself so that my children could return to their Heavenly Father. How can one leave any child he or she loves so much and still go to Heavenly Father? My most important mission here upon the earth as a mother is to return the children I received from Heavenly Father back to Him."

We sons are now of the age that we have children and grandchildren and can understand and appreciate our mother's testimony.

The gospel is true, and truth changes people. Through the gospel we have come to know God's love and mercy. We have made many friends with the wonderful brothers and sisters in the Church and are grateful for the changes we have experienced through their examples. We will go forward as instruments in God's hand here in Okinawa and preach the restored gospel, build churches and temples, and help to establish Zion. ■

Supporting Your Bishop

BY JOSEPH STAPLES

My first encounter with a Latter-day Saint bishop occurred before I was a member of the Church. I was 17 years old and was facing the confusion, doubt, and stress that many high school seniors confront.

One Saturday morning I was complaining to my best friend about my woes. Even though he had good intentions, he provided me with few answers. But he did offer what turned out to be a profound suggestion. “Sometimes when I don’t know what to do,” he said, “I talk to my bishop.”

“Your bishop? Who is he?” I asked.

“He is the head of my ward,” my friend replied.

I now recognize my next question to be a distinct prompting from the Spirit, but at the time it was the most out-of-character

question I could imagine coming from my 17-year-old mouth. “Do you think he’d meet with me?” I asked.

My friend said he’d call his bishop and call me right back. An appointment was quickly made for later that morning at the bishop’s house.

I didn’t know what to expect. As I pulled up in front of the modest rambler home, I was a bit surprised at its normalcy—bikes in the driveway, nicely mowed lawn. I was even further surprised by the man in the nice, casual shirt

who greeted me at the door. He smiled and said, “Hi, you must be Joe. I’m Bishop Maxwell. Please come in.” As we walked to his small, in-home office, my mind was trying to justify it all. “Shouldn’t the bishop’s home be somehow

different?” I asked myself. “Shouldn’t he dress in a formal robe or something?”

During the next 45 minutes, what I found was a compassionate man, someone who took a sincere interest in my struggles; an inspired man willing to spend some of his precious time on a Saturday morning to help someone, anyone, of his faith or not, make decisions and draw conclusions.

More than 25 years have passed since that meeting. I don’t recall any of the specific advice the bishop imparted that morning, but I still vividly remember the

amazing clarity and lightened burden I felt as I left his home. Not until many years later would I realize that meeting was one of my first experiences in feeling the Spirit.

I joined the Church later that year. My friend Bill, who had referred me to Bishop Maxwell, baptized me. Bishop Maxwell was at the baptism. I later served a mission, married a beautiful young woman in the temple with Bishop Maxwell serving as a witness, and am now raising five wonderful children.

How blessed we are that the Lord sees fit to provide loving, devoted, caring bishops. We can assist them through our support and positive actions.



Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has promised that “if we will sustain and support our bishops, learn to be concerned for their welfare, and pray for their success in all they have to do, it will bless our lives as we are placed under their leadership and have opportunity to follow their inspired direction, as they lead the wards of the Church.”¹

I have come to realize that we can take action to fulfill our responsibility of supporting and sustaining our bishop (or branch president). The following six suggestions provide guidance in accomplishing that objective.

Respect His Family Time

Your bishop will generally drop whatever activity he is involved in to assist one of his ward members in need. He knows his responsibility as a shepherd of the flock and

works hard at fulfilling his sacred stewardship. Being torn in various directions is something he quickly becomes accustomed to.

Your bishop is also a husband, in most cases a father, and often a father with children still at home in need of his guidance and attention. As we look for our bishop’s guidance, we need to be aware and considerate of his time with his family and his responsibility as a provider in his home. While we should never hesitate to call the bishop when we truly need his help, we should still ask ourselves, “Can this wait?” or, “Is there another person, such as a home teacher, who could help me just as well?” Of course, questions of worthiness should be discussed only with our bishop or branch president.

Speaking of bishops and other Church leaders and of the special burdens they bear, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the

As we look for our bishop’s guidance, we need to be considerate of his time with his family and his responsibility as a provider in his home.



When home teachers and visiting teachers properly care for their assigned families, the bishop can focus on those activities that only he can perform.

Twelve Apostles has stated: “I testify of home and family and marriage, the most precious human possessions of our lives. I testify of the need to protect and preserve them while we find time and ways to serve faithfully in the Church.”²

The bishop will always be busily engaged in the work of the Lord. That includes devoting time to his eternal calling as husband and father. With considerate planning on our part, we can be a great support in helping the bishop manage a busy and demanding load.

Lighten His Load

Some responsibilities the bishop cannot delegate. These include administering formal Church discipline, conducting tithing settlement, dispensing welfare assistance, and listening to the confessions of repentant ward members. Beyond these responsibilities, however, are many properly delegated things others can do to ease the bishop’s burden, such as caring for ward members in need,

planning social activities, and assisting with employment concerns.

When home teachers and visiting teachers properly care for their assigned families, when group leaders and quorum and auxiliary presidents lead in righteousness, the bishop can focus on those activities that only he can perform. If we want to support the bishop and lighten his load, let us be diligent in fulfilling our assigned responsibilities.

Respect the Office

Some new bishops struggle with the transition from being a regular ward member to that of being the ward leader. They realize that in most cases others are equally qualified to serve. Even as they receive a confirmation that the Lord has chosen them for this assignment, accepting the mantle can be as awkward for them as donning the king’s armor was for David prior to his battle with Goliath.

The office of bishop is a sacred calling that the Lord has entrusted to a certain

individual in each ward at any given time. We can help him by showing respect for the office. Call him “Bishop” instead of using his first name or a slang or informal title. Show respect in the way you treat him, and you’ll help him better assume the very real mantle the Lord has placed upon him.

Pray for Him

The scriptures teach, “The alms of your prayers have come up into the ears of the Lord” (D&C 88:2). As we pray for our bishop, the Lord does indeed hear us. And when we pray for our bishop during family prayer, we teach our children important principles of faith, obedience, and trust. Many bishops have testified of the strength they have received through the prayers of their ward members.

Accept His Challenges and Follow His Counsel

The bishop is a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ. He may challenge us. He may ask us to serve in positions that might be out of our comfort zone. He may ask us to stretch and give. For our benefit, for his benefit, and as a means of building the Lord’s kingdom here on earth, we should follow the bishop’s counsel and accept and magnify the callings he or his counselors extend to us.

Be Supportive and Nonjudgmental

Bishops, like all of us, are human. They each have different strengths and different leadership styles. As members, we should not compare one bishop with another but know that our bishop is doing his best to follow what the Lord would have him do. We should be complimentary, nonjudgmental, and determined not to engage in criticism or gossip.

A few years ago I was called as a bishop. While serving for several years in that capacity, I experienced some of the greatest joys I have ever known—joys of interviewing enthusiastic eight-year-olds for baptism and confirmation, of working with young men and young women as they prepared to serve missions, and of teaching about the great blessings of the temple to couples preparing for eternal marriage. I thought of Bishop Maxwell on countless occasions during that time. His influence on my life will be eternal.

How blessed we are that the Lord sees fit to provide loving, devoted, caring bishops to shepherd our ward families. Their calling is challenging, and their burden can be heavy at times, yet we have a great opportunity to sustain and assist them through our support and positive actions. ■

NOTES

1. “For a Bishop Must Be Blameless,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 32.
2. “Called to Serve,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 38.



LIGHTEN YOUR BISHOP'S BURDEN

“Everyone . . . is accountable to a bishop or a branch president. Tremendous are the burdens which they carry, and I invite every member of the Church to do all that he or she can to

lift the burden under which our bishops and branch presidents labor.

“We must pray for them. They need help as they carry their heavy loads. We can be more supportive and less dependent upon them. We can assist them in every way possible. We can thank them for all that they do for us.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Shepherds of Israel,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 60.

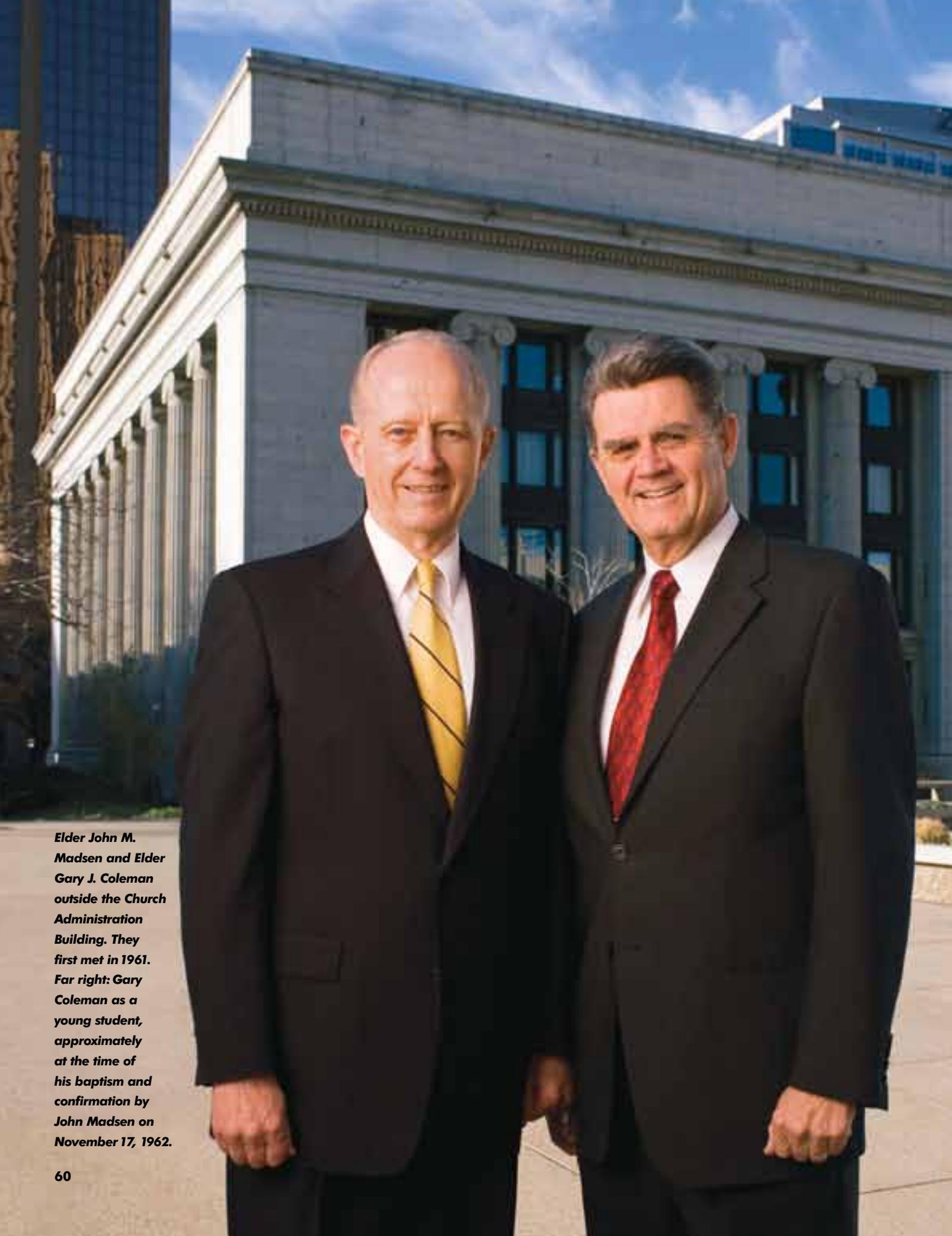


BISHOPS CAN DO ONLY SO MUCH

“In all the world there is nothing quite like the office of bishop in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Except for parents, the bishop has the best opportunity to teach and to cause to be

taught the things that matter most. . . . But be careful not to impose unnecessarily upon his time. Bishops can do only so much. The bishopric must have time to make a living and time for their own families.”

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Bishop and His Counselors,” *Liabona*, July 1999, 71, 73; *Ensign*, May 1999, 57, 58.



Elder John M. Madsen and Elder Gary J. Coleman outside the Church Administration Building. They first met in 1961. Far right: Gary Coleman as a young student, approximately at the time of his baptism and confirmation by John Madsen on November 17, 1962.

New Religion

New Life



I longed for clarity and purpose in life, but to attend the discussion about Mormon doctrine would go against everything I had been taught.

BY ELDER GARY J. COLEMAN,
WITH ELDER JOHN M. MADSEN
Of the Seventy

One day in 1961, as a student at Washington State University, I walked across the campus and noticed an advertisement for a program featuring a discussion about various religions. The first topic was “Mormon Attitude on Life and Death,” taught by John M. Madsen, a fellow student.

I had been raised in a devoutly religious home, and my family attended services regularly. My brothers and I participated faithfully as altar boys from age nine until we were young adults. During my youth the looming question was whether or not to enter into the ministry. When I was young, the bishop of our diocese said to me, “Gary, someday you will be a priest. In fact, someday you will become a bishop.” Yet something in my heart moved me to weigh life as a priest against life as a husband and father with a family. Concerns about living a life of celibacy with no marriage and no family lingered deep in my soul. I longed for clarity and purpose in life.

Being Prepared

About a month before seeing the advertisement, I had met Judy England, a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and a fellow student at the university. In our brief, initial visit together, she told me

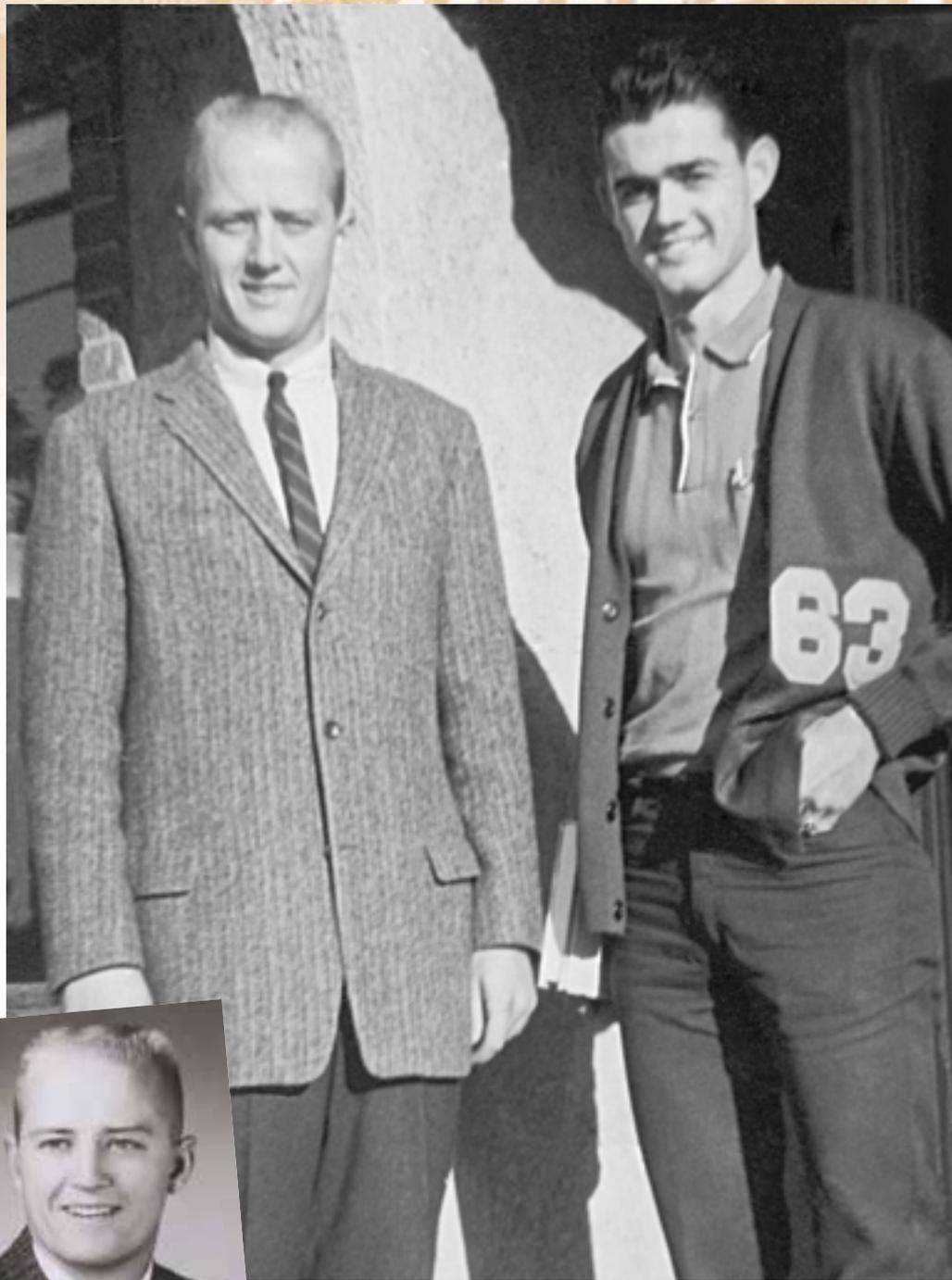
of her beliefs, her faith, and her hopes for the future. She spoke of a *true* Church, of forever families, a celestial kingdom, and eternal marriage. Though I was very religious, these concepts were totally new to me. Judy’s love of the gospel showed in the way she lived and how she spoke of what she believed. Little did I know I was being prepared for the journey of conversion into the restored gospel and God’s great plan of happiness.

Now I debated whether or not to attend the discussion about Mormon doctrine. My willful decision to listen to a presentation about a religion other than my own would be a grievous sin in the eyes of my religious leaders. The night of the program, I paced back and forth in the hall outside the lecture room for several minutes before entering. But once inside I learned about the plan of salvation, our pre-mortal life, mortality, and resurrection to eternal life with God and Jesus and family. I admired the way John taught the principles of his religion.

Is It True?

What I heard seemed sacred and comforting, but I began to struggle with such concepts as true authority, true Church, true doctrine, true ordinances, and true scripture versus the teachings, creeds, and philosophies of men.

I continued to participate in my own church but began to seek more opportunities to learn about the Restoration. Judy and John were friends to me and examples of good



Above: John Madsen and Gary Coleman as students at the Washington State University Institute. Left: John in a portrait from that time.

Latter-day Saints. This was a new time in my life, a day of awakening from the traditions of my fathers into a world of truth and light. Over the next year I kept being drawn back to the principles of the gospel. I simply could not walk away. I had a great desire to learn more.

In the spring of 1962, when I was at practice as a member of the Washington State Cougars baseball team, John would often stop by to say hello, to wave or smile, and

acknowledge me as a friend. My interest in Judy was also increasing, but the topic of religion kept me fearful of developing a relationship. Changing my religion was still not on my agenda.

That summer John gave me a copy of *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* by Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) to read while I was working in a United States Forest Service camp. Reading this book helped answer my questions about the purpose of life. The true doctrines of Christ and the Restoration of the gospel were opened further to me. I was impressed with the clarity of the teachings about the Godhead, priesthood authority and revelation, latter-day scripture, and the plan of redemption.

One Sunday that summer I was able to attend church services at John's ward and was welcomed with open arms. John was

the teacher of the investigator class that day, and he taught about the Godhead. After Sunday School, John talked with me in the foyer just before I was to leave. He said, "Well, Gary? How do you feel?" I replied, "I feel I have known these things before!" Then John said, "Gary, you have. You knew these things before you came into this life."

When I returned to the university in the fall, John invited me to attend an early-morning seminary class

he was teaching for local high school students. This helped me gain a greater understanding of the truths of the restored gospel, the role of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the need for a restoration.

Receiving an Answer

On Friday morning, November 2, 1962, in seminary class, John played a tape of a talk titled *Profile of a Prophet* by President Hugh B. Brown (1883–1975), then Second Counselor in the First Presidency. The previous weeks of seminary had quietly prepared me for this momentous experience in my life. During that sacred hour I gained a testimony of Joseph Smith as the Prophet of God through whom the gospel of Jesus Christ had been restored. Religious traditions I had been taught were overcome that morning by the witness I received concerning the truthfulness of the work of the Prophet. On that day in November, all of the principles and precious truths I had learned with respect to the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon converged in my mind and heart.

I returned to my apartment after that seminary class and sincerely, with real intent, having faith in Christ, poured out my soul to God and pleaded for His guidance and direction at this crucial point in my search for truth. During this act of faith and humility before God, the power of the Holy Ghost enveloped my entire being, burning out every doubt, fear, and concern as to what I must do. Feelings of relief and assurance swept over me, and I knew that my life was about to change dramatically. I returned to the seminary building and said to John, “I would like to join your Church.” He arranged for the missionaries to teach me the discussions, and we set a date for my baptism.

My spiritual rebirth was real but also very painful. My parents and family were crushed as they learned of my decision to join the Church. Judy and John were thrilled,



Gary and Judy Coleman in 1967. Judy was influential in introducing Gary to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. They married in 1963 in the Cardston Alberta Temple.

but now I was dealing with acceptance and joy on one side and rejection and disappointment on the other.

Conversion experiences are based upon three pillars: friends in the Church; responsibility through service; and nurturing through study, participation, and prayer. Thirty-five years after my baptism, President Gordon B. Hinckley listed these as necessary elements of conversion while speaking to the Church about missionary work and retention.¹ These same pillars were essential in my conversion.

Parallels

After I was baptized and as time has gone on, there have been many parallels between John’s life and mine. I was able to further learn about priesthood service as John’s junior companion in our home teaching assignments. He pursued a career in the Church Educational System, and so did I. In 1963 I married Judy in the Cardston Alberta Temple, and John married Diane Dursteler in the Salt Lake Temple. John and I both received bachelor’s degrees from Washington State University and master’s and doctoral degrees from Brigham Young University. John and I have served as full-time mission presidents accompanied by our eternal companions. Both of us were sustained as General Authorities in the Second Quorum of the Seventy in October 1992, followed by our calls to the First Quorum of the Seventy in April 1997. It has been our sweet and sacred privilege to serve side by side in the Quorums of the Seventy.

I shall be eternally grateful for the wonderful friends who brought me the glorious truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ in these latter days. How blessed is anyone with friends willing and eager to share with them the gift of the gospel, which makes possible the gift of salvation, “which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7). ■

NOTE

1. See “Converts and Young Men,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.

It Made Us a Family

Six ways family home evening drew us together.

BY RAQUEL M. GARCIA-REBUTAR

It has been my experience that there is no problem so great that a family firmly founded on gospel principles cannot successfully endure or overcome it. It is in this light that my husband and I have come to know the

tremendous power of successful family home evenings. As we put effort into making each home evening an enjoyable and meaningful experience, we are laying a foundation for the building of a happy home.

About a year after my husband and I were

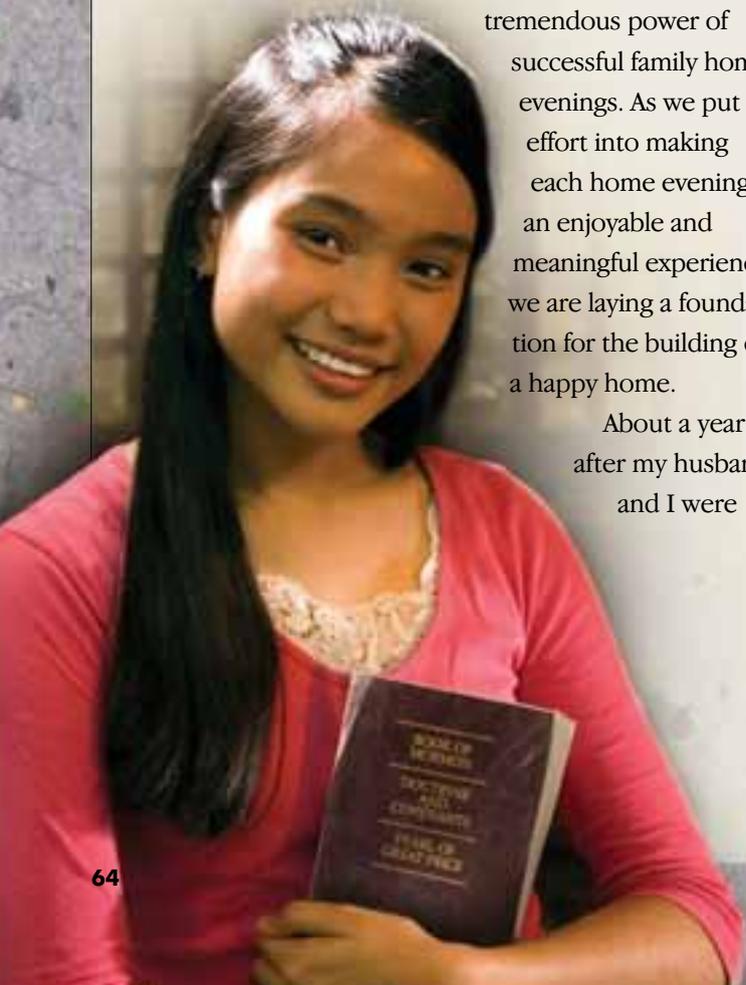
married, my youngest brother's three daughters came to live with us. My husband's youngest sister and a girlfriend of mine also asked if they could stay with us for a while, and since we didn't have any children, we welcomed all of them. Suddenly we were no longer just a couple; we were a large family.

Prior to this time, my husband and I were not too serious about holding home evenings because it was just the two of us, but with the new additions to our family, we decided to implement the program earnestly in our home.

From our first family home evening together, our Mondays were never the same, nor will our lives be the same, because of those wonderful experiences. Our usually quiet home started to be filled with music. The children who couldn't read started to learn and developed a love for it. Those who were shy and hesitant to accept assignments developed confidence and showed eagerness to contribute, even volunteering to do special presentations. There was excitement throughout the week as everyone talked about what we had done the previous Monday night and what we were going to do the next one. Excitement would build as Monday neared and as family members were busy making preparations for their "big surprises."

The promise of an exciting home evening even became a motivation for all to do their assigned household chores. Each home evening brought insights and discoveries that enriched our lives.

Following are some ideas that helped make our family home evenings successful and effective:





1 Plan. We had regular family meetings to decide our weekly themes and agreed to have a three-month calendar.

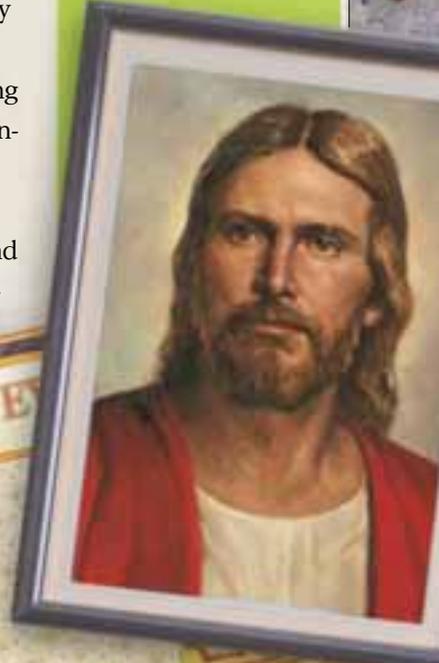
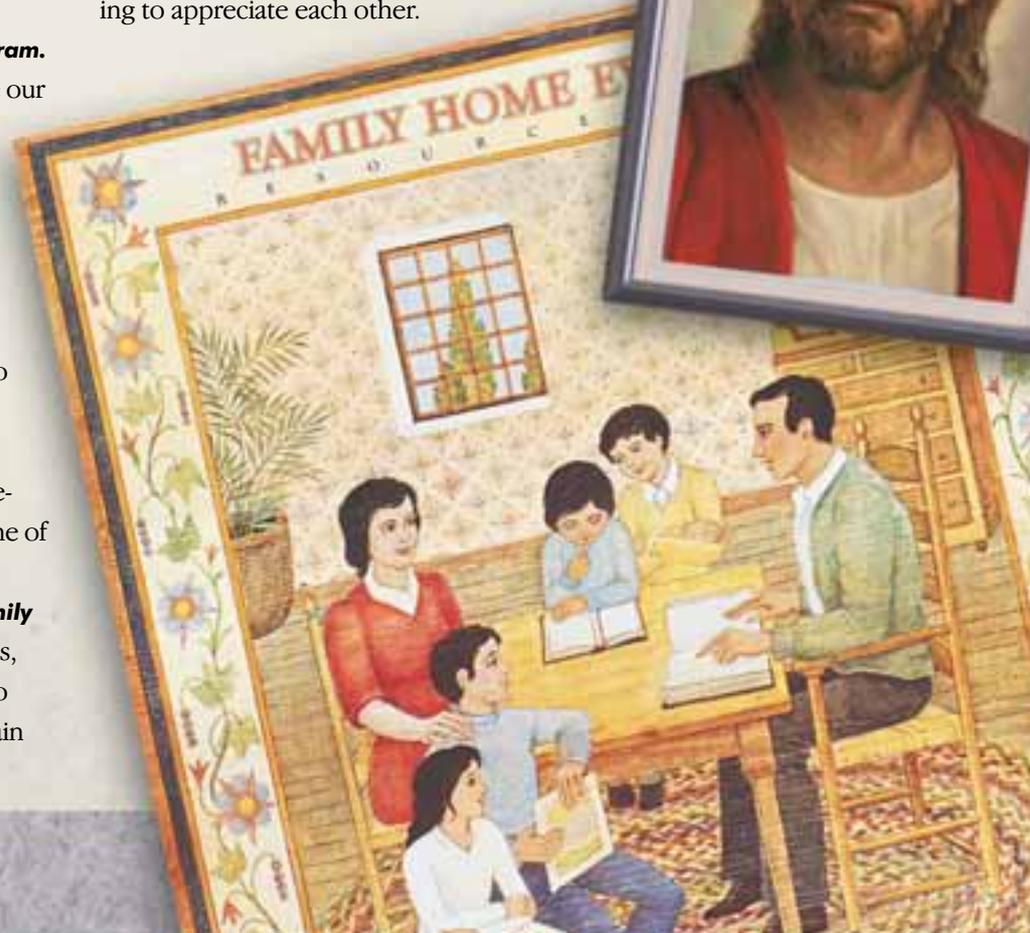
2 Involve everyone. Each person had an assignment, from planning the themes and activities to assigning lessons to being the week's home evening leader. The shy and hesitant ones were given special encouragement and assistance to ensure they successfully accomplished assigned tasks and to help them recognize the value of their contribution to home evening.

3 Create a structured but flexible program. We kept a notebook where we wrote our weekly themes and noted what happened during each home evening. This helped us remember the lessons, games, activities, and themes we had already done and made it easy for us to follow up on previous assignments. It was the responsibility of the person conducting to announce the coming week's theme and ensure assignments for the next home evening were given and noted in the notebook. This person also reminded everyone of his or her part in the next home evening.

4 Meet the needs and interests of family members. Themes, lessons, activities, and even games were carefully chosen to address specific family needs and maintain interest throughout the evening. All the

elements were thoughtfully linked together to reinforce the objectives for the evening. In the beginning, my husband and I ensured every activity was linked to the theme and objective, but soon even our youngest family member picked this up.

For example, after a lesson titled "Showing Appreciation for Our Family," the person conducting asked us to sit in a circle and listen to kind words of appreciation expressed by everyone. We then formed groups of two and listed the benefits we could gain from learning to appreciate each other.





Involve everyone in all parts of family home evening, from planning to leading.

5 Be consistent and committed.

Perhaps one of the biggest factors in the success of our home evenings was our consistency in having them and including everyone. We always communicated our willingness to help anyone at any time. Throughout the week we would watch for those needing help, and we took time to see how we could assist them. If there were recommendations or requests that we agreed to implement in the coming days, we helped by posting reminders on walls and creating checklists.

6 Use available resources. We had materials, reference manuals, and other resources available in our family library such as the *Family Home Evening Resource Book* (item no. 31106)

and other Church manuals, game books, idea books, the scriptures, and Church



magazines.

We also stocked various office supplies for everyone to use for activities.

My husband and I also found that family home evening is an effective tool for addressing family issues in a nonthreatening way. There was no reprimanding, blaming, nagging, or ridiculing. It was a time to communicate love, develop skills, infuse values, build confidence, increase knowledge, and teach eternal principles. By consistently making a united effort to hold home evenings, our family was blessed.

My nieces have since returned to their father, my sister-in-law has moved out on her own, and my girlfriend now lives in a dorm close to the school she's attending. We're back to being just a couple again. But we are still having those fun-filled, meaningful home evenings. Sometimes we invite other families to join us, and other times we take pleasure

in just getting to know each other better, working out our problems together, and expressing our appreciation for each other.

Our themes and activities continue to be simple and focused on meeting our needs.

We have no doubt that family home evening is an inspired program. Each meaningful home evening is a building block that adds to the fortification against the forces that seek to destroy happy and successful families. ■



He Would Not Touch the Book

By Hermenegildo I. Cruz

In the last area of my mission, Molo, Iloilo, in the Philippines, I prayed hard that before I was released we could baptize and confirm a family. My companion and I prayed one day that we would be directed to the honest in heart, someone who was ready to accept the gospel. We were impressed to knock at a certain house with a bamboo fence. A man came down the stairs, opened the door for us, and invited us to come in.

We befriended him and learned that he was a lawyer. He asked many

questions that we sometimes could not answer, and when he spoke, it was with such eloquence as to discourage any missionary. He became a difficult investigator. We introduced the Book of Mormon, but he said, “The Bible alone is enough.” He would never read or even touch the Book of Mormon, as if his hand would be burned.

One day an assistant to the mission president came to work with Elder Alcos, my junior companion. They met with this man, and afterward the assistant frankly told us, “I don’t think that man is prepared to accept the gospel.” I pondered his words, but a sweet, peaceful, reassuring feeling came to me as I recalled our prayer petitioning Heavenly Father to direct us to those who were ready to accept the

gospel. I knew our prayer had been answered. I felt that there was something we needed to share with this man. We just did not know what it was or how to do it. But we did not give up on him.

Slowly his heart began to change, and he learned to love the family home evening program that we introduced to him. As the days passed, I felt discouraged that we could not baptize and confirm this family before I left. I had only a few more days before my release. One day I sadly told him, “Brother Garcia, I think I failed my mission.”

He said, “No, Elder Cruz, you did not fail. We have developed a friendship.” We

When we introduced the Book of Mormon to our investigator, he said, “The Bible alone is enough.”

were delighted at his next words: “Don’t worry. We will go to your church on Sunday.”

He and his family did come to church, and the members received them warmly. I saw him shed tears as he listened to the inspiring words spoken during sacrament meeting. He went home happy and uplifted that day. I knew his heart had been touched.

When the time was right and we felt he was ready, we challenged him to be baptized and confirmed. He accepted the challenge. We also challenged him to fast and pray and read the Book of Mormon. My companion and I fasted for him and his family.

May 4, 1986, was my last Sunday in the mission field. It was fast and testimony meeting, and I bore my sincere final testimony to the people I had learned to love. After I testified, I saw this lawyer, who had at first been unreceptive to our message, stand up and walk to the pulpit, holding the Book of Mormon. His whole frame was shaking, and there were tears in his eyes as he raised the Book of Mormon and cried, “Brothers and sisters, I know the Book of Mormon is true.” We rejoiced to hear this testimony.

That afternoon many members of the ward attended the baptism of the Garcia family.

After I was released from my mission, I corresponded regularly with Brother Garcia. He gladly told me when he became a Sunday School president. Later he was called as

bishop. He traveled many hours by boat to attend my wedding in the Manila Philippines Temple. Eventually he was called to serve as a stake president and as a counselor in the Philippines Bacolod Mission presidency.

He has been an instrument in the conversion of many people to the restored gospel. The man who acted as if his hand would be burned if he touched the Book of Mormon became a great witness to the divinity and truth of that book. ■

The Orange Car

By Elwin C. Robison

Early in our marriage my wife and I attended school in the northeastern United States, where winters are harsh and road salt is plentiful. After several winters, the body of our old car began to corrode, culminating with a passenger stepping through the floor of the car. With optimism I purchased some sheets of aluminum and pop rivets, and we called my parents to see if we could visit that weekend and work on the car.

We arrived late Friday night, and my father and I got up early on Saturday to work on the car floor. We pulled back the rubber mats and started looking for sound metal to which we could fasten the metal sheets. Our search revealed nothing but corroded metal. We looked at each other silently, replaced the mats, and went to breakfast.

After we made the slow and careful five-hour drive back to our apartment, the phone was ringing when we walked in. Mom had decided that she “needed” a new car and wondered if we would like her old one. My dad

cautioned that the car was three years old and had many miles on it. My mom then joked that it couldn’t be too bad—it had been driven by a full-time payer. We laughed, and after we hung up the phone, we danced around the apartment in honor of this bit of manna from heaven.

The orange car was wonderful. It had four doors, air conditioning, and no rust holes. It got us through graduate school and on to our first job. But after six years of driving and an additional 80,000 miles (129,000 km), it was now the ugly car I drove to work. The shiny orange paint was looking blotchy from sun exposure, the air conditioning no longer worked, the driver’s side window wouldn’t go down, and my mother was once again shopping for a new car (legitimately this time). The trade-in value of her old car was so little that my parents decided to give it to us.

In the midst of our pleasure in having a newer car, we wondered what to do with the orange car. Yes, it was ugly, but the engine ran reliably. We could



get a few dollars for it at a junkyard, but we both felt we should look for someone to whom we could give it.

On Sunday morning I went into the clerk's office to ask the ward clerk if he needed a car. He and his wife had several teens. He smiled and said no thanks; he didn't need another car. In the corner of the office, however, was a ward member writing something. He perked up at the mention of a car, so I went through the long list of things that didn't work. But I assured him it had good tires, the engine was reliable, and it couldn't be too bad since it had always been driven by a full-tithe payer.

He and his wife had only one car, and he worked nights while she worked days. He had turned down better employment opportunities because he would have needed the car when his wife also needed it. A second car would permit them to increase their income and open up advancement potential for him. So we gave them the old orange car.

This would have remained just a fond memory if it hadn't been for our conversation three months later. This ward member and his wife wanted us to know more about their circumstances when we gave them the car.

We looked for someone to whom we could give our old car, but little did we know how the Lord would use it to fulfill His promises.

As is often the case with young couples, money was scarce, and with the birth of their first child, expenses had increased

more rapidly than income. They had gotten behind in their tithing and had felt awful about it. With each passing month they felt worse, but they didn't see a way out of their dilemma. They had gone six months without paying tithing, and they had prayed and felt that they just had to make things right with the Lord. That Sunday morning when I walked into the clerk's office, he had been writing out his tithing check, wondering how he was going to meet his financial obligations through the coming month.

My first thought was embarrassment at my joke about the car having been driven by a full-tithe payer. But as I reflected on the situation, I marveled at how the Lord keeps His promises when we keep ours. The ink wasn't even dry on his check when the means to resolve his dilemma unwittingly walked through the door.

I have often looked back at the example of faith shown by this young couple. It comforts me to know that if I show faith, someone somewhere can be in the right place at the right time to help solve my dilemmas. How grateful I am for a Father in Heaven who knows us so well that He can bless us even before we have finished demonstrating our faith. ■

Sharing Dinner, Sharing Conversation

Macaroni and cheese. Top Ramen. These sometimes become the food staples of young adults living on their own. Well, it doesn't have to be that way. When I was a student, my roommates and I decided to take turns preparing dinner. (You could also form a dinner group with neighboring students.) Each of us had one night during the week when we cooked a delicious and somewhat nutritious meal. It didn't have to be anything fancy or expensive. The food tasted

good simply because we enjoyed one another's company while we ate. Even though we are no longer roommates, we still reminisce about the good times we shared around our apartment dinner table.

Stefanie Rasmussen, Utah

Rewind to Relief Society

After my sixth child was born, I began to struggle with various health problems. At the same time, my husband's employer relocated us to another state. New to the area and often homebound, I have struggled to attend Church meetings. During this challenging time, the Relief Society sisters have done many things to reach out to me.

One particular act of service has been especially beneficial. The sisters record the Relief Society lessons for me to enjoy at home during the week.

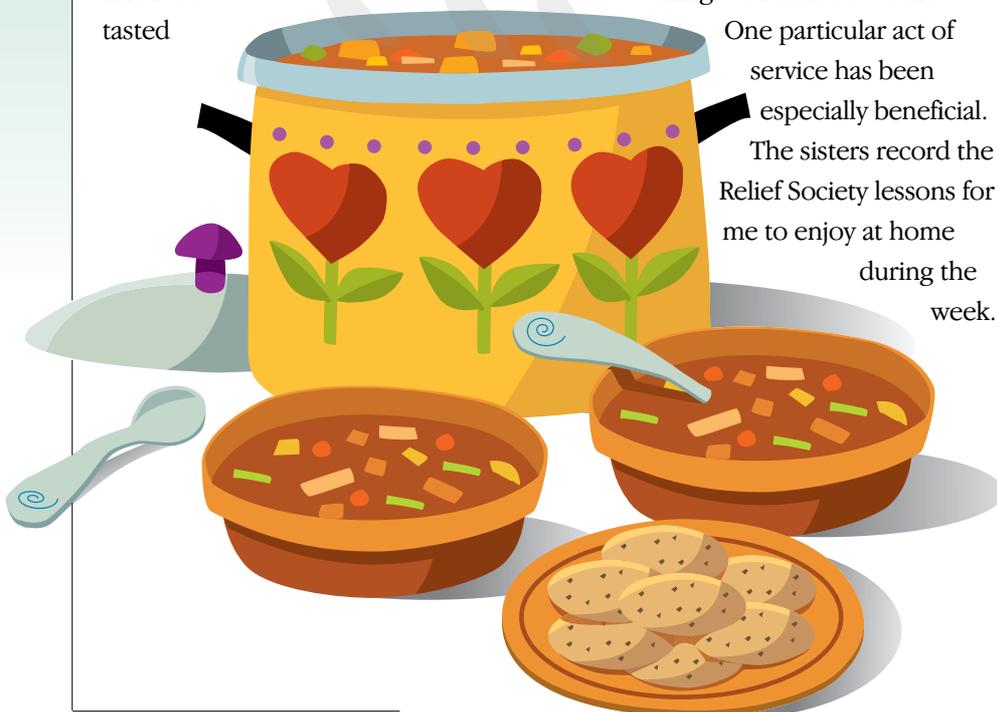


Each recording arrives with a label identifying the teacher and lesson date. Not only do I know who each teacher is, but I can also learn about many of the sisters in the ward through the experiences they share. And if I don't recognize a particular voice, I remember to ask when a sister comes to visit.

These recordings have been so beneficial to me that the Relief Society also circulates them to other homebound sisters. In addition to recording the lesson, the sisters include all the songs, announcements, and introduction of visitors.

My health continues to improve, and I attend Church meetings when I can. Thanks to the taped recordings, I'm beginning to match voices with faces—all of whom belong to a loving sisterhood. I feel that I'm an integral part of Relief Society.

Cheryl Burr, Utah



Emergency Information

Would you know how to drain the pipes in your home if you needed more usable water in an emergency? Or what if you had to evacuate and needed drinking water? Would you know how to purify some? Even in calm situations, many of us would not recall each step required in life-saving measures such as these. We may vaguely remember something we've read or heard in a lesson somewhere. But in the event of a real emergency, we would probably be at a loss to remember how to do things correctly. One possible solution is to



FAMILY HOME EVENING HELPS

Family Night—MTC Style

I want to be a missionary now. I don't want to wait until I'm grown" (*Children's Songbook*, 168). With a house full of six boys, from teenage to Primary age, several missions are on the horizon for our family. So we decided to create a home evening mini-MTC experience to help jump-start their preparations.

To begin, I typed an "official" letter for each boy, mentioning him by name and the prospective years he would be called to serve as a representative of Jesus Christ. The letters informed them that their missionary training experience

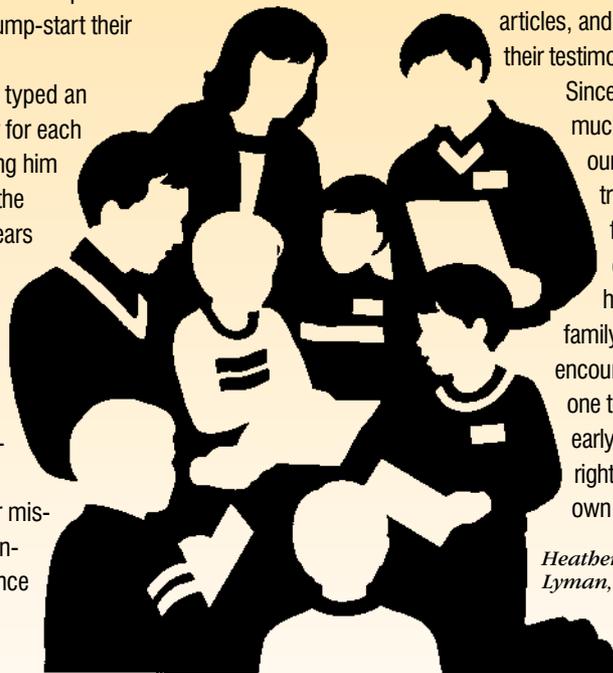
would begin that very evening at the Early Missionary Training Center (EMTC), located in our basement. At the appointed time our youngest son, acting as courier, rang our doorbell and presented a "special delivery."

With calls in hand, our boys lined up near the basement steps while their dad and I gave them name tags, notepaper, and pencils. We began with a spiritual devotional. Then, working in

stations, the boys learned how to sew buttons onto scraps of fabric, how to properly tie a tie, and how to do a short door approach. We even practiced this last part in a few languages and emphasized the importance of maintaining good eye contact, speaking clearly, and having a firm handshake. We also asked each of the older boys to share an impromptu sacrament meeting talk with us. They used available resources such as their scriptures and Church magazine articles, and they shared their testimonies.

Since there's much to teach our missionary trainees, our family will continue to host EMTC family nights. We encourage everyone to get an early start—right in your own home.

Heather Lee Lyman, Colorado



organize emergency information ahead of time so you can quickly refer to it if you ever need to. For instance, pamphlets and handouts could be stored in protective plastic bags in your emergency kit. More extensive information could be organized in sheet protectors, stored in a binder, and

placed in an easy-to-reach locale in your home.

Many helpful emergency preparedness guidelines are available. Scouting handbooks and information on providentliving.org are just a few of the resources available. Check your local library and bookstores, or go online to discover more. Someday you might be glad you did. ■

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

I would like to get involved in community service, but I don't have much free time, and I'm not sure how to get started. What should I do?



PHOTOGRAPH BY GETTY IMAGES

You don't need large blocks of time to be able to serve in your community. Some projects—such as knitting newborn hats—can be done in shorter time increments.

When I am seeking opportunities for community service, my best resource is prayer. As I kneel and express a desire to serve despite my limitations, I am always reminded that the Lord knows perfectly my abilities and time constraints as well as the needs of others within my sphere of influence. This helps me trust that the Spirit will bring to my attention anything He knows I can do that is needed. After taking the time to pray, I am often surprised at how quickly I am presented with service opportunities.

Ginger Churchill, Utah

I find service projects I can do at home on my own schedule. I sew and tie quilts for terminally ill children in hospitals and those who have experienced trauma in accidents. I also knit newborn baby hats to donate to a home for teenage mothers and a neonatal clinic at a local hospital. It's amazing how 10 to 15 minutes here and there can add up to getting a large project done. "By small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6).

Rebecca Thomas, Washington

With four young children, I didn't think I had enough time to get involved with community service, even though it was something I really wanted to do. I started by asking my children's teachers if they needed help in the classroom. I let the teachers know when I could come and how long I could be there. They always had something for me to do—grading papers, helping students, making copies, etc. I started out small and then added as my children got older and I could do more.

Kim McAllister, Michigan

Identify your talents, interests, and passions and match them with local community needs. Do you enjoy working with animals, gardens, or youth? Do you have a specific skill like building Web sites, planning events, or handling finances? When you get involved with something that you are passionate about, the limits of time are much more easily overcome as your service becomes fun and fulfilling.

Sharilee Guest, Utah

Read out of books, magazines, or the scriptures to residents at a local nursing home. Have them reminisce about their early lives. Deliver water to residents, work in the beauty shop, or just visit. With the approval of the staff, consider taking an appropriate pet with you.

Tom Stogdill, Indiana

If you would like to donate to a food bank but have limited finances, don't feel that you can't afford enough of a donation to make a difference. Buy one extra food item on each trip to the store. After a few weeks, you will be surprised at your collection.

Lynelle Merritt, Idaho

Teachers often appreciate having experts in a field come and give demonstrations. If you have a

particular skill that would be interesting to share with students, call your local school and discuss it with a teacher who teaches classes in that field. When my son returned from his mission in Guatemala, he went upon request to his sibling's classroom to share with the students his experiences living in that area and culture. The class enjoyed his presentation, and my son left appreciating the opportunity to teach about a place that had become part of his life.

Jocelyn Parker Parmer, Utah

Donating blood has been an easy and rewarding way for me to give community service. It takes relatively little time, can be done on a regular basis, costs nothing, is essentially painless, and is a great incentive to maintain good health (so that donations will be accepted). If health or other restrictions limit donating, consider volunteering to organize or assist with a community blood drive. Volunteers can sponsor and publicize drives, recruit donors, coordinate volunteer service, and work with other local

OTHERS NEED YOUR HELP



"Along your pathway of life you will observe that you are not the only traveler. There

are others who need your help. There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save."

President Thomas S. Monson, "How Firm a Foundation," *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 68.

organizations to promote this needed service. It is very rewarding to encourage and enlist others, especially when many first-time donors become regular donors once they see how easy it is.

Sherrie L. Hutchings, Texas

Volunteer for involvement in a short-term responsibility such as a town celebration or cleanup day. During major election years, attend community meetings. Here you may become a delegate to a county or state convention or may be assigned to be a judge at the voting booths. These short-term assignments can be rewarding.

Elaine Calvert, Utah

Even short-term assignments such as donating blood, attending community meetings, or participating in a town cleanup day can be rewarding.



PHOTOGRAPH BY GETTY IMAGES

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Community service doesn't take time; it takes ingenuity! Start with your current responsibilities and multiply—rather than divide—your time.

• **Your Church calling:** My CTR class collected food for a local food pantry. The folks at the pantry loved being let in on the fun, and the Primary children got a taste of service.

• **Your work responsibilities:** Many corporations are interested in contributing to the community. Ask if you can get involved. You might organize a team of coworkers to walk in a charity fund-raiser or participate in a town cleanup.

• **Your neighborhood:** Join with other local congregations for a service

Look for opportunities that might exist within your Church calling, your work responsibilities, and your neighborhood.

To find volunteer opportunities in your community for adults, youth, children, families, and groups, inquire at a local school, a library, or the city council. Contacts at these places may be able to direct you to a local volunteer hub, nonprofit organizations, or Web sites listing volunteer opportunities.

For more ideas, check with local institutions and causes. For example:

- Animal shelters
- Arts programs
- Churches
- Homeless shelters
- Hospitals
- Local governments
- Museums
- Nursing homes and care centers
- Parks and recreation centers
- Political and civic organizations
- Programs for children and youth

project. This lets participants work shoulder to shoulder with other people of faith in building a better world.

Ideas for service projects can be found on volunteer Web sites, which often display results tailored to your specific geographic location, group size, and schedule. Your local service council or the community service department of a nearby high school or college may also have project ideas.

Marci McPhee, Massachusetts

Service is not limited to organizations. If you notice individuals who need help, reach out to them. Sometimes you may be the only one who is aware and has the ability and time to do something about it.

Linda Turner, Utah ■

SHARE YOUR IDEAS

An upcoming Questions and Answers feature will focus on the following question: *What are some ways I can strengthen myself and progress spiritually when my spouse is not supportive of my Church activity?*

If you'd like to contribute your ideas and experiences, please label your submission "spiritual progression" and follow the submission guidelines under "Do You Have a Story to Tell?" in the contents pages at the beginning of the magazine. Please limit responses to 500 words, and submit them by July 20.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT CASEY



Shakira Farrar (Maryland), Alfreda Tsai (New York) and Rianne Sonke (California) listen to general conference while sitting on the Salt Lake Temple grounds.

Membership, Retention on the Rise

Annual statistics released at April general conference indicate the Church is rapidly approaching 13 million members worldwide. This steady growth pattern has continued with about a million new members now being added every three years or less.

These figures were announced just weeks after the National Council of Churches published its *2007 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*, where it listed the Church as the fourth-largest religion in the United States. However, the Church itself makes no statistical comparisons with other churches and makes no claim to be the fastest-growing Christian denomination.

"The Church is unusual in

that it creates membership records and updates them constantly," said Church statistician Glen Buckner, who is also a member of the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies.

In 2006 there were more than 272,800 convert baptisms. The net increase for children of record during 2006 was more than 94,000.

Church membership growth numbers are often interpreted inaccurately, which can lead to misconceptions in the media, Brother Buckner said. Therefore, it is important to clearly understand what these numbers signify. They represent the number of Church members, but they do not represent activity rates. The Church does not remove an individual's name from its

membership rolls based on inactivity.

Like other faiths, the Church has varying degrees of growth among its members throughout the world. For example, the Church has relatively slow growth in Northern Europe, where many other churches are declining. It has steady and manageable growth in the United States, and is expanding rapidly in Africa, the Philippines, and South America.

For decades the Church has identified growth as its single greatest challenge. The Church has a lay ministry, and experience has shown that new members are more likely to slide into inactivity when they are not offered opportunities to serve or when they feel inadequate to accept a position.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has emphasized how essential it is that new members' involvement not end after baptism and confirmation. "The challenge now is greater than it has ever been because the number of converts is greater than we have ever before known. . . . I plead with you . . . I ask of you, each of you, to become a part of this great effort. Every convert is precious. Every convert is a son or daughter of God. Every convert is a great and serious responsibility. . . . In my view nothing is of greater importance" ("Converts and Young Men," *Ensign*, May 1997, 48).

In the Philippines, where many people are being

baptized, mission presidents and local Church leaders aim to ensure that potential converts fully understand the commitment they make at baptism. "We are more concerned with personal conversion than the number of baptisms and confirmations," said Elder D. Rex Gerratt, President of the Philippines Area. "The stronger our converts, the stronger our congregations. The stronger the Church is, the more it will be able to bless the people and strengthen the families of this country."

In the Philippines, while convert baptisms per missionary have increased in each of the last three years, activity rates of new converts are also on the rise.

The Church has also refined its missionary program to aid in the retention of converts. Potential missionaries are held to a higher standard to qualify for missionary service, and in 2004 the inspired missionary training publication, *Preach My Gospel*, was instituted to help missionaries focus on more comprehensive and personalized teaching of potential converts. The goal is stronger commitment from newly baptized members because of a deeper conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In addition to membership, the Church's increase in meetinghouses also indicates growth. There are currently 8,254 meetinghouses internationally, which shows a 10 percent growth rate over the past five years. That trend is also reflected in the United States, where

there are 6,361 meeting-houses—or a 9.6 percent growth rate for the same time period. Many of these meetinghouses accommodate

several congregations.

“Ultimately, the strength of the Church is really measured by the devotion and commitment of its members,”

said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “The Lord has never given us a mandate to be the biggest Church—in fact, He

has said our numbers will be comparatively few—but He has asked that we commit ourselves to living and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.” ■

Church Diversity Breaks Stereotypes

In Harlem, an African-American bishop leads his congregation in prayer. In Miami, neighbors enter a bright yellow chapel and greet each other in Haitian. In Salt Lake City, a teacher instructs her New Testament class in Chinese.

This picture is a striking contrast to the stereotypical image many have of members of the Church in the United States as white, middle-class people from Utah. Yet it accurately portrays the changing face of Church membership, which is becoming increasingly diverse, mirroring a wide range of cultures and experiences.

For example, in the United States, more than 150 Latter-day Saint congregations speak a total of 20 different languages, including Polish, Navajo, Russian, Spanish, and German.

Much of the Church’s growth is attributed to the global volunteer missionary program, the largest of its kind in the world. More than 52,000 missionaries teach in 347 missions in more than 140 nations.

The Church is also growing more diverse internationally. More than half of all Church members now reside outside of the United States, a milestone that was reached

in February 1996.

Such growth among diverse cultures and nations has become the Church’s primary challenge. To help meet it, the Church translates scriptures, conference proceedings, satellite broadcasts, curriculum manuals, magazines, software, Web site information, and other materials into more than 100 languages. As a result, the Church’s translation system is one of the largest in the world.

With dramatic growth comes the challenge of unifying Latter-day Saints of many cultures. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that the growing diversity among the members is simply a condition, not a Church goal. The real goal is unity, not diversity. “We preach unity among the community of Saints and tolerance toward the personal differences that are inevitable in the beliefs and conduct of a diverse population,” he said.

As a result, efforts are made to teach Latter-day Saints around the world the doctrines of the Church and to train local leaders without imposing American culture.

“Sometimes our culture and the Western culture are very different,” said Seung Hwun Ko, a Church member from Seoul, Korea, “but when we talk about the gospel of Jesus Christ, we meet.” ■

New Missions Bring Total to 347

The continued growth of the Church and the desire of priesthood leaders to further strengthen members and leaders throughout the world have prompted the creation of new missions in Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean, and the realignment of four missions in Japan.

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have approved the creation of three missions—the Ukraine Dnepropetrovsk Mission, the Sierra Leone Freetown Mission, and the Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission. This brings the total number of missions around the world to 347.

Japan Realignments

In Japan, the boundaries of the Hiroshima, Nagoya, and Tokyo missions were realigned in early March 2007.

Portions of the Japan Tokyo North Mission and Japan Tokyo South Mission were consolidated and will be known as the Japan Tokyo Mission. The newly aligned Japan Tokyo Mission will be concentrated around the greater Tokyo metropolitan area and its 10 stakes.

The Japan Kobe Mission will include the Osaka-Kobe



Members meet in Ghana, Africa, reflective of the worldwide growth of the Church.

MAP BY THOMAS S. CHILD



Several missions in Japan were realigned to create the Japan Tokyo Mission in place of the Japan Tokyo North and South Missions.

area with its four stakes and another stake in nearby Kyoto. It is one of three areas in Japan that have multiple stakes in a metropolitan area.

Ukraine Dnepropetrovsk Mission

The Church in eastern Ukraine has grown so much that it is now beyond the capacity of one mission president to administer effectively. The creation of the Ukraine Dnepropetrovsk Mission from the Ukraine Donetsk

Mission will allow the mission president and missionaries to concentrate on strengthening existing branches and expanding into other large cities located within reasonable commuting distances of Dnepropetrovsk.

Sierra Leone Freetown Mission

In the Africa West Area, the Sierra Leone Freetown Mission was created from a division of the Ghana Accra



The Ukraine Dnepropetrovsk Mission becomes the third mission in Ukraine.



The Sierra Leone Freetown Mission was created from a division of the Ghana Accra Mission.

Mission. The countries of Togo and Benin will also be transferred from the Ghana

Ghana Cape Coast, and Sierra Leone Freetown, with 10,000 in the Freetown mission.



The Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission has been created from a division of the Puerto Rico San Juan and West Indies Missions.

Cape Coast Mission to the Ghana Accra Mission.

The new mission will include neighboring countries to reduce travel and administrative demands. Priesthood leaders will have more opportunity to care for new members and to conduct Church affairs in this area.

Approximately 38,000 members live in the three missions of Ghana Accra,

Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission

In the Caribbean, the Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission has been created from a division of the Puerto Rico San Juan and West Indies Missions.

The Puerto Rico San Juan Mission will be renamed the Puerto Rico San Juan West Mission. The mission headquarters will be centered in

San Juan, and the mission will cover the western half of Puerto Rico. It will also include the islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao.

The new Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission will also be centered in San Juan and will contain the two stakes and one district in eastern Puerto Rico as well as the English-speaking Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Montserrat, Dominica, and Barbados.

The West Indies Mission will remain headquartered in Trinidad and will be renamed the Trinidad and Tobago

Mission. It will oversee English-speaking Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent, and the Grenadines; French-speaking areas Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, and St. Martin; and Dutch-speaking areas Suriname and the northern islands of the Netherlands Antilles, including St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, and Saba.

The new mission will reduce travel demands and allow the mission president more contact with missionaries and local priesthood leaders. ■

Adapted from Church News, February 10, 2007.

New Museum Exhibit Documents Tabernacle

By Stephanie Long, Church Magazines

A new exhibit documenting the history of the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square will run through January 11, 2009, at the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City.

Coinciding with the rededication of the newly renovated Tabernacle, the display, *The Salt Lake Tabernacle: Gathering the Saints under One Roof*, looks at the construction and history of the Tabernacle and tells its story through artifacts, pictures, documents, drawings, architectural models, and artwork.

"The story of the construction of the Salt Lake Tabernacle is so unique that we pulled out every stop possible to do it justice," said

museum curator Richard Oman. "We haven't installed an exhibit with this many complex exhibit techniques and messages since our Salt Lake Temple centennial exhibit in 1993."

Those involved with the planning of the exhibit meticulously gathered artifacts from the Tabernacle during the recent renovation to use in the exhibit, including one of the original floor joists believed to have been used as a support beam for several boweries before being reused in the Tabernacle in the 1860s; original adobe bricks and wall plaster; and various original objects such as square-headed nails, benches, and organ pipes.

But the exhibit doesn't



Opening the exhibit, Elder Marlin K. Jensen, Church historian, shows reporters a replica of the trusses in the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

stop at merely providing visitors with visual displays.

Visitors can experience and imagine firsthand what it was like to be President Brigham Young speaking to the Saints by standing at a full-size reproduction of an original Tabernacle pulpit.

Visitors can also take a firsthand look at a replica of the roof of the Tabernacle. A portion of the original roof trusses of the Tabernacle has been reproduced in the museum. Original latticework timbers measuring 10 feet (3 m) deep by 16 feet (4.9 m)

wide and 16 feet (4.9 m) high were removed from the Tabernacle to be used in the construction of the replica.

"The full-size roof section is the 'wow' part of this exhibit," Brother Oman said. "Everyone who has watched us construct it has been astonished that we would even attempt to recreate a part of the roof in the gallery."

For more information on *The Salt Lake Tabernacle: Gathering the Saints under One Roof*, visit www.lds.org/churchhistory/museum. ■

Martin Harris Wallet Donated to Church

An original wallet used by Martin Harris (1783–1875) was donated to the Church by Mr. Harris's great-great-grandson, Russell Martin Harris, at the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles accepted the wallet on behalf of the Church and spoke briefly about Martin Harris and of the wallet's historical significance.

"One of Martin Harris's greatest contributions to the Church, for which he

should be honored for all time, was his financing the publication of the Book of Mormon," said Elder Oaks. "He mortgaged his home and farm for \$3,000 to secure payment on the printer's contract."

Martin Harris was a key figure in early Church history. He served as one of Joseph Smith's early scribes and was one of the Three Witnesses to the divine origin of the Book of Mormon. In 1829 he used his farm as collateral to finance the printing of the



Russell Martin Harris, his daughter-in-law Ula Harris, and his grandson Shane Lance Harris present Martin Harris's wallet to Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

first 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon and sold 151 acres of his farm in 1831 for \$3,000 to pay for its publication. Oral tradition in the Harris family holds that the wallet was used by Martin Harris to carry the \$3,000 to

the printer, Egbert B. Grandin, for payment.

According to Richard Oman, curator at the Museum of Church History and Art, "This wallet makes visually tangible the testimony of Martin Harris." ■

Church Responds to Disasters

Church Opens Meetinghouses to Argentine Flood Evacuees

Hundreds sought shelter in Church meetinghouses following flooding and heavy rains in Argentina at the end of March.

For several days rain drenched parts of Argentina, causing widespread flooding that killed at least 7 people. Nearly 37,000 people were forced to evacuate their homes, prompting the Church to offer its meetinghouses as shelters in the affected areas.

Hardest hit were the Santa Fe and Entre Rios Provinces in Argentina's northeast. It is unknown how many homes and businesses were flooded, but there were no reports from Church members of deaths or destroyed homes.

Eight meetinghouses across the region have

housed approximately 600 people. The Church has also provided food, mattresses, medication, and clothing to the flood victims.

Church Aids Those Affected by Tornadoes

On Wednesday, March 28, more than 60 tornadoes swept through an area covering South Dakota to Colorado to Texas, USA, killing at least four people in three states and prompting the response of the Church to help those affected.

Extensive damage occurred in Holly, Colorado, when a tornado 600 feet (183 m) wide touched down for over a mile (1.6 km), damaging more than 60 homes. The Holly Branch meetinghouse sustained serious damage, and the branch president's home was heavily damaged. Thousands of

people in the affected areas were left without gas and power.

All missionaries and Church members were reported safe. Local Church welfare leaders worked to meet the needs of Church members and the community.

Church Assists Caribbean Flood and Landslide Victims

The Church assisted residents of Hispaniola, the Caribbean island shared by the countries of Haiti and the Dominican Republic after at least 11 people died and more than 1,000 homes were damaged or destroyed by flooding and landslides on March 27.

The disasters, caused by more than three days of intense rain, isolated 20 towns and led to the evacuation of more than 4,000 people. The Church authorized

the Caribbean Area Presidency to use funds to purchase essential emergency relief items for those affected by the disaster.

Members, Missionaries Safe Following Japan Quake

Early on Sunday, March 25, an earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale shook the Hokuriku region of Japan. The quake, centered just offshore, killed one person, destroyed several roads and 50 homes, and severely damaged more than 200 homes, schools, and other buildings.

Shortly after the quakes, two six-inch (15-cm) tsunamis hit the coast but caused no damage.

All members and missionaries in the region were safe and accounted for following the quakes, though multiple aftershocks plagued the area.



Members of the Church in Jakarta prepared two meals a day for approximately 500 people displaced by floods.

Members' Homes Damaged in New Mexico Tornadoes

A series of tornadoes touched down overnight in the state of New Mexico, USA, on Friday, March 23. Local Church members responded quickly to distribute food, water, and hygiene kits to those in the affected area. Volunteers from local LDS congregations assisted in the cleanup.

The tornadoes destroyed 24 homes and businesses in Clovis and Logan, New Mexico, where they did the most damage. More than 100 homes, businesses, and schools in the area reported damage.

Despite minor damage to some members' homes, all members and missionaries were safe. No casualties were reported in the affected areas.

Members Feed Community after Jakarta Floods

After a devastating flood hit parts of Jakarta, Indonesia, in early February, members of the Church living in the area set up a food kitchen to prepare meals for

more than 500 people displaced by the floods.

With funding from LDS Charities, the members were

Comment

A Story Like My Own

I was touched by the article "Tell Me It Isn't True" (February 2007). Brother Anthony Atkins's experience in coming to the truth of the restored gospel reminded me of my own as a teenager. I was raised in a Protestant sect and was taught in school to know and love the Bible. But that knowledge led me, even as a young child, to have some questions, such as, "If God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, then where are the prophets?"

The analogy of the pond and the hang gliders given to Brother Atkins by the Spirit mirrors the feelings that I experienced while considering baptism. It seemed as if I had already reached the highest way of living I could reach in the church I attended, and I was barely 16 years of age.

able to provide two meals a day and deliver them to those who had to relocate because of the floods.

Members of the Church gathered all the food and supplies, then set up a makeshift kitchen under a tent. This service was reminiscent of the 2002 floods in Jakarta, when Church members also set up temporary kitchens to prepare food for displaced community members.

Missionaries serving in the Jakarta area also assisted with the cooking and delivering of the food. It is estimated that rising waters drove almost 50,000 people from their homes. ■

That church offered me the best the world had to offer in serving others and living the principles I had learned. The restored gospel offered me the universe to learn and explore.

So often we get caught up in the day-to-day demands of living in the world and in a busy church that we sometimes forget the feelings and inspiration that led us to the path we are on. I am grateful for the reminder this article gave me.

Karen Murray, Washington

Healing Power of Music

I noticed in the March 2007 issue of the *Ensign* the numerous references to the healing power of music—in particular, the hymns of the Church. I want to thank you for including that message. Music is indeed sometimes

the only thing that can heal a wounded soul.

Larry Beck, Oregon

A Personal Benchmark

Thank you for your article "Having Faith in God's Timeline" (March 2007). The author expressed thoughts I often experienced as a single member of the Church with eloquence and exactness. Her statement, "I consistently check in on whether what I'm doing is right—if my goals in life match the larger goal of discipleship to the Savior," is an exceptional benchmark for me. I will use it as such.

I appreciate the personal relevancy I find in each issue. Thank you for this publication. Rachel Lemblé, Canada

Practical Application

I can't help but write and tell you how enlightening the article "Confirming the Call" by A. Wayne Baker (April 2007) was to me. The three principles the author shared have so many practical applications, and the personal experiences were easy to relate to. Thank you.

Jeanine Tew, Utah

Correction

A news story in the April *Ensign* reported that *The Testaments of One Fold and One Shepherd* ran exclusively in Salt Lake City for five years. While the Joseph Smith Memorial Building is the only location where the feature was shown on 65 mm film, *The Testaments* has also been screened at visitors' centers and missionary training centers on video. ■



Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting

Teaching and Learning

FEBRUARY 10, 2007



**The proceedings of this worldwide leadership training meeting are
also available at www.lds.org.**

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Principles of Teaching and Learning

PRESIDENT BOYD K. PACKER

Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

ELDER L. TOM PERRY

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Teaching and Learning

President Packer: Our theme is teaching and learning the gospel of Jesus Christ, both in the classroom and at home. All of us—leaders, teachers, missionaries, and parents—have a lifelong challenge from the Lord to both teach and learn the doctrines of the gospel as they have been revealed to us.

We will begin with a brief conversation between Elder L. Tom Perry and

myself on principles that build good teaching. My assignment is to convey a few personal experiences that have taught me much about teaching and learning. If you watch and listen carefully, you will notice that to be a good teacher you must also be a willing learner.

Our conversation will be followed by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, who will instruct us on preparing to teach. He will then join a classroom of students

to demonstrate an example of classroom teaching.

Any of the Twelve could have effectively given this demonstration. Each would have varied his approach from the others. There is no one method that works for all teachers or situations. The Spirit is essential in guiding us to use our own preparation, experience, personality, knowledge, and testimony in any particular teaching situation.

Leaders' Responsibilities

Leaders have a responsibility to teach, whether they are in councils or interviews or worship services. They also have a responsibility to ensure that teacher development and effective gospel learning are ongoing in the lives of members.

To that end, the First Presidency issued a letter dated November 17, 2006, discontinuing the positions of ward and stake teacher improvement coordinators. Accompanying the letter was a list of "Leaders' Responsibilities for Teacher Improvement." We trust that with the principles taught in this broadcast, together with the suggestions and resources stated in the letter, priesthood and auxiliary leaders will counsel together to improve gospel teaching and learning. It should not be necessary to hold special meetings for teacher improvement other than in your councils and interviews from time to time as needed.

We pray that this training broadcast may help you become better teachers



The presentations from this worldwide leadership training meeting can help you improve as a teacher and learner. To identify and apply the ideas in these presentations, read the information in the yellow boxes that have been placed near the beginning of each presentation. You may also want to mark scriptures and key phrases in the presentations and write impressions you receive.

Read President Packer's opening remarks. Identify ideas that can help you become a better teacher and learner.

Ponder the following question, and write down the ideas and impressions that come to you: What should I do to ensure I have the Spirit in my teaching at home and at church?

What do you think helps make President Packer an effective learner?



and students of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Willingness to Learn

Elder Perry: President, you wrote a book entitled *Teach Ye Diligently*. Every position in the Church requires an effective teacher. It is our most important calling. Could we visit for a few minutes and talk about teaching diligently as a requirement in our several Church callings?

President Packer: I was appointed seminary supervisor, and I didn't know anything. I was assigned then, employed, and paid more or less to go about the Church to tell seminary teachers how to teach and what they did wrong. That was very embarrassing, because I would go into a class and see teachers do something and have to correct them when I knew I did that every time I taught, and I had learned something about it.

Elder Harold B. Lee and Elder Marion G. Romney were always teaching, and they would, in a sense, go out of their way to tell me something

or teach me something. I think the reason they did it—I'm not sure they ever saw me in this position or calling—is that I had one virtue: I wanted to learn, and I didn't resent it. And if you don't resent it, and if you want to learn, the Lord will keep teaching you, sometimes things you really didn't think you wanted to know.

Both of those great teachers would teach me. When I would see Brother Romney, sometimes he would say, "Kid, I want to tell you something." I knew it was coming. He was going to tell me I was doing something that I shouldn't do, and I would always thank him.

I learned early on that there is great value in listening to experience in older people. I had a stake president once who said, "I always tried to be in the presence of great people." He was in a little town in Idaho, but he said, "If there was a lecturer coming or something special, I would always try to be there, because I could learn."

I have always been drawn to associate with older people (now I am one).

I remember in the Quorum of the Twelve, LeGrand Richards didn't walk as fast as the other Brethren, and I would always wait and open the door for him and walk back to the building with him. One day one of the Brethren said, "Oh, you're so kind to take care of Brother Richards." And I thought, "You don't know my selfish motive"—as we would walk back, I would just listen to him. I knew that he could remember Wilford Woodruff, and he would speak. One-on-one teaching is very powerful. Generally one-on-one teaching is what happens when you are corrected.

Another principle of teaching is to arise from your bed early (see D&C 88:124)—but the easy part of that, or the hard part, is to retire to your bed—and then reflect in the morning when your mind is clear. That's when the ideas come to teach.

I don't know how often I have had an assignment come and I didn't have a clue in my mind what to do. Yesterday I was in a meeting of the General Authorities. I knew I was

going to speak first, and I thought, “What will I say?” And I was confident it would come, and it came.

Using the Scriptures

Elder Perry: What is the importance of using the scriptures in your teaching?

President Packer: I have always relied on the scriptures. The best example of teaching and how to teach, the best model for teaching methods, besides the subject matter, which is the gospel, is the Lord and His teaching. That’s why I don’t like to go to the pulpit or stand in front of a class without my scriptures in hand. I have got them in hand today.

Elder Perry: President, you’ve carried those scriptures around with you. Every time I’ve been with you, you’ve had those scriptures. You told us the story one time of how they were in the water, and that only helped them because you could turn to them faster.

President Packer: Well, I was studying outside on the lawn and was called away and left my scriptures open on the little table—I forgot them, as old men will do—and the sprinklers went on. I came out in the morning and thought, “Oh, my scriptures that I’ve marked up for 50 years are gone.” I found out it just loosened the pages. I think if I had to get new scriptures, I’d put them out in the rain before I started using them.

Elder Perry: People always talk to us about the scriptures and, some

of them, how difficult it is to get through them. How do you make the scriptures come alive in your teaching?

President Packer: Stay at it. I remember when I determined I was going to read the Book of Mormon. I was in my teens. I opened it and read, “I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents” (1 Nephi 1:1). And I went on through the chapters, and I was learning things. It was interesting, and I could follow it until I got over to the Isaiah chapters and the Old Testament prophet language. So a few months later I decided to try again to read the Book of Mormon. I read, “I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents,” but every time I’d hit the barrier of those Isaiah chapters, and I wondered why they were in there. Finally I decided I was even going to read them. So when I was a teenager, I just had to look at the words. I didn’t understand it, but I could turn the pages and then go on through. When you get over in Alma, you will sail on through.

So you have to be determined to read them, and not just glean from them, but read them from beginning to end—the Book of Mormon, the New

Testament, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price. For years I made it a practice to read the scriptures each summer when we had a little time off, to refresh the store that’s there.

Pray for the Gift of Teaching

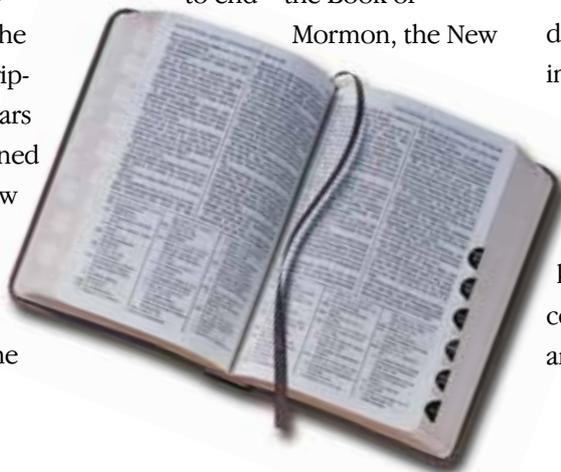
Elder Perry: What counsel would you give recent converts prior to their first calling as a teacher?

President Packer: I would tell them they can do it. Everybody can teach. I would counsel them to pray for the gift of teaching. You know, the Book of Mormon speaks of gifts and outlines several gifts, among them to teach the gospel by the Spirit (see Moroni 10:8–10). When I read that years ago, I thought, “That’s a gift I want, to be able to teach by the Spirit.” I found out from the scriptures that you have to ask for it—ask and ye shall receive—so I would tell them to keep asking and seeking, “and ye shall find” (see Matthew 7:7; 3 Nephi 27:29) and that the gift has to be earned, but it can come.

Seeking the Spirit

Elder Perry: What should teachers do to ensure that they have the Spirit in their teaching?

President Packer: You have to live worthily, and you have to ask for help. You can ask for help if you are parents. And then you have to keep the commandments and pray constantly, unceasingly for the ability and the inspiration to know what to



do and when to do it. The Lord won't fail you: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18). "Whatsoever . . . ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive," it will be given you (Enos 1:15). Then one of the scriptures adds a little—if it's good for you (see Moroni 7:26). The gospel is very practical.

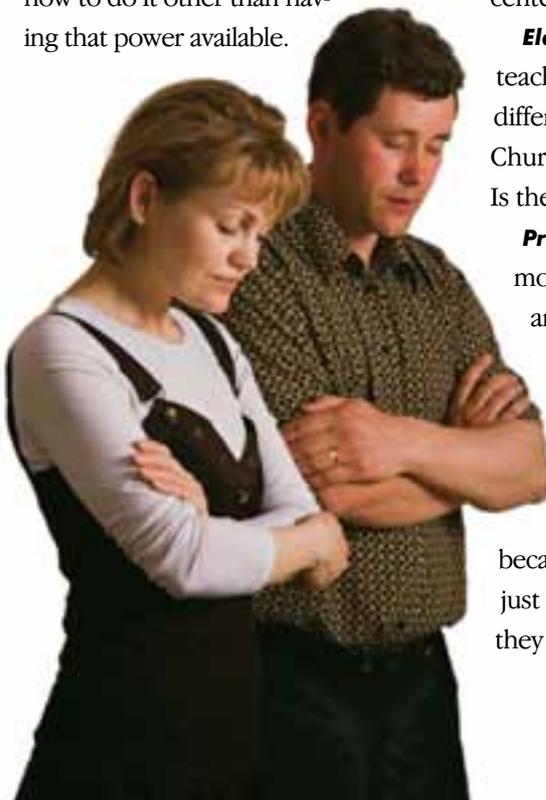
You may be an older person who thinks that your ministry is finished, you may be a young person who is frightened about everything or a mother who is so busy with the children or a father who is preoccupied, but you can teach, and you can pray, and you can be guided. And you will. You'll be blessed of the Lord—I can promise you that.

When the Lord was teaching, He always dealt with things that the people knew about. For instance, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net" (Matthew 13:47)—it isn't really a net, but it's just like unto it; and then He explained why. And "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking [after] goodly pearls" (Matthew 13:45). When He gave the parable of the sower (see Matthew 13:3–8), that was something they could relate to, and it's not only possible but quite probable, after He gave the parable of the sower and talked about seeds being thrown on hard ground and on productive ground, that a month later one of those who was hearing and out doing some planting, seeing the seeds in his hand, would relive that lesson.

If you use parables and stories and illustrations, it lives after the students are out of the class. His method was remarkably simple. He was at times fairly stern, but always His teachings were on their level.

Teaching is a sacred calling, a holy calling. The thing I think I would tell teachers is that they never teach alone. They never have to be alone. The Lord has promised that in the scriptures. Alma said the Lord granteth unto all nations, in every tongue, teachers (see Alma 29:8), and the Lord said, "Teach ye diligently and my grace [will] attend you" (D&C 88:78).

I don't know how to teach the gospel without a constancy of prayer. You can speak a prayer, but you can also think a prayer. A lot of times when I've been teaching a group or a class I've just been praying inwardly, "How can I get through?" And I don't know how to do it other than having that power available.



The Responsibility to Teach

Elder Perry: Teaching is central in all the activities of the Church. Who has the responsibility to prepare themselves to teach?

President Packer: Everybody is a teacher—the leader is a teacher; the follower is a teacher; the counselor is a teacher; the parents are teachers. So we have a responsibility to learn the principles of teaching. The Lord set up His Church so that we all do everything in the Church. There's a statement in the Doctrine and Covenants that "every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, . . . the Savior of the world" (D&C 1:20). How blessed we are that we have a lay priesthood, as it is called, so that all of the brethren can hold the priesthood. All of the sisters are eligible for callings in the Church, and all of us will be parents. Therefore, teaching is the center of all that we do.

Elder Perry: You've mentioned teaching in the home. What is the difference between teaching in the Church and teaching in the home? Is there any great difference?

President Packer: In the home it's more intimate and better and easier and less formal, and parents are teaching by example. Parents also teach some things that are kind of painful to kids when they ask "why," and all the parents can say is "because"—because they don't know why, they just know it isn't the thing to do, and they teach them obedience so that



You have to live worthily, and you have to ask for help. You can ask for help if you are parents. And then you have to keep the commandments and pray constantly, unceasingly for the ability and the inspiration to know what to do and when to do it.

they will know and understand. And at home there's that powerful bond of love between parent and child that you won't let go until you get it taught.

Teaching by the Spirit

Elder Perry: President, how do you get the Spirit in the classroom from the teacher to the students in such a way that it will be a meaningful experience to them?

President Packer: First, they have to know that you love them, that you want to teach them. Then you have to communicate on their level. We can't float around above them—even in the gospel—about subjects that they cannot connect with. That isn't what the Lord did. The Lord walked with them and talked with them in everyday life, and His teachings were on that level always.

If you have something to teach, they really want to learn. Teenagers even—teenagers especially—want to learn. They have a thirst for it.

A lot of teachers think they have

to be prepared to the very sentence. Yes and no. That preparation includes having the presentation loose enough to involve the students and having them ask questions and bringing them into it. You have to leave a little room for inspiration.

We have a memory prompter in the Holy Ghost. If we have a challenge of something to teach, and we think about who we are and what we do, there's always some little experience we've had or someplace we've been or something we've seen that we can bring into the lesson. And the scriptures are part of all of that. They aren't just a book you read now and again to figure out the rules and regulations of the Church.

Quite a bit of teaching that is done in the Church is done so rigidly, it's lecture. We don't respond to lectures too well in classrooms. We do in sacrament meeting and at conferences, but teaching can be two-way so that you can ask questions. You can sponsor questions easily in a class.

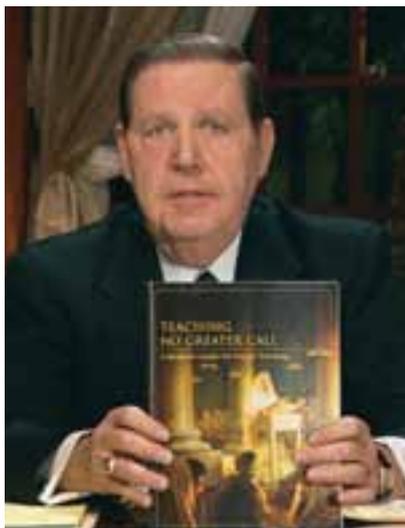
Suppose you were teaching the Martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Here you are a Church history teacher, and you've studied it all, and you know it was on June 27, 1844, at 5:00 p.m. in the Carthage Jail when the Prophet was shot. If you ask them what time of day and where and so on the Prophet was shot, none of them will know. You didn't know before you read the manual. But you can say, "What brought him to that? What do you think brought him to that?" The minute you say, "What do you think?" they have something to say. They can contribute; even the students that are the most backward will have something to say. So there's a way to handle questions and to monitor and manage the class. Respond to questions. Feel free to ask questions in a class.

You can't give away something you haven't got anymore than you can come back from someplace you haven't been. So you have got to have the Spirit. ■



Teaching and Learning in the Church

ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



A High Priority

We thank President Packer and Elder Perry for that inspiring foundation for our subject today, and we look forward to the capstone message that will come from President Monson at the close of our meeting.

It's indicative of the high priority the presiding Brethren give to the subject of teaching and learning that we are devoting all of our worldwide leadership training broadcast this year to this subject. Perhaps the reason for

that is obvious. We all understand that the success of the gospel message depends upon its being taught and then understood and then lived in such a way that its promise of happiness and salvation can be realized.

For that reason, Jesus's great final charge to His disciples just prior to His Ascension into heaven was:

"Go ye therefore, and *teach all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19–20; emphasis added).

What the Savior stresses in that passage is that however much there is to do in living the gospel—and there is much we are to do to live it—none of that can be accomplished until we have been taught those truths and have learned the way of the gospel. For several years now, President Hinckley has been counseling us

to hold our people close to the Church, especially the youth and the new converts. He said we all need a friend, a responsibility, and nourishing "by the good word of God" (Moroni 6:4; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 66; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 47).

Inspired instruction in the home and in the Church helps provide this crucial element of nourishing by the good word of God. And the opportunity to magnify that call exists everywhere—fathers, mothers, siblings, friends, missionaries, priesthood and auxiliary leaders and teachers, classroom instructors, including our wonderful seminary and institute teachers, who join us today. Well, the list goes on and on. In fact, in this Church, it is virtually impossible to find anyone who is not a teacher.

Select some ideas from Elder Holland's presentation that you can apply as a learner or as a teacher.

Elder Holland's class discussion focuses on five principles. Consider them; then make a plan of how you would teach these principles to someone else.

What did Elder Holland *demonstrate* about learning and teaching in addition to what he talked about?

President Packer made that point in his exchange with Elder Perry. He said, “Everybody is a teacher”—the leader, the follower, the parent, the counselor. Little wonder that the Apostle Paul would say in his writings, “God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers.” After that would come the broad blessing of miracles, spiritual gifts, and heavenly manifestations (see 1 Corinthians 12:28).

Underscoring the divine nature of those who were called as instructors, a young Apostle by the name of David O. McKay said in general conference in 1916, “No greater responsibility can rest upon any man [or woman], than to be a teacher of God’s children”

(in Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 57). That’s still true. We picked from that quote the title for our wonderful teacher’s help and manual in the Church, *Teaching, No Greater Call*. That wonderfully revered Primary hymn “I Am a Child of God” has the children singing this request to parents and teachers:

*Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,
Help me find the way.
Teach me all that I must do
To live with him someday.
(Hymns, no. 301)*

That is our common task in this Church. That is our shared responsibility. We are all children of God, and we must teach each other; we must help each other “find the way.” That is what we are going to try to do today.

Preparing to Teach

You can see from these materials spread out on this table that I am trying to prepare a lesson. Does it look familiar? It’s today’s lesson—a lesson for all of you. Preparing for any class is hard work, and it takes time. In that regard, may I encourage you to start thinking about and planning early for any lesson that you are to give.

For example, if I were going to teach a class on Sunday, I would read through and begin praying about that lesson the Sunday before. That gives me a full week to pray, to seek inspiration, to think, to read and watch for real-life applications that will give vitality to my message. You won’t finalize the lesson that early, but you will be surprised to find how many things come to you during the week, how much God gives you—things that you will feel to use when you do finalize your preparation.



Inspired instruction in the home and in the Church helps provide the crucial element of nourishing by the good word of God.



Top: Elder Jeffrey R. Holland prepares for a teaching demonstration, presented as part of the worldwide leadership training meeting. Above: Some members of the Church in the Salt Lake City area were invited to form a class for this teaching demonstration. Some of their additional comments are included in boxes on the following pages.

In discussing preparation, may I also encourage you to avoid a temptation that faces almost every teacher in the Church; at least it has certainly been my experience. That is the temptation to cover too much material, the temptation to stuff more into the hour—or more into the students—than they can possibly hold! Remember two things in this regard: first of all, we are teaching

people, not subject matter per se; and second, every lesson outline that I have ever seen will inevitably have more in it than we can possibly cover in the allotted time.

So stop worrying about that. It's better to take just a few good ideas and get good discussion—and good learning—than to be frenzied, trying to teach every word in the manual. In these materials lying before me,

I already have three or four times the content that I can possibly say or share with you today in the allotted time period of a classroom hour. So, like you, I have had to choose and select; I'm holding some material over for another day.

An unrushed atmosphere is absolutely essential if you are to have the Spirit of the Lord present in your class. Please don't ever forget that. Too many of us rush. We rush right past the Spirit of the Lord trying to beat the clock in some absolutely unnecessary footrace.

Teaching Demonstration

Well, let's return now to that wonderful discussion between President Packer and Elder Perry to find some of the key points for success in this great task of teaching and learning. To do that we are going to enter a classroom here at Church headquarters where we are going to interact in something of the same way we hope you will do in your classroom, wherever that may be in the world. This is unrehearsed and spontaneous, just the way your classes are. The teacher has done his best to prepare and pray—I reassure you that I have done that—and so have the students. Now, having had an opening prayer for our class, we are going to trust in the Spirit of the Lord to guide us in our teaching experience.

Welcome to class. This is intended to be something of an average class size, *más o menos*. Some of you will

have more, and some of you will have less, but the principles for teaching will be essentially the same whatever the size of the class. Here we have 15 absolutely perfect and beautiful people in our audience and a 16th that includes you, out in that worldwide audience we're reaching to.

Listen for new ideas, things that may come to only you. They may not have anything to do with what we are saying. But that is how the Spirit works. Be open to promptings about

If we ask, we will receive, and if we knock, it will be opened. We can do this.

how you can teach. And remember, you can teach! You can do this!

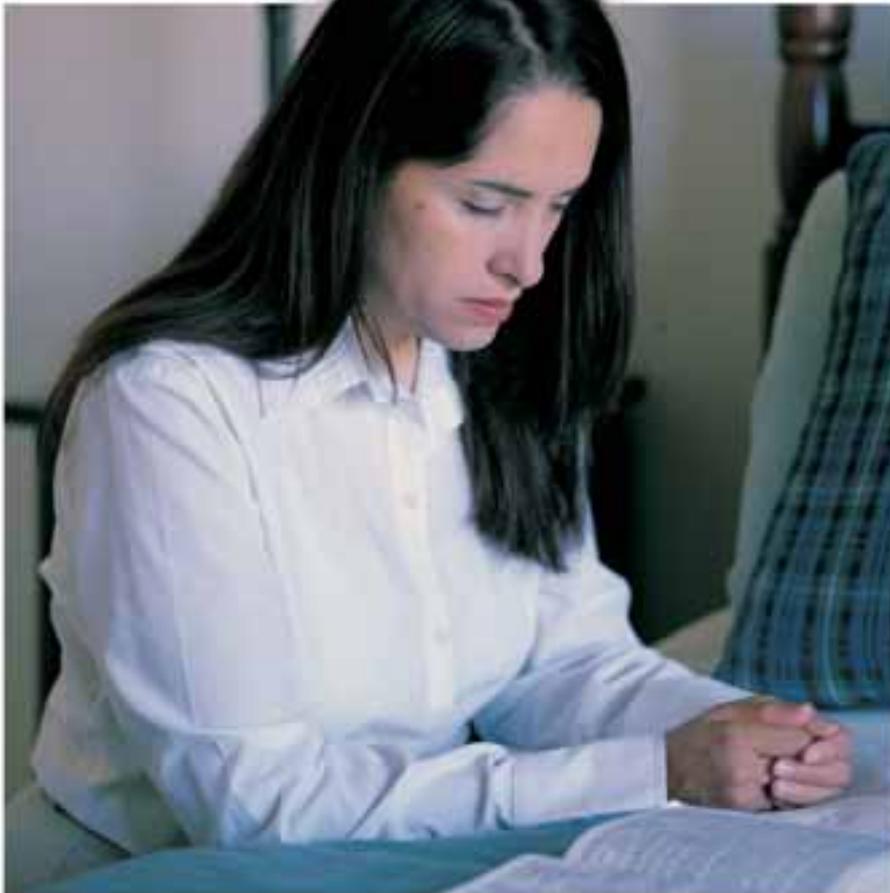
Everybody Can Teach

Elder Perry posed a question for President Packer midway in their conversation: "What would you say to a new teacher?" If someone were newly called, what would you advise him or her to do? What would you say to help this teacher take courage and be able to accept the call and fulfill it and enjoy it?

Brother Charles W. Dahlquist II:

You can do it.

Elder Holland: You can do it. Everybody can teach.



And that is what President Packer said when he answered that question from Brother Perry.

He referred to scriptures that promise you that you can do it. The scriptures always provide an extra reassurance. Do any scriptures come to mind?

Elder Jay E. Jensen: Moroni 10:17.

Elder Holland: Moroni 10, the last chapter in the Book of Mormon, is a great summary statement about gifts. Do you want to read that, Brother Jensen?

Elder Jensen: "And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally."

Elder Holland: That's wonderful.

Elder Jensen: It excludes no one.

Elder Holland: No one is left out of that. Sometimes we think it means, "Everybody but me, everybody can teach but me, or everybody can lead but me." Well, that's not the case. These are gifts to everyone. Note a little warning on that, as long as we are in the subject. Brother Jensen, read the first couple of lines of verse eight.

Elder Jensen: "And again, I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many; and they come from the same God" (Moroni 10:8).

Elder Holland: I think there is a little temptation for us to "deny." We kind of hang back. When a call comes, or we're to face a classroom—and that is a pretty intimidating experience for any of us—I think there is something in us that says, "I can't do this, and I'm



“When I was a member of the branch in Colonia Suiza, Uruguay, my first calling was as a Primary president

when I was 13 years old. I was the president, and I was the teacher also. I remember being set apart and given a manual, and the assignment was to teach to the children the lessons and the gospel. I opened the manual, and I didn’t know what to do, how to teach a lesson. So I prayed. I said, ‘Heavenly Father, I need to teach the lesson to the children next Saturday. Wilt Thou help me?’ And I received the influence of the Spirit, and I learned to teach because the Spirit taught me.”

Sister Delia Rochon

going to deny. I’m going to deny that the gift can come; I’m going to deny that the gift is mine. I’m going to, in a sense, deny the authenticity of the call.” In a way, that is what we’re saying. And what Moroni says here is “Don’t deny”: “Deny not the gifts of God, for they are many.”

“Ask and Ye Shall Receive”

I’m thinking of something the Savior Himself said directly to His disciples in the New Testament, and I am told that it is the scriptural promise and declaration repeated more than almost any other in all of scripture. Someone said that some variation of this appears

a hundred times in the scriptures. Now, if it appeared only once or twice, I guess we could embrace it once or twice, but something repeated 20, 40, 60, or 80 times obviously has great significance for the Lord.

Does anybody have any idea what this promise is?

Sister Vicki F. Matsumori: I would think it is the scripture that says something about ask and knock and you shall receive.

Elder Holland: That’s it. Sister Matsumori, as long as you’ve led us into that, would you read Matthew 7:7? This is from the Sermon on the Mount and one of many places where this promise is expressed.

Sister Matsumori: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

Elder Holland: Thank you. I love the crisp, clear, declarative spirit of that promise. If we ask, we will receive, and if we knock, it will be opened. We can do this.

Now at this point we are starting to accumulate some ideas. I am going to ask Sister Kathy Hughes of our general Relief Society presidency to be our scribe. We have a theme developing, given to us by President Packer in his exchange with Elder Perry. And that would be “The Gift of Teaching.” Would you write that up on the board as a heading for us, Sister Hughes?

We are going to list some of the things we want to remember about how to pursue the gift of teaching.

The one that Sister Matsumori just gave us would be number 1: “Ask, seek, and knock spiritually”—perhaps the most fundamental requirement for a teacher in seeking this gift that God has promised us.

Elder W. Rolfe Kerr: It seems to me that it’s very important to put the concluding piece to this and even maybe have it in front of us. What comes from asking is that we receive. What comes from seeking is that we find. We knock, and it is opened.

Elder Holland: Let’s write that on the board, Sister Hughes, that we are going to receive. There is a promise in this.

Brother Orin Howell: Along with that, I like Luke 12:12, where it says, “For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.”

Elder Holland: That starts to open up a wider world, because we are always talking that way to the missionaries. We are forever talking to the missionaries about opening their mouths, telling them that if they have prepared and done the best they can, God will give them what to say in the hour of their need. That is a wonderful, broad, whole new idea about asking and receiving at the appointed hour. That’s a terrific verse, Orin.

Sister Tamu Smith: I think that sometimes when I am in situations where I feel overwhelmed, being a convert to the Church and being asked to teach a class where people come from pioneer heritage, the Spirit does touch you to say something

that you don't feel inclined to say. In Exodus 4:12, it says, "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." I think that if we are willing to allow the Spirit to move us to say those things, even though we may not feel like we have all the answers, we let Heavenly Father do His job in speaking through us.

Elder Holland: What a wonderful verse. In all of my years of discussing this subject, I don't know that I have ever heard that one used, so thank you, Sister Smith. And the context there, of course, is this overwhelming task that Moses had to help the children of Israel extricate themselves from life's problems. That's what all of us face. That's a terrific verse to say, "Just don't worry; it will be given to you." Thanks for that reference.

Well, keep these citations in mind if you are going to teach such a subject. You can use these or many, many more.

Teach from the Scriptures

Elder Steven E. Snow: Many of us when we are called to teach are just overwhelmed with the enormity of the assignment and feel inadequate and unprepared. But you know, if we will do our best to study the resources we are given and get into the scriptures and then just trust in the Spirit, we will be helped through the process. I think sometimes we just are overwhelmed because we don't know enough.

Elder Holland: Absolutely. We all

feel that way; every teacher who has ever taught has felt that way. I think it's fair to say that all of us here represent the collective effort of the Church to put good material in people's hands. We really do have good curricular materials. We have good lesson manuals. They don't teach themselves, but there is a great reassurance there that we are not in this alone, and we don't have to reinvent the wheel. We have wonderful resources, and we are going to talk about those throughout the day. That helps us not feel quite so overwhelmed.

When President Packer was talking with Elder Perry, he said, "I always relied on [blank]," whether at the pulpit or standing in the front of the class. He said he never wanted to go anywhere without them. To what was he referring?

Sister Julie B. Beck: The scriptures.

Elder Holland: The scriptures, absolutely. Would you write number 2, Sister Hughes: "Teach from the scriptures."

I don't think that we can overstate this or overestimate this in our role of teaching in the Church. Obviously, the very substance of the gospel, the scriptures themselves are the things that we are being called to teach, whether it's Primary or our adult groups or our teenage groups, at home or in the Church. I am reminded of a powerful thing said in Alma 31—a favorite verse that I think says this about as well as any verse that I know of in the scriptures.

Alma had taken on a very serious mission, a very difficult mission—the mission to the Zoramites—and he had just had his exchange with Korihor. He finds what works for him, and he finds what doesn't work in this challenge to teach and to testify.

Brother Wada, would you read Alma 31:5?

Brother Takashi Wada: "And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought



"I will never forget one Sunday morning. We were in Athi River, Kenya, and there was a young man who stood and gave a sacrament meeting talk using only the scriptures. It was so powerful. He must have been only about 15—he couldn't have been more than that. I just kept smiling, and I thought, 'Oh, my goodness, I wish we could all hear this young man bear testimony and talk of Christ and preach of Christ.'"

Sister Kathleen H. Hughes



The very substance of the gospel, the scriptures themselves are the things that we are being called to teach.

it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God.”

Elder Holland: Thank you very much. Somehow over the years, this has become a favorite scripture for me. We all have verses we return to time and again, and I have returned again and again to this one. “The preaching of the word”—the power of the word—“had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just,” it had a “more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword,” and they have had plenty of sword in this book and in life, “or anything else,” all the other battlegrounds, conflicts, and challenges. “Therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God.”

Another word for *virtue* is *power*. When the woman came to touch the

hem of Christ’s garment, in the scene in the New Testament, He said, “Virtue [has] gone out of me” (Luke 8:46). The original Greek New Testament language for that is *power*.

So Alma is saying we should try the power of the word of God, since it has such a powerful effect.

Brother Wada: I think that everybody comes to church to learn something and wants to be nurtured. One phrase from the book of Jacob, Jacob 2:8, says, “It supposeth me that they have come up hither to hear the pleasing word of God, yea, the word [of God] healeth the wounded soul.” It is satisfying when just after I teach a class somebody says to me, “This is exactly what I wanted to hear. I needed it.”

Elder Holland: A profound point—thank you, Brother Wada—because people come to church for a spiritual

experience. That’s why they come. We come to church and gather in these settings to hear the word of God, to hear declaration, Spirit, testimony, and conviction. When tough times come, when we need to be healed, what the world offers is not going to be enough. We come to be healed by the word of God.

Sister Matsumori: For most Primary teachers, teaching from the word of God with children is a real challenge. They don’t read; they don’t have their own scriptures; they are not familiar with it if their family hasn’t taught them. It can be challenging.

Elder Holland: Good point. Here’s an experienced Primary teacher giving us just a little caution that we are going to get children at all stages of development and that we should bring them along gradually—as



“Once I was sitting with a six-year-old granddaughter, and she said, ‘I want to learn

how to study in my scriptures.’ And I thought, ‘Well, she’s only six. Can she really get anything powerful out of the scriptures?’ So I said, ‘Let’s turn to 1 Nephi, chapter 1, and if you read anything you understand or if it means anything to you, you can underline it. And if you want to say something about it, you can write about it.’ So we started with that verse: ‘I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents’ (1 Nephi 1:1), and she stopped and said, ‘I have goodly parents.’ She was getting it from the first line. She marked her scriptures, and she said, ‘I’m going to finish the Book of Mormon before I’m baptized.’ ‘Some days,’ she said, ‘I don’t understand anything.’ But it was powerful for her to read the first verse of the Book of Mormon, the first time she tried it.”

Sister Julie B. Beck

children need to be brought along. Good reminder, Sister Matsumori.

Brother Dahlquist: It’s even the same with young men and young women. If they are going to understand it, they have to, as Nephi said, be able to apply it. They need to relate to it.

Elder Holland: They need to liken it unto themselves (see 1 Nephi 19:23).

Brother Dahlquist: They need to have the scriptures come alive.

Elder Holland: Yes, and we are talking about lots of experience here—some experiences in the home, some in seminary and institute. We are talking about something that has to grow over time in our young men and our young women. We won’t be impatient if it takes a while for this to develop.

Elder Jensen: So far our discussion has concentrated on the four standard works. We do have other scripture.

Elder Holland: Yes. Do you want to say a word about the living prophets?

Elder Jensen: We do have good manuals, and we do have magazines and stories. Aren’t they powerful?

Elder Holland: We do have great material, to say nothing of the whole world of the living prophets and semi-annual general conference broadcasts and publications that go to the Church. We have a wealth of the word of God available to us, and we ought to use it.

Sister Kathleen H. Hughes: This raises in my mind a question. We frequently see, as Elder Oaks pointed

out in another talk that he gave, that there is just cursory acknowledgement that the manual is even there, and then we go off on our own. Why do we do that? How can we help our brothers and sisters understand that the handbooks and the manuals are for our edification?

Elder Holland: Yes, that’s a good reminder. It fits with Elder Jensen’s comment. In the spirit of the wonderful comments you’ve made and the insights you’ve given me—new insights about the power of the word and the healing, the help, and the light that comes from it—I am reminded of a story President Packer told the Quorum of the Twelve some years ago. He talked about a severe winter in Utah when the snow was excessive and had driven the deer herds down very low into some of the valleys. Some of them were trapped by fences and circumstances as they were taken out of their natural habitat, and well-meaning, perfectly responsive, capable agencies tried to respond by feeding those deer to get them through the crisis of the winter. They brought in hay and dumped it everywhere; it was about as good as they could do under the circumstances. Later an immense number of those deer were found dead. The people who handled those animals afterward said that their stomachs were full of hay, but they had starved to death. They had been fed, but they had not been nourished.

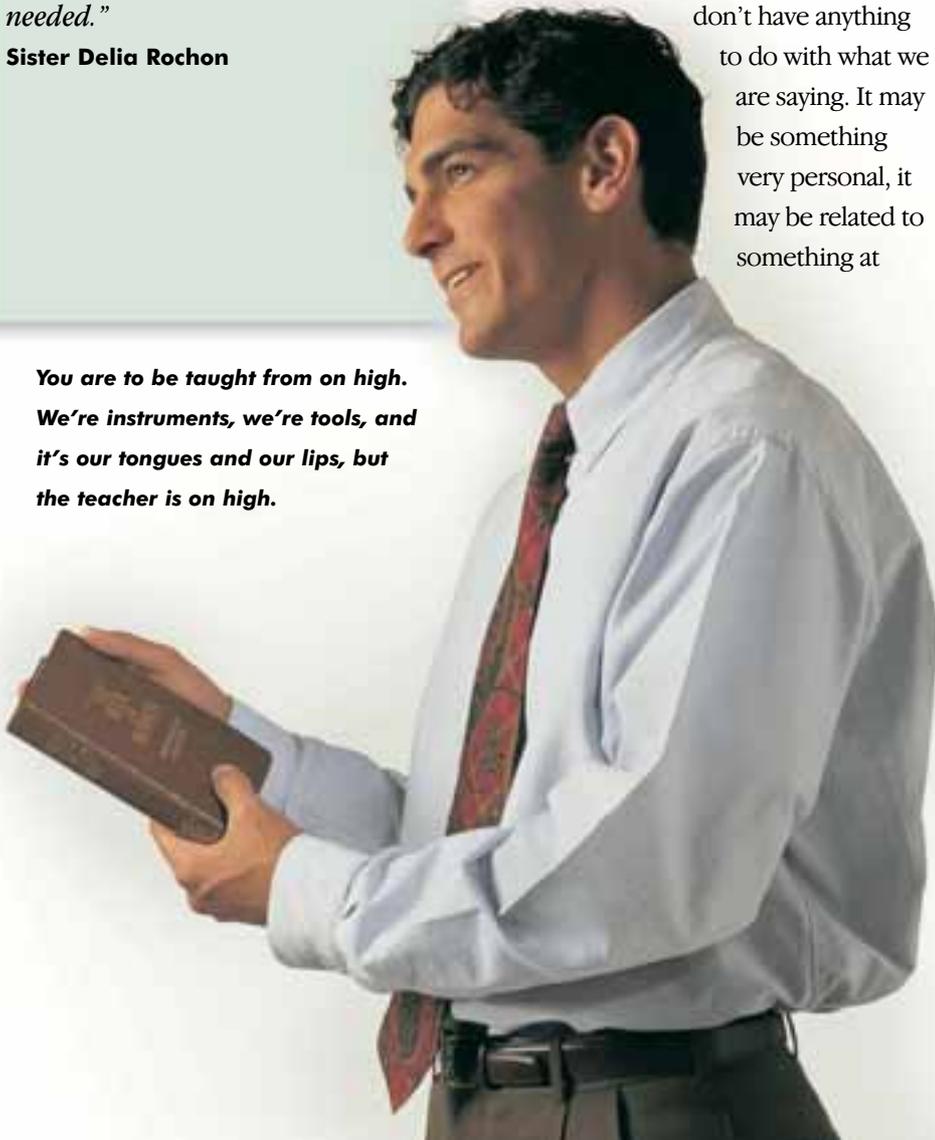
Every teacher needs to remember



“Sometimes when you’re teaching, you try to work with the Spirit, teach with the Spirit, use the scriptures. But it seems to me, in my experience, that the one who makes the connection in what we are teaching with the need of the student is the Spirit. And for that reason, sometimes I have had a student come and tell me, ‘Oh, thank you, when you said so and so,’ and I was thinking, ‘Did I say that? When?’ I wonder if that person really heard the voice of the Lord, and all that I did was create through the scriptures, through the Spirit, the environment that the learner got the message that was needed.”

Sister Delia Rochon

You are to be taught from on high. We’re instruments, we’re tools, and it’s our tongues and our lips, but the teacher is on high.



that we have to “nourish by the good word of God.” We can be fed too—that can be part of the fun of it—but the significance of teaching is nourishment anchored in the word of God.

Teach by the Spirit

Sister Hughes, would you write point number 3: “Teach by and with the Spirit.”

The Spirit of the Lord is the real teacher, and that’s why I said earlier, “Listen.” Listen with your heart. Listen with your soul, and you may have

feelings or promptings that don’t have anything to do with what we are saying. It may be something very personal, it may be related to something at

home, something in a marriage or with a child, but that’s the Spirit, and He’s the real teacher.

There’s a line from Doctrine and Covenants 43:16 that says you are to be taught from on high. We’re instruments, we’re tools, and it’s our tongues and our lips, but the teacher is on high.

Now, it’s a good teaching practice to have the class get to know each other and become a little better acquainted, so we’re going to do that for a minute with Orin Howell.

Orin, when did you join the Church?

Brother Howell: I joined the Church in June 1996.

Elder Holland: Where did you join the Church, Brother Howell?

Brother Howell: In Bosnia.

Elder Holland: What were you doing in Bosnia, Brother Howell?

Brother Howell: I was in the military at the time.

Elder Holland: Where and in what in Bosnia were you baptized?

Brother Howell: I was baptized in Tuzla, in a Russian bar that had been converted to a chapel. We got a used cover of a tank, turned it upside down, brought it into the chapel, and used that as a font.

Elder Holland: This is a wonderful young man in the military, who is touched by the lives of other Latter-day Saints in the military, and he receives a testimony of the gospel and wants to be baptized. So in the converted chapel in wartime conditions, the engine cover of a tank was tipped



“Our ultimate reassurance is in the honest prompting of the Lord—the prompting that you are

the Lord’s instrument, this is His class, this is His Church, these are His people. Then honestly respond to that Spirit. Generally speaking, the curriculum is going to give us our framework, our course and direction during the months of the year. But at any given moment, we are less than we are supposed to be as a teacher in the Lord’s hands if we aren’t willing to set aside some special thing we had prepared and respond to something the Lord prompts us to do. We have to say, ‘Right now is the moment. This is the teaching moment.’

“Parents face this situation all the time. Parents have to seize the teaching moment because it may not come again. We must prepare the best we can, then trust that the Lord will take us into some unexpected opportunities in a given class. We need to be prepared to go where He leads us.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

upside down to form a basin-like structure and filled with water, and Orin filled the basin. He was baptized. Orin, who confirmed you a member of the Church in that setting?

Brother Howell: You did, Elder Holland.

Elder Holland: I had the wonderful privilege in the summer of 1996 to confirm Orin Howell a member of the Church in Tuzla, Bosnia, under wartime conditions, where we were scrambling for our lives. This wonderful young man is now a high priest serving the Church faithfully here in the Salt Lake Valley. He’s a very distinguished member of our class today. Thank you, Orin, for that little bio. It lets the class get to know each other a little better.

I am going to have Brother Howell develop the theme “Teaching by the Spirit” with us. Turn to section 50, part of a series of verses that we regularly and urgently use with the missionaries. But we should use it equally with everyone. Brother Howell, would you read Doctrine and Covenants 50:13?

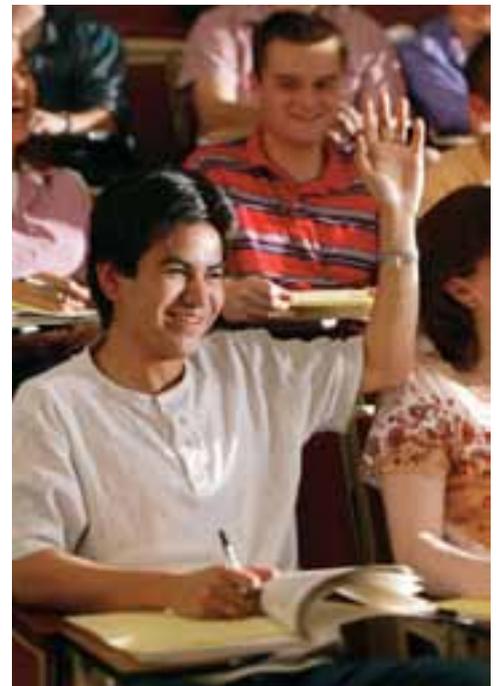
Brother Howell: “Wherefore, I the Lord ask you this question—unto what were ye ordained?”

Elder Holland: To shift the emphasis a little for broader purposes here, let’s substitute the word *called* for *ordained*. *Ordained* would be priesthood language, and we are going to talk about the general call to teach. So, “Wherefore, I the Lord ask you this question—unto what were ye [called]?”

Now, Brother Howell, read the Lord’s answer in verse 14.

Brother Howell: “To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth.”

Elder Holland: That is a scriptural assertion to underscore what we are trying to develop and have already



Elder Richard G. Scott told seminary and institute instructors that the “use of agency by a student authorizes the Holy Ghost to instruct. It helps the student to retain your message.”

said—that the real teacher is the Spirit. I am not the teacher, and you are not the teachers. We all need to be receptive to the Holy Spirit, to the guidance of heaven, which is the teacher. We are “to preach [the] gospel by the Spirit, even the

Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth.”

Now, a caution: What if we try to do it in some other way? What if we try to teach without the Spirit or are unmindful of or unresponsive to the Spirit? What is the Lord’s verdict on that kind of teaching?

Sister McKee, do you want to read verse 18?

Sister Maritza McKee: “And if it be by some other way it is not of God.”

Elder Holland: Say it one more time. That is so powerful.

Sister McKee: “And if it be by some other way it is not of God.”

Sister Beck: So does this mean that if I sit down and study my books and manuals and I write up an outline and have my plan, I can’t teach that? I prepare, but do I have to be ready to set it aside and be directed by the Spirit with the preparation I have?

Elder Holland: Are there any comments on that question before I offer my own response? It’s a legitimate question.

Brother Dahlquist: It’s not that the Spirit whispers just when you are standing up not using your notes. I think the Spirit can whisper beginning with the preparation and when you are putting together the lesson. It’s much like general conference. General conference has a marvelous way of touching our lives, but there’s a lot of preparation.

Elder Holland: OK, let’s have some more comments about this. What is

the role of the teacher, and what is the role of the Spirit?

Sister Beck: I prepared; I worked on it. But then, if someone in my class has had a challenge that week, that changes the dynamic of the lesson. Help me understand how I know where the blend comes of being prepared and being guided and directed to say what comes into my heart at that time or to use a different scripture.

Elder Holland: That’s a terrific question, and every teacher will face it.

Elder Kerr: I think the key—beyond the preparation and treasuring up—is to not be bound by the lesson plan, but let that be just the background and then be open to the prompting.

Elder Holland: It wouldn’t be fair to just walk into a class and say, “I haven’t prepared, but the Spirit is going to guide us.” On the other hand, to be so locked in to preparation that we are not going to entertain any prompting we get along the way would be the other extreme.

I think Sister Beck is steering us toward some combination of these. We have prepared, but we are open to the Spirit, and we have that freedom to move where we should go at that given hour, in the moment of our delivery.

Elder Snow: We have to understand that every member of that class may go home with a slightly different prompting from the Spirit, and it’s just so important that the Spirit be present. But how many of us have been in a class when there has been

a wonderful discussion going on, and the teacher has said, “This is a very good discussion, but I must complete the lesson.”

Elder Holland: Yes, we have all heard that.

Elder Snow: And we miss opportunities sometimes by doing that.



“I saw a wonderful example when I went teaching with two missionaries. They were teaching a fifth discussion.

The one missionary was German, had the language; he had been on his mission for a number of months. The other one was really fairly new, first fifth discussion he had ever taught.

“And I watched. The one was confident; he was a good missionary. He taught with confidence. The other had to rely a little bit on his lesson plan—but, you know, as I sat and watched those two, the Spirit came through on both of them. And so with teachers at different teaching levels, the Spirit can whisper wherever we are if we have done our part. It was wonderful.”

Brother Charles W. Dahlquist II

Elder Holland: Yes, we do. And those are realities we will have to learn to accommodate, and we will have to be sensitive to those impressions so that we do right by the moment and seize that opportunity.

Sister Hughes: You know, this has always been a really interesting and somewhat perplexing issue for me. How do we know, and how can teachers know that they are teaching with the Spirit? I don't know. I'm not sure, when I go to teach, that I'm always confident of that.

Elder Holland: Does anyone have a response to that? What is the teacher's reassurance that she or he is teaching by the Spirit? What would you look to for an indication of that, or do you just do it in faith and hope that it's happening even though you won't always know?

Elder Jensen: I have the same question. And I'm wondering if the answer isn't, at least for me, back in Doctrine and Covenants 50:21–22:

“Therefore, why is it that ye cannot understand and know, that he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth?”

“Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together.”

Elder Holland: Maybe a little rejoicing, Kathy—maybe if your heart rejoices, that is at least one indication.

Elder Jensen: Is the teacher up there, the talking head, delivering

and not inviting participation? I have a little quote I carry in my scriptures related to that verse, and I think I have a new appreciation for it today as we've been talking about it. Elder Scott taught this in a CES training meeting: “Ensure that there is abundant participation because that use of agency by a student authorizes the Holy Ghost to instruct. It helps the student to retain your message. As students verbalize truths, they are confirmed in their souls and strengthen their personal testimonies” (Richard G. Scott, *To Understand and Live Truth* [address to CES religious educators, Feb. 4, 2005], 3).

Elder Holland: That's wonderful. That triggers a thought that I remember from President Marion G. Romney, who said once, “I always know when I've spoken under the influence of the Spirit because I learned something I didn't know.” He's the teacher, and suddenly he's either saying things or thinking things that he had not thought before—or if he thought them before, they have come with new delight, new power. Those might be some of the ways to get an indication you are teaching by the Spirit.

In many cases, we won't know. We will do all we can do, and we hope that hundreds of things are happening in people's hearts or will happen because of this experience or other Church experiences, but we may never know.

Maybe part of the teacher's divine



“I think it could be boldly said that we are not successful if at the end of 40 minutes, a student walks out the door and says, ‘My, wasn’t that nice?’ If it ends when the student walks out the door, I think we have failed in the ultimate sense of teaching, the ongoing sense of teaching. Our instruction ought to be so provocative, so spiritually sweet, so new and interesting that the students say to themselves, ‘I felt so much that I will think about it this afternoon and tomorrow and next week and next month.’ In that way, our lesson will take on a life of its own and bring new thoughts.”

“There is a real danger of classroom performances that seem to be so self-contained or dazzling that people are entertained for 45 minutes and say, ‘Boy, I can’t wait to get here to be entertained next week’—and never have another thought through the week or through the month about the substance of the doctrine they have been taught.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

calling is to be an instrument and move on, to trust that we have been as spiritual and as devoted as we can, and then let the miracle of personal revelation go on and on and on. I think that is a very gratifying idea about teaching and being a teacher.

The Responsibility for Learning

Item 4: “Help the learner assume responsibility for learning.”

What do you do when you come to a class cold, and there isn’t much going on—where somebody says by body language, “I defy you to teach me. I am going to slump in this chair, and I am going to sit with my head down, and I’m going to look at my shoes. And when I look at you, I’m going to scowl.” It may not always be that bad, but I have had some of those classes. We’ve probably all been in situations where it seemed like people had not come prepared to learn. How do we help people do that?

Sister Beck: Sometimes I work on crafting my questions. But I think this seems to be what we are saying: the more questions we can get from the learners about something, the more they are engaged in the learning.

And the thought that came to mind was that when Joseph Smith read a verse of scripture in James, it created questions in his mind, and he said, “How am I going to know? And will I ever know? And if I don’t figure this out, I’ll never know.” And he was in a learner mode when he asked God. But that to me is a challenge as a teacher—not so much the questions I am asking but what is happening that is helping other people to ask questions so the Holy Ghost can teach them.

Elder Holland: One of my favorite books in the Church, written by a professorial, longtime friend of mine at BYU, Dennis Rasmussen, is called *The*

Lord’s Question. It’s a sample of how the Lord always teaches with a question. As early as Adam, the Lord said, “Where art thou?” (Genesis 3:9). He knows exactly where Adam is. He needs to know whether Adam knows where Adam is. That is why He asks the question: “Adam, where art thou?” And so on—“Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). The Savior’s life was built around teaching by asking questions. Many of the revelations—I don’t know how many; I haven’t counted—but many, many of the revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants came in response to a question that the Prophet or the brethren took to the Lord.

Sister Matsumori: I have been struggling just a little bit with this

topic in relation to children, even back when President Packer said he wanted to learn. But to be honest with you, I think it’s an advanced concept to think that the learner is going to assume responsibility for learning, especially little children. And so how does a Primary teacher do that?

Elder Holland: That’s a great point. What do you do if that is what you face and you are still the teacher? You still have to perform. By the way, it’s number 4 because we do realize it is a little more mature and a more advanced concept. But it is one we probably don’t talk about enough, so let’s talk about Sister Matsumori’s question. A child, a seminary student, a 14-year-old teacher or Mia Maid—sometimes they are not very

The more questions we can get from the learners about something, the more they are engaged in the learning.



interested or at least don't act like they are. They are probably more interested than they want you to know, but they don't act like they're interested. How do we deal with that? How do you help them?

Brother Wada: Learning does not happen right in the classroom sometimes. Sometimes it happens outside. When I was learning about the Church, the missionaries would teach me, and a week later I thought about it and said, "This is what it is." So we do not need to assume that the exact learning needs to happen at that moment.

Elder Holland: Great point. I am confident that was the Spirit of the Lord working on you for a week or as long as required.

That's the classic case of investigators in the Church. We want that Spirit working on them for hours and days after the missionaries have gone and before they come back for their next lesson.

Sister Naomi Wada: Sometimes children have so many, many questions, and I have prepared so many examples or experiences or visual aids, and I can't utilize all of them. I'm sometimes busy answering questions. Is it all right? I have tried to simplify the lesson, and if there is just at least one topic I can focus on and just be able to teach them, at least they feel comfortable.

Elder Holland: Good. You said that better than I said it at the start. Don't try to do too much. With a Primary child—well, maybe with any child,

maybe with any of us—if we can get one thing across, one idea, one principle, something sterling and significant that Brother Wada still feels a week later, that is probably worth any good classroom experience. So be reassured. Don't be reluctant about that.

Elder Kerr: What she just said has opened my eyes. What more exciting environment in the classroom is there than the fact that the children or the adults in the class are asking questions?

Elder Holland: Somebody is responding.

Elder Kerr: They're thinking.

Elder Holland: What if you meet a situation where the student is not yet participating, and the burden for a while is on you?

Brother Bruce Miller: Should we forge ahead with the lesson then, or should we stop and do some of the things that invite the Spirit, even though we have had an opening song, a prayer, a scriptural thought? If it's still not there, instead of moving ahead with the lesson, do we stop and say, "OK, how can we get the Spirit here?"

Elder Holland: Does anyone want to respond to that?

Elder Snow: I think it's a long-term process. It doesn't happen the first class. I think sometimes you have to do your best, and then there's going to be a moment when it really works, when the Spirit's there and everyone's contributed to the class. And then you stop and say, "Do you see



"Be patient, and above all do not lose the Spirit. We can't in any way be offended or get angry or disappointed that we've worked so hard on our lesson, and it doesn't seem the students are with us. We just have to be patient and loving. More is happening in their hearts than we think."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

what's happening right now? Do you see the difference?"

Elder Holland: Earlier Sister Hughes said, "How do we know if we have had the Spirit?" That may be in its own way the question that Brother Miller wants to know—with this unresponsive class in front of me, how do I know how I'm doing? Somehow at the heart of that for them and for you is *how do you feel?* Can you feel that the Lord is with you, that the Lord loves you, that you have done the best you can do, that He loves them? If we can just have some feelings for the gospel, if we just love each other, I suppose that's a place to begin. And if those children are unresponsive, maybe you can't teach them yet, but you can love them. And if you love them today, maybe you can teach them tomorrow.

But I think that is totally within our power. None of that is dependent upon them. We can love them from start to finish, and miracles will happen, the kind of miracles that you're talking about.

If I, the teacher, want questions from you, the student, I may have to prime the pump a little, as we have tried to do here today. I may try to pose a question that will then take on a life of its own, and all I have to do is direct traffic in order to get the students to participate.

Now, may I pause and make an editorial comment? A teacher could know that Brother Merrill talked on a subject in conference and say, “Good. I’ll go to the materials center, and I’ll get that video clip. I can play it, and I can show the class Brother Merrill.”

If you do that, great. We ought to do it from time to time. But audio-visual aids are just that—they are aids. They are not a substitute for a lesson. Use them in the way that you would use spice in cooking—to flavor, to heighten, to accentuate, to enrich. A

My plea to one and all is please do not overdo visual aids. Use them when you need them.

map or a painting or a video clip or a key point written on the board—these can often make the difference between a good lesson and a great lesson. But no one wants a meal of spices only. So my plea to one and all is please do not overdo visual aids. They are not a substitute for the teacher, they are not a substitute for the course material, and they are not a substitute for the Spirit of the Lord. Use them when you need them.

Sister Wada: There is a child who is really, really disruptive sometimes in the Primary class, and I try to imagine that child wearing white and being a spirit of the Lord. The bottom line is we are all children of God, and that intelligence, even though the shape is small, came here to this earth to learn something, and there is a reason for him to be there. It really helps to think that.

Elder Holland: Thank you very much. That’s a sweet comment.



“I went to early-morning seminary, and I feel that my seminary teacher assumed responsibility for teaching us. He assumed that we were receiving the message that he was giving us. There were times that we arrived in seminary in pajamas; there were times where some of us brought pillows and blankets; there were times where girls would be painting their nails while they were listening to him teach, but we were blessed with a seminary teacher who assumed that we were listening to him. We were not engaging him in conversation, but there was never a day in seminary that I was not paying attention and listening with my ears and with my heart to what he said.

“I think that as teachers, if we’ve done everything that we need to do, we’ve done our part, and we have the Spirit there, then we can assume that the students are taking the responsibility to listen.”

Sister Tamu Smith



Brother Howell: What I'm hearing is that sometimes the teacher is the learner and the learner is the teacher.

Elder Holland: Almost always the teacher will be getting more than the class. That is one of the joys of teaching.

Testify

Let's conclude. Number 5, one word: "Testify."

May we conclude here the way that every teacher must conclude his or her class, in the Church and at home—in the spirit of testimony.

For many years, I have loved the story that President Packer has told about William E. Berrett's boyhood Sunday School teacher. An elderly Danish brother was called to teach a class of rowdy boys. It didn't seem like much of a fit. He didn't speak the language very well; he still had a heavy Danish brogue; he was much older, with big farm hands. Yet he was to teach these young, rambunctious 15-year-olds. For all intents and purposes, it would not have seemed like a very good match. But Brother William E. Berrett used to say—and this is the part President Packer quotes—that this man taught them somehow; that across all those barriers, across all those limitations, this man reached into the hearts of those rowdy 15-year-old kids and changed their lives. And Brother Berrett's testimony was "We could have warmed our hands by the fire of his faith."

Every student deserves at least that.

We may not give the fanciest lesson. We may not be skillful with audiovisual aids (though we can use any we know how to use). But we can share with all students the fire of our faith, and they can warm their hands by it.

I have been painfully disappointed over the years at wonderful lessons, given by loyal, gifted teachers who, somehow, at the end of a class, say, "Well, there is the bell. Brother Jones, would you give the prayer?" And it's over. There's no closing of the books, no looking in the eye for just a minute, no settling down to say, in effect, where have we been and where are we going and what does the Lord want us to do? In some cases—I'm being a little unfair and a little extravagant, but to make a point—not a single reference is made to what this lesson was supposed to mean to the student or to the teacher. I'm left to walk away saying, "I wonder how he felt about that. I wonder what she thought about it or what it was supposed to mean to me." There is so much effort to get some doctrine, some principle, some map, some video clip across to the students, but not a hint of personal testimony about what that doctrine or that principle meant to the teacher, the one who was supposed to lead us and guide us and walk beside us.

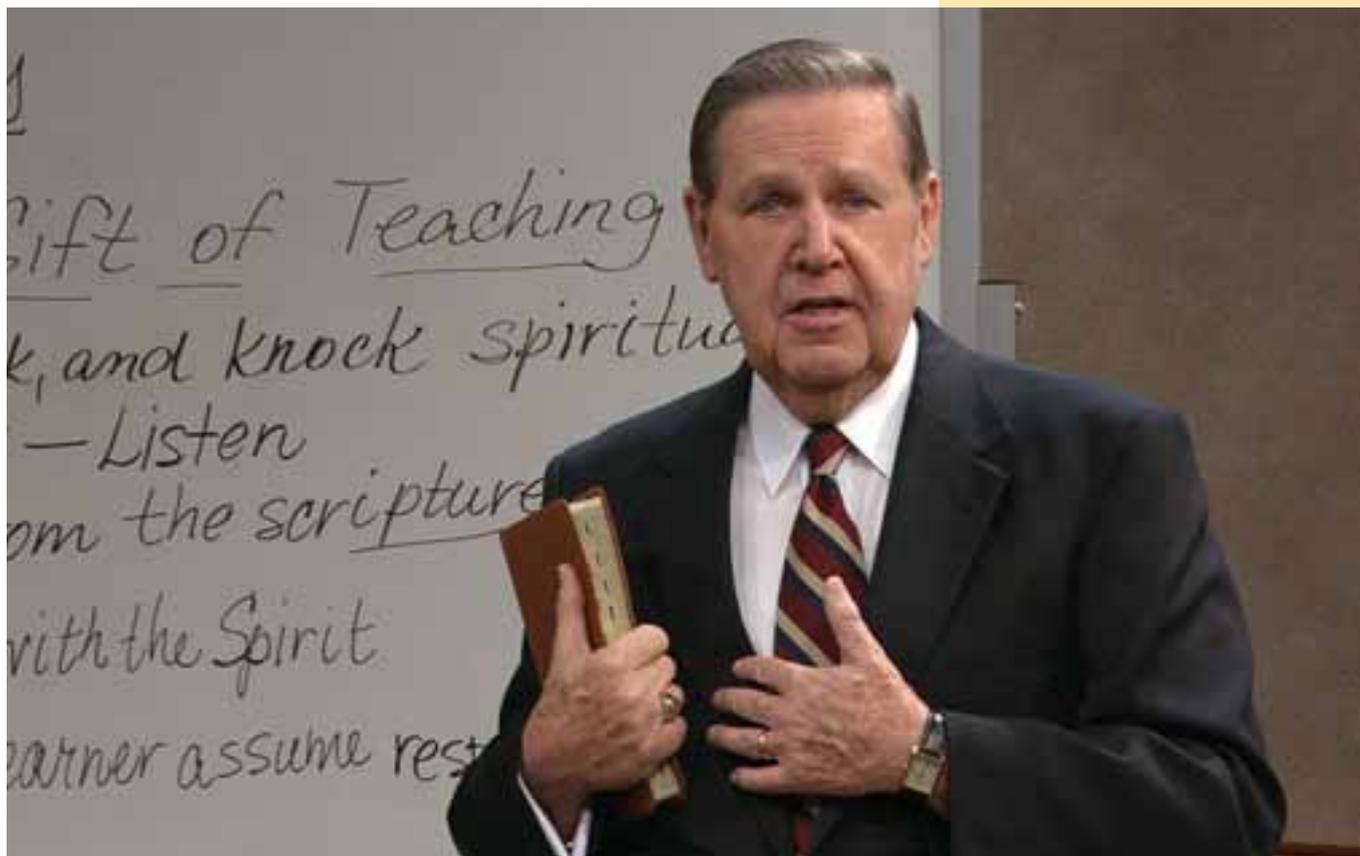
As President J. Reuben Clark Jr. once said, "Never let your faith be difficult to detect." May I repeat that? "Never let your faith be difficult to detect." Never sow seeds of doubt. Avoid self-serving performance and

vanity. Don't try to dazzle everyone with how brilliant you are. Dazzle them with how brilliant the gospel is. Don't worry about the location of the lost tribes or the Three Nephites. Worry a little more about the location of your student, what's going on in his heart, what's going on in her soul, the hunger, sometimes the near-desperate spiritual needs of our people. Teach them. And, above all, testify to them. Love them. Bear your witness from the depths of your soul. It will be the most important thing you say to them in the entire hour, and it may save someone's spiritual life.

Say that you "speak [out] in the energy of [your] soul" (Alma 5:43). I love that phrase. I want to testify out of the energy of my soul. If we feel inclined, we could ask the congregation what Alma asked his, namely, "Do ye not suppose that I know of these things myself?" He continues, "I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. . . . I say unto you, that I know of myself that [they are] true" (Alma 5:45, 48).

I know that God lives and loves us. I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. I know that this is His Church, and I know that teaching matters.

To that end I know that heaven will help us if we will teach as we have here described. And this won't be all; this will be only a beginning. Welcome to the quest for the gift of teaching.



But as we search for that gift and pray for it, if we will ask and seek and knock spiritually, if we will teach from the scriptures, if we will teach by and with the Holy Spirit, if we will help the learner assume responsibility for learning, and if we will testify of the truths that we have taught, God will confirm to our hearts and to the hearts of our students the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, near and far, close at hand and around the world, the gospel of Jesus Christ means everything to me. It means everything to me. It is my whole life. It is my hope and my safety and my quest for salvation. It is everything that I want for my children and my children's children.

And I feel what I feel about the gospel because of you, because people like you taught people like me. Somewhere in those little Primary classes

and in those first family home evenings and in the deacons quorum and on a mission and everywhere else, somebody like you taught somebody like me. And I am not all that I want to be yet. I'm not all that I should be, but whatever I'm going to be, I owe to great teachers, starting with my own beloved parents and every other good person who has touched my life along the way, up to and including the magnificent councils and quorums in which I now sit, where I am able to be taught by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, other General Authorities, and wonderful auxiliary leaders like all of you.

I testify and I bear witness of love. I know God loves us. And I know that in part because I love you, and I love the experience of teaching. I pray that we will be better at it, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

The Gift of Teaching

1. Ask, seek, and knock spiritually.
2. Teach from the scriptures.
3. Teach by and with the Spirit.
4. Help the learner assume responsibility for learning.
5. Testify.

Examples of Great Teachers

PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

First Counselor in the First Presidency



Everyone Has a Story

I have been thinking of one of our emeritus General Authorities, even Elder Marion D. Hanks, who has excelled in teaching seminary, institute, and the Church generally. He has utilized many different teaching methods.

On one occasion, Elder Hanks toured a mission, interviewing each of the missionaries laboring in that particular area. I had been on an assignment in an adjoining area and was given a ride to the airport with Elder Hanks and the mission president.

Elder Hanks told the mission president what a privilege it had been to visit with and interview each of the missionaries. He said he had felt prompted to ask one sister missionary, “Please tell me about your mission and how you felt about being called as a sister missionary.”

She told him that her humble father, a farmer, had willingly sacrificed much for the Lord and His kingdom. He was already sustaining two sons on missions when he talked with her one day about her unexpressed desires to be a missionary and

explained to her how the Lord had helped him to prepare to help her.

He had gone to the fields to talk with the Lord, to tell Him that he had no more material possessions to sell or sacrifice or to use as collateral for borrowing. He needed to know how he could help his daughter go on a mission. He felt the inspiration to plant onions. He thought he had misunderstood. Onions would not likely grow well in this climate; others were not growing onions; he had no experience growing onions.

After wrestling with the Lord for a time, he was again impressed to plant onions. So he borrowed money from the bank, purchased seeds, planted and nurtured, and prayed.

The elements were tempered; the onion crop prospered. He sold the crop; paid his debts to the bank, the government, and the Lord; and put the remainder in an account under his daughter’s name—enough to support her during her mission.

As you read the experiences in President Monson’s talk, what impressions come to you about learning and teaching? What experiences have you had as a learner or as a teacher that are similar to the examples in these accounts?

How does each experience President Monson relates illustrate qualities of the Savior’s teaching? Pray and ponder what you can do to follow the Savior’s example.

We have heard from some of the greatest teachers in the Church, who have given us wonderful insights into many of the elements and principles of good teaching.

As has been mentioned, we are all teachers in some respect, and we have a duty to teach to the best of our ability.

I should like to share with you some examples of individuals I have known who have touched my life and have taught me important and never-to-be-forgotten lessons.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BUSABU PHOTOGRAPHY. DETAIL FROM CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG RULER, BY HEINRICH HOFMANN. COURTESY OF C. HARRISON CONROY CO.



The white envelope containing our precious party fund passed from the delicate hand of our teacher to the needy hand of a grief-stricken father.

Elder Hanks then told the mission president, “I will not forget the story or the moment or the tears in her eyes or the sound of her voice or the feeling I had as she said, ‘Brother Hanks, I don’t have any trouble believing in a loving Heavenly Father who knows my needs and will help me according to His wisdom if I am humble enough.’”

Elder Hanks was teaching a most important lesson: each child in each classroom, each young man or young woman, each student in seminary or institute, each adult in Gospel Doctrine classes, each missionary—yes, every one of us—has a story waiting to be told. Listening is an essential element as we teach and as we learn.

“It Is More Blessed to Give Than to Receive”

It was my experience as a small boy to come under the influence of a most effective and inspired teacher

who listened to us and who loved us. Her name was Lucy Gertsch. In our Sunday School class, she taught us concerning the Creation of the world, the Fall of Adam, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. She brought to her classroom as honored guests Moses, Joshua, Peter, Thomas, Paul, and, of course, Christ. Though we did not see them, we learned to love, honor, and emulate them.

Never was her teaching so dynamic nor its impact more everlasting as one Sunday morning when she sadly announced to us the passing of a classmate’s mother. We had missed Billy that morning but did not know the reason for his absence.

The lesson featured the theme “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Midway through the lesson, our teacher closed the manual and opened our eyes and our ears and our hearts to the glory of God. She asked, “How much money

do we have in our class party fund?”

Depression days prompted a proud answer: “Four dollars and seventy-five cents.”

Then ever so gently she suggested, “Billy’s family is hard pressed and grief stricken. What would you think of the possibility of visiting the family members this morning and giving to them your fund?”

Ever shall I remember the tiny band walking those three city blocks, entering Billy’s home, greeting him, his brother, sisters, and father. Noticeably absent was his mother. Always I shall treasure the tears which glistened in the eyes of all as the white envelope containing our precious party fund passed from the delicate hand of our teacher to the needy hand of a grief-stricken father.

We fairly skipped our way back to the chapel. Our hearts were lighter than they had ever been, our joy more full, our understanding more profound. A God-inspired teacher had taught her boys and girls an eternal lesson of divine truth: “It is more

blessed to give than to receive.”

Well could we have paraphrased the words of the disciples on the way to Emmaus: “Did not our heart burn within us . . . while [she] opened to us the scriptures?” (Luke 24:32).

Lucy Gertsch knew each of her students. She unfailingly called on those who missed a Sunday or who just didn’t come. We knew she cared about us. None of us has ever forgotten her or the lessons she taught.

Many, many years later, when Lucy was nearing the end of her life, I visited with her. We reminisced concerning those days so long before when she had been our teacher. We spoke of each member of our class and discussed what each one was now doing. Her love and caring spanned a lifetime.

The Articles of Faith

Another inspired teacher in my life was Erma Bollwinkel, a member of our stake Primary board. She constantly stressed the importance of learning the Articles of Faith. In fact, we could not graduate from Primary until we successfully recited each article of faith to her—something of a challenge for rambunctious young boys, but we persevered and succeeded. I have, throughout my life, as a result, been able to recite the Articles of Faith.

For many years as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I had responsibility for East Germany, also known as the German Democratic Republic. In this assignment, my

knowledge of the Articles of Faith was most helpful. On each of my visits throughout the 20 years I supervised this area, I always reminded our members in that area of the twelfth article of faith: “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.”

Our meetings behind what was known as the Iron Curtain were always monitored by the communist government there. In the early 1980s, when we sought approval from the government officials to build a temple there, and later when we asked permission for young men and women from that area to serve missions throughout the world and for others to come into their country to serve missions, they listened and then said, “Elder Monson, we’ve watched you for 20 years, and we’ve learned we can trust you and your Church because you and your Church teach your members to obey the laws of the land.”

I share another example of the value of learning the Articles of Faith. Forty-five years ago I worked with a man named Sharman Hummel in the printing business in Salt Lake City. I once gave him a ride home from work and asked him how he came to receive his testimony of the gospel.

He responded, “It’s interesting, Tom, that you asked me that question, for this very week my wife, my children, and I are going to the Manti Temple, there to be sealed for all eternity.”

He continued his account: “We lived in the East. I was journeying by bus to San Francisco to establish myself in a new printing company, and then I was going to send for my wife and children. All the way from New York City to Salt Lake City the bus trip was uneventful. But in Salt Lake City a young girl entered the bus—a Primary girl—who sat next to me. She was going to Reno, Nevada, there to have a visit with her aunt. As we journeyed westward, I noticed a billboard: ‘Visit the Mormon Sunday School this week.’

“I said to the little girl, ‘I guess there are a lot of Mormons in Utah, aren’t there?’

“She replied, ‘Yes, sir.’

“Then I said to her, ‘Are you a Mormon?’

“Again her reply: ‘Yes, sir.’”

Sharman Hummel then asked, “What do Mormons believe?” And that little girl recited the first article of faith; then she talked about it. Continuing, she gave him the second article of faith and talked about it. Then she gave him the third and the fourth and the fifth and the sixth and all of the Articles of Faith and talked about all of them. She knew them consecutively.

Sharman Hummel said, “When we got to Reno, and we let that little girl off into the arms of her aunt, I was profoundly impressed.”

He said, “All the way to San Francisco I thought, ‘What is it that prompts that little girl to know her doctrine so well?’ When I arrived in San Francisco, the very first thing I

did,” said Sharman, “was to look through the yellow pages for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I called the mission president, and he sent two missionaries to where I was staying. I became a member of the Church, my wife became a member, all of our children became members, in part because a Primary girl knew her Articles of Faith.”

I think of the words of the Apostle Paul: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16).

Just three months ago, the Hummel family came to Salt Lake City for the wedding of their daughter Marianne. They stopped by the office; we had a wonderful visit. All 6 daughters came, along with 4 sons-in-law and 12 grandchildren. The entire family had remained active in the Church. Each of the daughters has been to the temple. Countless are those who have been brought to a knowledge of the gospel by the members of this family—all because a young child had been taught the Articles of Faith and had the ability and the courage to proclaim the truth to one who was seeking the light of the gospel.

“Be Ready Always”

I love the Lord’s injunction found in the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants: “I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom. Teach ye diligently and my grace

shall attend you” (D&C 88:77–78).

Many years ago, as I was traveling by air to an assignment in southern California, a lovely young lady sat down in the empty seat next to me. She began reading a book. As one is inclined to do, I glanced at the title: *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*.

I said to her, “Oh, you must be a Mormon.”

She responded, “Oh, no. Why would you ask?”

I replied, “Well, you’re reading a book written by a very prominent member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

She said, “Is that right? A friend gave this to me, but I don’t know much about it. However, it has aroused my curiosity.”

Then I wondered, “Should I be forward and say more about the Church?” And the words of the Apostle Peter came to mind: “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). I decided that this was the time when I should bear my testimony.

I told her that it was my privilege years before to have assisted Elder Richards in printing *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*. I told her something about that great man. I told her of the many thousands of people who had embraced the truth after reading that which he had prepared.

Then it was my privilege, all the way to Los Angeles, to answer her questions relative to the Church—

intelligent questions that came from a heart which was seeking the truth. I asked if I might make arrangements for two sister missionaries to call upon her. I asked if she would like to attend our branch in San Francisco, where she lived. Her answers were affirmative.

Upon returning home, I wrote to President Irvan G. Derrick of the San Francisco stake and passed along to him this information. Can you imagine my delight when, a few months later, I received a call from President Derrick in which he said, “Elder Monson, I’m calling about Yvonne Ramirez, an off-duty flight attendant, a young lady who sat next to you on a flight to Los Angeles, a young lady to whom you said that it was not coincidence that you sat next to her and that she was reading *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* on that trip. Brother Monson, she has just become the newest member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She’d like to speak to you and express her gratitude.” Of course I was overjoyed. It was a wonderful call.

President McKay’s Example

An example of a master teacher was President David O. McKay, who called me to be a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He taught with love and with sensitivity. He was the epitome of what he taught. His heart was kind, and his manner was gracious. He was a teacher of truth after the pattern of the Savior.



Sunday dinner always seemed to taste a bit better after I had returned from my errand.

I observed this trait when, long before I was a General Authority, I entered his office to review some printing proofs of a book that we were printing. On that particular occasion, I noticed a picture on the wall, and I said to him, “President McKay, that’s a lovely painting. Is it a rendition of your childhood home in Huntsville, Utah?”

He sat back in his chair and gave a familiar David O. McKay chuckle and said, “Let me tell you about that picture. A sweet woman came in to see me one autumn day and presented to me that beautiful painting, framed and ready to be placed on the wall. She said, ‘President McKay, I spent much of the summer painting this picture of your ancestral home.’” He said he accepted the gift and thanked her profusely.

And then he said to me, “Do you know, Brother Monson, that dear woman painted the wrong house.

She painted the house next door! I didn’t have the heart to tell her she painted the wrong house.”

But then he made this comment—and here is a vital lesson for all of us. He said, “In reality, Brother Monson, she painted the right house for me, because when, as a young boy, I would lie on the bed which was on the front porch of my ancestral home, the view I had through that screened porch was of the very house she painted. She *did* paint the right house for me!”

Lessons about Serving Others

Some of the best lessons learned in life come from our parents. Mine taught me valuable lessons as I was growing up. Frequently those lessons had to do with serving others. I have many memories of my boyhood days. Anticipating Sunday dinner was one of them. Just as we children hovered at our so-called starvation level and sat anxiously at the table with the

aroma of roast beef filling the room, Mother would say to me, “Tommy, before we eat, take this plate I’ve prepared down the street to Old Bob, and hurry back.”

I could never understand why we couldn’t first eat and later deliver his plate of food. I never questioned but would run down to his house and then wait anxiously as Bob’s aged feet brought him eventually to the door. Then I would hand him the plate of food. He would present to me the spotlessly clean plate from the previous Sunday and then offer me 10 cents as pay for my services.

My answer was always the same: “I can’t accept the money. My mother would tan my hide.”

He would then run his wrinkled hand through my blond hair and say, “My boy, you have a wonderful mother. Tell her thank you.”

I remember too that Sunday dinner always seemed to taste a bit better after I had returned from my errand.

My mother’s father, Grandfather Thomas Condie, also taught me a



Grandfather reached into his pocket and removed a key and handed it to Old Bob.

powerful lesson which involved this same Old Bob, who came into our lives in an interesting way. He was a widower in his 80s when the house in which he rented a room was to be demolished. I heard him tell my grandfather his plight as the three of us sat on the old front-porch swing of my grandfather. With a plaintive voice, he said to Grandfather, “Mr. Condie, I don’t know what to do. I have no family. I have no place to go. I have little money.” I wondered how Grandfather would answer.

We just kept rocking the swing. Then Grandfather reached into his pocket and took from it an old leather purse from which, in response to my hounding, he had produced many a penny or nickel for a special treat. This time he removed a key and handed it to Old Bob.

Tenderly he said, “Bob, here is the key to that house I own next door. Take it. Move your things in. Stay as long as you like. There will be no rent to pay, and nobody will ever put you out again.”

Tears welled up in the eyes of Old Bob, coursed down his cheeks, then disappeared in his long, white beard. Grandfather’s eyes were also moist. I spoke no word, but that day my grandfather stood 10 feet tall. I was proud to bear his given name. Though I was but a boy, that lesson has had a powerful influence on my life.

These are but a few of the lessons I have learned from those who have touched my life and have taught me.

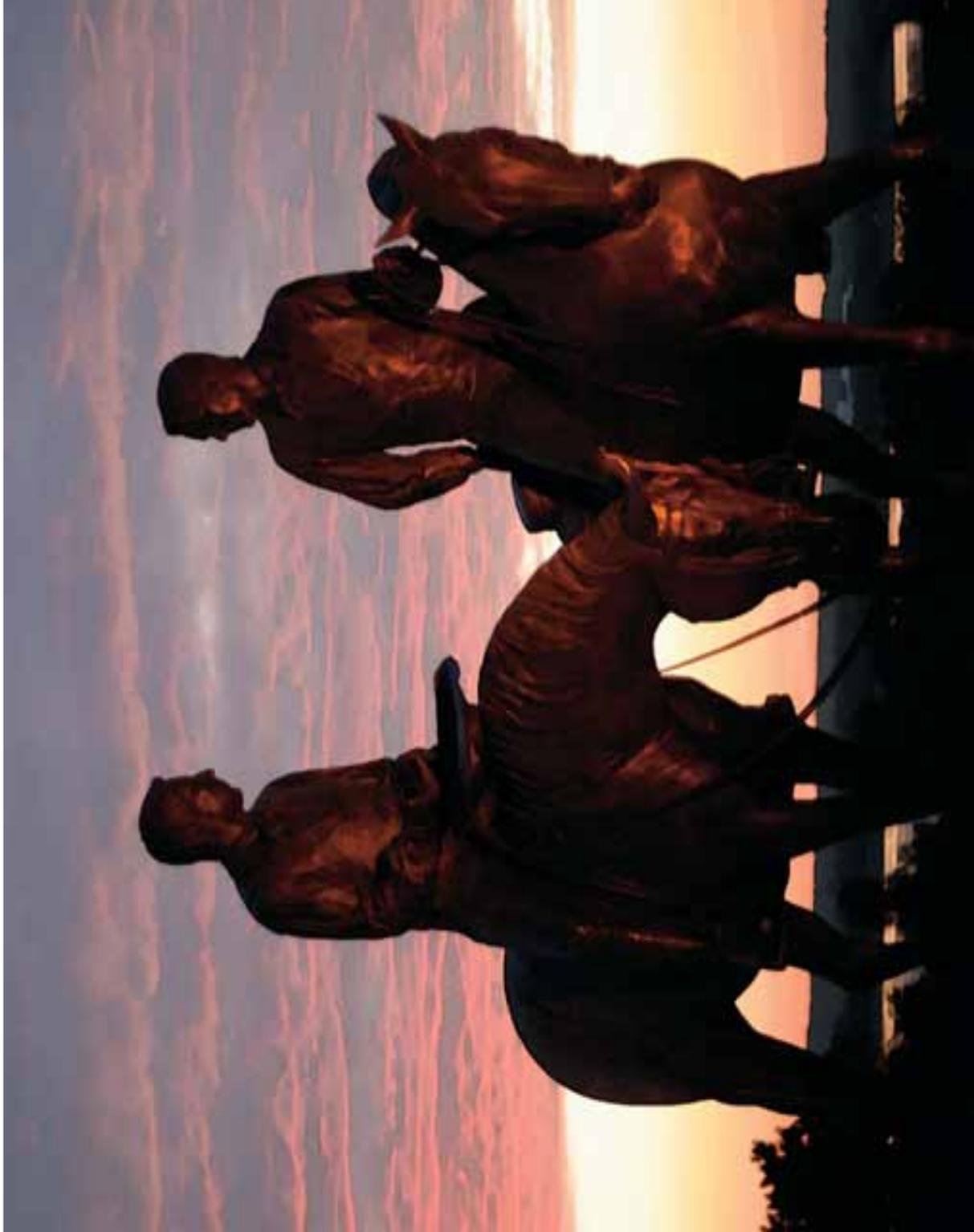
Again, I reiterate that we are all teachers. We should ever remember that we not only teach with words; we teach also by who we are and how we live our lives.

The Perfect Example

As we teach others, may we follow the example of the perfect teacher, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He left His footprints in the sands of the seashore but left His teaching principles in the hearts and in the lives of all whom He taught. He instructed His disciples of that day—and to us He speaks the same words—“Follow thou me” (John 21:22).

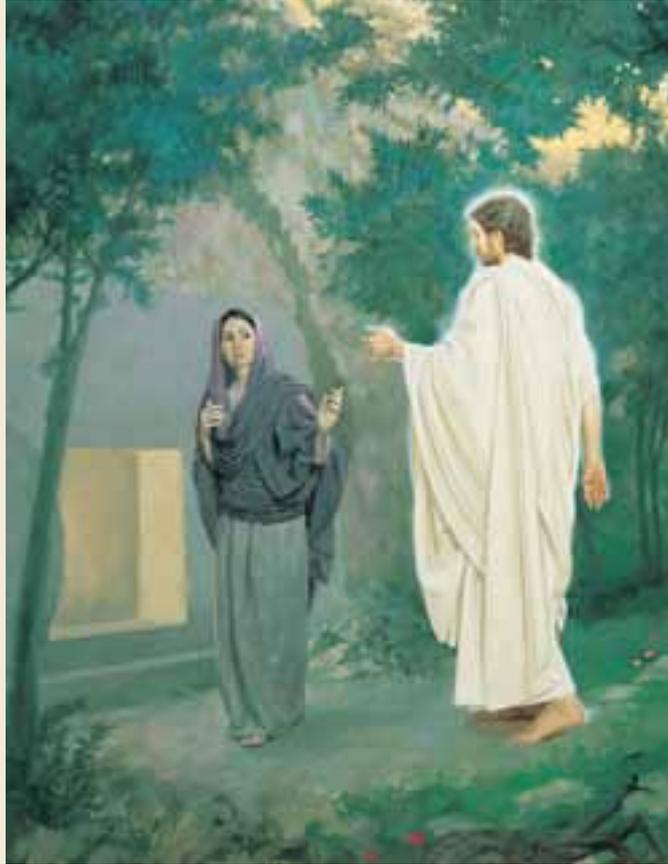
May we go forward in the spirit of obedient response, that it may be said of each of us as it was spoken of the Redeemer, “Thou art a teacher come from God” (John 3:2). May this be so, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■





Joseph and Hyrum Leaving Nauvoo, by Don O. Thorpe

On June 27, 1844, Joseph and Hyrum Smith were martyred in Caribage Jail by an angry mob. "Like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, [the Prophet Joseph Smith] has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated!" (D&C 135:3).



The New Testament tells of many women who knew and followed the Savior; including Mary Magdalene, to whom the Savior first appeared following His Resurrection (above), and also of a woman (front cover) who “began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head.” Of this woman, the Savior said, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much” (Luke 7:38, 47). See “For She Loved Much: Women of the New Testament,” p. 40.

