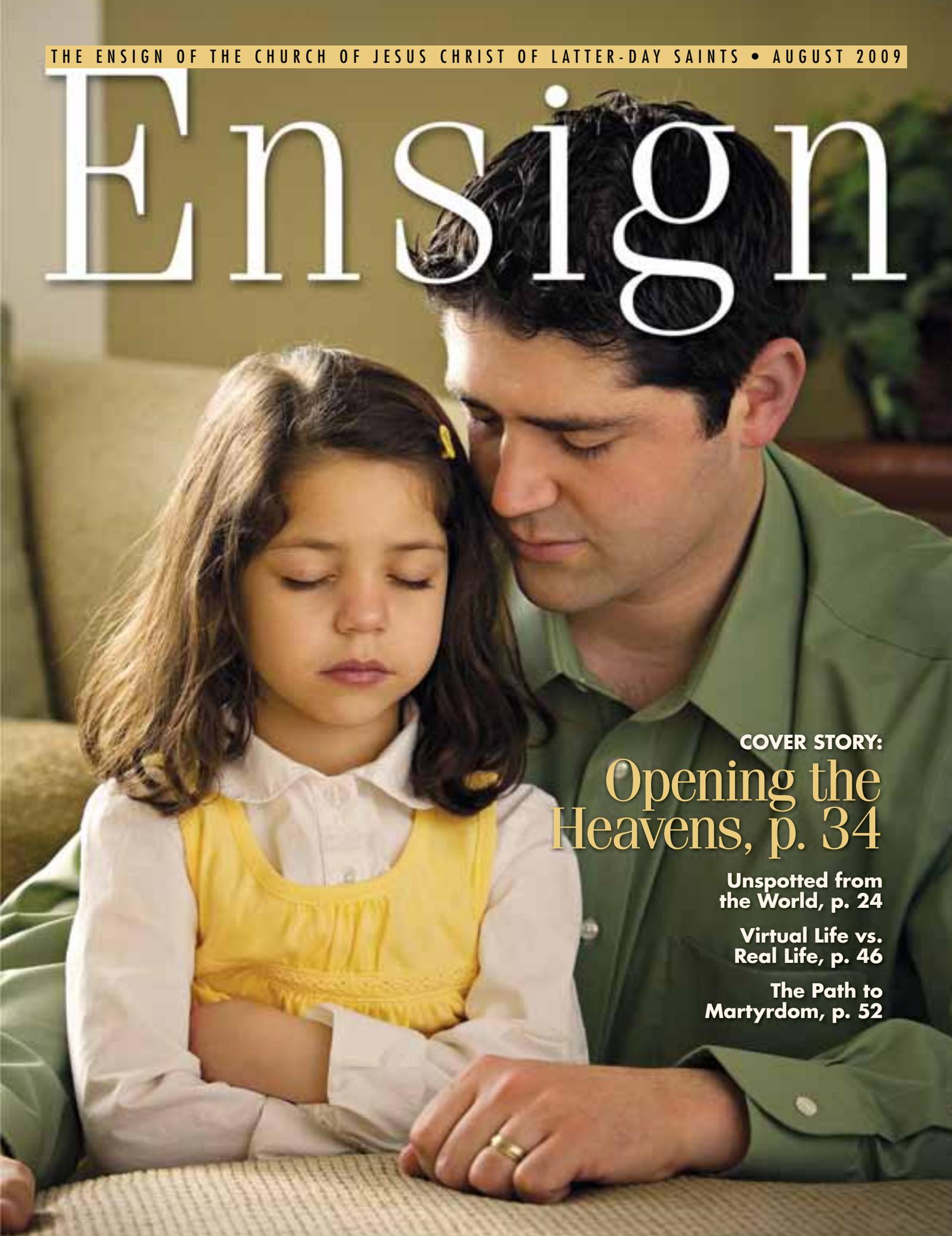


Ensign



COVER STORY:

Opening the Heavens, p. 34

**Unspotted from
the World, p. 24**

**Virtual Life vs.
Real Life, p. 46**

**The Path to
Martyrdom, p. 52**



COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Yesterday, Today, and Forever, by David Marshall Habben II

The artist says of his artwork, which is currently a part of the 8th International Art Competition sponsored by the Church History Museum: "This artwork depicts the fulfillment of prophecies given through the Lord's prophets. There are four prophets: Isaiah with his prophetic writings, Ezekiel with scrolls of scripture from two nations, Moroni humbly kneeling over the plates he diligently kept, and Joseph Smith retrieving the record and fulfilling a long-awaited promise."



The Savior admonished the Apostles to follow His example. 24



ON THE COVER
Front: Photo illustration by David Stoker.
Back: Scene from the Church film *The Restoration*; photo illustration by Matthew Reier.



MESSAGES

FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

4 That He May Write upon Our Hearts

PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING
When we teach those we love that we are spirit children temporarily away from a loving Heavenly Father, we open the door of prayer to them.

VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

61 Seek Education and Lifelong Learning



FEATURE ARTICLES

10 Elder Neil L. Andersen: Man of Faith

ELDER D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON

The life of Elder Andersen, the newest member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, is an example of obedience and discipleship.

16 Mending Quilts, Mending Lives

CAROLYN RUSCH

Repentance truly makes us whole.

18 Staying Home . . . Again

NAME WITHHELD

The allure of the workplace was pulling me away from my family.



46

24 Unspotted from the World

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

God will bless every man and woman, no matter where he or she may be, who will stand for righteousness and truth.

30 Holding to the Rod after High School

Young adults share what has helped them stay strong in the gospel through typical periods of transition.

34 Opening the Heavens

ELDER YOSHIHIKO KIKUCHI

Coming to know the Father and the Son.

39 Fast Day

JOHN S. TANNER

A testimony of how fasting draws us closer to Christ.

40 Joy in the Scriptures

Celebrate the joy of feasting on the scriptures.

44 Turning Off and Tuning In

Why these three young adults appreciate opportunities to “unplug.”

46 Just a Game?

CHARLES D. KNUTSON AND KYLE K. OSWALD

Why online role-playing games could be risky to your spiritual well-being.



62

58 Guarding against Danger from Within: The Legend of Mixco Viejo

ADAM C. OLSON

Prophets have warned of dangerous openings through which the enemy may enter, no matter how strong the wall.

62 Managing Postpartum Depression: A Gospel Perspective

LYNN CLARK CALLISTER

Having a baby is usually a happy time for new mothers. What happens when it's not?

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

In his October 2004 general conference address, Bishop H. David Burton taught: “For some, the pursuit to acquire more of this world’s goods and services has become a passion. . . . The unbridled desire for more often has tragic consequences.” Have you ever felt preoccupied by the desire to acquire more wealth and possessions? What helped you find balance? Please tell us about your experience, labeling your submission “Acquisition Obsession,” and send it by September 18, 2009.

We also welcome other submissions that show the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. You can find this and other calls for articles online at <http://ensign.lds.org>.

Ensign Magazine Writers’ Guidelines are posted on the same page under “Resources.”

Submit your article at ensign.lds.org or to *Ensign* Editorial, 50 E. North Temple Street, Room 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA. Include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, ward (or branch), and stake (or district). Because of the volume of submissions we receive, we cannot acknowledge receipt. Authors whose work is selected for publication will be notified. If you would like your manuscript, photos, art, or other material returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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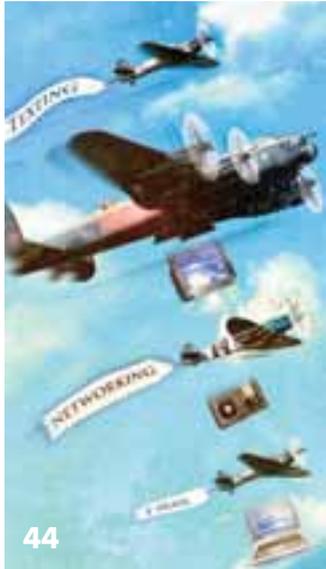
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44

USING THIS ISSUE

The right amount of media.

Pages 44–51 talk about the influence of media. Although many kinds of media are useful, overusing technological devices can result in distraction from essential spiritual messages. Consider reviewing these articles as a family and discussing ways to maintain proper balance and priorities.

The power of prayer.

President Henry B. Eyring's "That He May Write upon Our Hearts" and Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi's "Opening the Heavens" both talk about the powerful influence that meaningful prayer can have in our lives. As you read these articles, think about how you feel when you pray "with real intent" (Moroni 7:9; 10:4).

Gospel-based information about mental health.

The article starting on p. 62 offers help to women suffering from postpartum depression. The Church offers resources to meet many social and emotional challenges. Visit ldsfamilyservices.org, and mentalhealthlibrary.info.



52

DEPARTMENTS

LESSONS FROM THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

21 The Steps to the Temple

CHERYL C. LANT

Overcoming obstacles to temple worship.

52 The Path to Martyrdom: The Ultimate Witness

ELDER ANTHONY D. PERKINS

Staying true to the faith "for which martyrs have perished."

68 Random Sampler

Holding long-distance family home evenings, finding service opportunities, what to do about frozen food when the power goes out.

70 LATTER-DAY SAINT VOICES

From warning to comforting, the Holy Ghost blesses the faithful.

74 NEWS OF THE CHURCH

GOSPEL TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Addiction, 46 | Joseph Smith, 52 |
| Adversity, 72 | Learning, 61 |
| Agency, 30 | Marriage, 62 |
| Apostles, 10 | Media, 44, 46 |
| Atonement, 16, 34 | Missionary, 30 |
| Balance, 46 | Motherhood, 18, 62 |
| Baptism, 21 | Obedience, 21, 30 |
| Callings, 30 | Parenthood, 4, 18, 62 |
| Education, 61 | Pondering, 34, 44 |
| Example, 10, 70 | Prayer, 4, 34, 44, 73 |
| Faith, 10, 18, 21, 30, 72, 73 | Preparation, 68 |
| Family, 46, 58, 68 | Priesthood, 30, 71 |
| Family Home | Prophets, 10, 58 |
| Evening, 23, 29, 69 | Relief Society, 30 |
| Fasting, 39 | Repentance, 16, 21, 58 |
| Gratitude, 71, 73 | Reverence, 44 |
| Happiness, 40, 62 | Sacrifice, 18, 52 |
| Heavenly Father, 4 | Scripture Study, 30, 40, 62, 71 |
| Holiness, 44 | Service, 30, 68 |
| Holy Ghost, 21, 44, 58 | Teaching, 4, 58 |
| Home, 18 | Technology, 44, 46 |
| Home Teaching, 70 | Temples, 21 |
| Hope, 62 | Testimony, 52 |
| Institute, 30 | Virtue, 24 |
| Jesus Christ, 4, 10, 16, 52, 72 | Visiting Teaching, 61 |

COMING IN SEPTEMBER

Look for articles on:

- *Spiritual and emotional fidelity in marriage.*
- *A religion "to save souls."*
- *One family's legacy of service.*



That He May Write upon Our Hearts

BY PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING

First Counselor in the First Presidency

Parents should teach their children to pray. The child learns both from what the parents do and what they say.

The child who sees a mother or a father pass through the trials of life with fervent prayer to God and then hears a sincere testimony that God answered in kindness will remember what he or she saw and heard. When trials come, that individual will be prepared.

In time, when the children are away from home and family, prayer can provide the shield of protection the parent will want so much for them to have. Parting can be hard, particularly when the parent and the child know that they may not see each other for a long time. I had that experience with my father. We parted on a street corner in New York City. He had come there for his work. I was there on my way to another place. We both knew that I probably would never return to live with my parents under the same roof again.

It was a sunny day, around noontime, the streets crowded with cars and pedestrians. On that particular corner there was a traffic light which stopped the cars in all directions for a few minutes. The light changed to red;

the cars stopped. The crowd of pedestrians hurried off the curbs, moving every way, including diagonally, across the intersection.

The time had come for parting, and I started across the street. I stopped almost in the center, with people rushing by me. I turned to look back. Instead of moving off in the crowd, my father was still standing on the corner looking at me. To me he seemed lonely and perhaps a little sad. I wanted to go back to him, but I realized the light would change and so I turned and hurried on.

Years later I talked to him about that moment. He told me that I had misread his face. He said he was not sad; he was concerned. He had seen me look back, as if I were a little boy, uncertain and looking for assurance. He told me in those later years that the thought in his mind had been: "Will he be all right? Have I taught him enough? Is he prepared for whatever may lie ahead?"

There were more than thoughts in his mind. I knew from having watched him that he had feelings in his heart. He yearned for me to be protected, to be safe. I had heard and felt that yearning in his prayers—and even more in the prayers of my mother—for all the years I had lived with them. I had learned from that, and I remembered.



Our goal when we teach our children to pray is for them to want God to write upon their hearts and be willing then to go and do what God asks of them.

A Matter of the Heart

Prayer is a matter of the heart. I had been taught far more than the rules of prayer. I had learned from my parents and from the Savior's teachings that we must address our Heavenly Father in the reverent language of prayer. "Our Father . . . in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9). I knew that we never profane His sacred name—never. Can you imagine how the prayers of a child are harmed by hearing a parent profane the name of God? There will be terrible consequences for such an offense to the little ones.

I had learned that it was important to give thanks for blessings and to ask for forgiveness. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). I had been taught that we ask for what we need and pray for others to be blessed. "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). I knew that we must surrender our will. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). I had been taught and found it true that we can be warned of danger and shown early what we have done which displeased God. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13).

I had learned that we must always pray in the name of Jesus Christ. But something I had seen and heard had taught me that those words were more than a formality. There was a picture of the Savior on the bedroom wall where my mother was bedridden in the years before she died. She had put it there because of something her cousin, Elder Samuel O. Bennion of the Seventy (1874–1945), had told her. He had traveled with an Apostle who described seeing the Savior in a vision. Elder Bennion gave her that print, saying that it was the best portrayal he had ever seen of the Master's strength of character. So she framed it and placed it on the wall where she could see it from her bed.



She knew the Savior, and she loved Him. I had learned from her that we do not close in the name of a stranger when we approach our Father in prayer. I knew from what I had seen of her life that her heart was drawn to the Savior from years of determined and consistent effort to serve Him and to please Him. I knew the scripture was true which warns, "For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?" (Mosiah 5:13).

No Casual Invocation

Now years after my mother and father are gone, the words "in the name of Jesus Christ" are not casual for me, either when I say them or when I hear others say them. We must serve Him to know the Master's heart. But we also must pray that Heavenly Father will answer our prayers in our hearts as well as in our minds (see Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16).

President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), a former counselor

in the First Presidency, described the blessing of people coming together having prayed for such answers. He was speaking of going to a priesthood meeting, yet many of you have prepared your hearts in the way he described in these words:

"I should enter that assembly with my mind entirely free from all influence that would prevent the operation of the Spirit of God upon me. I should go in a prayerful spirit, asking God to *write upon my heart* His will; not with my own will already prepared, and determined to carry out my will . . . , regardless of everyone else's views. If I were to go, and all the rest were to go, with this spirit, then the Spirit of God would be felt in our midst, and that which we would decide upon would be the mind and will of God, because God would reveal it to us. We would see light in the direction

where we should go, and we would behold darkness in the direction we should not go.”¹

Our goal when we teach our children to pray is for them to want God to write upon their hearts and be willing then to go and do what God asks of them. It is possible for our children to have faith enough, from what they see us do and what we teach, that they can feel at least part of what the Savior felt as He prayed to have the strength to make His infinite sacrifice for us: “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

I have had prayers answered. Those answers were most clear when what I wanted was silenced by an overpowering need to know what God wanted. It is then that the answer from a loving Heavenly Father can be spoken to the mind by the still, small voice and can be written on the heart.

Learning to Seek His Will

Some parents will ask: “But how can I soften the heart of my child now grown older and convinced he or she doesn’t need God? How can I soften a heart enough to allow God to write His will upon it?”

The child who sees a mother or a father pass through the trials of life with fervent prayer and then hears a sincere testimony that God answered in kindness will remember. When trials come, that individual will be prepared.



Sometimes tragedy will soften a heart. But for some, even tragedy is not enough.

But there is one need even hardened and proud people cannot believe they can meet for themselves. They cannot lift the weight of sin from their own shoulders. And even the most hardened may at times feel the prick of conscience and thus the need for forgiveness from God. A loving father, Alma, taught that need to his son Corianton this way: “And now, the plan of mercy could not be brought about except an atonement should be made; therefore God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also” (Alma 42:15).

And then, after bearing testimony of the Savior and His Atonement, the father made this plea for a softened heart: “O my son, I desire that ye should deny the justice of God no more. Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins, by denying the justice of God; but do you let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in humility” (Alma 42:30).

Alma knew what we can know: that testifying of Jesus Christ and Him crucified had the greatest possibility of helping his son sense the need for the help only God could give. And prayers are answered to those whose hearts are softened by that overwhelming feeling of the need for cleansing.

Opening the Door of Prayer

When we teach those we love that we are spirit children temporarily away from a loving Heavenly Father, we open the door of prayer to them.

We lived in His presence before we came here to be tested. We knew His face, and He knew ours. Just as my earthly father watched me go away from him, our Father in Heaven watched us go into mortality.

His Beloved Son, Jehovah, left those glorious courts to come down into the world to suffer what we would suffer and to pay the price of all the sins we would commit. Our

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. Sing or read the first two verses of the hymn “Our Savior’s Love” (*Hymns*, no. 113). Note the loving relationship described in the hymn. Read President Eyring’s experience about parting with his father in New York City. Invite family members to explain how they felt when they have had to leave a loved one for a time. Discuss how prayer can help family members feel closer to Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and each other.

2. Display a paper heart with “God’s Will” written on it. Read the section “No Casual Invocation,” and ask what the family thinks President Cannon meant by “write upon my heart His will.” Discuss how family members can “pray . . . to want God to write upon their hearts and be willing then to go and do what God asks of them.” Bear testimony of how prayer helps us know God’s will.

Savior provided for us the only way to go home again to our Heavenly Father and to Him. If the Holy Ghost can tell us just that much about who we are, we and our children might feel what Enos felt. He prayed this way:

“And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens.

“And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed” (Enos 1:4–5).

I can promise you that no joy will exceed what you will feel if a child of yours prays in the hour of need and receives such an answer. You will someday be separated from him or her, with a longing in your heart to be reunited. A loving Heavenly Father knows that this longing would last forever unless we are reunited as families with Him and His Beloved Son. He put in place all that His children will need to have this blessing. To find it, they must ask of God for themselves, nothing doubting, as the boy Joseph Smith did.

My dad was concerned that day in New York because he knew, as my mother knew, that the only real tragedy

would be if we were apart forever. That is why they taught me to pray. They knew we could be together forever only with God's help and with His assurances. As you will do, they taught prayer best by example.

The afternoon my mother died, we went from the hospital to the family home. We sat quietly in the darkened living room for a while. Dad excused himself and went to his bedroom. He was gone for a few minutes. When he walked back into the living room, there was a smile on his face. He said that he'd been concerned for Mother. During the time he had gathered her things from her hospital room and thanked the staff for being so kind to her, he thought of her going into the spirit world just minutes after her death. He was afraid she would be lonely if there was no one to meet her. He had gone to his bedroom to ask his Heavenly Father to have someone greet Mildred, his wife and my mother. He said that he had been told in answer to his prayer that his mother had met his sweetheart. I smiled at that too. Grandma Eyring was not very tall. I had a clear picture of her rushing through the crowd, her short legs moving rapidly on her mission to meet my mother.

Dad surely didn't intend at that moment to teach me about prayer, but he did. I can't remember a sermon from my mother or my father about prayer. They prayed when times were hard and when they were good. And they reported in matter-of-fact ways how kind God was, how powerful, and how close. The prayers I heard most were about what it would take for us to be together forever. And the answers which will remain written on my heart seem to be the assurances that we were on the path.

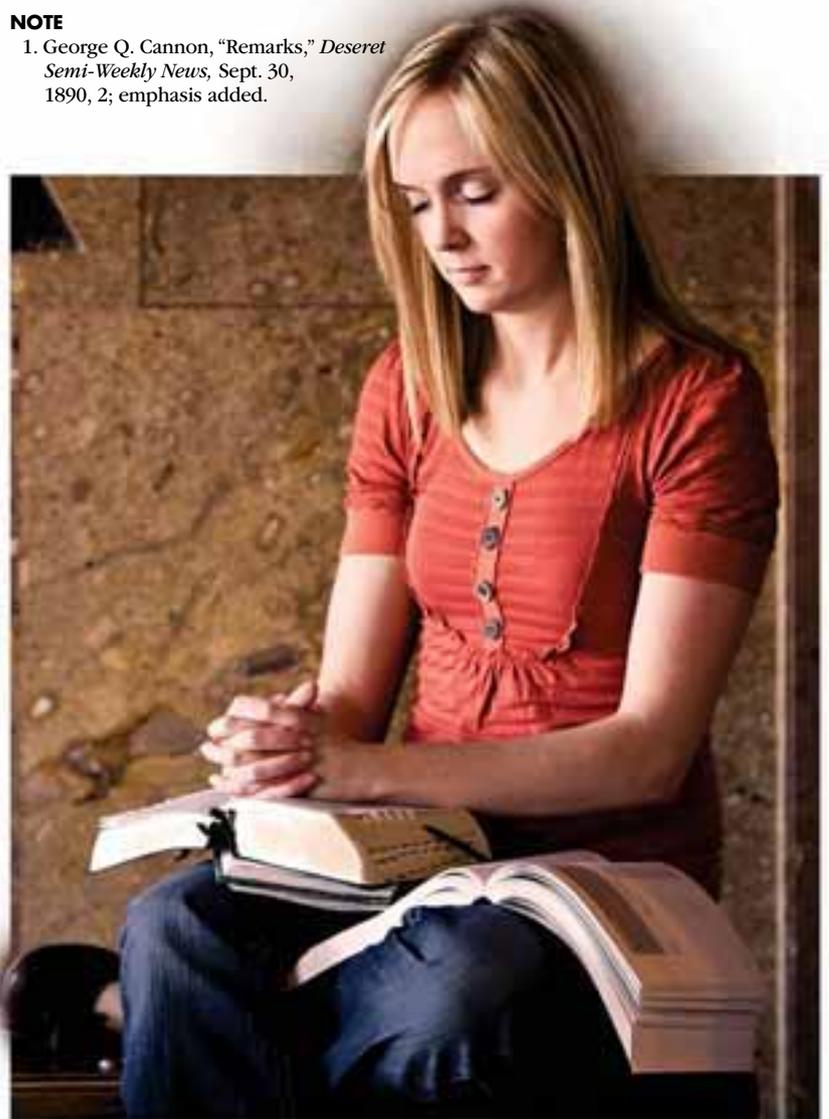
When I saw in my mind my grandmother rushing to my mother, I felt joy for them and a longing to bring my sweetheart and our children to such a reunion. That longing is why we must teach our children to pray.

I testify that our Heavenly Father answers the pleadings of faithful parents to know how to teach their children to pray. I testify as a servant of Jesus Christ that because of His Atonement, we can have eternal life in families if we honor the covenants offered in this, His true Church. ■

NOTE

1. George Q. Cannon, "Remarks," *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, Sept. 30, 1890, 2; emphasis added.

In time, when the children are away from home and family, prayer can provide the shield of protection the parent will want so much for them to have.



Elder Neil L. Andersen: *Man of Faith*

BY ELDER D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

One February evening in 1968, Neil Andersen found himself the center of attention. He had been selected as a high school junior to represent Idaho in the Student Burgesses, a gathering of students from 37 countries and each of the 50 states in the United States. Students came together in Williamsburg, Virginia, to discuss challenges facing democracy.

This was the first time 16-year-old Neil, raised on a small farm in Pocatello, Idaho, had ever flown on an airplane, traveled so far from home, or been among so many bright and sophisticated young people.

As evening discussions turned to subjects around the world, Neil's membership in the Church became evident. Some of the delegates began to challenge his beliefs. Young Neil had never before been asked such pointed questions regarding his faith.

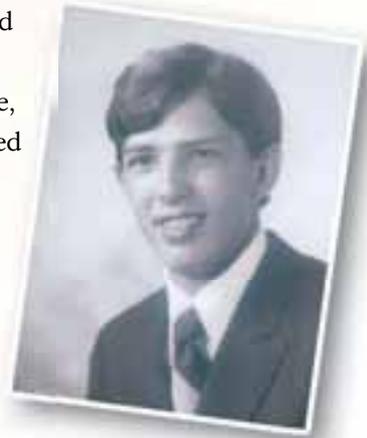
"I remember praying in my mind that I would say the words that needed to be spoken," he recalls. "What followed was a little miracle for me. I told them more than I knew. I felt the power of the Lord as He guided me through sensitive explanations and the sharing of my deep convictions. I could feel the Spirit of the Lord as I spoke. At the conclusion they expressed their appreciation and quietly acknowledged their respect for what I believed.

"I learned that there is a power and influence in this sacred work beyond ourselves and that it is worth defending. I understood that as we are true and faithful, 'ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is in [us]' (1 Peter 3:15), the Lord will bless us beyond our own abilities."

This is how Elder Neil L. Andersen has lived his life—acting in faith.

A Foundation of Faith

Neil Linden Andersen was born on August 9, 1951, the third of five children, to Lyle and Kathryn Andersen. Neil's father was a student at





Utah State University studying agricultural husbandry. When Neil was three, the family moved to Colorado.

Neil's parents taught their family through their own faith and sacrifice. They lived 90 miles (145 km) from the meetinghouse. Making the journey to Church meetings was something they just did every Sunday. "We wanted to show our children how important the Church is," his mother, Kathryn, explains.

When Neil was five, his family moved to a dairy farm in Pocatello, Idaho. Neil raised rabbits, rode horses, and played in the fields with his siblings. When Neil was about seven years old, a rabbit he especially liked escaped from its cage. He relates:

"I looked all over our little farm, but I could not find it anywhere. I remember walking back behind an old barn and praying that I could find the rabbit.

"Immediately after the prayer, an image came into my mind of a spot beneath some boards. And sure enough, I went to that spot and found my rabbit. This experience and many others like it taught me that the Lord responds to the small and simple prayers of all of us."

Life on his parents' farm instilled the principle of hard work in Neil. "I milked a lot of cows and moved a lot of irrigation pipe," he says. "I can remember that on Christmas morning before we opened our presents, we had cows to milk. Looking back, I realize how valuable it was to



learn that part of life is just hard work."

As a young man Neil also worked hard at sports. In high school he lettered in cross-country running. However, he focused most of his energies on excelling in other ways. His mother recalls, "While at Highland High School, he attended Boys State in Boise, Idaho, and was elected governor by all of the other delegates. He was president of the Idaho Association of Student Councils, which included all the high school student body officers throughout Idaho."

As a freshman at Brigham Young University in 1969, Neil Andersen was a diligent student. However, his sister Sheri notes, "as driven as he was by education, he was always planning to go on a mission. His only question was if he was really prepared to serve. I was so impressed that faith was a choice to him."

Elder Andersen also remembers putting the question to the Lord. As he recalled recently in general conference, the feeling came, "You don't know everything, but you know enough."¹ Armed with that assurance, Neil Andersen accepted a mission call and served faithfully in France.

After his mission Neil continued to excel at BYU. He was named an Edwin S. Hinckley Scholar and elected student body vice president.

It was also at BYU that he met the person who would have the greatest influence on his life: Kathy Sue Williams. He and Kathy were married in the Salt Lake Temple on March 20, 1975, just before he graduated. Marriage was followed by two years at Harvard University, where he earned

Opposite page, from left to right: Neil L. Andersen today and as a teenager in high school in Pocatello, Idaho. Above, from left to right: Neil (center) with his parents, Kathryn and Lyle, and siblings Lauri, Sheri, and Alan, 1962; Neil as a young boy on the farm in Idaho. Below: Neil as a missionary in France, 1970-72.





Above: Neil and Kathy on their wedding day, 1975, at the Salt Lake Temple.

Right: Neil and Kathy with their children, Brandt, Derek, Camey (Hadlock) in back, and Kristen (Ebert), in Tampa, Florida, 1988. Opposite page: The Andersen family in France while Elder Andersen served as mission president, around 1990.

a master's degree in business administration in 1977.

A Focus on Family

Neil and Kathy had their first child while attending Harvard, toward the end of their first year of marriage. Three more children followed.

With the arrival of children, Kathy postponed her studies but never gave up on finishing her degree. Elder Andersen expresses his admiration: "When we were in Brazil [where Elder Andersen served in the Area Presidency] and the children were

no longer living with us, she opened her books, learned Portuguese, and finished her degree—18 credit hours in Portuguese. That's the kind of tenacity that she has."

Following graduate school, the Andersens moved to Tampa, Florida, where they intended to settle for life, as this was where Kathy had been reared and where her family still lived. Neil engaged in several successful business ventures, including real estate development, health care, and advertising. The Lord, however, had other plans for him.

In 1989, while serving in a stake presidency, Neil was called as the mission president in Bordeaux, France. After returning to Florida in 1992, he was called within a month to be president of the Tampa Florida Stake. The following year, a new calling came: this time to the First Quorum of the Seventy. In 2005, he was called to the Presidency of the Seventy. Then, in April 2009, he was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Despite the pressures of his work and

his Church callings through those many years, his devotion to his family never wavered.

The Andersens' oldest daughter, Camey Hadlock, says, "Daddy [an endearing term still used by his sons and daughters] always made time for the children. For example, he took each one individually to breakfast with him once a month. He let us pick the place for breakfast and the topics we would talk about. We looked so forward to having his undivided attention."

Derek Andersen remembers his dad making time to play: "Growing up, we loved playing basketball as a family. He'd come home from work, and we'd team up against my older brother and play basketball together."



Daughter Kristen Ebert recalls that even though her father was extremely busy, “he always had time to listen and to give sound advice.”

The Andersens were so faithful in having family scripture study and singing a hymn each night that the children would do it alone if their parents returned home late.

For family home evening, the Andersens would often study the conference talks in the *Ensign*. “It was clear that when the prophet spoke, we listened,” Derek says.

Sister Andersen says, “Neil is a man with deep faith and love for the Savior. The loving kindness he has always shown to me and our children has brought immeasurable strength to our family and filled our lives with happiness and peace.”

Judging by the way her husband treats her, one can see that Kathy is the heart of the home. She explains, “Neil recognizes and expresses an abundance of gratitude for the little things that I do each day—things that many people would not even notice or would regard as insignificant, such as cleaning the house, preparing dinner, or washing the clothes.”

Kristen says, “I’ve always appreciated my father’s example of treating my mother with kindness and respect. He opens doors for her, helps her be seated, volunteers to do the dishes, and so forth.”

Elder Andersen says, “Kathy is absolute and uncompromising in her loyalty to the Lord and to me and the family. She does so much to put me and the children first. It is impossible not to love her completely and want to do things for her.

“Once I married her,” he adds, “the standards in my life went way up—being totally consistent in prayer and scripture study, keeping the commandments with precision. Her influence upon me and our children is phenomenal. She has a pure and disciplined faith.”

Elder Andersen credits his wife with being a strong support to the children through challenging circumstances. Including their mission, they spent 10 of the past 20 years outside the United States, moving a total of eight times. “You can see the challenges our children faced moving

nearly every year: new friends and in most cases a new country. Kathy was the strength that held them together and kept them realizing that this would be a positive experience for them.”

The children too were resilient. “We appreciate the children’s sacrifices during those years. The Lord has rewarded them richly with choice companions and wonderful children of their own,” Elder Andersen says.

Trusting the Lord

When President Thomas S. Monson, then a counselor in the First Presidency, called Neil Andersen to serve as mission president, accepting that call required financial sacrifice. Neil owned a prosperous and growing advertising agency. “It’s not a business that is easily left to others,” Elder Andersen explains. “We accepted the call not knowing how we would make the transition work.”

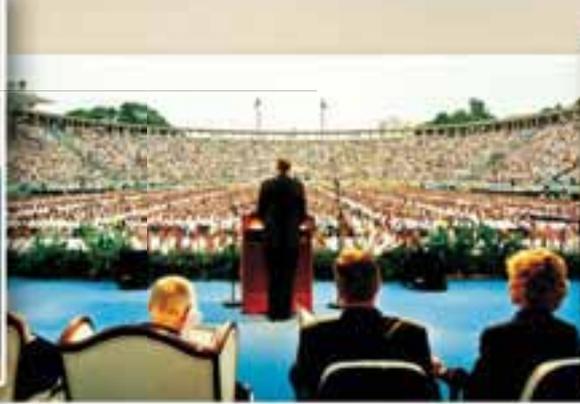
Sister Andersen adds, “I have always had confidence in his faith. He has consistently reassured us: ‘If we put the Lord first, He will open the way, and miracles will follow.’”

Within weeks an offer to buy the business came forward unsolicited. “It was clearly the Lord’s hand at work in a miraculous way,” Elder Andersen says.

The principle of the Lord’s work being a work of miracles was taught constantly to the missionaries in France. Kurt Christensen, who served as a missionary under President Andersen, explains, “He always raised our vision of the blessings the Lord desired for France. He taught about pure faith and obedience with exactness, and the Lord poured out His miracles upon us.”

Wherever their assignments have taken the Andersens—western Europe, Brazil, Mexico, and elsewhere—they have loved the devoted members of the Church and have worked diligently to learn the language of the countries.





Once, when Kathy commented on the countless hours Neil devoted to learning languages, he expressed that he had been given a spiritual gift and that the Lord expected him to labor diligently to realize that gift. Elder Andersen now speaks French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Following the Brethren

“For 16 years the members of the First Presidency and the Twelve have been my examples and teachers,” Elder Andersen explained as he spoke in general conference after his call to the Twelve. “I have experienced their love and sure witness of our Heavenly Father and His Son. I have watched them untiringly seek first to build up the kingdom of God. I have seen the power of God rest upon them and magnify and sustain them. I have witnessed the fulfillment of their prophetic voice.”²

While Elder Andersen served as Executive Director of the Church Audiovisual Department, he had almost weekly meetings with President James E. Faust (1920–2007). “One time I went to President Faust with a piercing problem I didn’t know how to solve,” Elder Andersen recalls. “He said to me, ‘Neil, have you prayed about it? Have you prayed all night like Enos did?’ And then he sat back in his chair and said, ‘I’ve prayed all night many times to receive the answer to difficult challenges. That is how you will get your answer as well.’ He was right.”

It was at this time that Elder Andersen oversaw the development of the movie *The Testaments of One Fold and One Shepherd*; the initial launch of Mormon.org, the Church’s missionary Web site; and the installation of the audiovisual systems in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City.

Through these experiences Elder Andersen has recognized the guidance of the First Presidency and the Twelve. “The Brethren teach you about spiritual power. They are not just teaching you facts; they are teaching how to understand and listen to the Lord. You learn to be a servant of the Lord.”

Serving the One

Elder Andersen acknowledges, “President Monson has been a wonderful teacher to me and many others, as he has taught us to reach out to others as the Savior would. He has constantly emphasized that there is no greater joy than knowing you have been an instrument in the Lord’s hand to answer an honest prayer.”

These principles have taken root in Elder Andersen.

The mother of a young man whom Elder Andersen had once met briefly recalls that at one point her son “was on the verge of emotional and physical collapse” when he saw Elder and Sister Andersen sitting at a table in a cafeteria. “My son later told us, ‘I would not have approached any other person, but when I saw Elder Andersen, I knew he loved me, and I immediately got up from my chair and approached him.’”

Despite the terrible change in the young man’s appearance caused by his current crisis, Elder Andersen recognized him and called him by name. Elder and Sister Andersen took the young man home, fed him, and talked

MILESTONES IN CHURCH SERVICE

- 1970–72: Missionary, France
- 1984–89: Counselor, Tampa Florida Stake presidency
- 1989–92: President, France Bordeaux Mission
- 1992–93: President, Tampa Florida Stake
- 1993: Called to the First Quorum of the Seventy
- 1994–97: Counselor, Europe West Area Presidency
- 1998–2001: Executive Director, Church Audiovisual Department
- 2002–05: President, Brazil South Area Presidency
- 2005–09: Presidency of the Seventy
- 2008–09: Senior President, Presidency of the Seventy
- April 2009: Called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



at length with him. Then, though it was midnight, Elder Andersen drove several hours to take the young man home.

“Elder Andersen’s influence didn’t end there,” explains the mother. “Now, years later, he continues to see our son, to be interested in his life. He saved our son.”

Once, when Elder Andersen was visiting in a hospital, he noticed a 26-year-old patient named Lora McPherson, who was recovering from surgery related to cancer. Her mother, Nancy, relates:

“[Elder Andersen] gave her a priesthood blessing, sent her a copy of the talks from a recent general conference, and later asked Lora to share her thoughts on what she was grateful for, which he used in a talk at BYU–Hawaii.

“As Lora was recovering, Elder Andersen invited her to visit him in his office, showing her around the Church Administration Building.

“Several months later, when it became apparent that Lora’s time on earth was limited, Elder Andersen gave Lora a beautiful blessing, which brought her so much comfort in anticipating her passing from this life to the next. He later adjusted his travel schedule to speak at Lora’s funeral.

“We have been so impressed with the ability of Elder Andersen to carry out his global and family responsibilities and still take time for the one. He is truly an example of the Savior’s admonition to seek out and serve those in need.”

Opposite page, from left: With President James E. Faust following production of the movie *The Testaments of One Fold and One Shepherd* in 2000; speaking at a celebration in connection with the rededication of the São Paulo Brazil Temple in 2004; as mission president with President Boyd K. Packer while creating the Bordeaux France Stake in 1992; with Elder D. Todd Christofferson during the April 2009 general conference. Right: Elder and Sister Andersen with children and grandchildren in 2006.

A Servant of the Lord

Speaking of his father’s calling as an Apostle, son Brandt says, “This call is life changing, but it won’t change my parents’ lives. They are the same in private as they are in public.” All who know Elder Neil L. Andersen will agree.

It has been my blessing to have a close association with Elder Andersen during his service as a General Authority. The faith that was evident even in childhood sustains him still. He teaches the gospel with conviction, in large measure because he so faithfully lives it in every aspect of his life. His counsel is unflinchingly wise. I have observed that he is blessed with prophetic insights that I am confident will only grow with the mantle of his new calling as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As he embarked upon this sacred service, Elder Andersen humbly declared: “I take solace that in one qualification for the holy apostleship where there can be no latitude extended, the Lord has deeply blessed me. I do know with perfect and certain clarity through the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, the Beloved Son of God.”³ ■

NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, “You Know Enough,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 13.
2. Neil L. Andersen, “Come unto Him,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 79.
3. Neil L. Andersen, *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 78.





Mending

QUILTS MENDING LIVES

BY CAROLYN RUSCH
Repentance truly makes us whole.

As I was preparing to speak to a group of Young Women, I caught myself reflecting on quilts. I wanted to help the girls understand that each of our lives is like a quilt. Just as every quilt has a unique pattern, so too our lives have a pattern uniquely ours. Each piece in our quilt represents a challenge we've had, a blessing received, a truth learned, a talent nurtured, or an experience that has helped shape us into the person we are today—and the person we can become. Some quilts are orderly and have a precise pattern; others are crazy quilts with oddly shaped pieces and mismatched colors randomly sewn together. Although both types of quilts can be used for the same purpose, each is wonderfully unique.

As these thoughts wandered around in my head, I was reminded of the graduation quilt my grandmother had lovingly pieced together for me. She had used a sunbonnet design made of scraps of fabric left over from previous sewing projects, both hers and mine. After my grandmother had sewn all of the pieces together, quilting her work of art became a family project. I remember sitting for hours around that quilt with my grandmother, my mother, and an aunt as they taught me the art of taking tiny stitches—making sure each one went through both layers of fabric. We had worked on the quilt for several days when an unfortunate thing happened. One of us asked my aunt to pass the scissors, which

she quickly did. But much to everyone's horror, as she slid them across the quilt point first, they went into the quilt, leaving an unsightly hole. We were all upset and just knew the quilt was ruined. I remember my grandmother telling us not to worry because with iron-on tape and some careful "finagling" she would be able to make the hole almost invisible. Sure enough, she fixed it, and although a patch now covered the unsightly hole, we had to look closely to find it.

The night before I was to speak to the young women, I decided I would take my graduation quilt, now 37 years old, with me. The girls would be able to see how each square was unique and how each added to the beauty of the quilt. I could tell them about the hole in the quilt, how my grandmother had patched it, and how I treasured the memories sewn into the quilt with every stitch. I also wanted to remind them that just as the hole had been mended, we too can be mended when we do something wrong, not with iron-on tape, but through the gift of repentance and the great atoning sacrifice of a loving Savior.

As I finished my preparation, I decided to mark the patch in the quilt so I could quickly point it out to the young women. I pulled the quilt down from the shelf and began looking for the patch, but much to my amazement, I couldn't find it. I even laid the quilt on the floor and went over it inch by inch on my hands and knees but still could



not find the L-shaped scar. I began to wonder if my memory was failing, yet I knew the incident had happened and there had been a hole in the quilt—but where?

I searched for some time but the patch was not to be found. Then I was reminded of the words in Doctrine and Covenants 58:42: “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.” I knew then what I needed to share with the young women. They needed to know that they are beloved daughters of our Heavenly Father, each unique and

different, with individual talents, trials, weaknesses, and triumphs. They needed to know that repentance is available and forgiveness is possible. Just as I had been unable to find the patch in the quilt, so it is with our lives—if we truly repent, it can be as if a sin had not been committed and even the Lord will remember it no more.

I had caught myself reflecting on quilts but found my testimony of the principle of repentance and the power of the Atonement strengthened. That night I added one more piece to the quilt that is my life. ■



STAYING HOME . . . AGAIN

Once I returned to work and realized how much I enjoyed what I did there, it became harder and harder to make the decision to stay home with my children.

NAME WITHHELD

After several years of being a stay-at-home mom, I didn't think working two days a week would be a big deal. A year following the sale of our business, the buyers defaulted and ownership reverted to us. My husband had started a new company during this time and didn't have time for both. Because of the current market, we were not in a position to sell the business again. We decided that, with the help of good management, I could oversee things two days a week.

I missed being home at first, but I hadn't counted on how much I would enjoy my new position. The two days

a week soon grew to three and sometimes four. Being at the office became more rewarding than changing diapers and looking for missing shoes. I shopped for nice clothes and found time to pursue my own interests during the hours I was away from home.

Over time I found myself annoyed that after spending all day working I still had to cook dinner, so I often picked something up on my way home. When I walked in the door, my children clamored for my attention when all I wanted to do was unwind. In response to the perceived ingratitude of my family, I became even more involved in the business, which wasn't doing very well despite my attention.

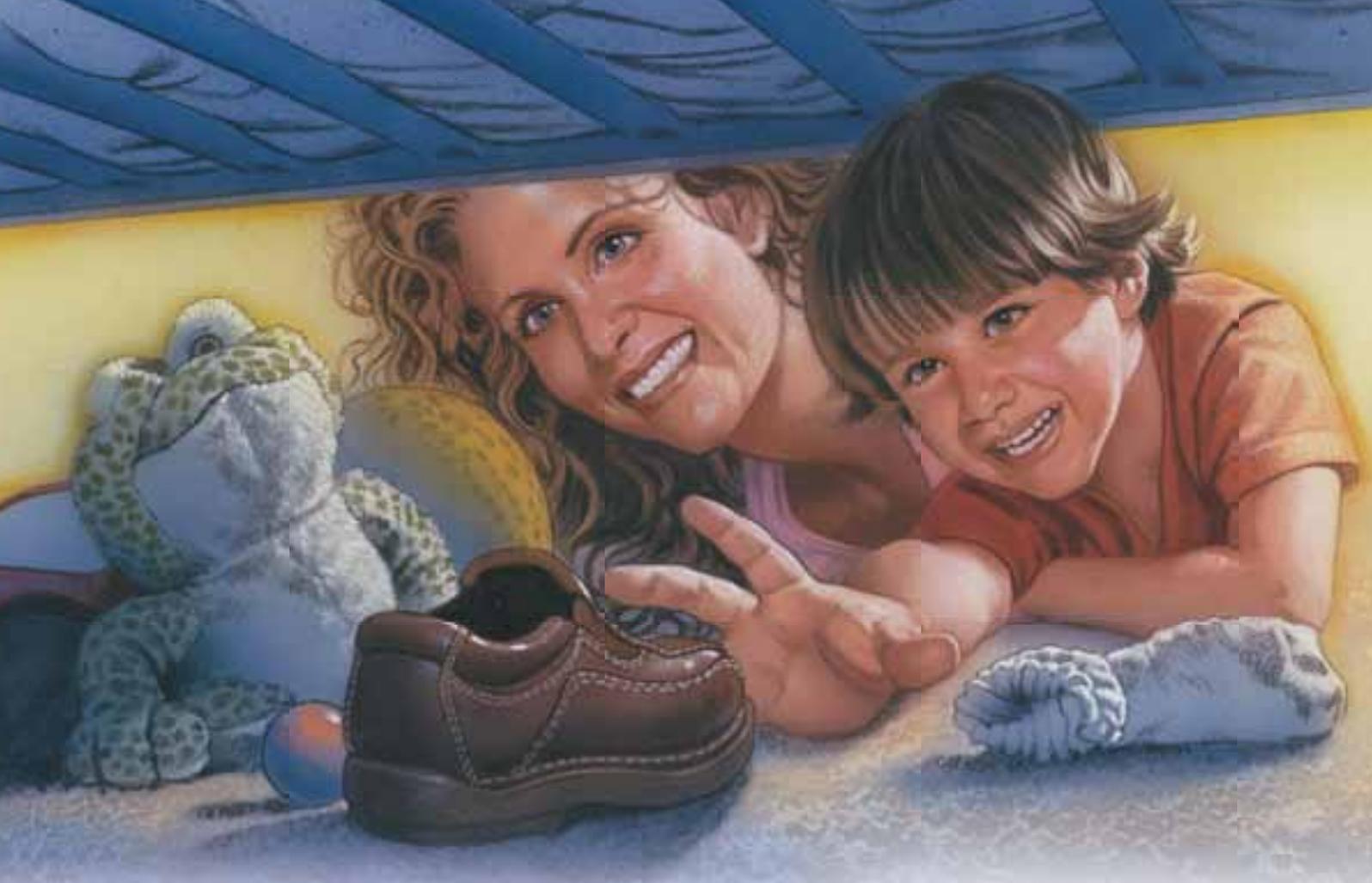


One day while driving home I found myself searching for any possible reason to delay my arrival. Was there one more errand I could run? Had I left anything undone at the office? I realized with surprise that I didn't *want* to be home. In fact, I wanted to be anywhere *but home*. Matthew 6:21 reads, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." I no longer treasured being home with my children—my heart was not in it.

I pulled into the driveway and sat in my car for a few minutes. Even with the realization of how far from the path I had veered, my attitude didn't instantly change. I was overwhelmed with guilt, sorrow, and embarrassment, yet I still

didn't want to go inside. Feeling a little panicked, I felt the prompting of the Spirit to do the only thing I could think of—I bowed my head over the steering wheel and prayed.

I asked for forgiveness for straying so far from my divine role, and then I made two pleas: first, that I could rekindle my desire to be at home; and second, that Heavenly Father would help me find a way to return home full time. I felt confident that in time I could rediscover my joy of being home with my children, but I had no idea how the second request could be achieved. The business was struggling, and my husband was having to pay many expenses with the profit from his other business. I didn't know what the



solution would be, but I had faith that things would get better somehow. I went to bed that night with a heavy heart, but I was determined to do my part to make things better.

I repeated my prayer every day. I stopped pursuing personal business during working hours so I could be home more often. I took pride in making home-cooked meals again. My attitude didn't change overnight and it was often frustrating to have to work so hard at changing it, but in time I learned to enjoy being home again. However, aspects of the business weren't coming together the way I had hoped. In fact, things were getting worse.

A few months after my first prayer, we reached a point where we were no longer able to make our loan payments on the business. Eventually we had no choice but to close the business and allow it to go into foreclosure. The bank would sell the building for much less than it would get as an operating company, and we would be responsible for the difference, which would amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

It was impossible not to take the failure personally. We had made so many sacrifices and worked so hard, but the business had failed despite our best efforts. We had never faced anything like this and found the entire experience

overwhelming. And yet, there was one element that was impossible to ignore. Once we no longer had the business, I would be at home again.

I *had* prayed to return home full time, and though I assumed it would be through the *success* of the business, not the failure, I received exactly what I had asked for. Matthew 6:20 reads, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Through this experience I have come to realize just how important it was to the Lord that I be home with my children, regardless of the consequences. The power of prayer was also driven home as I realized just how well my Father in Heaven had listened to my pleas for help. He had first helped me to change my heart, and then He helped change my circumstances.

Being home again isn't all enjoyment. I still spend a lot of time looking for missing shoes, and at times I long for the respect and satisfaction I found at the office. However, my heart is now back where it belongs, and I once again treasure my role as a mother. I lost sight of my true riches for a time, but through the help of my Father in Heaven I was able to come home again and stay there. ■

THE STEPS TO THE TEMPLE



BY CHERYL C. LANT
Primary General President

I love the beautiful temples of the Lord. They are a witness that He lives, loves us, and desires to bless our lives.

I remember well my first impressions of the temple. I was just a little girl visiting my grandmother. Each day as I woke up, I would look out of her bedroom window and see the beautiful spires of the Manti Utah Temple gleaming in the morning sun. The temple seemed to beckon me. It represented, even then, everything that was pure and safe and worthy in the world.

I remember visiting the Manti Temple hill with my family. In the early days, broad stone steps led up to the temple; to me they represented the journey we must all follow to get to the temple. Each step in our personal journey to the temple is essential, and it is important that we not get discouraged or distracted by the world along the way. Each step prepares us and strengthens us. And always, the temple stands above us, encouraging us to come.

Faith

For me, the first step that leads to the temple is faith. This is also the first principle of the gospel. Our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ awakens in us a desire to return to Him.

Our faith in His teachings about eternal families leads us to want to secure that blessing. Our faith strengthens our desire to be in the temple, where we can draw closer to Him and become eternal families.

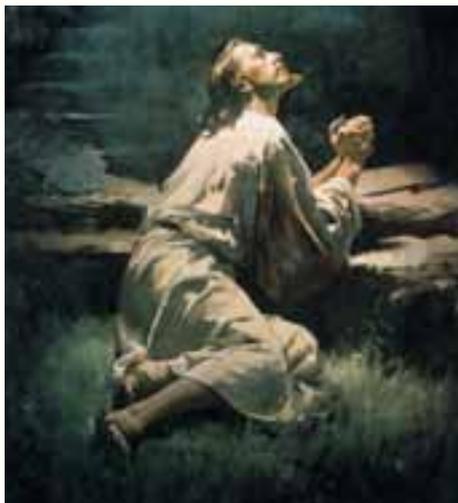
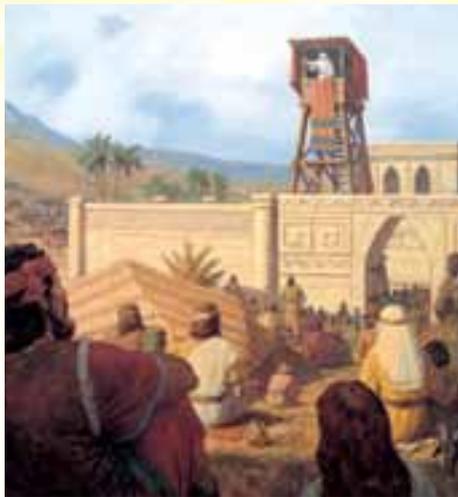
When the Book of Mormon prophet King Benjamin asked his people to gather to the temple, “they pitched their tents round about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple” (Mosiah 2:6). Then King Benjamin taught them about faith:

“I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, . . . calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith” (Mosiah 4:11).

Faith allows us to move forward in our lives, even when things become difficult. Faith becomes stronger as we use it. Faith is not only the first step but also the foundation of all other principles of the gospel.

Repentance

I think the second step to the temple is repentance.



Becoming worthy of temple blessings is a process. Staying worthy of those blessings once we have received them is also a process. This process requires faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. After all we can do, we must rely on the love of our Savior in order to be worthy before our Heavenly Father. Every day of our lives we experience weakness in some form or another. Only as we turn to our Savior for forgiveness and strength to do better can we become worthy of His blessings. Repentance is essential to worthiness.

Baptism, Gift of the Holy Ghost

Baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost constitute my third step leading to the temple. We must be baptized into our Heavenly Father's kingdom in order

to enter the temple. When we are baptized we make a covenant with our Heavenly Father that we will keep all of His commandments. In turn, He promises that He will bless us with His spirit. Worthiness to enter the temple depends on how faithfully we keep this covenant.

Obedience

Each of the subsequent steps leading to the temple represents obedience to God's commandments. We are supported by our faith and by the Atonement. How easily we climb these steps depends on our attitude.

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said, “When obedience ceases to be an irritant and becomes our quest, in that moment God will endow us with power.”¹

And what do we receive when we finally get to the top of those steps? As a child, I thought the prize was just touching the beautiful temple, but now I know that



the reward comes when I walk through the doors and feel the love and blessings of the Lord surround me.

Blessings of the Temple

It is only through the temple that we can regain the presence of our Heavenly Father, and it is only in the temple that we can secure eternal relationships by receiving ordinances and making covenants. My relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ comes first. My eternal relationship with my family comes next. Who can describe the joy and sweetness of being sealed for time and all eternity to your eternal companion and children? What joy we feel when we are joined with our parents and grandparents!

Other blessings come as well. The temple is the Lord's university. When I go there I always learn something new. I learn something important for my eternal progression. I learn something about how I can live my life better, how I can solve problems, and how I can serve more unselfishly. I can receive direction and insight into my life because the temple is a place of personal revelation.

The temple is also a place of peace, comfort, strength, and power. Whenever we are in the temple we feel renewed. The temple helps us face life's challenges with more faith and trust in the Lord.

The temple is a place of service where we do the work for those who have lived on the earth before us. We grow as we unselfishly



serve those we have never met.

At times the steps to the temple can seem overwhelming, but we can and must climb them every day of our lives as we strive to be worthy to enter

and to keep the covenants we make there. Obedience to the principles of the gospel makes us worthy to enter and keeps us worthy to return again and again. Each time we enter those beautiful doors, no matter which temple we attend, we receive the promised blessings of the Lord.

We can help our children while they're still young begin to climb those steps as we take their hands and walk with them, helping them to keep the commandments and keep the faith. We climb the steps to the temple together as we teach them the principles of the gospel and bear witness of those principles. We encourage them with our gratitude and joy in our own temple blessings. We are steady in our climb as we are strengthened by the very eternal covenants we want our children to make and keep. With the Lord's help, we climb

those steps together until we reach our eternal goal.

I love the beautiful temples of the Lord. They are a witness that He lives, loves us, and desires to bless our lives. May we all come to the temple. ■

NOTE

1. In Donald L. Staheli, "Obedience—Life's Great Challenge," *Ensign*, May 1998, 82.



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

Consider displaying a picture of the temple as you teach this lesson. Share the steps that lead us to the temple. Invite family members to write down a few words or illustrate the principles taught. Encourage your family to share their feelings about the temple. You could conclude by discussing the blessings that come from attending the temple.

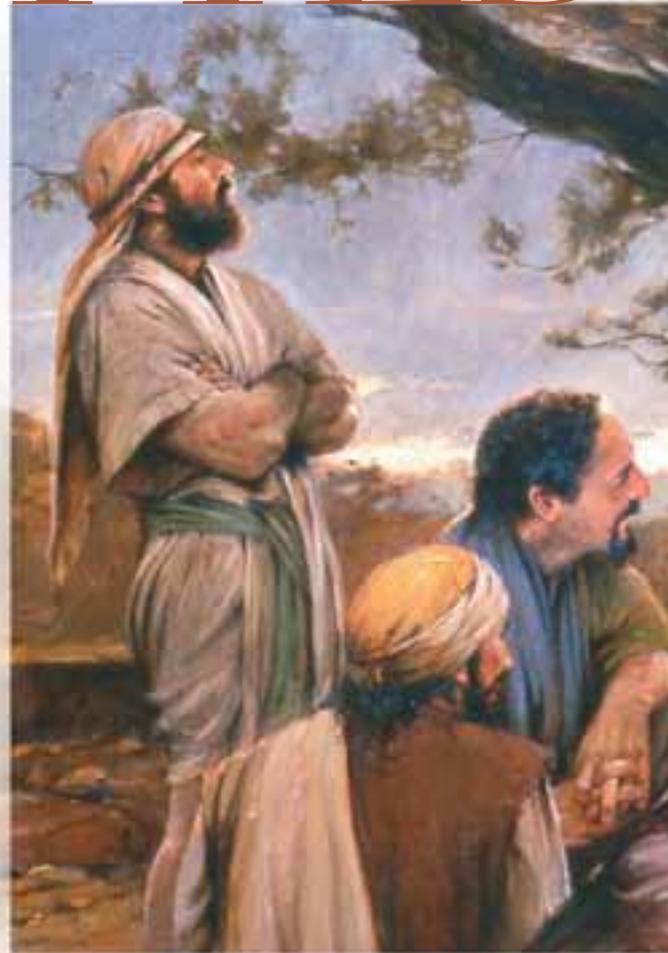
UNSPOTTED



BY PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY
(1873–1970)

Wordsworth once wrote of Milton, “Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart.” It seems to me, after listening to the brethren testify to the principles of the gospel and the high standard of living among the Latter-day Saints, that this people “dwells apart,” that they should be in reality “a peculiar people.” I do not mean that we are not to mingle with our friends who do not believe as we, neither do I believe that we ought to be exclusive; but as the Church of God we must “dwell apart.” Now, in what way? James says that “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). It is in the sense of keeping ourselves unspotted from the world that I take it the Church of God should be distinct. . . .

In that most impressive prayer of the Savior’s, . . . He says, speaking of His Apostles, “these are in the world,” and then adds these significant words, “I pray not that



thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (John 17:11, 15). This is in harmony with the teachings of the Book of Mormon, as recorded in the 42nd chapter of the Book of Alma, where it is explained why the children of God are here in this world; [namely], to mingle with the sons of men, to gain an experience that will bring them back to God;

David O. McKay, ninth President of the Church, was born in Huntsville, Utah, on September 8, 1873. He married Emma Rae Riggs on January 2, 1901. Five years later, on April 9, 1906, he was called as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. On April 9, 1951, he was sustained as President of the Church. This article is an excerpt from a talk given by Elder McKay in general conference, October 1911.

from the World



but not to partake of the sins of the world. The Savior said to His Apostles on the same evening that He offered that beautiful prayer, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Going soon to meet His Father, He admonished them to follow His example, praying not that God should take them out of the world, but that He should keep them from the evil. . . .

The Individual Test

I have never met a member of the Church who would not express himself . . . as being willing to defend his membership if this Church were attacked. . . . That feeling, that spirit of defense is always looking for some exceptional manifestation of opposition, something great that is coming. When such comes, we think we shall be ready to defend



We are told
by Paul
not to conform to the fashions of the world. The test, after all, of the efficiency of God's people is an individual one. What is the individual doing? Each one should ask "Am I living so that I am keeping unspotted from the world?"

the Church, when, perhaps this very day, there has been an encroachment upon our souls which has weakened our power to defend the truth. Trees that can stand in the midst of the hurricane often yield to the destroying pests that you can scarcely see with a microscope, and the greatest foes of humanity today are those unseen microscopical microbes that attack the body. It is the unseen influences at work in society that are undermining the manhood and womanhood of today. It is these unseen influences that come from the world that get us when we are least prepared to defend ourselves. When we do not withstand the encroachments of these evil influences, we weaken the possibility of defending the Church of Christ. This is an individual work, and what the individuals are, that the aggregate is.

I was with a party of friends recently, driving over a beautiful valley, not far from Salt Lake City. We passed a beautiful wheat field. It was an impressive sight really to see that dry farm of wheat, and one of the party

expressed his admiration of the luxuriant growth in the field, and looked at it in general. There it stood apart from the sagebrush and barren surroundings. But he was not satisfied with looking at it in the aggregate; the conveyance was stopped, and he looked at individual heads of wheat and exclaimed, "Look what large heads." . . . That was not enough. He broke the head, shuffled it in his hand, blew the chaff away, and examined each kernel. "The kernels," continued he, "are plump and solid." After all, the test of that wheat field was the individual kernel of wheat, and so it is in a community, so it is in the Church. The test, after all, of the efficiency of God's people is an individual one. What is the individual doing? Each one should ask, "Am I living so that I am keeping unspotted from the evil of the world?" . . .

The World and Its Temptations

Now, what do we mean by the world? It is sometimes used as an indefinite term. I take it that the world refers to the inhabitants who are alienated from the Saints of God. They are aliens to the Church, and it is the spirit of this alienation that we should keep ourselves free from. We are told by Paul not to conform to the fashions of the world. [Timothy] was warned not to partake of those things, the evils of the world, and to "flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22). Purity of heart—Zion is the pure in heart, we have been told, and the strength of this Church lies in the purity of the thoughts and lives of its members; then the testimony of Jesus abides in the soul, and strength comes to each individual to withstand the evils of the world.

These evils present themselves insidiously in our daily associations. They come in the shape of temptations, as they came to the Savior after His baptism. What were those temptations? When Satan said, “Command that these stones be made bread” (Matthew 4:3), he was appealing to the appetite. He knew that Jesus was hungry, that He was physically weak, and [he] thought that by pointing to those little lime stones which resemble somewhat a Jewish loaf of bread, he could awaken a desire to eat. Failing in that, when he received the divine word, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4), Satan then tried Him in another way. He dared Him—an appeal to His pride, to His vanity. . . . But the Savior answered him in terms of scripture, “It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord

thy God” (Matthew 4:7). What was the third? An appeal to His love of power, domain, wealth: “All these things [the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof] will I give thee,” said the tempter, “if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:9). “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:10).

Now, nearly every temptation that comes to you and me comes in one of those forms. Classify them, and you will find that under one of those three nearly every given temptation that makes you and me spotted, ever so little may be, comes to us as (1) a temptation of the appetite; (2) a yielding to the pride and fashion and vanity of those alienated from the things of God; or (3) a gratifying of the passion, or a desire for the riches of the world, or power among men. . . .

THE THREE TEMPTATIONS © GARY SMITH



Did They Condemn Him?

Now, when do temptations come? Why, they come to us in our social gatherings, they come to us at our weddings, they come to us in our politics, they come to us in our business relations, on the farm, [and] in the mercantile establishment. In our dealings in all the affairs of life, we find these insidious influences working, and it is when they manifest themselves to the consciousness of each individual that the defense of truth ought to exert itself. . . .

When that little small voice calls to the performance of duty, insignificant though it seem, and its performance unknown to anyone save the individual and God, he who responds gains corresponding strength. Temptation often comes in the same quiet way. Perhaps the yielding to it may not be known by anyone save the individual and his God, but if he does yield to it, he becomes to that extent weakened, and spotted with the evil of the world. Let me cite an instance:



A young missionary was invited to a wedding in a foreign country, at which two of his acquaintances were joined together in the bonds of matrimony, the ceremony being performed by a minister of another church. This young man was the only member of [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] present amidst the one hundred or more guests at the table in the hotel. By each plate was the wine cup, filled to the brim, and also a glass of water. After the ceremony, as the guests were all in their places, the minister arose and said, "Now I propose that the company drink the health of the newly married couple." They all arose.

Now, propriety suggested that [the young Latter-day Saint] take the wine cup. He was a missionary, [and] he belonged to the Church that preaches the Word of Wisdom, revealed direct from God to the Prophet Joseph. Science since then has proved it to be indeed a word of wisdom. He was teaching that, and he was [trying] to live it. Here was a time when he could indulge, [and] no one would know; indeed it seemed to be the act of propriety, but he resisted. Now was the time to defend his Church, and that is what he did. He took the glass of water, and some of his immediate friends by him, dropping their wine cups, followed his example, and at least half a dozen wine glasses remained untouched. Others saw it, and the circumstance furnished an excellent opportunity to converse with these guests upon the Word of Wisdom. Was he humiliated? No, he was strengthened. Were the guests embarrassed? No. Did they feel to condemn him? No. Condemnation was replaced by admiration, as it always is in the hearts of intelligent and God-fearing men and women. . . .

Now, as I say, these temptations come to us in business transactions, or perhaps on the streetcar when we have an opportunity to refuse paying the corporation five cents. Stooping to cheat a corporation! Well, let us always remember this, that the corporation can afford to lose that nickel, but we cannot afford to take it, to steal it. It is an insignificant thing, isn't it? It is really a great thing; it is one of these insidious things stealing into the character of the individual.



If One Can Do It, All Can Do It

Everywhere, in all places, let us remember that “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from [the sins] of the world” (James 1:27). Can we do it in aggregate? Is this just for the individual? Can we think of a body of men living this way, a hundred men and women, fifteen hundred men and women? If one can do it all can do it. . . .

God . . . will bless every man and woman, no matter where he [or she] may be, who will stand for righteousness and truth, and live so as to keep himself [or herself] unspotted from the world. . . . I want to think of the Priesthood throughout all Israel, . . . whose duty is to preach these things by their lives and words, . . . standing before the world as a light that cannot be hid, because their lives are clean and pure. They are unspotted from the world. Then we shall indeed be a

“peculiar people” and become as God would have us, because we are preaching the gospel by our acts. “If ye love me,” says the Lord, “keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

May He help us to do it, keep us pure and free, our homes pure and true, that our children may breathe the atmosphere of purity and virtue, and we be ever true to the testimony of God that we have in our hearts. ■

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from [the sins] of the world” (James 1:27).



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

Begin by reading the section, “The World and Its Temptations” as a family. Discuss how Christ overcame the three temptations presented to Him by Satan. Compare these to the temptations we face today. Discuss how we can follow the Savior’s example. Consider concluding the lesson by sharing the story of the young missionary.

Holding to the Rod after High School



Young adulthood is full of transitions: leaving home for the first time, moving from the Young Men or Young Women organizations to elders quorum and Relief Society, serving missions, attending school, beginning full-time work, and learning to get along with roommates, to name just a few.

Here, young adults share experiences about the people, programs, places, and principles that have made a difference in their transitions.

Service—with or without a Calling

During my freshman year of college, I did not have a calling. I really wanted to serve and have an opportunity to meet people, so not having a formal calling was frustrating. But I decided I just had to find other ways to get involved in my student ward. I made a sincere effort to go to all ward activities and support the ward members who were organizing them. At these events I made a point of being social and reaching out to others. I went to the temple to do baptisms for the dead. I frequently offered to help my roommates with their callings and responsibilities. I got to know people through our family home evening group. I learned that I wasn't the only one looking for a friend, so I tried to extend myself and be that friend to everyone.

Later, during my sophomore year, I was called to be the Sunday School secretary and then a member of the compassionate service committee. These callings have helped me grow in my testimony as I have counseled with others, learned to rely on the Spirit for direction, and come to know the members of the ward.

My experiences during these two years taught me the importance of reaching out to other people, some of whom may feel as I did that first year. Putting others first has helped strengthen the love and unity I feel for people in the ward. I've also realized that showing love to people is something we can all do, regardless of our formal callings.

Jackie Spjut, Kentucky, USA

Simple but Consistent Patterns

I wish I could say I have experienced a miraculous Alma-the-Younger-like turning point in my life, something I could point to as *the* event that solidified my testimony, but I have had no such event. My experience of personal conversion has been more subtle yet miraculous in its own way. Simple things like reading the Book of Mormon daily, attending seminary, praying daily, and serving others in Aaronic Priesthood quorums solidified my testimony, little by little, and motivated me to stay true to what I knew. Growing up I had no idea how much of a difference these small things were making, but they have added up over time to make a big difference and serve as a foundation for my adult life, a foundation on which I can continue to build.

Michael Silva, New York, USA

Friendship

When I started attending Relief Society, I felt as though I didn't have anyone to sit with or talk to because my mom had a calling that required her to be elsewhere during that hour. But one day a woman in my ward, Sister Brown, thanked me for bearing my testimony. Then she asked if I would have dinner with her. Since that first act of kindness, we have become good friends. To befriend people and to be befriended has really helped me stay strong in my testimony.

Gennese Hawks, Utah, USA

Teaching and Learning the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Shortly after I graduated from high school, my bishop called me to be a Sunday School teacher for a class of young teenagers. I couldn't think of a calling that would be more intimidating, but I accepted it.

The calling turned out to be a great experience. Not only did my knowledge and testimony of the gospel increase (which was great preparation for a full-time mission), but I also got to know my ward better. I started associating with the young men and women I taught, as well as other adults who were involved in directing and teaching Sunday School. I came to know and appreciate people whose faces I'd seen in the ward for years but who I hadn't gotten to know because they were a different age.

I was also blessed with an increased understanding and appreciation of the organization of the Lord's Church. As I planned lessons and found myself truly interested in helping class members, my eyes were opened to how much service I had been receiving from ward members my entire life—some of which I had never really noticed. As a result I was motivated to serve diligently because I had been blessed by the service of others, and I grew to love my ward at a deeper level.

Brady Hogan, Utah, USA

A Second Home at Institute

After graduating from high school in Cairns, Australia, I moved approximately 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) to Brisbane to attend university. Moving so far from home at 18 years old was a huge step, but finding a second home at institute helped me in the next chapter of my life.

The “Institute Lounge” is in the city, close to several universities, particularly to the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Gardens Point campus, which I attended. When my parents helped me move to Brisbane, my mum and I attended a welcome day at the Institute Lounge, and I could tell right away that it was a place that was warm, inviting, and comforting. It was a place I could feel the Spirit.

The Institute Lounge played a critical role in my transition. There, I formed friendships with other young single adults, institute instructors, and the Church Educational System and welfare missionary couples whose offices were at the lounge. This was crucial because university can be a very daunting place for a young person, especially when, as a Latter-day Saint, you’re in the minority. And although my family showed me their love through many long-distance phone calls, I was grateful that when I just needed to see a friendly face, there was always someone at the Institute Lounge to offer one.

Moreover, having a place to go during breaks between classes was helpful. I found that in attending institute classes, I received an extra spiritual lift and guidance. Studying the gospel provided me with strength to stay firm in my testimony during my time at university.

I am thankful for the programs of the Church that support young adults. I felt the love of my Heavenly Father through them, which has helped me navigate the sometimes-overwhelming aspects of this stage of life.

Jessima Munro, Australia

A Balanced Life

Putting Heavenly Father first and staying busy have helped me to remain active in the Church.

College life and living away from home helped prepare me for a mission by giving me an independent experience. During this time I was able to meet new people and accept a calling in a new ward. I participated in ward activities and stuck to a schedule.

Now that I have served a mission, my testimony continues to grow as I live a balanced and busy life full of spiritual and secular learning. Serving as a Young Men’s leader in my ward has helped me to share the gospel and to strengthen the testimonies of others, which in turn strengthens my own. In serving, I feel I am part of a ward family, which includes many people with whom I have built lasting relationships.

Attending institute classes has also enriched my life in many ways. I have been blessed with numerous opportunities to reach out to friends I have made at the institute in their time of need, and they have always done the same for me. We learn and grow as we help each other.

Having a full school schedule and a good part-time job keep my mind occupied and always learning so I don’t get into trouble. Young adults face a challenging world full of opportunities and temptation that may seem like better options than what spiritual matters have to offer. By staying occupied with good things, I don’t leave room for temptation.

As long as I keep my life balanced and busy, as well as always putting God first in all I do, I know I will remain active and have a strong testimony.

Dallin Lewis, Utah, USA

Reaching Out to Others

I try to reach out to people in my ward by being friendly. I find it nice when someone knows me by name, so I try to extend the same courtesy to others. I appreciate it when someone calls to remind me about family home evening or to ask me to say a prayer in class on Sunday; it helps me feel like I am known. Because of this, I make a special effort to remember people’s names and the details of what they tell me. By doing this, we can all make each other feel wanted and welcome.

Evann Howlett, Oregon, USA



A Testimony to Rely On

I attend college in Ohio, but my family lives in another state. Although they still encourage me and help me make good choices, I cannot rely on them for spiritual strength. I am not around them—or other members of the Church—very often, but having a strong testimony has helped me stay active. I am grateful to my parents for providing a home where I could build a testimony that would help me in times to come.

My testimony includes knowing that no matter what circumstances surround me, I have a Heavenly Father who is watching over me and is willing to help me. I know that I am never alone.

I also find that sharing my testimony helps strengthen it. As part of my calling as a ward missionary, I go out with the elders and help teach the gospel. With this regular opportunity, I can strengthen my testimony and, I hope, help others as well.

Scott Butler, Ohio, USA

Good Influences

Not many members of the Church lived where I grew up. So I learned early in my life the importance of surrounding myself with good friends who would help me maintain my standards.

Now as a student at Brigham Young University, I am surrounded by members of the Church. And while I know I have to rely on my own testimony and not on others' light, surrounding myself with good friends has blessed my life and helped me maintain high standards.

For instance, the transition from Young Women to Relief Society might have been difficult had it not been for good friends who were enthusiastic about attending Relief Society. Their excitement has rubbed off on me and helped me enjoy my membership in this organization. I have been amazed by what one person's optimistic attitude can do for an entire group.

I am grateful for friends who are loyal to the gospel and to me, and for our opportunity to strengthen each other.

Melinda Williams Golden, Kansas, USA ■

Opening the Heavens

BY ELDER YOSHIHIKO KIKUCHI
Of the Seventy



Do you want to have the heavens opened to you daily? There is a way. It follows a pattern set by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Do you want to feel the love of God more powerfully in your life? Do you want to feel more in tune with His Spirit? Do you want to have the heavens opened to you daily?

There is a way you can feel a daily renewal of God’s everlasting love and drink from “the fountain of living waters” (1 Nephi 11:25). It follows a pattern set by the Prophet Joseph Smith when he went to a grove of trees early one morning in 1820 seeking answers to his questions. I speak of a morning devotional time spent in prayer, meditation, and scripture study. If you have a devotional every morning, even if only for a few minutes, you will be deeply blessed. I know this to be true.

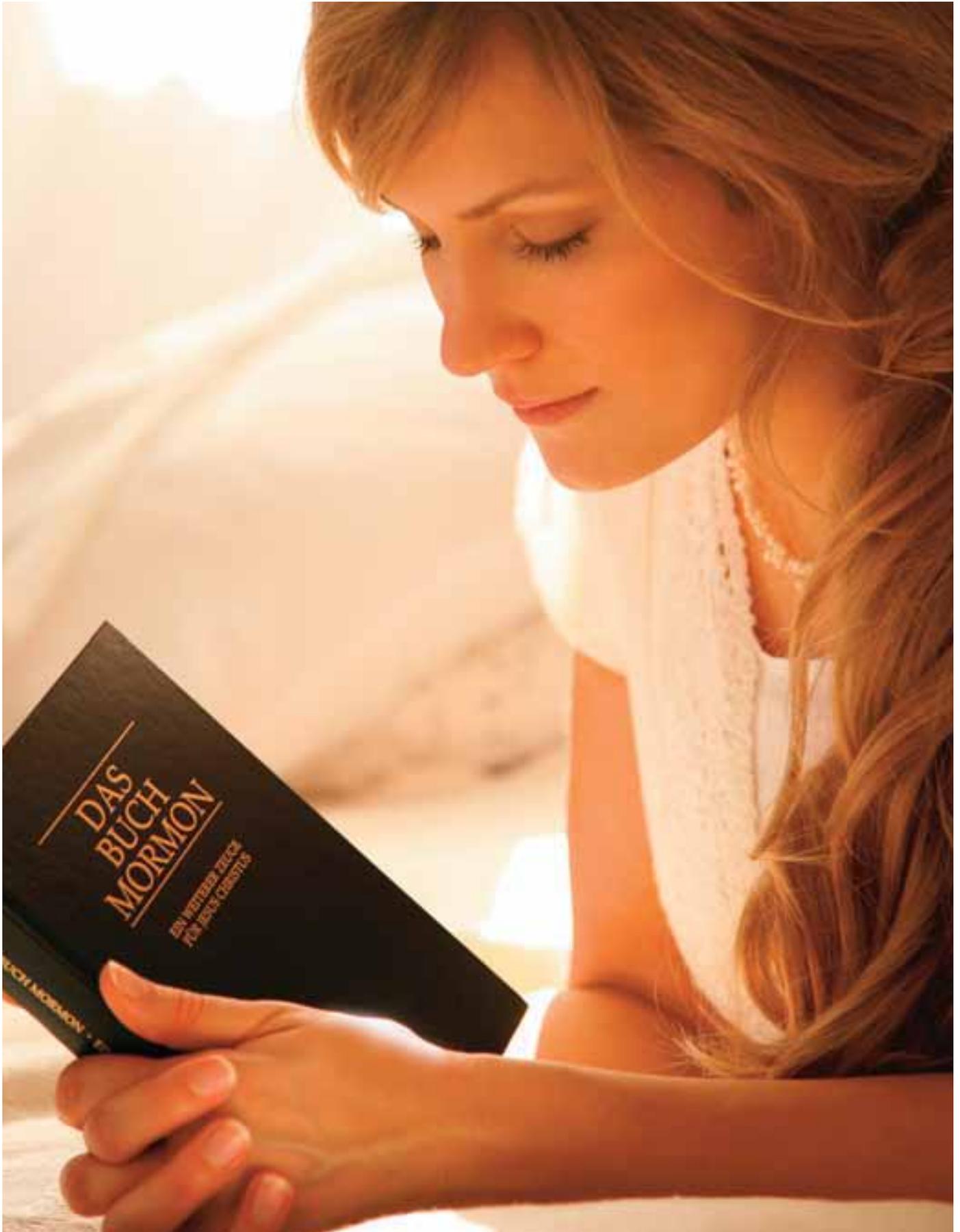
Escaping the Noise and the Tumult

The Prophet Joseph Smith once made this interesting observation about opening the heavens: “The manifestations of the gift of the Holy Ghost, the ministering of angels, or the development of the power, majesty or glory of God were very seldom manifested publicly, . . . but most generally when angels have come, or God has revealed Himself, it

has been to individuals in private, in their chamber; in the wilderness or fields, and that generally without noise or tumult.”¹

Unfortunately, modern life is filled with noise and tumult. Our society provides so many distractions that unless we make the time and effort to extract ourselves from them, the voice of the Spirit may not get through to us. That is why on a spring day in 1820, Joseph Smith left his home early to enter a grove of trees so he could pray in quiet seclusion about a question of religion. The answer came with astonishing clarity when both Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him, ushering in the dispensation of the fulness of times (see Joseph Smith—History 1:14–19).

In similar ways, the key to gaining the spiritual strength we need lies in what President Thomas S. Monson once described as entering a “sacred grove” of our own. He was teaching bishops, but the counsel applies to all members of the Church: “Every bishop needs a sacred grove to which he can retire to meditate and to pray for guidance. Mine was our old ward chapel. I could not begin to count the occasions when on a dark night





at a late hour I would make my way to the stand of this building where I was blessed, confirmed, ordained, taught, and eventually called to preside. The chapel was dimly lit by the streetlight in front; not a sound would be heard, no intruder to disturb. With my hand on the pulpit I would kneel and share with Him above my thoughts, my concerns, my problems.”²

Of course, these “sacred grove” moments do not duplicate what happened to the Prophet Joseph in the Sacred Grove. We don’t enter into these devotional times expecting to see the Father and the Son any more than Joseph Smith did. But we can trust that Heavenly Father will answer our prayers; how He answers them, however, is up to Him.

There is great power in setting aside quiet, prayerful, meditative time. In the stillness that accompanies our pondering, we can come to know the Father and His Son (see Psalm 46:10; D&C 101:16).

The Power of Morning Prayer and Scripture Study

When I served as a mission president in Hawaii, I had many opportunities to speak with young elders and sisters struggling to become better missionaries. I remember one missionary who became deeply discouraged. His missionary work had become unbearable to him, and he started doubting his testimony. He came to me with the request to send him home.

Instead, I asked him to follow the example of Nephi in pondering and praying about his concerns and desires (see 1 Nephi 10:17; 11:1). This is a practice I have followed for many years and a practice many other General Authorities of the Church follow.

I asked the missionary to go to his apartment and do the following:

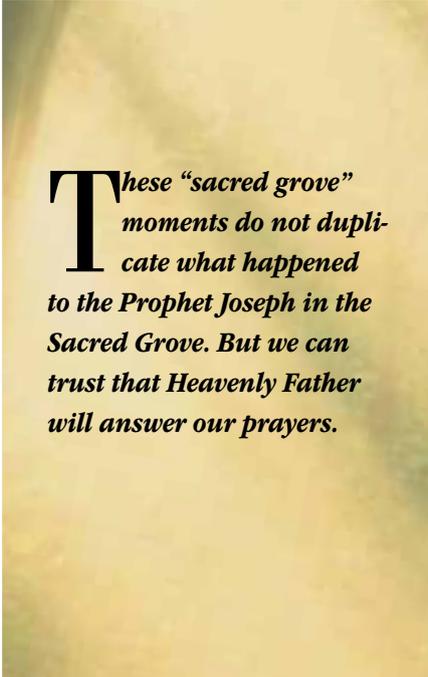
- Rise from his bed early—in his case, a few minutes before 6:30 a.m.
- Exercise for a few minutes.
- Wash his body and shave—make himself clean.
- Dress for the day.
- Go to a quiet place inside his apartment.
- Kneel, subdue his spirit before Heavenly Father, and call upon Him. Talk with Him in reverent prayer.
- Wait for His holy inspiration, pondering the scriptures or a recent general conference talk and think about the specific problems he faced.

I promised this young elder that if he did this and immersed himself in the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, for a few minutes every day, he would experience feelings of joy and would receive strength to go on.³

A few days later he came to see me. His eyes filled with tears as he told me of his experiences during his early-morning devotional time. He served wonderfully as a servant of the Lord and completed an honorable mission. His wife recently told me that he continues to rise early to have private time with his Heavenly Father.

I taught this same principle to each of the missionaries over whom I had the privilege to preside. I was concerned that we were not doing all we could to bring the light of the gospel to the Hawaiian people. Within a relatively short time after the missionaries started this practice, the number of referrals we received from members increased, teaching opportunities went up, and the number of baptisms in our mission doubled and then tripled. All of this happened because the missionaries' efforts were magnified by power of the Holy Spirit.

I know from personal experience the spiritual power that can flow into your life if you follow this practice.



These “sacred grove” moments do not duplicate what happened to the Prophet Joseph in the Sacred Grove. But we can trust that Heavenly Father will answer our prayers.

You will feel the love of God and a cleansing, purifying regeneration of your spirit (see 1 Nephi 11:22–25; D&C 50:28–29). You will experience moments of revelation, when the Spirit whispers to your spirit what you need to do to be a better father, a better mother, a better son or daughter, a better disciple of Jesus Christ.

Finding Solutions to Everyday Problems

I know a good member of the Church who has a successful marriage and six beautiful children. She is trying to be the best companion she can be to her husband and the best mother she can be to her children. She is an

effective Young Women leader in her ward. But sometimes she feels she isn't good enough. She becomes discouraged and feels an emptiness of soul.

She came to me one day with her husband and described the powerlessness she feels at such times. She had discussed her concern with her priesthood leaders and especially her husband but had yet to find relief. I suggested that after her husband left for work and their children were in school, she find a place in her home and there reverently and humbly visit with Heavenly Father. I suggested that she express her gratitude to God for her blessings and then wait for His holy inspiration. She committed to do this daily.

Sometime later I received a letter from her. She said that as she went to her knees in those quiet moments each day and dropped her burden at Heavenly Father's feet, He took her concerns away. She felt of her great worth to Him and learned more of “the healer's art”⁴ as He healed her soul.

Greater Understanding of the Atonement

As we use daily devotional time to gain greater spiritual strength, we will be blessed to better understand

As we use daily devotional time to gain greater spiritual strength, we will better understand Heavenly Father and the Savior and His Atonement. We will taste of “the goodness of Jesus” and feel “with exceedingly great joy” the power of His eternal love.



Heavenly Father and the Savior and His Atonement. We will taste of “the goodness of Jesus” (Mormon 1:15). We will feel “with exceedingly great joy” (1 Nephi 8:12) the power of His eternal love. We will come to love the Savior even more for what He did for us during His mortal ministry—particularly in Gethsemane, on the cross, and in the Resurrection—and for what He continues to do for us today (see John 6:51; Alma 7:11–12).

A number of years ago, Elder Melvin J. Ballard (1873–1939) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had an experience while visiting the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana, USA. At the time, he needed inspiration and strength to help the people in that community.

One night he had a dream in which he was ushered into a room, where he saw “the most glorious being I have ever conceived of, and was taken forward to be introduced to Him. . . . He smiled, called my name, and stretched out His hands toward me. If I live to be a million years old I shall never forget that smile. He put His arms around me and kissed me, as He took me into His bosom, and He blessed me until my whole being was thrilled. As He finished I fell at His feet, and there saw

the marks of the nails; and as I kissed them, with deep joy swelling through my whole being, I felt that I was in heaven indeed. The feeling . . . then was: Oh! If I could . . . go into His presence and receive the feeling that I *then* had . . . , I would give everything that I am and ever hope to be!

“I know—as I know that I live—that He lives.”⁵

I don’t know if you will have that same kind of experience in this life. But I do know that if you continue to meet daily with Heavenly Father in the private chambers of your home, you will come to know Him and our Savior in ways you couldn’t otherwise (see 3 Nephi 19:16–23, 25–29). May you do so and have the heavens open to you in whatever glorious ways your Heavenly Father has prepared for you. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2007), 121; see also *History of the Church*, 5:30–31.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Bishop—Center Stage in Welfare,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 90.
3. See “Thy Spirit, Lord, Has Stirred Our Souls,” *Hymns*, no. 157.
4. See “Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” *Hymns*, no. 220.
5. In Melvin R. Ballard, *Melvin J. Ballard: Crusader for Righteousness* (1966), 66.

FAST DAY

*I hunger, Lord, and sense my need,
Yet not for want of bread alone.
Upon the Bread of Life I'd feed
And shun the tempter's loaves of stone
While wandering through this wilderness
While none but Thee fills emptiness.
I thirst, dear God, and parched, I seek
For water from Thy cooling well,
A living drink that quenches deep.
Thy fountain must my drought dispel
Lest in an arid world I die
My deepest thirst unsatisfied.
I faint, O Lord, and feel the lack
Of nourishment for my weak flesh.
My weak spirit too grows slack.
Thy power must my strength refresh
While in this desert I endure
The tempter's wiles and sin's allure.
I've lifted up my prayers to Thee;
With hungry souls I've shared my bread.
Hear, then, my cry, my heartfelt plea.
Say, "Here am I!" Upon me shed
Thy light to guide my pathless way
And make my darkness as noonday.*

BY JOHN S. TANNER

JOY In the scriptures

Many Latter-day Saints have found greater understanding of the gospel in recent years as they have improved their personal study of the scriptures. Feasting on the word of God, many have found invaluable assistance through the study aids added to the standard works in the early 1980s— aids like the Bible dictionary, chapter headings, more complete cross-referencing in notes, and excerpts from the Joseph Smith Translation.

After enhanced new editions of the scriptures were published, Church leaders urged members to obtain their own new copies of the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price so they could enjoy the spiritual benefits of scripture study with added knowledge provided by the new study aids.¹ Members who responded found it much easier to hear the voice of the Lord through their daily scripture study.

“Now, what do we hear in the gospel which we have received? A voice of gladness! A voice of mercy from heaven; and a voice of truth out of the earth; . . . glad tidings of great joy” (D&C 128:19).

The following art may remind us of the joy we can find in daily scripture study.

NOTE

1. Boyd K. Packer, “Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 51.



MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU. BY STEVEN NEWMAN



TEACH THEM TO UNDERSTAND, BY WALTER RANE

2 NEPHI 31:20

*“Wherefore, if ye shall
press forward, feasting
upon the word of Christ,
and endure to the end, be-
hold, thus saith the Father:
Ye shall have eternal life.”*



GIRL STUDYING SCRIPTURES, BY SANDY GAGON

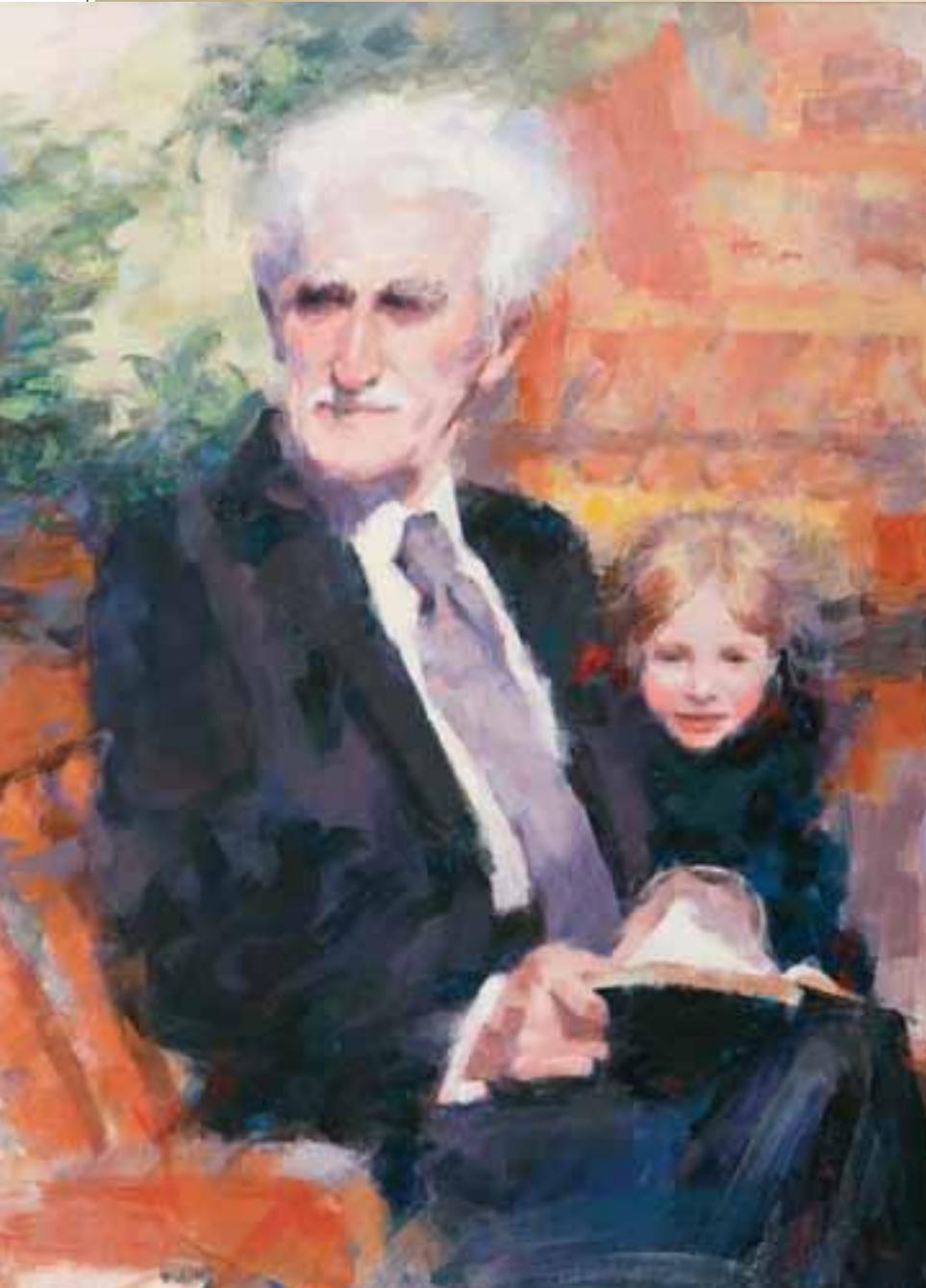




FAMILY READING, BY JOSE MANUEL VALENCIA ARELLANO



REMEMBER, BY BLANCHE WILSON, WOODBLOCK PRINT



GRANDPA AND THE SCRIPTURES IN THE PARK, BY JUDITH CAMPION

3 NEPHI 28:10

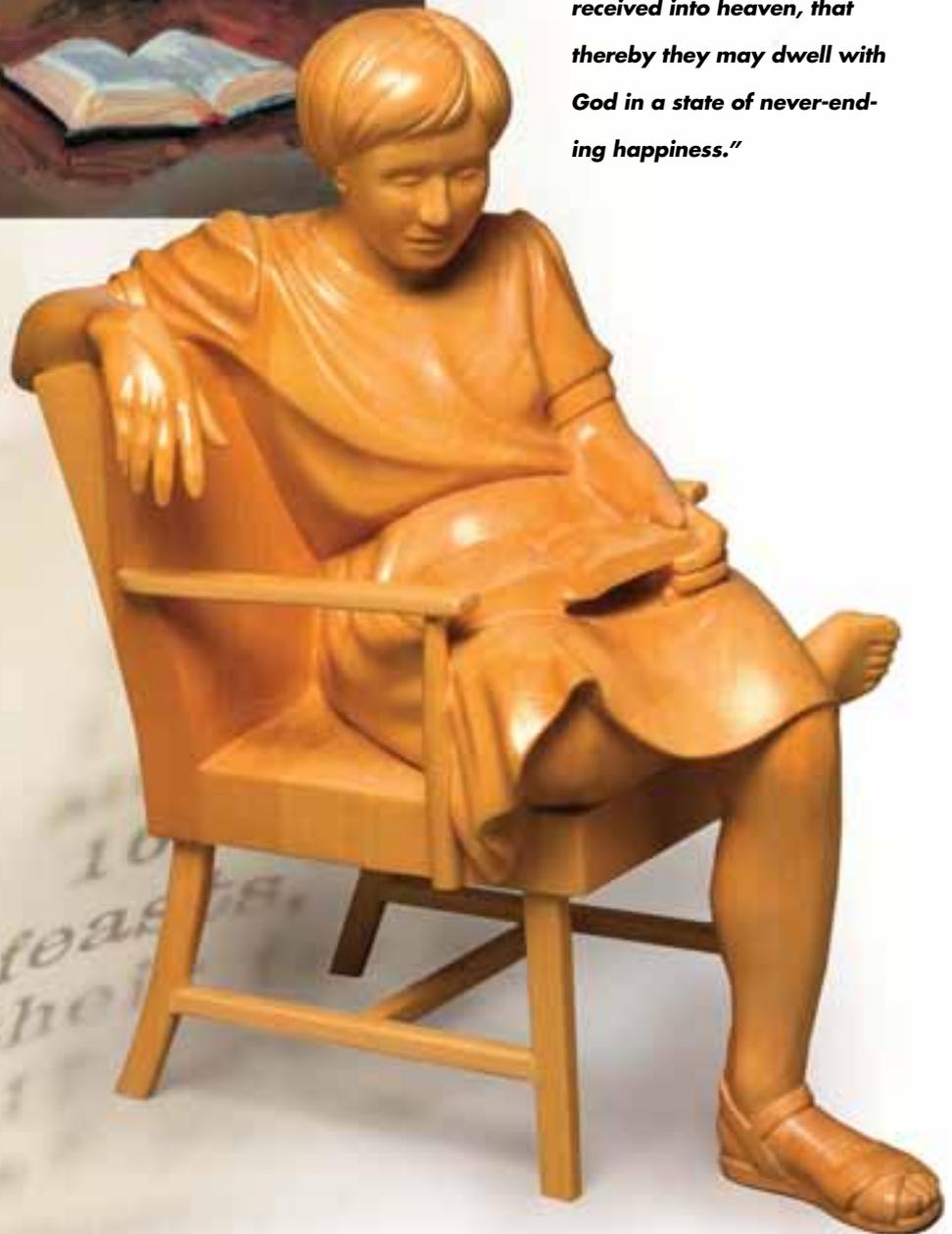
“And for this cause ye shall have fulness of joy; and ye shall sit down in the kingdom of my Father; yea, your joy shall be full, even as the Father hath given me fulness of joy; and ye shall be even as I am, and I am even as the Father; and the Father and I are one.”

LEARNING FROM THE SCRIPTURES, BY NANCY SEAMONS CROOKSTON

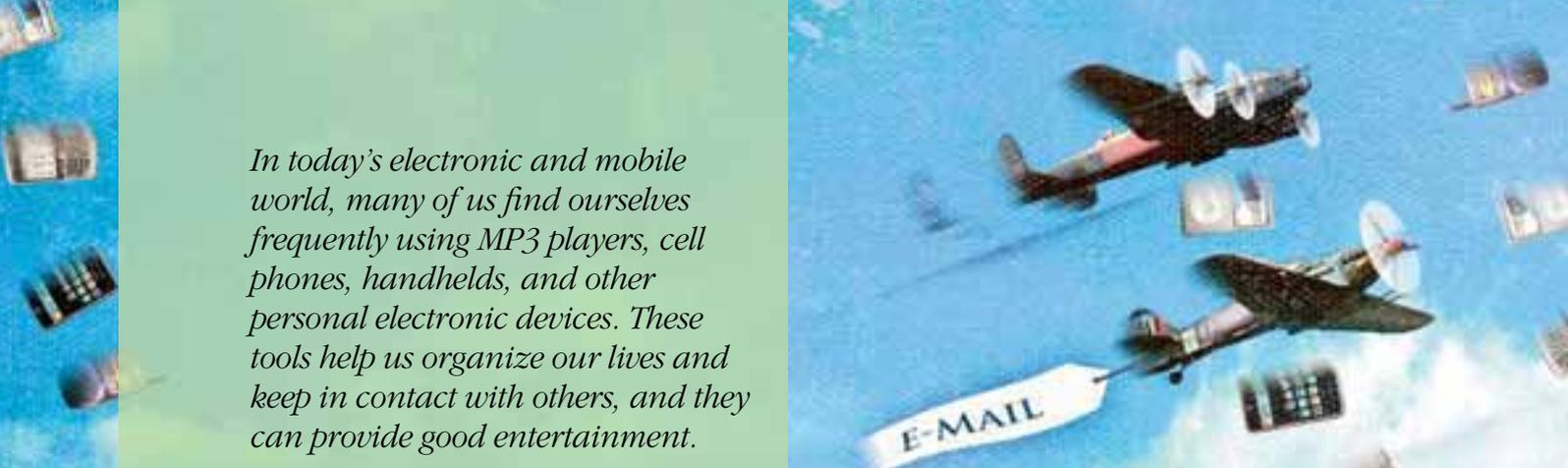


MOSIAH 2:41

“And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness.”



READING THE BIBLE BY JOHN ARNOLD



In today's electronic and mobile world, many of us find ourselves frequently using MP3 players, cell phones, handhelds, and other personal electronic devices. These tools help us organize our lives and keep in contact with others, and they can provide good entertainment.

TURNING OFF AND TUNING IN



But we can also benefit from having time away from them—time for quiet pondering. Here, members share how they have benefited from “unplugging” themselves from the world during worship and meditation.

Time “Under the Radar”

In this world of technological phenomena, we are constantly bombarded with messages. From text messages to e-mail, from cell phones to social-networking sites and blogs, we can always be up-to-date on what's going on in our world. We are also more available to others than ever before.

Even though I am grateful to live in the digital communication wave, I sometimes find myself wishing I could go undisturbed for a while. I have made it a priority to find moments every day in which I can go “under the radar” and have time for the most important messages available to me—the promptings of the Spirit.

I compare it to being in a classroom, trying to listen to the instructor give vital information that will be on the next test. This test will affect my grade and possibly even my graduation. What if, in the midst of this lecture, while I was trying to concentrate and listen, a friend sitting next to me said something to distract me from what the instructor was teaching? It could make passing the class very difficult.

I have found that when I choose not to bring the outside influences of the digital world into my life, especially during institute class and church worship, I receive more from the Holy Ghost than I ever thought possible.

David Martin, Utah, USA

Alert to Important Messages

While I was serving my mission in Seattle, Washington, my companion and I worked with young single adult wards and spent time tracting on the University of Washington campus. There were dozens of times when we would approach someone who wore headphones or who was talking on a cell phone. It often seemed that they used their conveniently available electronics as a means to ignore us or an excuse to wave us away.

I have since returned from my mission, but I think often about the amazing message that electronics prevented those people from hearing. I realize how important it can be for *all of us* to take time to disconnect and simply listen for what the Holy Ghost can teach us. Some of the strongest spiritual experiences I've had since returning from my mission have happened when I felt the need to turn off the radio and just think about spiritual things or pray. There is definitely a time for listening to music, texting, and talking, but there is also a time for simply listening for things of the Spirit.

Randy Hoffman, Utah, USA



Distraction-Free Worship

The world is naturally a noisy place, so I have always enjoyed the reverence and quiet at church. This reverence is enhanced when fellow Latter-day Saints choose to leave their electronic devices at home or turn them off. This gives all of us time to focus and meditate on gospel questions or circumstances in our lives. By doing this, we can block worldly distractions and allow the still, small voice to enter our minds and souls to fill us with joy, love, and understanding.

I am grateful for the peace I can receive every time I walk into a chapel to worship the Lord with my brothers and sisters without the distractions and noise of the world.

Alison Curtis, California, USA ■



GENTLE MESSAGES OF THE SPIRIT

"The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting or shaking us with a heavy hand. Rather it whispers. It caresses so gently that if we are pre-occupied we may not feel it at all."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Candle of the Lord," Ensign, Jan. 1983, 53.

JUST A GAME?

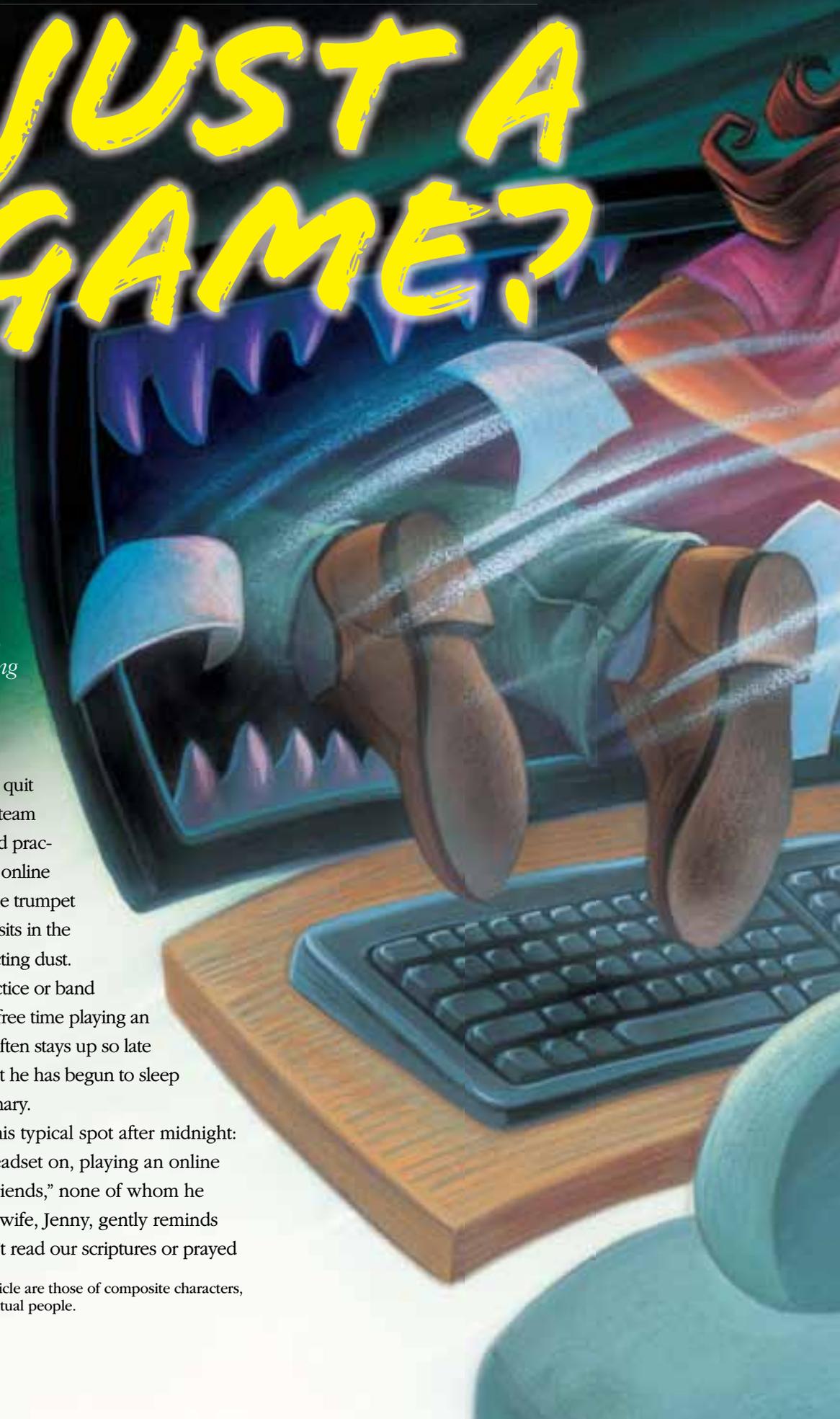
BY CHARLES D. KNUTSON, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY COMPUTER SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, AND KYLE K. OSWALD, LDS FAMILY SERVICES

Online role-playing games may be more than a way to pass the time. For some, they can become addictive, leading to lost spirituality, lost opportunities, and lost relationships.

Two weeks ago, Jason* quit the high school track team because the meets and practice times conflicted with his online “guild quests” and “raids.” The trumpet he used to love to play now sits in the corner of his bedroom collecting dust. Instead of being at track practice or band rehearsals, Jason spends his free time playing an online computer game. He often stays up so late at night playing his game that he has begun to sleep through early-morning seminary.

Or consider Michael, at his typical spot after midnight: in front of the computer, headset on, playing an online adventure game with his “friends,” none of whom he has actually met. When his wife, Jenny, gently reminds him, “It’s late, and we haven’t read our scriptures or prayed

* The names mentioned in this article are those of composite characters, based on the experiences of actual people.





together,” he replies, “I can’t come right now. We’re right in the middle of a raid, and my guild needs me.”

Then there’s Sara, who discovered online gaming** about a year ago. She was a top salesperson in her department, winning prizes and earning bonuses for outstanding performance. Online gaming, however, has negatively affected her work. She now plays most evenings and weekends, and she has stopped attending singles activities in her stake to make more time for gaming. She often leaves church early so she can continue her online adventures.

Jason, Michael, and Sara are representative of the growing number of people who demonstrate compulsive behavior in playing massive multiplayer online role-playing games (or MMORPGs). In these games, social networking meets virtual computer fantasy to bring players into exciting, collaborative quests. Tens of millions of players are active worldwide, with new players joining every month.

** The term gaming may appropriately refer to either gambling or computer game playing. In this article, we address only computer game playing.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GREG NEWBOLD

DON'T WASTE THE DAYS OF YOUR PROBATION



“One of the ways Satan lessens your effectiveness and weakens your spiritual strength is by encouraging you to spend large blocks of your time doing things that matter very little. I speak of such things as sitting for hours on end watching television or videos, playing video games night in and night out, surfing the Internet, or devoting huge blocks of time to sports, games, or other recreational activities.

“Don’t misunderstand me. These activities are not wrong in and of themselves (unless, of course, you are watching salacious programs or seeking out pornographic images on the Internet). Games, sports, recreational activities, and even television can be relaxing and rejuvenating, especially in times when you are under stress or heavily scheduled. You need activities that help you to unwind and rest your minds. It is healthy to go onto the soccer field or the basketball court and participate in vigorous physical activity.

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

“One devastating effect of idling away our time is that it deflects us from focusing on the things that matter most. Too many people are willing to sit back and let life just happen to them. It takes time to develop the attributes that will help you to be a well-balanced person.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Be Strong in the Lord,” *Ensign*, July 2004, 13–14.

The growth of the activity shows that an increasing number of men and women enjoy MMORPGs as a relaxing, recreational activity. But some people (like Jason, Michael, and Sara) are letting recreational, virtual life interfere with their actual lives.

Although many online gamers do not become addicted or even compulsive players, prophetic warnings about the use of our time in this mortal life indicate that online gaming is an activity that warrants caution. Of course, MMORPGs are not the only form of recreation that have the potential to cause problems. There are many activities that can become so absorbing that they rob participants of spiritual, intellectual, and social development. We hope that the explanations, suggestions, and prophetic counsel included in this article

may be helpful to individuals and families as they seek the guidance of the Spirit in finding balance in their lives.

Why Are These Games Cause for Concern?

Professional counselors are seeing an increasing number of individuals “hooked” on video and computer games, especially the online “quest” variety. Individuals most commonly seek help at the urging of friends or

family members who are concerned with the excessive nature of their game playing. Many of these players recognize the emerging imbalance in their lives and earnestly seek help to restore a healthy balance. Others resist the idea that their online gaming is a problem, insisting that they are only relaxing, or that since they play with other people, it’s a social activity. Still others argue that since it’s a game, it cannot be addictive.

The fallout from compulsive gaming can be temporally and spiritually devastating. News reports include stories of broken marriages, lost employment, failed health, even children removed from parents because of criminal neglect caused by the parents’ excessive online gaming.¹ We personally know of young men who have forfeited mission

opportunities because, they say, their online gaming group needs them, and they simply cannot be gone for two years.

How Are Online Role-playing Games Different Than Other Video Games?

MMORPGs are different from traditional stand-alone computer or console games in two primary ways:

- The virtual world of the game moves in real time. When a



AM I ADDICTED?

player logs off, the game continues. There is no pause key.

- Characters in the game are controlled not by the computer but by actual people scattered around the world. Most online role-playing games encourage the formation of teams, or “guilds,” that band together to carry out quests or challenges. Membership in a guild creates social pressure on players to be present when other guild members are playing.

These unique characteristics make the games more demanding as well as more socially stimulating, which has led to greater addictive tendencies.

Why Are Online Role-Playing Games So Compelling?

One reason that online role-playing games may potentially be more addictive is that they are essentially a social network with an exciting graphical interface. They fill social needs that may be unmet in the real world. For instance, a teenage boy may not feel popular or successful at high school, but in the online world, he gets a fresh start and a new set of friends. His problem-solving skills and intelligence make him socially important in his virtual community. He steps into a role in

A good measure to use when determining the value of a hobby is if it adds to or takes away from your sense of balance. Healthy activities help you feel revitalized, refreshed, and ready to tackle your challenges. Destructive activities leave you feeling drained and empty inside and less able to cope with the struggles of real life. Destructive activities also tend to leave you feeling compelled to continue rather than feeling in control of your decisions.

Although there is no specific test for addiction to online gaming, the following are factors that, taken together, may indicate an unhealthy involvement or addictive tendency.

- Do you play compulsively?
- Do you play for long periods of time (often longer than you had planned)?
- Once online, do you have difficulty stopping?
- Do you play as often as you can?
- Do you sneak or violate family rules in order to play, even when facing punishment or loss of privileges for doing so?
- When you are not playing, do you obsess about the game, plotting and planning your next opportunity to play?
- Do you sacrifice real-world things for your online world?
- Is your gaming negatively affecting your relationships with family members or other non-gamer friends? For instance, if you are a parent, does it cause you to neglect your children’s needs? If you are a child, does it cause you to distance yourself from your parents and siblings?
- Do you consider other online gamers (even those whom you’ve never met in real life) to be among your best friends?
- Is your school or work suffering because of the time and energy you spend gaming?
- Are you having a difficult time deciding to serve a mission because of the extended break from the game that will naturally result?
- Do you neglect personal hygiene?
- Have your sleep patterns changed since you became involved with online gaming? Are you staying up extremely late or getting up in the middle of the night to play?

which he feels needed and successful.

Another draw is that online gaming provides an unending source of goals or objectives. Unlike games installed on a home computer, MMORPGs prevent players from ever actually winning the online game because each victory brings yet another task, goal, quest, or skill level to be obtained.

Moreover, as players perform quests and rise in their achievements, the time investment for each skill level normally rises. So while players may gain 5 or 10 levels in their first few days playing, the next week may bring only one or two new levels, with each new level after that requiring longer and longer time investments. Players who have spent significant time attaining a certain skill level tend to be reluctant to walk away from the game and lose their investment.

Finally, the collaborative nature of online role-playing games can result in a strong form of peer pressure. Each person’s involvement matters

not only to himself or herself but also to guild or team members, so a player who cuts back on playing time or fails to show up at agreed-upon times may face criticism or rejection from fellow gamers.



How Do I Avoid Problems?

A critical element in avoiding problems is to understand the importance of balance in our lives. Leaders of the Church have been clear in their counsel about doing things in “wisdom and order” (Mosiah 4:27). For example, Elder Donald L. Staheli of the Seventy has warned: “Distractions and discouragement are some of Satan’s most effective tools. He finds ways to help us make excuses about why we can’t do this or that. He gets us involved in wasting our time and resources in things that lead us away from improving our lives and developing our talents. He blurs our focus by diverting our attention. This can happen to the very best of you.”²

One way to protect ourselves is to follow the counsel given by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “We need to limit the amount of time our children watch TV or play video games or use the Internet each day.”³ Of course, this counsel to limit the time we dedicate to media applies to parents as well! We can do this by establishing reasonable time constraints for online recreational activities. Then, if the attraction of the activity begins to pull us beyond our own guidelines, we can recognize a potentially dangerous situation and stop participating in the activity. As Elder Ballard counseled, “Virtual reality must not become [our] reality.”

Restoring proper balance in our lives is something we

decide to do. As Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Seventy has taught, “When we are out of balance, we have a choice. We can delay making changes and experience the tragedy of a failing family or the sorrow of losing our own spirituality; or we can be attentive and continually nudged by the whisperings of the Holy Spirit to make necessary adjustments. Seeking balance among the essential responsibilities of life is preparatory to salvation.”⁴

The choice to overcome a distraction or diversion may be very difficult because an addiction is much more than a “bad habit” to be overcome by willpower alone. In fact, “many people become so dependent on a behavior or a substance that they no longer see how to abstain from it. They lose perspective and a sense of other priorities in their lives.”⁵ President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught this idea when he said, “Addiction has the capacity to disconnect the human will and nullify moral agency. It can rob one of the power to decide.”⁶

As you think about the compelling nature of online role-playing games, you might also consider your own potential for addiction. Some studies have shown that online gaming addiction may be correlated with other emotional challenges.⁷ In addition, if you have struggled with other forms of addiction, including Internet-related addictions (such as pornography), you might be more vulnerable than others to an online gaming addiction.



Where Can I Find Spiritual Help and Hope?

But even cases of addiction are not without hope. The scriptures teach that the Atonement of Jesus Christ is sufficient to help us overcome the “natural man,” whatever unhealthy or unbalanced forms our “natural” tendencies may take. (See Mosiah 3:19.)

President James E. Faust (1920–2007) taught, “While some addictions require professional clinical help, let us not overlook the spiritual help available to us through priesthood blessings and through prayer. The Lord has promised us, ‘My grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them’ (Ether 12:27). Let us remember that the power to change is very real, and it is a great spiritual gift from God.”⁸

Spiritual help is available through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Such a promise can be especially poignant for those caught in a trap of obsessive online gaming. Hope in the Atonement, coupled with the guidance of the Holy Ghost and counsel from inspired leaders, will help individuals as they seek to apply principles of balance and move toward a life—an actual one and not merely a virtual one—that is rich and full. ■

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently spoke at a Church Educational System Fireside about the influence of technology and media. See “Things as They Really Are,” available under the firesides link at ldsces.org.

HOW CAN I HELP SOMEONE WHO IS STRUGGLING?

If someone you love is struggling with a compulsion to play online games for inordinate amounts of time, recognize that the person’s problem is real and that the risks are significant, even though it is “just a game.”

Consider spending time with your loved one while he or she is playing the game, paying particular attention to the communication taking place between players. (Many games use a “chat” form of communication, similar to instant messaging. Others support the use of headsets with built-in microphones for real-time audio communication between players.) If you are looking to find out more about the game your son plays, you might, for instance, ask him about how the game is played, the nature of his role or character, his interaction with other players, what he likes about the particular game he plays, and how he feels when he plays it. Spending time and asking questions will not only help you be educated about the nature of the game, it will also help your son feel understood. If he refuses to let you see the game being played, it may be that he feels defensive around you or is embarrassed by the nature of the game (or both).

If your loved one plays excessively, to the point of neglecting important aspects of his or her life (such as school, work, family life, church attendance, and church service), intervention may be merited. Seek counsel from priesthood leaders or professional counselors to know how best to approach your loved one. Since every situation is unique, these people can be a valuable resource as you prayerfully seek the Lord’s help.

Professors in the Brigham Young University School of Family Life recently published a study, “More Than Just a Game” in the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, available at springerlink.com.

NOTES

1. Please see the following URLs for examples: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/26/AR2006052601960.html; www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/17/AR2006081700625_2.html; <http://virtualmentor.ama-assn.org/2008/01/jdsc1-0801.html>; www.msnbc.msn.com/id/19354827.
2. Donald L. Staheli, “Achieving Your Full Potential,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2009, 58.
3. M. Russell Ballard, “Let Our Voices Be Heard,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 19.
4. Donald L. Hallstrom, “Seeking a Balanced Life,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 57.
5. LDS Family Services, *Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing* (2005), page v.
6. Boyd K. Packer, “Revelation in a Changing World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 14.
7. Please see the following for examples: “Shyness and Locus of Control as Predictors of Internet Addiction and Internet Use,” Katherine Chak, Louis Leung. *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 7, no. 5 (2004): 559–570. See also “The Relationship between Online Game Addiction and Aggression, Self-Control, and Narcissistic Personality Traits,” Eun Joo Kim, Kee Namkoong, Taeyun Ku, and Se Joo Kim. *European Psychiatry* 23, no. 3 (2008): 212–218.
8. James E. Faust, “The Power to Change,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 124.



The Path to Martyrdom: The Ultimate

We need not visit Carthage Jail to strengthen our testimonies of Joseph's calling as a prophet of God. We need only study patterns of prophets in the scriptures and learn of Joseph's life.

ELDER ANTHONY D. PERKINS

Of the Seventy

Several years ago I stood in the upper bedroom of Carthage Jail surrounded by my wife and our six children.

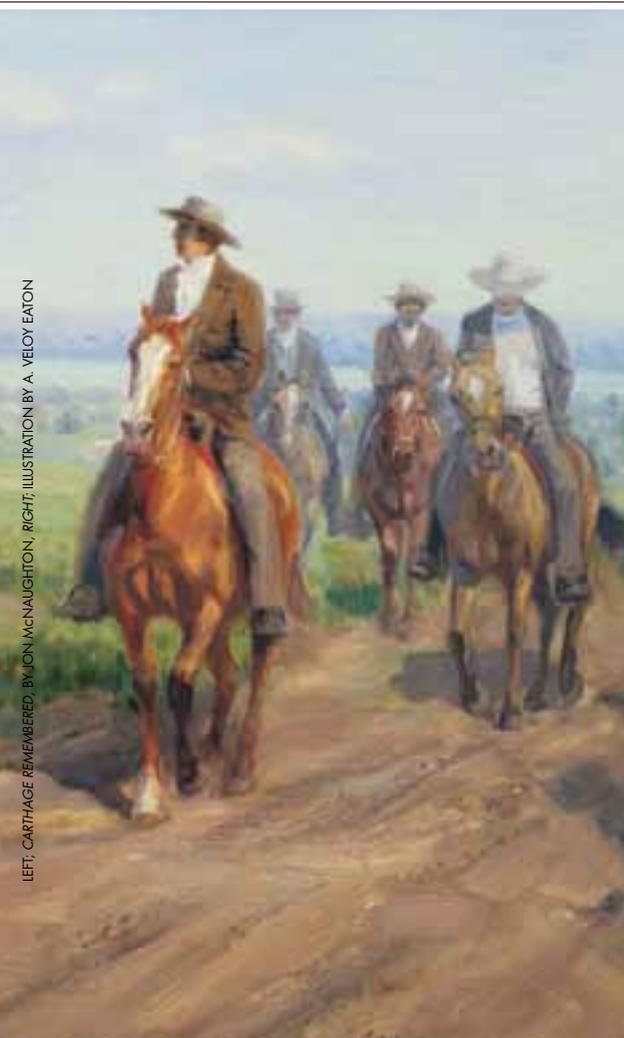
Over the prior week, our family had visited the various locations of Joseph Smith's remarkable life and mission. As we traveled, each family member felt the Spirit testify of Joseph's divine calling as the Prophet of the Restoration. We felt that same witness as we exited this room in Carthage, Illinois, where Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, "the best blood of the nineteenth century" (D&C 135:6), were martyred by an angry mob.

Since that day I have learned more about the life and death of the Prophet. I know that studying the Martyrdom of Joseph Smith has strengthened my testimony of his calling as a prophet of God.

The term *martyr* comes from a Greek word for "witness."¹ Joseph Smith's path to Carthage followed four steps walked by ancient apostles and prophets who also died as witnesses of the truth.

Step 1: Persecuted for Bearing Testimony of the Son of God

When the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi testified to the inhabitants of Jerusalem



Joseph Smith's last glimpses of Nauvoo came after 24 years of persecution that included nearly 20 attempts on his life.

More than 600 years after Lehi testified in Jerusalem, a young priesthood leader named Stephen was called to stand before the Sanhedrin. When he testified of the apostasy of Israel, these religious leaders “were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.” But when he testified of Jesus “standing on the right hand of God,” these leaders “cast him out of the city, and stoned him” (Acts 7:54–55, 58).

Joseph Smith's life follows the pattern of Lehi, Zenos, Zenock, and Stephen. A few days after experiencing the First Vision in 1820, Joseph shared his experience and bore personal testimony of God the Father and His Beloved Son. According to Joseph, the almost immediate response was “a spirit of the most bitter persecution and reviling” (Joseph Smith—History 1:23). As with ancient prophets, the Prophet of the Restoration taught truths regarding the nature of God that ran counter to the inherited traditions of religious sects. During the next 24 years, nearly 20 attempts were made on Joseph's life.²

Step 2: Forewarned of Death

After His resurrection, Jesus prophesied to the senior Apostle, Peter: “When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

“This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me” (John 21:18–19; see also 2 Peter 1:14).

On another occasion the Lord described Paul to Ananias: “He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

“For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake” (Acts 9:15–16).

The Prophet Joseph Smith was 17 years old when first visited by the angel Moroni in 1823. Moroni prophesied that Joseph Smith's name

Witness

“of their wickedness and their abominations,” they mocked him. But when he testified “of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world,” the people “were angry with him . . . and they also sought his life” (1 Nephi 1:19–20). The people wanted to do to Lehi what had been done to the prophets Zenos and Zenock. Because Zenos “did testify boldly” of Christ, “he was slain,” and because Zenock had “testified of the Son of God, and because the people would not understand his words they stoned him to death” (Helaman 8:19; Alma 33:17).



ILLUSTRATION BY WALTER RAINE

Joseph's life followed the pattern of martyrs like Stephen, who was cast out and stoned after he testified that he saw Jesus “standing on the right hand of God.”

Moroni told Joseph that his name would be had for good and evil “among all people.”



HE CALLED ME BY NAME, BY IIZ LEMON SWINDIE

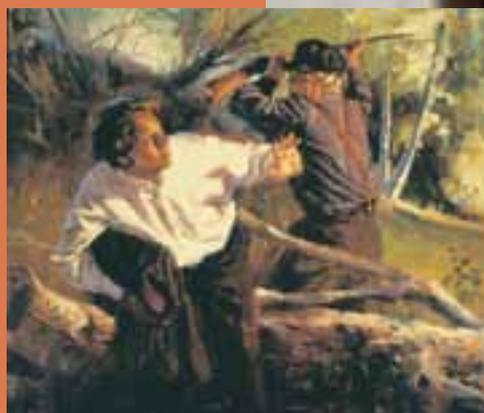


ILLUSTRATION BY SAM LAWLOR

“There are many that lie in wait to destroy thee,” the Lord warned the Prophet.

“should be both good and evil spoken of among all people” (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). In March 1829, when Joseph was just 23, the Lord warned, “There are many that lie in wait to destroy thee

from off the face of the earth” (D&C 5:33). One month later, the Lord revealed, “Even if they do unto you even as they have done unto me, blessed are ye, for you shall dwell with me in glory” (D&C 6:30).

In the remaining 15 years of his life, “on at least 19 different occasions . . . Joseph Smith told the Saints that he would probably not leave this life peacefully.”³

Step 3: Remained Confident in Finishing Work

After the prophet Abinadi’s initial preaching to King Noah and his council of wicked priests, King Noah said, “Away with this fellow, and slay him.” But Abinadi boldly responded, “Touch me not, for God shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me, for I have not

delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver; . . . therefore, God will not suffer that I shall be destroyed at this time. . . . But I finish my message” (Mosiah 13:1, 3, 9).

Later, the prophets Alma and Amulek were forced by the rulers of Ammonihah to watch believers be martyred by fire.

“Now Amulek said unto Alma: Behold, perhaps they will burn us also.

“And Alma said: Be it according to the will of the Lord. But, behold, our work is not finished; therefore they burn us not” (Alma 14:12–13).

Joseph gained confidence that his mission would be completed before his life on earth could be cut short. In March 1839, while in jail at Liberty, Missouri, the Lord declared:

“If thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee. . . .

“ . . . Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do” (D&C 122:7, 9).

The Prophet’s father, Joseph Smith Sr., gave his son a blessing in September 1840, telling him, “You shall live to finish your work.”

“At this Joseph cried out, ‘Oh! Father, shall I?’

“‘Yes,’ said his father, ‘you shall. You shall live to lay out all the plan of all the work that God requires at your hand.’”⁴

During the latter years of his life, Joseph Smith focused on finishing his work. Building a temple, revealing its sacred ordinances, and conferring the priesthood power to perform those ordinances provided a sense of urgency.⁵ Finally, in a climactic meeting in late March 1844, Joseph imparted to the Twelve Apostles all of the priesthood keys and power necessary to lead the Church.

“After he had thus spoken, he continued to walk the floor, saying: ‘Since I have rolled the burden off from my shoulders, I feel as light as a cork. I feel that I am free. I thank my God for this deliverance.’”⁶

Elder Parley P. Pratt quoted Joseph as saying, “The Lord is about to lay the burden on your shoulders and let me rest awhile; and if they kill me . . . the kingdom of God will roll on, as I have now finished the work which was laid upon me.”⁷

Step 4: Executed While Imprisoned for Treason

Early Christian history records that many Christians, including the Apostles Peter and Paul, were executed in Rome under the direction of the emperor Nero. They were accused of subversion, starting a fire in Rome, and unwillingness to sacrifice to Roman gods or the emperor’s image.⁸

In the Book of Mormon, Abinadi was found “worthy of death” because he had said “that God himself should come down among the children of men.” The accusation was blasphemy, but after Abinadi had powerfully defended himself, “king Noah was about to release him.” The priests then asserted that Abinadi had “reviled the king,” invoking a new charge of crime against the state, or treason. Abinadi was then delivered up “that he might be slain,” suffering death by fire, “having sealed the truth of his words by his death” (Mosiah 17:7–8, 11–12, 20).

Despite being acquitted of charges related to the June 10, 1844, destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* press, Joseph and Hyrum faced new charges of riot.⁹ “On June 24, Joseph and Hyrum Smith bade farewell to

Like Abinadi in the Book of Mormon, Joseph “sealed the truth of his words by his death.”

ILLUSTRATION BY ARNOLD FRIBERG



Building a temple and conferring priesthood power to perform sacred ordinances provided a sense of urgency for Joseph to finish his work.

The path to martyrdom walked by Joseph Smith and ancient prophets is the same path walked by Him who said, “Come, follow me.”



JOSEPH, A POOR WAYFARING MAN OF GRIEF, BY JARED BARNES



ILLUSTRATION BY GARY SMITH

Nineteenth-century political leaders, like their ancient counterparts, chose not to intervene while Joseph Smith was murdered.

their families and rode . . . toward Carthage, voluntarily surrendering themselves to county officials. . . . After the brothers had been released on bail for the initial charge, they were falsely charged with treason against the state of Illinois, arrested, and imprisoned in Carthage Jail to await a hearing.”¹⁰ Nineteenth-century political leaders, like their ancient counterparts, chose not to intervene while Joseph Smith was murdered by a group of attackers, some of whom belonged to the militia responsible for defending Carthage Jail.

Elder John Taylor, who was in the

Carthage Jail and witnessed the Martyrdom, wrote, “Like most of the Lord’s anointed in ancient times, [Joseph Smith] has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood” (D&C 135:3). The Lord, through President Brigham Young revealed, “Many have marveled because of his death; but it was needful that he should seal his testimony with his blood, that he might be honored and the wicked might be condemned” (D&C 136:39).

Jesus Christ Showed the Way

The path to martyrdom walked by Joseph Smith and ancient prophets is the same path walked by Him who said, “Come, follow me” (Luke 18:22). During his three-year mission, Jesus Christ was persecuted for

bearing testimony of His Father and not refuting the testimonies of those who proclaimed Him as the Messiah (see Luke 4:16–24, 28–29; John 8:53–59; 10:24–39). He knew in advance of His coming death and taught His disciples that He must be lifted up (see Matthew 16:21; 21:33–39; John 3:14).

Despite repeated attacks on His life, the Savior was confident that He would finish His divine work of atoning for the sins of the world (see John 10:17–18; 19:10–11). After Jewish leaders found Jesus guilty of blasphemy and Roman political leaders convicted Him of high treason,¹¹ He was crucified (see Matthew 26:65; Luke 23:2).

A Branch of the True Vine

The night before His Atonement and Crucifixion, Jesus taught the Twelve many important doctrines. As part of these teachings He said, “I am the true vine. . . . Ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:1, 5).

At the conclusion of His discourse on the true vine, the Savior said to His Apostles, “Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me” (John 15:27). He prophesied, “Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” (John 16:2).

As with the ancient apostles and prophets, Joseph Smith never wavered in his testimony of the Son of God, and as a result he was slain. But the restored gospel continues to expand across the world on the foundation laid by the Prophet, and as we sing in the hymn, “millions shall know ‘Brother Joseph’ again.”¹²

Sometimes I reflect on the feelings we experienced during our family’s trip to sites associated with the life of the Prophet. We entered the Sacred Grove, where the heavens had opened again. We climbed the Hill Cumorah and walked the streets of Palmyra, New York, where the Book of Mormon came forth. We stood in

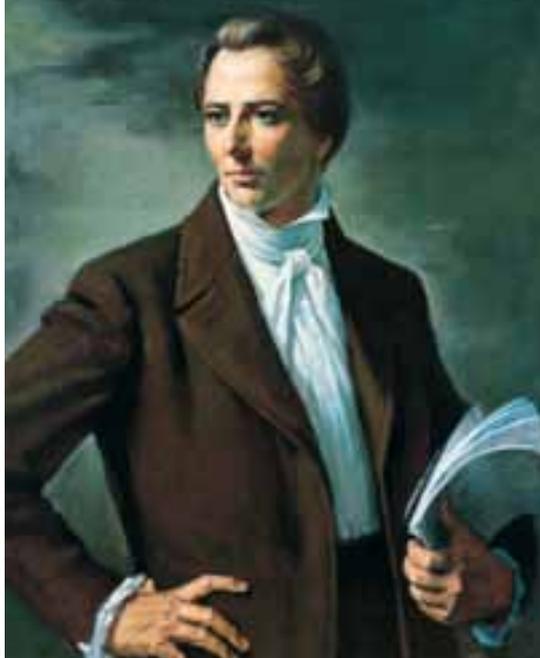


ILLUSTRATION BY AVIN GITTINS

As with ancient apostles and prophets, Joseph Smith never wavered in his testimony of the Son of God.

Peter Whitmer Sr.’s small home in Fayette, New York, where the Church was organized. We visited sites in and around Kirtland, Ohio, where visions and revelations poured forth. We walked the streets of Nauvoo the Beautiful and saw the temple on the site where temple ordinances were restored. We marveled at the fruits brought forth by Joseph, a branch of the True Vine. And we felt the Spirit in an old jail in Carthage, where the Prophet sealed his mission.

We need not visit Carthage Jail to strengthen our testimony of Joseph’s calling as a prophet

of God. We need only study patterns of prophets in the scriptures and learn of Joseph’s life. My testimony has grown by seeking to understand the Martyrdom at Carthage Jail—Joseph Smith’s ultimate witness.

We will not likely be required to die for our testimony of the Son of God, as did Joseph and the ancient prophets. We need only stay “true to the truth for which martyrs have perished.”¹³ Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve said, “They were called to *give* their lives for the gospel. We are called to *live* our lives for the same purpose.”¹⁴ ■

NOTES

- 1 . See Robert C. Patch, “Martyrs,” in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 2:862; and James E. Talmage, *The Great Apostasy* (1981), 70.
- 2 . See Craig K. Manscill and Derek R. Mock, “‘That Thy Days May Be Prolonged’: Attempts on the Life of Joseph Smith,” in *Joseph Smith and the Doctrinal Restoration* (2005), 253–71.
- 3 . *Our Heritage* (1996), 62.
- 4 . Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (1996), 434.
- 5 . See Ronald K. Esplin, “God Will Protect Me until My Work Is Done,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1989, 16.
- 6 . *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 534.
- 7 . *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 534.
- 8 . See Richard Lloyd Anderson, “The Church and the Roman Empire,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1975, 14; see also S. Kent Brown, “Whither the Early Church?” *Ensign*, Oct. 1988, 8.
- 9 . See Reed Blake, “Martyrdom at Carthage,” *Ensign*, June 1994, 30.
- 10 . *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 530.
- 11 . See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (1983), 587.
- 12 . “Praise to the Man,” *Hymns*, no. 27.
- 13 . “True to the Faith,” *Hymns*, no. 254.
- 14 . Robert D. Hales, “Preparations for the Restoration and the Second Coming: ‘My Hand Shall Be over Thee,’” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 91.

Guarding against Danger from Within

The Legend of Mixco Viejo

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

Taking a break from the welding work he is doing, Byron Iquic raises his visor and wipes the sweat from his brow. President Iquic, president of the San Juan Branch, Guatemala City Florida Stake, is building a new home for his wife, Etelvina, and their four children.

He loves his family and wants the house to be comfortable, but he also wants it to be safe and strong. Locks, lights, and a sturdy roof and walls are just some of the features meant to protect his family from man and nature.

As he talks about protecting his precious family, he pauses. Because President Iquic is familiar with the legend of Mixco Viejo, he understands that regardless of how well the house keeps things out, the greatest dangers to his family could come from what the family lets in.

The Fall of Mixco Viejo

Mixco Viejo, a ruined city near the Iquics' home, had its beginning as early as A.D. 900. Before its fall nearly 500 years ago, it must have been an impressive sight. The fortified city sat atop a series of high hills with steep approaches on all sides. Archaeologists estimate that at one time the city was home to more than 1,500 people, with another 7,000 in the surrounding valleys.



GUATEMALA
• Mixco Viejo

Parts of the history of Mixco's fall are uncertain, but the legend is instructive. In 1525 the Spanish conquistador Pedro Alvarado laid siege to Mixco Viejo. The Spanish and their indigenous allies tried for more than a month to take the city, suffering heavy losses. However, Mixco Viejo remained a seemingly impenetrable home for its people.

But legend says there was another way in—a secret passage that led into the city from a cave some distance away, a passage the people of Mixco Viejo may have seen no need to defend because it was small and so well hidden.

The Spanish found it. They took advantage of the small opening the people had left in their defenses, surprising the city's inhabitants from the inside and destroying Mixco Viejo.

Identifying Weaknesses

President Iquic believes homes and families are like Mixco Viejo—under a spiritual siege in which Satan “maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasseth them round about” (D&C 76:29).

“The enemy is always searching for a way in,” says President Iquic. “We must not be caught sleeping.”

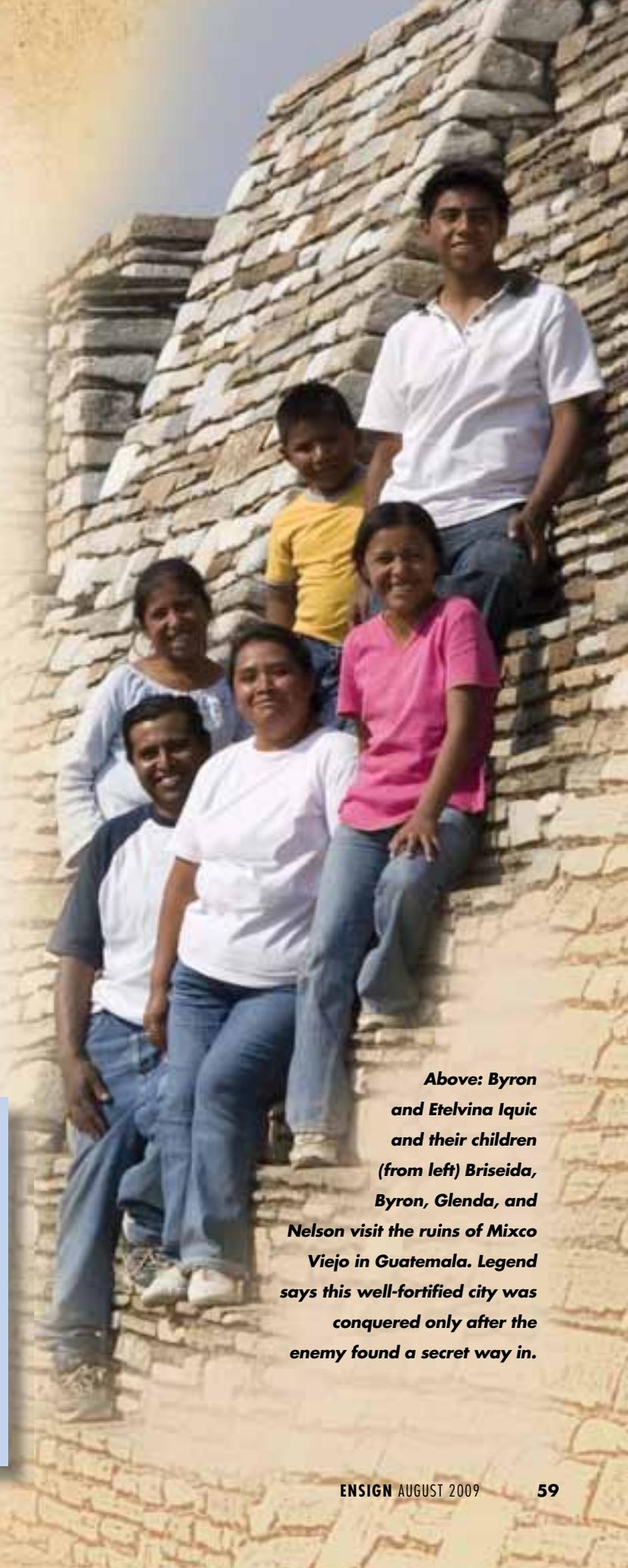
No physical or spiritual wall can keep out an enemy who finds a door unguarded. Prophets of God have warned of dangerous openings through which the enemy may enter no matter how strong the wall. Many of these

PROTECTING OUR HOMES

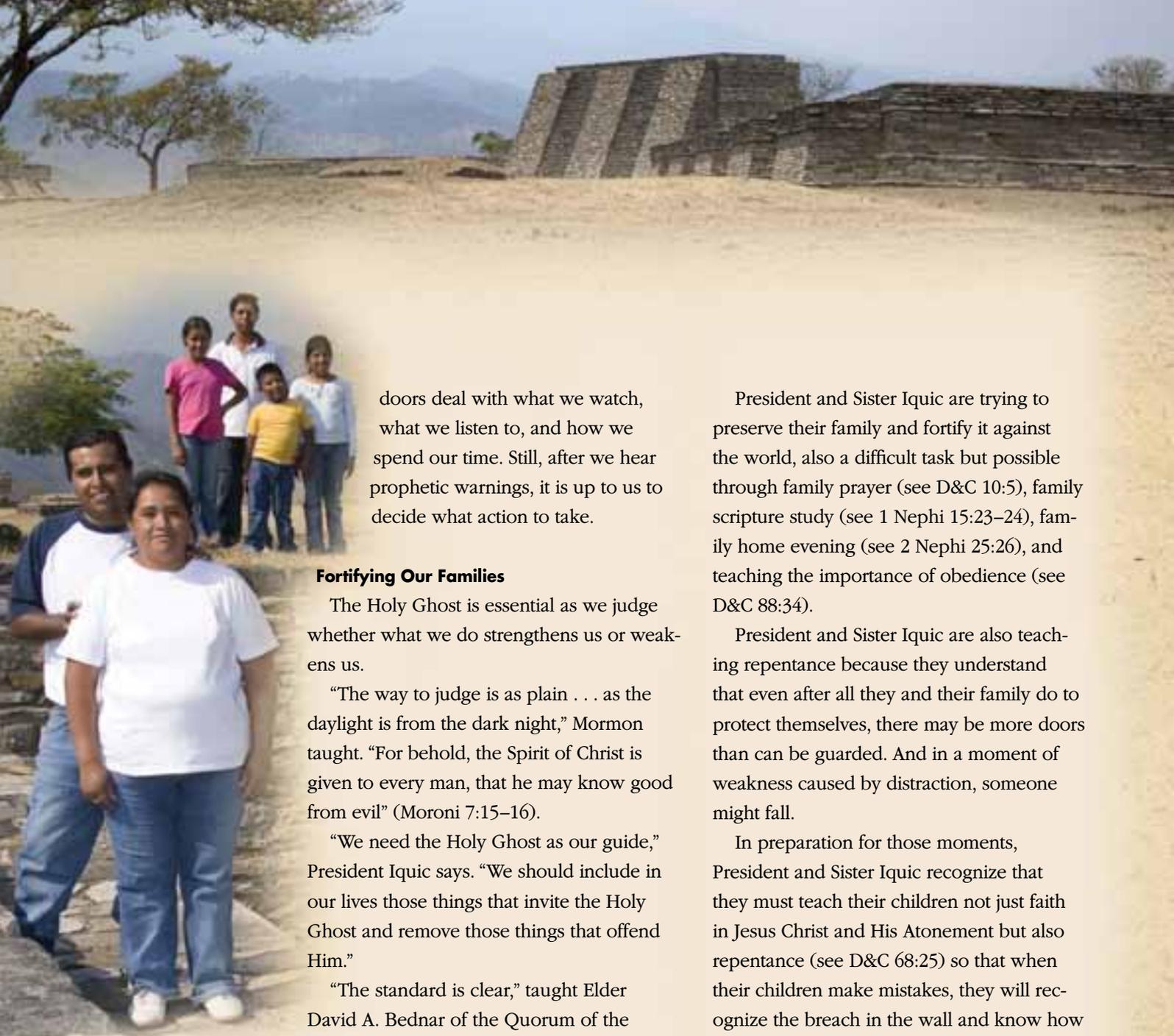


“We need to make our homes a place of refuge from the storm, which is increasing in intensity all about us. Even if the smallest openings are left unattended, negative influences can penetrate the very walls of our homes.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Importance of the Family,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2003, 40.



Above: Byron and Etelvina Iquic and their children (from left) Briseida, Byron, Glenda, and Nelson visit the ruins of Mixco Viejo in Guatemala. Legend says this well-fortified city was conquered only after the enemy found a secret way in.



Along with trying to protect their children from spiritual danger, Byron and Etelvina Iquic are teaching them about repentance in case the enemy slips past the family's defenses.

doors deal with what we watch, what we listen to, and how we spend our time. Still, after we hear prophetic warnings, it is up to us to decide what action to take.

Fortifying Our Families

The Holy Ghost is essential as we judge whether what we do strengthens us or weakens us.

“The way to judge is as plain . . . as the daylight is from the dark night,” Mormon taught. “For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil” (Moroni 7:15–16).

“We need the Holy Ghost as our guide,” President Iquic says. “We should include in our lives those things that invite the Holy Ghost and remove those things that offend Him.”

“The standard is clear,” taught Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “If something we think, see, hear, or do distances us from the Holy Ghost, then we should stop thinking, seeing, hearing, or doing that thing. . . . Taking ‘the Holy Spirit for [our] guide’ (D&C 45:57) is possible and is essential for our spiritual growth and survival in an increasingly wicked world.”¹

Rebuilding the Walls

Today, people are trying to preserve and rebuild the ruins of Mixco Viejo—a difficult task after 500 years.

President and Sister Iquic are trying to preserve their family and fortify it against the world, also a difficult task but possible through family prayer (see D&C 10:5), family scripture study (see 1 Nephi 15:23–24), family home evening (see 2 Nephi 25:26), and teaching the importance of obedience (see D&C 88:34).

President and Sister Iquic are also teaching repentance because they understand that even after all they and their family do to protect themselves, there may be more doors than can be guarded. And in a moment of weakness caused by distraction, someone might fall.

In preparation for those moments, President and Sister Iquic recognize that they must teach their children not just faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement but also repentance (see D&C 68:25) so that when their children make mistakes, they will recognize the breach in the wall and know how to fix it.

“Temptation will always be there,” President Iquic says. “We must recognize our mistakes and repent quickly, or they will impede our progress and keep us from the protection of the Spirit.”

With daylight fading and the legend of Mixco Viejo in mind, President Iquic puts his tools away and calls his family together for evening prayer against the gathering darkness. ■

NOTE

1. David A. Bednar, “That We May Always Have His Spirit to Be with Us,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 30.

SEEK EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING



Teach these scriptures and quotations or, if needed, another principle that will bless the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you visit to share what they have felt and learned.

Why Should I Continually Seek Spiritual and Secular Education?

D&C 93:36–37: “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one.”

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president: “The Lord has told us that our time should ‘be devoted to the studying of the scriptures’ (D&C 26:1) and that ‘the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures are given . . . for [our] instruction’ (D&C 33:16). Every woman can be a gospel doctrine instructor in her home, and every sister in the Church needs gospel knowledge as a leader and teacher. If you have not already developed the habit of daily scripture study, start now and keep studying in order to be prepared for your responsibilities in this life and in the eternities” (“My Soul Delighteth in the Scriptures,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 107–8).

President Thomas S. Monson: “Beyond our study of spiritual matters, secular learning is also essential. . . . I

urge you to pursue your education—if you are not already doing so or have not done so—that you might be prepared to provide if circumstances necessitate such.

“Your talents will expand as you study and learn. You will be able to better assist your families in their learning, and you will have peace of mind in knowing that you have prepared yourself for the eventualities that you may encounter in life” (“Three Goals to Guide You,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 119).

How Can I Be a Lifelong Learner?

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency: “We will have to make some hard choices of how we use our time. . . . But remember, you are interested in education, not just for mortal life but for eternal life. When you see that reality clearly with spiritual sight, you will put spiritual learning first and yet not slight the secular learning. . . .

“. . . And since what we will need to know is hard to discern, we need the help of heaven to know which of the myriad things we could study we would most wisely learn. It also means that we cannot waste time entertaining ourselves when we have the chance to read or to listen to whatever will help us learn what is true and

useful. Insatiable curiosity will be our hallmark” (“Education for Real Life,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2002, 18, 19).

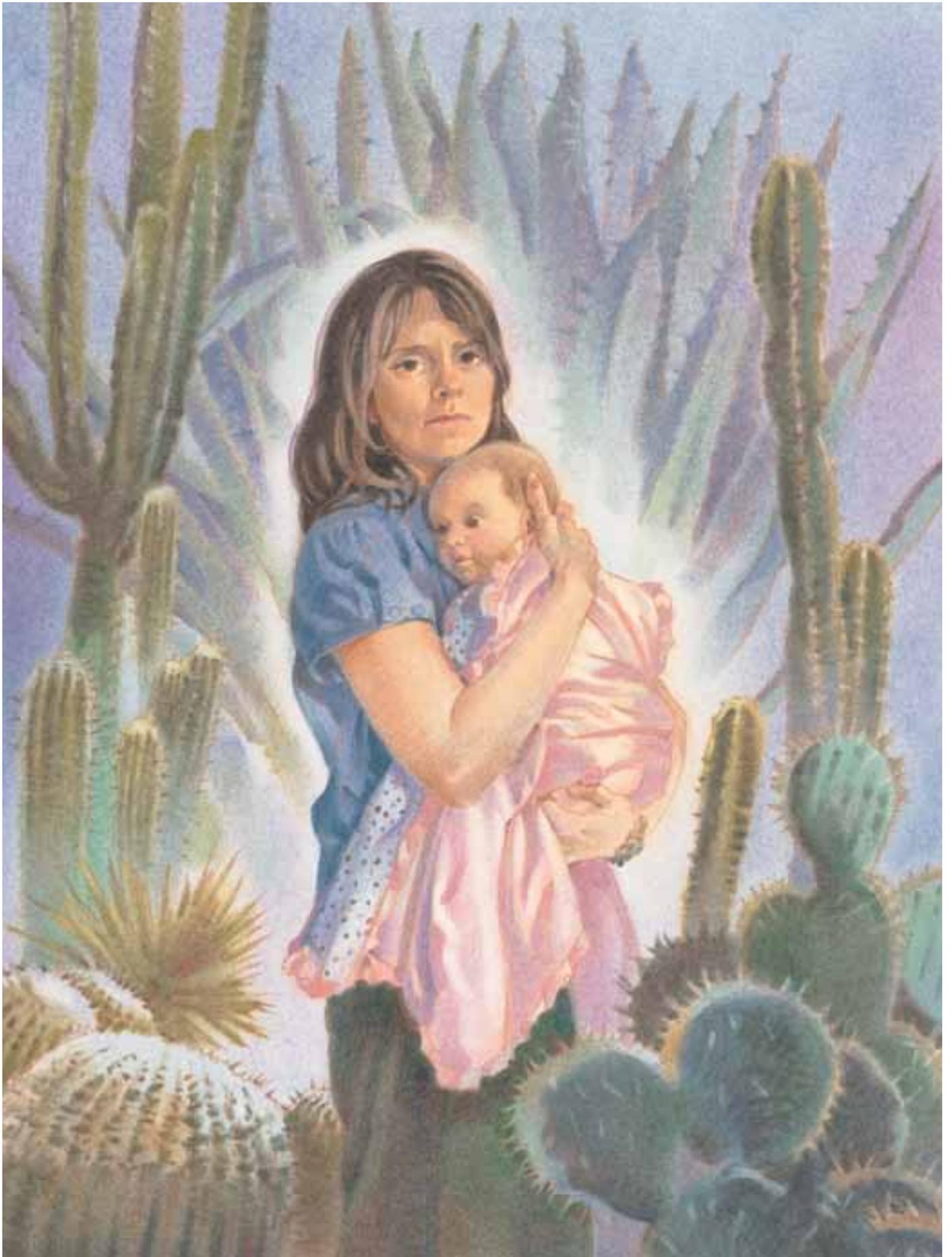
Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “A few of the basic attributes needed to become a lifelong learner are courage, faithful desire, humility, patience, curiosity, and a willingness to communicate and share the knowledge that we gain. . . .

“My dear sisters, don’t ever sell yourself short as a woman or as a mother. . . . Do not let the world define, denigrate, or limit your feelings of lifelong learning and the values of motherhood in the home—both here mortally and in the eternal learning and benefits you give to your children and to your companion.

“Lifelong learning is essential to the vitality of the human mind, body,



and soul. It enhances self-worth and self-actuation. Lifelong learning is invigorating mentally and is a great defense against aging, depression, and self-doubt” (“The Journey of Lifelong Learning,” in *Brigham Young University 2008–2009 Speeches* [2009], 2, 8–9). ■





Managing Postpartum Depression

A GOSPEL PERSPECTIVE

When a woman is struggling with postpartum depression, it's important that she have support from her husband, family members, and others.

BY LYNN CLARK CALLISTER

Brigham Young University professor, College of Nursing

After four years of trying to have another baby, Anna (names have been changed) and her husband were grateful for the birth of a daughter. But Anna found that adapting to the needs of a newborn, in addition to caring for her sons, was overwhelming. She found herself sinking into depression in spite of her best attempts to manage everything and maintain a sense of normalcy. Anna was struggling with postpartum depression.

All mothers, including Anna, know that having a baby is “supposed” to be a happy time and new mothers are “supposed” to be grateful for this incredible blessing in their lives. Yet for some women, postpartum mood disorders detract significantly from these happy feelings. Postpartum depression is manifested in many ways and can have physical, emotional, and even spiritual implications for the women who suffer from it. For instance, these women might have unrealistic expectations for themselves at a time of great transition, feeling that they should be able to do everything immediately for themselves and

their newborn because they should be “super-mom” and “super-wife.”

It is important that these women—and their families—understand what postpartum depression is (and what it is not), recognize symptoms, find effective ways to manage it, and, most of all, know that there is hope for normal functioning while dealing with feelings of depression.

A woman’s experiencing postpartum depression does not mean that she is weak, that she has done something wrong, or that she is to blame for her overwhelming feelings. In most cases the state is temporary. Suffering from postpartum depression, like facing other trials, can bring us closer to the Savior as we find ways to obtain spiritual strength. As former Young Women general president Ardeth G. Kapp explained: “We know about our Savior, but it is often in our adversities that we truly find Him and know Him and love Him. . . . I can testify from my own experience in life that some of our heaviest burdens, disappointments, and heartaches can in time be replaced with ‘the peace of God,

which passeth all understanding' (Philippians 4:7) while we 'wait upon the Lord' (Isaiah 40:31)."¹

More Than Just the "Baby Blues"

For some women, giving birth creates temporary feelings of sadness that are often referred to as the "baby blues." Symptoms—which usually appear within the first week after giving birth and can last up to 10 days—may include tearfulness, irritability, fatigue, anxiety, and emotional sensitivity with highs and lows. Baby blues are most often attributed to physical changes the mother is experiencing, but these symptoms can be aggravated by sleep deprivation, inadequate nutrition, a challenging infant, and lack of support. The baby blues are observed in all cultures across the world and affect up to 80 percent of women who give birth.

In contrast, postpartum depression is an illness with a biochemical basis. Although no one is sure what the exact cause is, researchers believe that the hormone-level shifts that occur during pregnancy and after childbirth may contribute to chemical changes in the brain. That, combined with the stresses and fatigue that accompany having a new baby, can lead to depression. About 10 percent of women who have a baby will experience postpartum depression, which typically occurs within four weeks after giving birth but can occur anytime during the following year. Many women who experience postpartum depression have had a previous encounter with depression; new mothers in this category should closely monitor their feelings so they can get help if symptoms appear and escalate.

Some women experiencing postpartum depression start to feel better within a few weeks, while others don't feel "like themselves" for several months. But help is not out of reach: identifying symptoms is the first step to starting to feel good again.

Symptoms

Often, a new mother assumes that feeling depressed demonstrates weakness. She may even worry that others will think less of her if they know how she is feeling. For

these and other reasons, she might not discuss her symptoms, leaving the postpartum depression to go undiagnosed and untreated.

John, speaking of his family's experience with postpartum depression, said, "My wife, Carolyn, hid her symptoms from everyone, even me. It was hard for me to know how much she was truly suffering. I think she thought that as the bishop's wife she couldn't let anyone—not me, not her friends, not her mother—know what was going on."

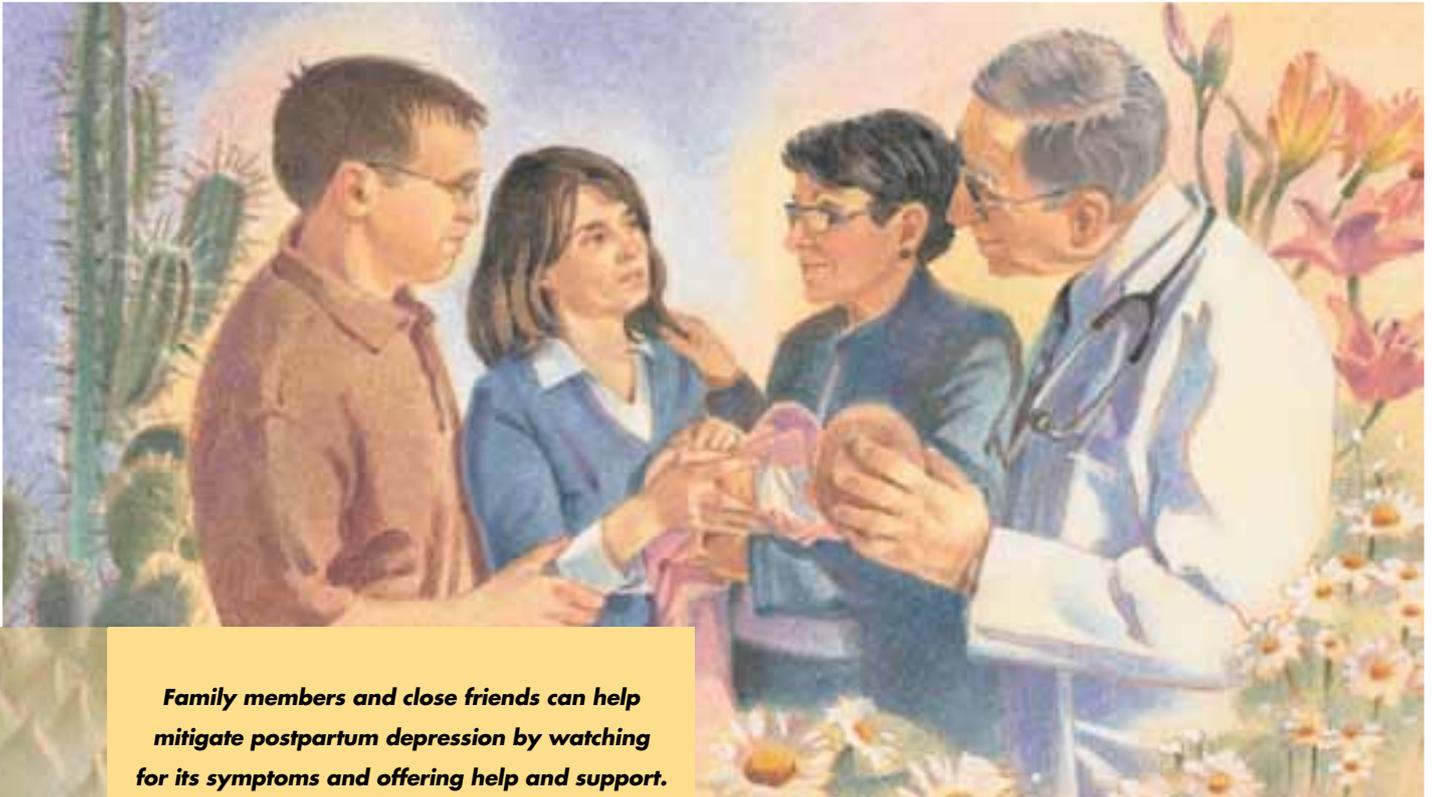
Dr. Cheryl Tatano Beck, a noted nurse-researcher, calls postpartum depression "a thief that steals motherhood."² But family members and close friends can help mitigate this "theft" by watching for its symptoms. They may notice behavioral changes in the new mother, including the following:

- A depressed mood lasting most of every day.
- The absence of laughter or play with the infant.
- A downcast or blank facial expression.
- Persistent sadness.
- Comments about flaws she perceives in herself or the infant.
- Indications of feelings of guilt or inadequacy.
- Indecisiveness about ordinary matters.
- Noticeable irritation, especially related to the infant's fussing or crying. (See "Symptoms of Postpartum Depression" sidebar on page 66 for more internal signs that only mothers themselves may notice.)

If family members and close friends think they detect some of these symptoms but aren't sure, they can sensitively ask the mother such questions as "Are you feeling down [or depressed or hopeless]? How long have you been feeling that way?" or "Do you feel a lack of joy in your life?" Once the mother and those closest to her recognize the symptoms, they can begin to get a handle on the depression.

Managing Postpartum Depression

Managing postpartum depression is important not only for the woman's welfare but also for that of the infant and the rest of the family. Because the mother is often the center of her child's social environment, her mood affects the child. And the mother's and



Family members and close friends can help mitigate postpartum depression by watching for its symptoms and offering help and support.

the baby's well-being affect the family's well-being.

Because this condition affects the entire family, the management of the postpartum depression is a family concern. It is important for the woman to have support from her husband, family members, and others.

Support from Family and Friends. According to "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," "husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children."³ The primary strategies for meeting the challenge of postpartum depression are to strengthen the couple's relationship and increase the husband's sensitivity. It is essential that the new mother have help and support from her husband in activities like these:

- Taking over household tasks and the care of other children.
- Limiting the number of visitors to foster a peaceful environment. (For some women, however, having visitors may help alleviate symptoms of depression.)
- Helping the mother get enough rest, appropriate nutrition, and exercise.
- Assisting with infant care.
- Becoming educated about postpartum depression.

- Giving priesthood blessings as appropriate.
- Offering the gift of presence—listening, caring, and just being with her. Accompanied by a hug, a healing conversation may be just one sentence long: "This must be very hard for you."
- Encouraging the new mother to get professional assistance as appropriate.

Rachel, who experienced postpartum depression after the birth of her third child, said, "The smallest task seemed insurmountable because I lacked emotional and physical energy. I was so grateful that my husband was understanding and compassionate and assisted me in getting the help I so sorely needed."

Postpartum depression may be difficult for a husband to understand, and sometimes he may react with confusion, frustration, anger, guilt, anxiety, or embarrassment. It may be helpful for him to engage in counseling or reading to increase his understanding of postpartum depression and to learn how he can be most helpful. His doing so can benefit both him and his wife.

Johanna, who suffered postpartum depression after having preterm twins, said, "Although the experience was challenging for Sam and me, our marriage became stronger. We became closer in our relationship than we had ever been before. We worked together to resolve issues.



SYMPTOMS OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

Mothers experiencing postpartum depression may have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Struggling for perfection.
- Feeling overwhelmed or feeling a sense of failure.
- Experiencing shattered expectations.
- Plunging into despair.
- Having difficulty focusing and concentrating.
- Feeling lonely.
- Panicking.
- Having difficulty sleeping.
- Lacking appetite.
- Feeling as though she is losing her mind.
- Struggling to survive.

I relied on him for priesthood blessings. We truly communicated with each other and the Lord.”

Extended family and the Church community can augment the support of the father. Kathleen H. Hughes, former counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, spoke about her experience with postpartum depression and the help she received from others:

“After the birth of our son . . . , I sank into a horrible depression. Many of the women in my family suffer from postpartum depression and, as you may know, in those days medical professionals did very little to help women with this condition. I was left to fight my way out of the darkness.

“But those hard times for me were often tempered and lightened by wonderful sisters in the ward who cared for my children and who cared for me physically, emotionally, and spiritually—helping me through that emotional battle.”⁴

Women might find additional support through organizations for new mothers. Christine, who lived far from

extended family and felt alone after she had her first baby, reported, “As I talked to other young mothers in my housing complex, I found a lot of commonalities in our struggles. It really helped—and I even found myself laughing instead of crying.”

Professional Treatment. New mothers might consider seeking professional assistance, including counseling from LDS Family Services (see www.ldsfamilyservices.org) or from an appropriate source recommended by a health care provider. For some, medication may be necessary, as prescribed by a psychiatrist or other clinician.

Taking Care of Yourself. It is vital that new mothers care for themselves by resting as much as possible, eating a nutritious diet, and taking “time out” with mothers’ groups or children’s play groups.

In addition, because motherhood is physically and emotionally demanding, mothers should set realistic goals that allow for flexibility, remembering that “to every thing there is a season” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Elizabeth, who gave birth to four daughters in a period of just a few years, said, “It isn’t feasible to quit doing housework and cooking when there are other children needing clean clothes and lunch. I found it helpful to do just a little bit each day—one load of laundry, cleaning the bathroom sink (instead of the whole bathroom), planning the meals, and having my husband do the shopping. Feeling productive, even if it’s just a little each day, is very encouraging.”

Other Helpful Outlets. Other activities might also be helpful in managing and overcoming postpartum depression:

- Listening to uplifting music.
- Reading the scriptures and other inspiring books. Anna reported that she especially enjoyed reading 2 Nephi 4, which documents Nephi’s feelings of discouragement and doubt, then his growing recognition of the love of the Lord for him: “My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions” (2 Nephi 4:20).
- Keeping a journal. Rachel said, “As I wrote in my journal, I was able to articulate my feelings of deep despair. It helped me to become more aware of



Recognizing that we can learn from our trials can strengthen our faith, even as we are in the midst of adversity.

what seemed to trigger feelings of depression. It also helped me begin to count my blessings.”

- Praying for help and comfort. Anna said, “Being depressed made it harder for me to feel the comfort of the Holy Spirit I so desperately needed. I tried to challenge the negative voices that left me feeling weaker and doubting my capacity to overcome my negative emotions.” Johanna asked herself and the Lord this question as she engaged in personal prayer and contemplation, “Heavenly Father, what am I supposed to learn from this?”

The Place of Trials in Our Lives

Recognizing that we can learn from our trials can strengthen our faith, even as we are in the midst of them. God does not leave us alone in our struggle to find hope. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled: “To any who may be struggling to see that light and find that hope, I say: Hold on. Keep trying. God loves you.”⁵ And He does. Sister Patricia Holland, Elder Holland’s wife, once invited us to return to “the wholeness of our soul, that unity in our very being that balances the demanding and inevitable diversity of life.”⁶

Anna explained the process she went through: “As I struggled to overcome postpartum depression, I sought

to get beyond the darkness and into the light, the light of the Son of God. I wept as I read Isaiah 53:3–4, understanding fully for the first time that the Savior was ‘a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.’ I held on to the promise that the Savior was my personal Savior, that He had been sent to ‘give unto [us] beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness’ (Isaiah 61:3). As I looked toward the Savior, I realized more fully that He knew my pain, that He could sensitively succor me as I reached out to Him.” ■

NOTES

1. Ardeth G. Kapp, “Pray Not for Light Burdens but for Strong Backs,” *The Joy of Our Salvation: Talks from the 2004 BYU Women’s Conference* (2005), 116.
2. Cheryl Tatano Beck, “Postpartum Depression: It Isn’t Just the Blues,” *American Journal of Nursing*, vol. 106, no. 5 (May 2006), 40.
3. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
4. Kathleen H. Hughes, “Serving and Supporting One Another,” *The Rock of Our Redeemer: Talks from the 2002 BYU Women’s Conference* (2003), 52.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, “An High Priest of Good Things to Come,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2000, 42; *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 36.
6. Patricia Holland, “‘One Thing Needful’: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1987, 30.

PRESERVING FOOD WHEN A STORM HITS HOME

When power is out for a few hours or a few days, what can you do to keep cold storage items from spoiling? Here's what I've discovered after extensive research and consulting with my father, a retired professor of food science.

- Keep the refrigerator or freezer door shut to minimize the loss of cold air. The temperature needs to stay below 40 degrees Fahrenheit (4 degrees Celsius). To check the temperature, keep a portable thermometer on the top shelf of each unit. Freezer temperature should maintain ice crystals—that means it should be at or below 5 degrees F (-15 C) to keep quality. Frozen meat that has partially thawed but still has ice crystals can be safely refrozen. Chest freezers keep foods frozen longer.

- If the refrigerator is unopened, the food inside should be safe for at least four hours. Most full freezers keep food frozen for two days if the doors remain closed. If the freezer is half full, however, you'll need to quickly group food together to preserve the cold; still, it may stay frozen for only a day. If thawing does start, meat products that still have ice crystals when the freezer starts working again can be safely refrozen and eaten later.

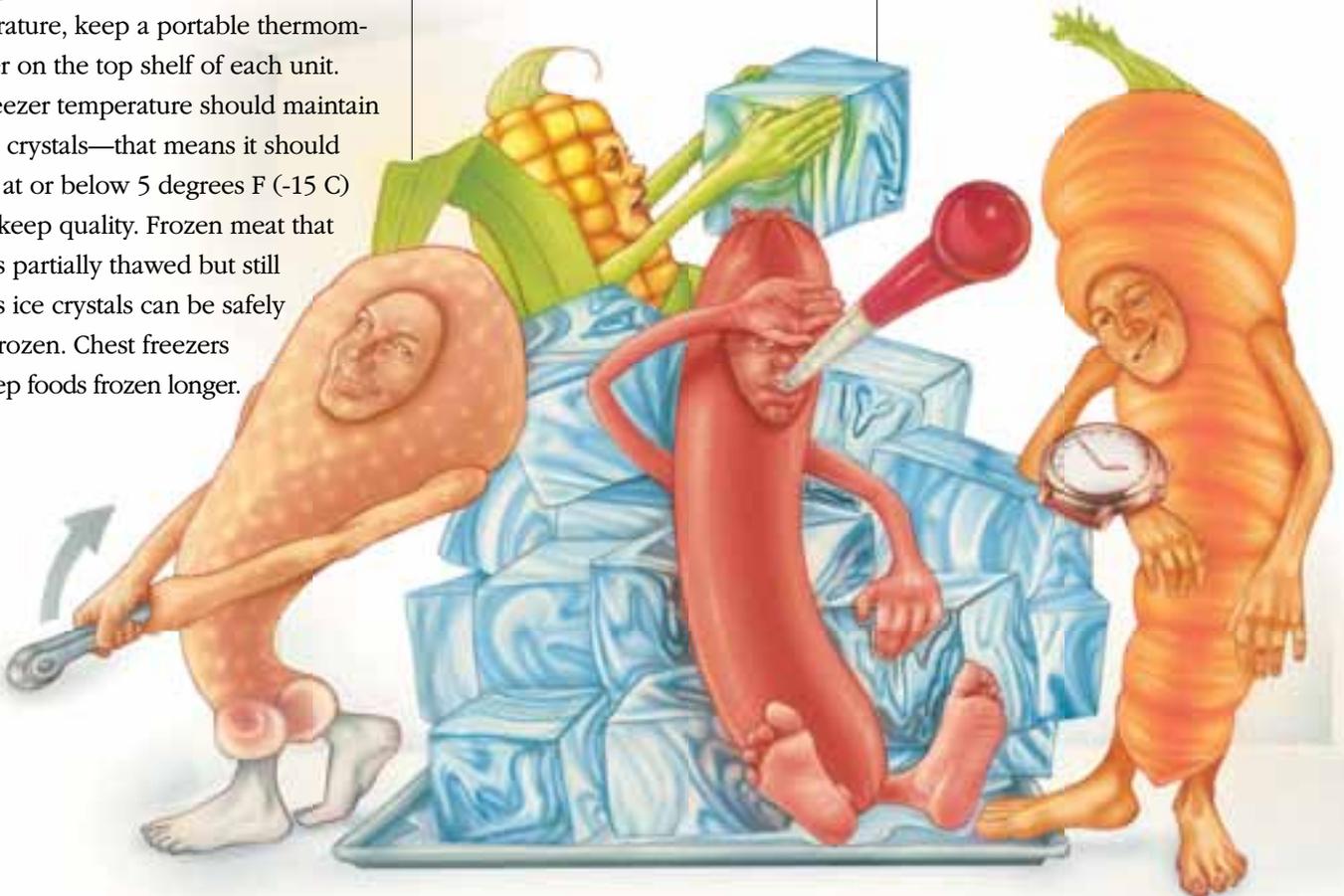
- As a preventive measure, don't leave the freezer low on food. If it tends to be near empty, fill plastic gallon bottles with water and keep them frozen in the freezer.

- Put trays beneath frozen food in

case it begins to thaw and leak. If you have to move items to other locations, trays will help you move food faster.

- Add bagged or block ice to the refrigerator or freezer if the power isn't restored quickly or if a technician can't come immediately.

- If the power outage continues and the freezer's cooling ability is still affected, use camping coolers. Put the most-valued items in the coolers and pack the top with bagged or large block ice. You'll need about two 10-pound bags per day to chill a loaded 60-quart cooler. Remember to drain the coolers regularly as the ice melts, particularly if your food is not in waterproof containers, or start cooking the food.





Cyber Family Home Evening

Weekly family home evening: that was our goal. My wife and I prayed and read scriptures together each day. But we struggled to hold family home evening on a regular basis. Since we don't have children, it seemed a little strange to do the same things we usually do together and call it "family home evening."

Soon after we set our goal, I received a new job offer in a different state. The employer needed me right away and I had to move into temporary housing for a month before my wife could join me. Among other challenges that came was the difficulty in keeping our family home evening

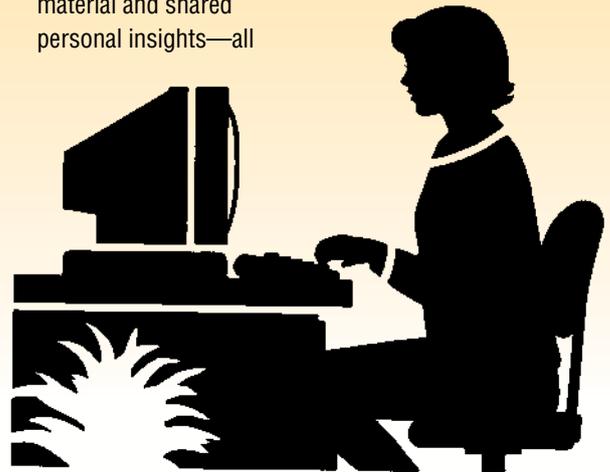
goal. We wanted to keep our commitment, but I couldn't fly back home every Monday night.

The solution turned out to be simple: we would use the Internet. We took turns each week preparing a lesson. Often we would use talks we found on LDS.org. On Monday nights, we would each say a prayer before connecting via an instant-messaging program. We would then access the lesson material in our Web browsers and read it together. We then discussed the material and shared personal insights—all

through instant messages we typed to one another. After the lesson, we would pause to allow each other time to say a closing prayer. Then we would play chess, Chinese checkers, or some other game together over the Internet.

Our cyber family home evenings became a good way for us to remain closely connected while we lived in different states. Best of all, we were able to keep our Monday-night commitment.

Anthony Hart, Utah, USA



- If you are worried about the quality of food once the refrigerator and freezer are working again, throw it away. Dealing with food-borne illness isn't worth the risk.

- Store a variety of shelf-stable foods. Many freezer foods, including meat, can also be canned and stored on your pantry shelf.

- Keep this information and other handy references in an emergency preparedness binder or folder.

Marti Johnson, California, and John Hal Johnson, Utah, USA

OPEN FOR SERVICE

Do you want to give back to your community and find more purpose in your life? That was how I felt a few years ago after my husband passed away suddenly. Initially I had preconceived ideas about how and where I wanted to volunteer. But those opportunities didn't materialize. I prayerfully considered other options and was blessed with two wonderful experiences.

I eventually contacted the local high school. Soon I was approached about helping a chemistry teacher who had multiple sclerosis. How could I, an English major, help with chemistry experiments and labs? I wasn't sure it could work, but I agreed to meet with him. During that same visit, the school principal, who was obviously delighted to have a volunteer, asked if I could also help

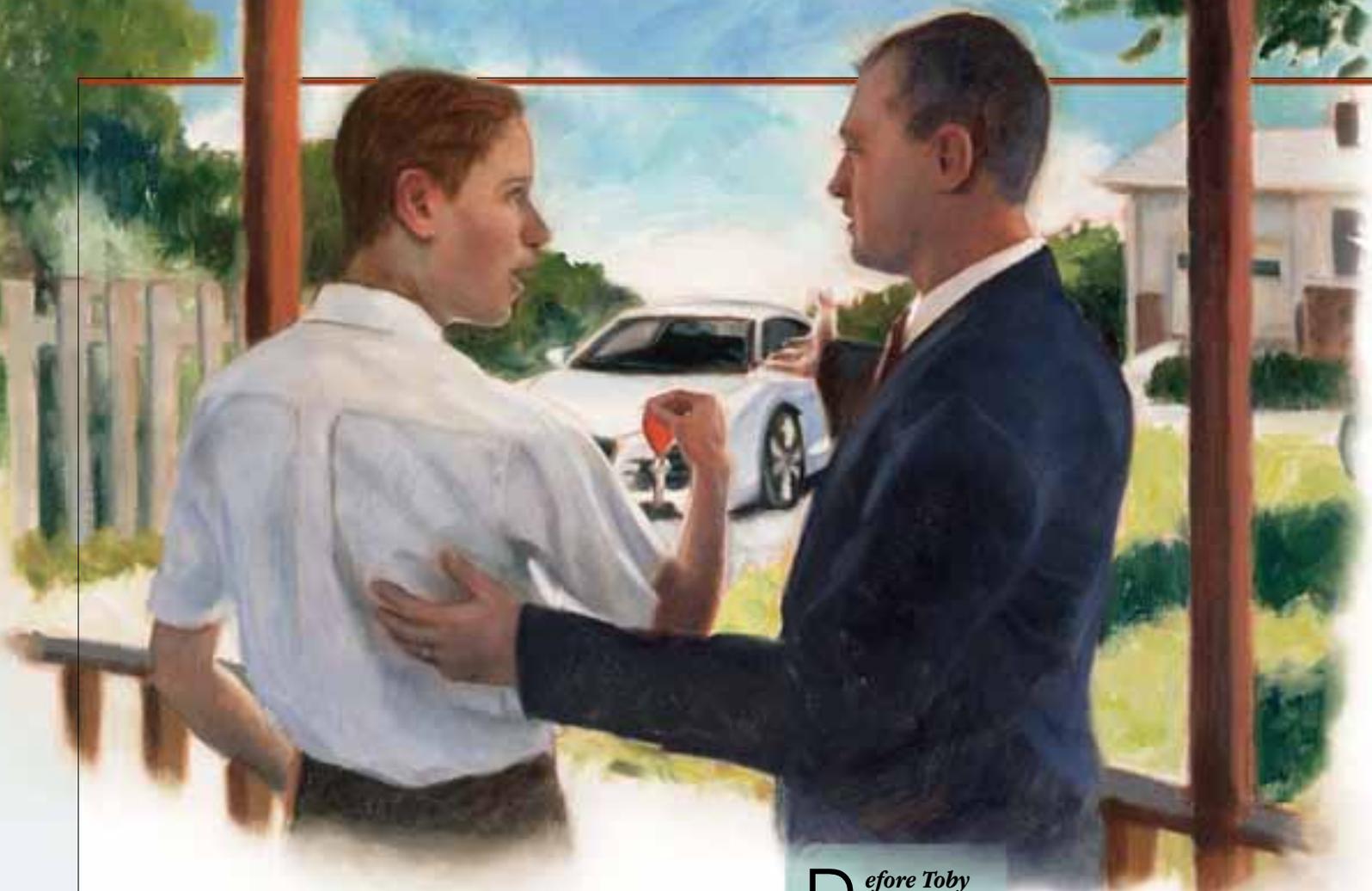
a special education teacher. I soon agreed to both volunteer opportunities because I also have disabilities and know what it is like to try to lead a fulfilling life despite the setbacks and limitations.

Through these opportunities I gained tremendous insight. As I helped the teens in special education and helped the teachers, the Lord helped me through some trying times with my own young adult children. As I helped the chemistry

teacher with tasks that sapped his energy, I felt so needed. Because of me, he could continue to do what he loves. His example inspired me to persevere in my own life despite my challenges.

I testify that Heavenly Father knows the righteous desires of our hearts. Opportunities to serve open our heart to lessons of love. As we reach out to others, He will help us in ways that we can't imagine.

Shelley L. Nelson, Minnesota, USA



I'M NEVER GOING HOME TEACHING AGAIN!

My 15-year-old son was excited about the many things going on in his life—friends, skateboards, cars, and his learner's driving permit. He was not, however, excited about his responsibilities as a home teacher.

My heart sank one Sunday when he said, "Home teaching is a waste of time. I'm going to call my adviser and tell him that he needs to get someone else because I'm never going home teaching again!"

Before he had the opportunity to find his priesthood adviser's name in the ward directory, however, the telephone rang. It was his newly

assigned home teaching companion, Brother Bernd Suckow, who spoke with a thick German accent.

"Toby, I'm coming to get you right now," he said. "You are my new companion, and I thought we could make a few visits. It is good? OK. Good-bye."

Brother Suckow was either inspired not to wait for a response, or he assumed that Toby's surprised silence was synonymous with consent. Either way, 10 minutes later there came a knock at the door. Before Toby could protest, an ebullient man had pulled him outside and

Before Toby could protest, an ebullient man pulled him outside and stuffed a set of car keys into his hand.

stuffed a set of car keys into his hand.

"Your name is Toby? Nice to meet you," Brother Suckow said. "Toby, it is the Sabbath, and I test-drive cars for a living. I think it is not so

good for me to drive on the Sabbath since it is my vocation. Can you help me out? Do you have a driving permit? Can you drive us to our home teaching appointments?"

Toby's jaw dropped as he saw the late-model sports car that Brother Suckow was test-driving that week. He quickly realized that he had almost lost what promised to be a memorable home teaching assignment.

When they returned a short while later, Toby showed Brother Suckow some new computer equipment, and they were soon talking about the latest trends in technology. When he left, Brother Suckow said, "I think it is good if we finish up our home teaching visits next Sunday. What do you think, Toby?"

Toby's little brother blurted out, "Can I be a home teacher too?"

Toby never hesitated when it came time to home teach with Brother Suckow. After a few months, home teaching was no longer about the nice cars he had the opportunity to drive. Rather, Brother Suckow had become a genuine friend, and Toby learned how important home teaching was to the families they visited.

Brother Suckow and his wife, Barbara, eventually returned to Germany. Our stake misses them greatly. I will never forget Brother Suckow's powerful example of love for a young man whose testimony of home teaching needed a jump start. ■

*Christine Francom,
California, USA*

A LONG-LOST TREASURE

Not long ago, as I sat waiting for the opening exercises of priesthood meeting, my home teaching companion mentioned that my scriptures were in the ward lost and found.

When I looked to my side, however, I saw that I still

had my new set of scriptures, which my wife had given me. As for my old set, they were sitting in a

basket next to a chair in our front room. I was puzzled.

"What's your middle initial?" my companion asked.

"R," I said.

"That's what the name said," he replied. "I'll go get them for you."

He returned a moment later and handed me a Bible with my name in faded gold letters on the front. I recognized it immediately. I struggled to unzip the old black cover. The book fell open to the first page, which bore a note in my father's handwriting. I was holding the Bible



that my parents had given me for my 12th birthday.

I was now living in Arizona, and the last time I had seen this Bible, I was living in Utah, preparing for a mission. I took my seminary set of scriptures with me to the mission field and left this Bible home. I found the odds staggering that my old Bible could have somehow made its way, over the course of 30 years, from my parents' home in Utah to my ward building in Arizona.

My father, a student of the scriptures, instilled in me at an early age a desire to read and study the word of God. A portion of the note he wrote in my Bible gave me counsel as a preface to my receiving the Aaronic Priesthood:

“David, on this, your 12th birthday, you will receive the priesthood of Aaron as a deacon and become a servant of the Lord, even as your namesake, David the king. As he behaved himself wisely, the Lord blessed him.

“So shall it be with you. If you will behave yourself wisely and follow the Lord, He will bless you and call you to serve Him.

“Be strong and faithful, Son. Study this book diligently, and it will give you strength.”

My father's words are as meaningful to me now as they were 30 years ago, perhaps even more so. How grateful I am to have again received the gift of my first Bible with the timeless counsel of my father. ■

David R. Hanks, Arizona, USA

I REMEMBERED THE SAVIOR

Some time ago I went through a period in which I was plagued with many personal problems and felt that I had nobody to help me solve them. I was attending church regularly but had not been successful in finding solutions to my difficulties. Fear often overcame me, especially during the night. I was very unhappy.

One day when I was feeling particularly distraught, I tried to get in touch with the mission president. On another day I had a strong desire to reach the President of the Church. I thought if I could just speak with or write to him, he would give me the answers I sought.

While in this troubled state of mind, I attended a session of district conference in Cúcuta, Colombia. I found the answer I needed during a talk by the mission president. When President Canals asked, “When is the last time you had a spiritual experience?” I realized that I had been so preoccupied with trying to find someone to help me solve my problems that I had forgotten

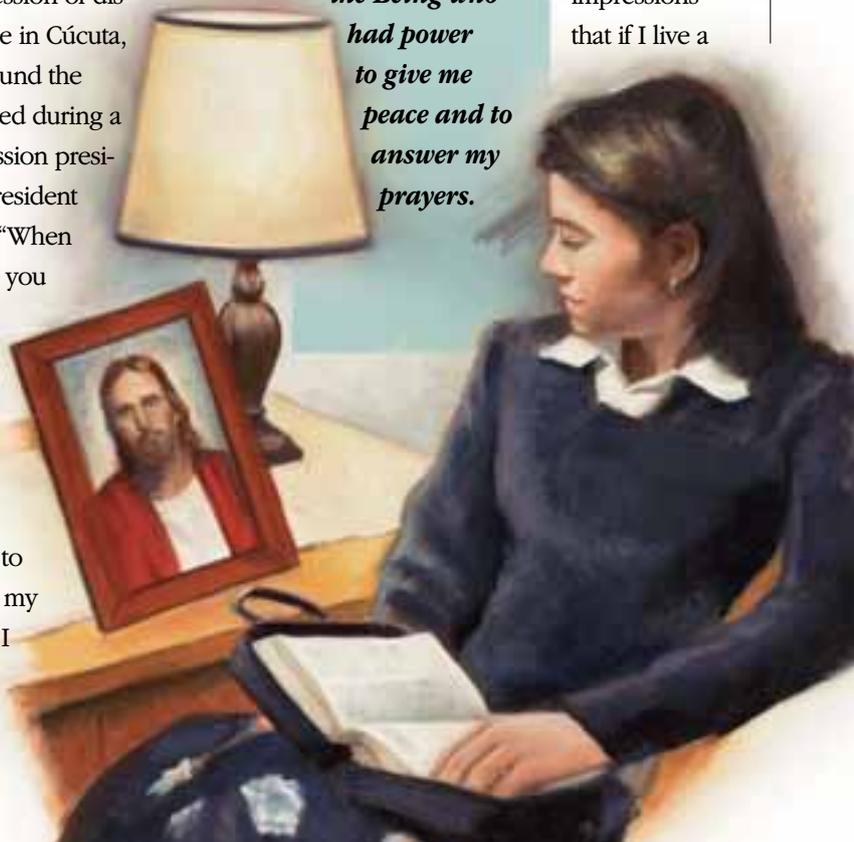
the Savior's call to draw near unto Him (see D&C 88:63). In my rush to find a solution, I had forgotten the Being who had power to give me peace in my afflictions and to answer my prayers.

That very day I started the process of drawing nearer to my Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. I told Heavenly Father of my fear and anguish, and I prayed in the name of Jesus Christ that I might have His Spirit to be with me. I dropped all of my burdens at the Savior's feet, remembering His promise: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

I still don't have all the answers to my personal problems, but I have

In my rush to find a solution, I had forgotten the Being who had power to give me peace and to answer my prayers.

received strength and comfort. I have also received impressions that if I live a



righteous life, keep the commandments, and serve the Lord with all my heart, He will help me solve my problems or give me strength to endure them (see Mosiah 24:14). ■

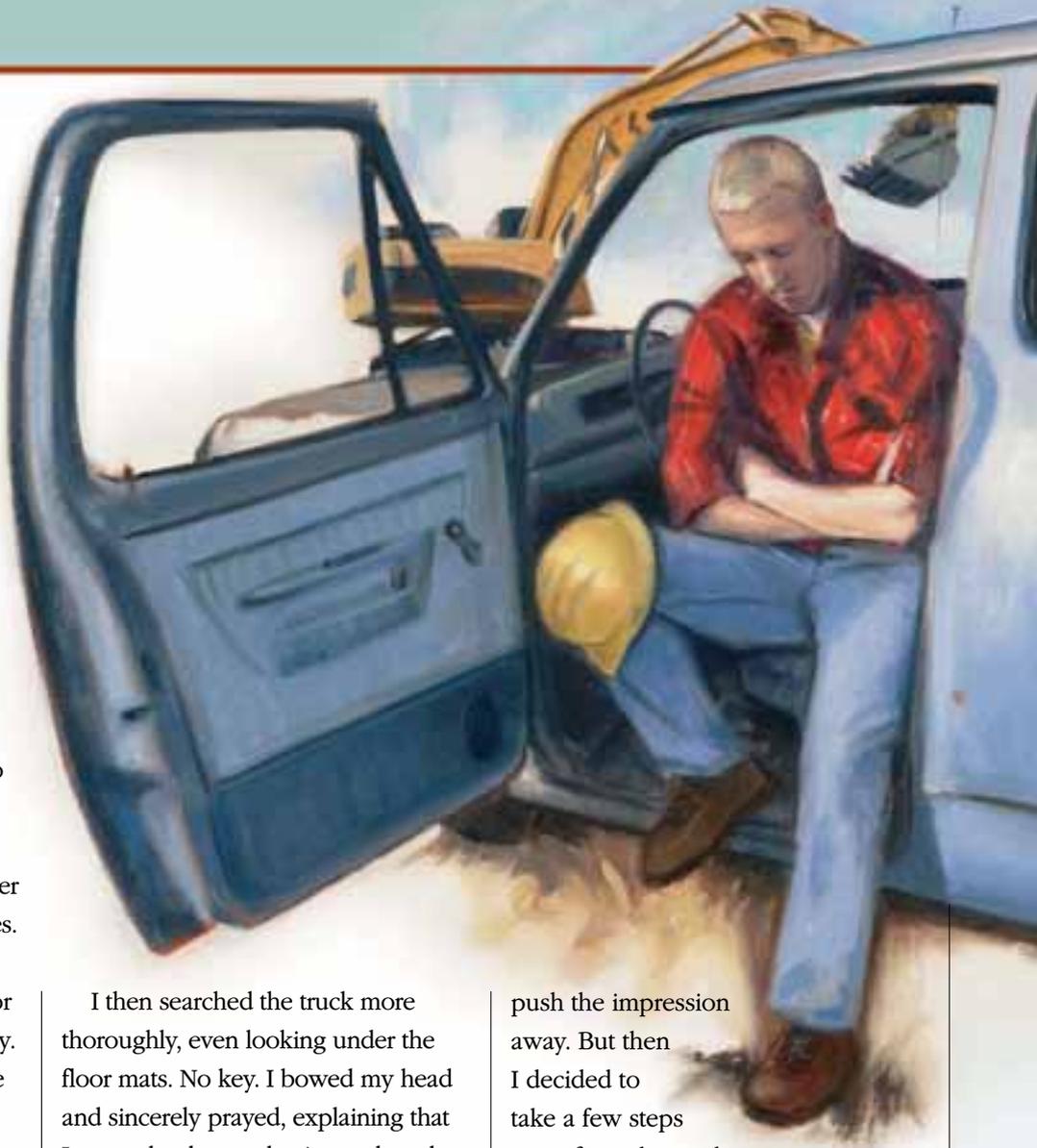
Iris Adriana Leal Castilla, Colombia

THE KEY TO PRAYER

I had recently returned home from a full-time mission and was blessed to find a job that would enable me to save money for college tuition. I was eager to be productive so my employer would hire other returned missionaries.

My work was simple: I did whatever odd jobs needed to be done for a construction engineering company. This often meant performing simple laboratory tests. On one particular day, I was scheduled to pick up samples of construction materials from several sites and return them to the lab. I was given an old truck to make my rounds, and off I went.

I arrived at the first site, greeted the foreman, and quickly found the samples of concrete and steel. After placing them in the truck, I reached into my pocket for the truck key. To my alarm, my pocket was empty. I checked the ignition and took a quick look around the truck cab but did not find the key. It occurred to me that I might have dropped it while walking through the construction site. As I retraced my steps, I said a silent prayer, but I still couldn't find the key.



I then searched the truck more thoroughly, even looking under the floor mats. No key. I bowed my head and sincerely prayed, explaining that I wanted to be productive and not be delayed at the first stop of the day. I began searching again while listening for an answer to my prayer. I felt an impression to look under the truck, so I took a quick, doubting glance at the ground near my feet. I still saw no key, so I decided to make another trip around the construction site.

When I returned to the truck, I was still empty-handed. How could I tell my new employer that I had lost the key and hadn't been able to complete such an easy task? I quietly said one more prayer, and the impression to look under the truck came again. I gave another quick glance, and when I didn't see the key, I was about to

push the impression away. But then I decided to take a few steps away from the truck and look again.

Suddenly I saw it! It must have fallen when I got out of the truck. It was just far enough under the truck that I hadn't seen it the first two times I looked. I was ashamed that I hadn't listened better to the promptings of the Spirit.

That day and many times since, I have reflected on how patiently and lovingly the Spirit works with me. When we sing, "I know my Father lives and loves me too" ("I Know My Father Lives," *Hymns*, no. 302), my heart swells. I am amazed that our Father loves us so much that He will answer our simplest prayers. ■
Mark Burns, Utah, USA

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG PEIHOA, TIMELINE PHOTOGRAPHY



A group of 81 young adults from around Australia visited the Australian Federal Parliament to learn about politics and represent the Church and its beliefs to their nation's leaders.

Young Adults Represent Church to Australian Federal Parliament

By Marianne Walters

In May 2009 81 Australian young adults responded to the call to “Get Involved!” (*Teachings of*

Gordon B. Hinckley [1997], 128), representing the Church in a visit to Australia’s Federal Parliament and

meeting with Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles later the same day.

This was the third such young adult group to visit Australia’s Parliament. The purpose of their visit was three-fold: to thank politicians for their leadership of the country, to learn about the nation’s leaders and how they govern, and to

Young, Single, and Active in Sydney

By Don Searle, Church Magazines

What is it like to be a young single adult in Sydney, Australia?

Young single adults here might say they face the same challenges shared by their peers in countries around the world. And yet young single adults in Sydney feel they have some unique opportunities.

“We’re the same,” says Brittany Jones, because “the gospel is the same everywhere.” But, she says, young single adults in Sydney “have a unique opportunity in terms of multiculturalism to open gates and doorways to

the rest of the world.”

Brittany is the next youngest of the four children of Trevor Jones, president of the Sydney Australia Hyde Park Stake. Brittany; her older brother, Ben; her older sister, Ashley; and her younger sister, Kate; have all taken part in the stake’s young single adult activities.

President Jones explained that single members make up more than 50 percent of the stake. A large percentage of the stake’s approximately 350 young single adults are students at one of the five major universities within

stake boundaries. Many come from other countries; they will later go back to their home countries and strengthen the Church there.

What are the challenges the remaining young single adults face?

First, there are so few Latter-day Saints compared to the general population in Australia. This may affect how they maintain friendships, maintain personal spirituality, and find potential marriage partners.

Second, challenges to spirituality are constant, Ashley says—invitations to take a drink, to have a

cigarette, to go to a club with friends who do not share LDS beliefs. “I think because of growing up in the Church and having parents who taught us what is right, it’s easier to say no,” she adds. Friends are usually accepting when she says drinking or smoking is not something she wants to do. “It’s not as hard as it used to be.”

In spite of the challenges, young single adults in Australia enjoy great opportunities, including the frequent opportunity to reach out to those of other faiths. For example, young single adults have met with members of Australia’s Parliament. (See article above.) “There are really

inform politicians of what members of the Church believe.

Local Church leaders nominated young people they felt would gain something from such an experience and whom they thought would be good ambassadors for the Church.

Attending training and the actual event in spite of car troubles, rugby injuries, university exams, and wedding plans, these young adults did all they could to prepare to represent the Church, from learning the appropriate behavior and dress to preparing spiritually.

One young adult from Perth, Australia, gave this explanation for the spiritual

preparation: "My reason for attending is to develop friendships with the leading figures of our nation so that as they govern they can better represent our beliefs. They can also feel of our spirit and in some way turn their hearts a little more toward our Heavenly Father."

On the day of the event the young adults participated in a spirited debate over whether Australia should have a bill of rights. Speaker of the House, Harry Jenkins, chaired the debate and complimented both the caliber of the arguments and the respectful behavior of the debaters.

Small groups visited various politicians and, later, the president of the

Parliamentary Press Gallery hosted a question-and-answer session.

Elder Holland, accompanied by Elder David S. Baxter, Pacific Area President, and Elder Terry Vinson, Area Seventy, addressed a private luncheon with politicians and academics in the Federal Parliament.

Elder Baxter commended the young adults for their excellent ambitions and examples. Of the 81 young adults, 71 had completed or were pursuing post-secondary education, 41 had served missions, and 26 spoke a foreign language.

Elder Holland told them that each member of the

Church is destined to be a light on the hill. In this dispensation we are engaging in dialogue with the world and having an influence, he said. The day concluded with a testimony meeting at the stake center in Canberra.

Many of the politicians were greatly impressed with the young adults.

David Bradbury, Member of Parliament, said: "As a group, you struck me as being an outstanding cross-section of your generation. You each brought great credit to the Church and our broader community in the way you presented yourself. I was inspired to see such an enthusiastic group of young leaders." ■

good opportunities for us to get the Church out there in Australia, where it's not that big as yet," Brittany says.

Young single adults look forward to multistake activities that bring larger groups together. A YSA conference at the end of December 2008, for example, involved members from New South Wales and Queensland. Along with counsel from Area Seventies (Elders Hans T. Sorensen and David J. Hoare), the young single adults enjoyed a temple trip, cultural activities, and social activities, including three dances and a New Year's Eve ball.

Kate Jones says the young single adults also often gather spontaneously

at someone's home, providing opportunities to spend time with people who have similar values.

A few years ago, Ashley Jones had the opportunity to attend the University of Utah for a semester. After she returned to Australia, she missed associating with so many young single Latter-day Saints. But opportunities provided through Church programs have helped her come to appreciate living where she does. "I've learned to love it," she says. "I wouldn't want to live anywhere else, honestly."

Through her growing up years, she enjoyed opportunities to work with missionaries in helping to teach the gospel. Now,



PHOTOGRAPH BY DON SEARLE

Singles in Sydney enjoy great opportunities, say members of the Jones family: Ben (left); Kate; their mother, Christina (seated); their father, Trevor; Brittany; and Ashley.

Sister Ashley Jones is serving as a full-time missionary in the Canada Calgary Mission.

Her sister Brittany talks of serving a mission too, when she reaches missionary age. For now, she is continuing her

university education and serving as a stake young single adult representative. "I love being a young single adult in Sydney. We have so many opportunities here," she says. "It's really exciting to be part of them." ■

New Area Leadership Assignments

The First Presidency has announced changes in area leadership assignments effective on August 1, 2009. All members of Area Presidencies are members of the First or Second Quorums of the Seventy.

Elder Donald L. Hallstrom has been called to serve in the Presidency of the Seventy following the call of Elder Neil L. Andersen to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

The First Presidency also announced the combining of the South America North and South America West Areas. The new area will be called the South America Northwest Area.

Presidency of the Seventy



RONALD A. RASBAND
ASSISTS IN ALL AREAS



CLAUDIO R. M. COSTA
1. NORTH AMERICA SOUTHWEST



STEVEN E. SNOW
2. UTAH NORTH
3. UTAH SALT LAKE CITY
4. UTAH SOUTH



WALTER F. GONZÁLEZ
5. NORTH AMERICA SOUTHEAST



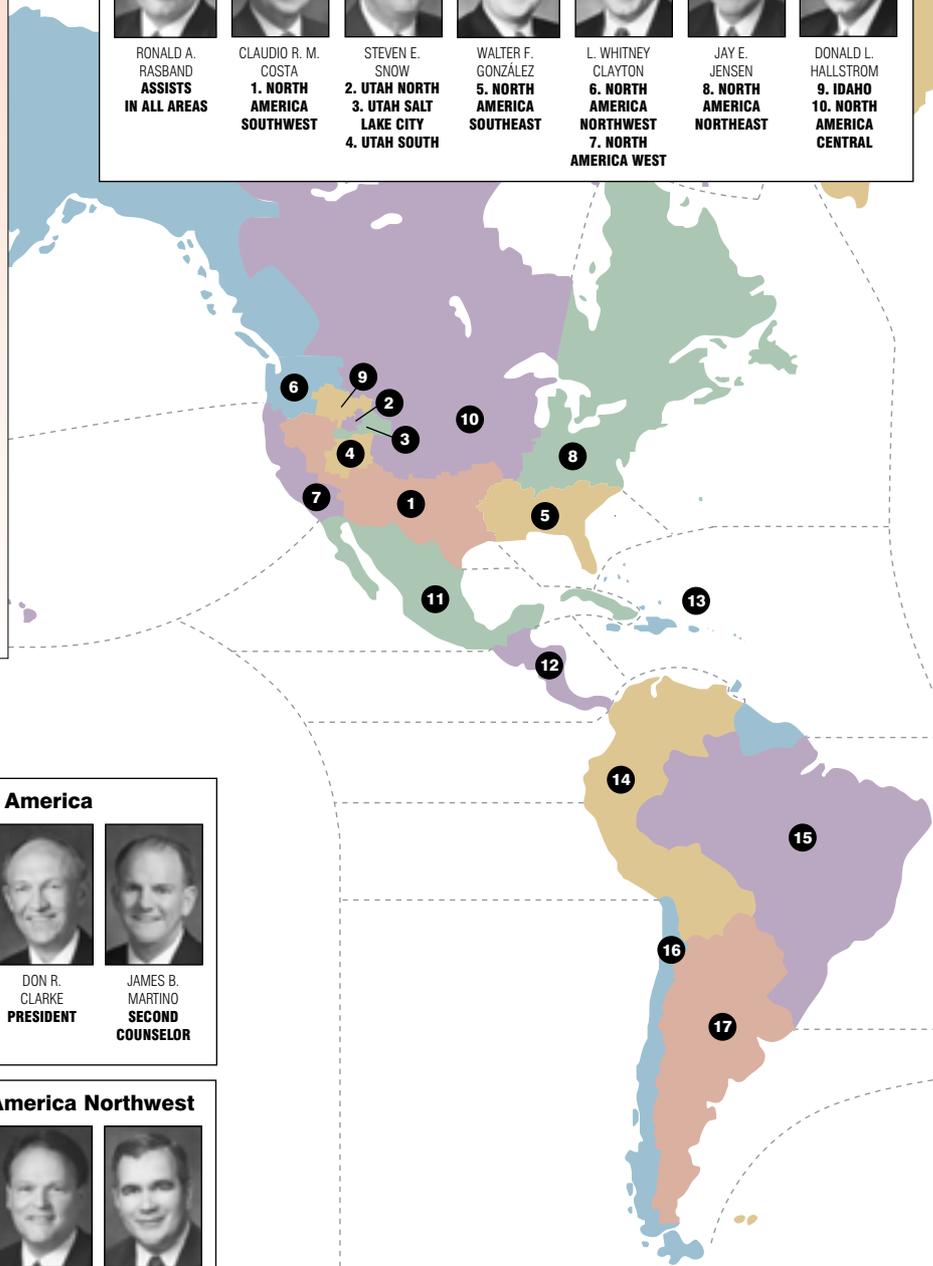
L. WHITNEY CLAYTON
6. NORTH AMERICA NORTHWEST
7. NORTH AMERICA WEST



JAY E. JENSEN
8. NORTH AMERICA NORTHEAST



DONALD L. HALLSTROM
9. IDAHO
10. NORTH AMERICA CENTRAL



11. Mexico



BENJAMÍN DE HOYOS
FIRST COUNSELOR



DANIEL L. JOHNSON
PRESIDENT



OCTAVIANO TENORIO
SECOND COUNSELOR

12. Central America



ENRIQUE R. FALABELLA
FIRST COUNSELOR



DON R. CLARKE
PRESIDENT



JAMES B. MARTINO
SECOND COUNSELOR

13. Caribbean



GARY J. COLEMAN
FIRST COUNSELOR



FRANCISCO J. VINAS
PRESIDENT



WILFORD ANDERSEN
SECOND COUNSELOR

14. South America Northwest



EDUARDO GAVARRET
FIRST COUNSELOR



MARCUS B. NASH
PRESIDENT



RAFAEL E. PINO
SECOND COUNSELOR

15. Brazil



STANLEY G. ELLIS
FIRST COUNSELOR



ULISSES SOARES
PRESIDENT



CARLOS A. GODOY
SECOND COUNSELOR

16. Chile



LAWRENCE E. CORBRIDGE
FIRST COUNSELOR



CARLOS H. AMADO
PRESIDENT



JORGE F. ZEBALLOS
SECOND COUNSELOR

17. South America South



CLAUDIO D. ZIVIC
FIRST COUNSELOR



SHAYNE M. BOWEN
PRESIDENT



MARCOS A. AIDUKAITIS
SECOND COUNSELOR

18. Europe





GÉRALD CAUSSÉ
FIRST COUNSELOR

ERICH W. KOPISCHKE
PRESIDENT

JOSÉ A. TEIXEIRA
SECOND COUNSELOR

19. Europe East





KEVIN W. PEARSON
FIRST COUNSELOR

WOLFGANG H. PAUL
PRESIDENT

GREGORY A. SCHWITZER
SECOND COUNSELOR

20. Middle East/Africa North




BRUCE D. PORTER
ADMINISTERED FROM HEADQUARTERS

PAUL B. PIEPER
ADMINISTERED FROM HEADQUARTERS

21. Africa West





CHRISTOFFEL GOLDEN JR.
FIRST COUNSELOR

CRAIG A. CARDON
PRESIDENT

JOHN B. DICKSON
SECOND COUNSELOR

22. Africa Southeast





F. MICHAEL WATSON
FIRST COUNSELOR

PAUL E. KOELLIKER
PRESIDENT

DALE G. RENLUND
SECOND COUNSELOR

23. Asia





KENT D. WATSON
FIRST COUNSELOR

ANTHONY D. PERKINS
PRESIDENT

CARL B. PRATT
SECOND COUNSELOR

24. Asia North





YOON HWAN CHOI
FIRST COUNSELOR

GARY E. STEVENSON
PRESIDENT

KOICHI AOYAGI
SECOND COUNSELOR

25. Philippines





WON YONG KO
FIRST COUNSELOR

KEITH R. EDWARDS
PRESIDENT

MICHAEL JOHN U. TEH
SECOND COUNSELOR

26. Pacific





TAD R. CALLISTER
FIRST COUNSELOR

DAVID S. BAXTER
PRESIDENT

JAMES J. HAMULA
SECOND COUNSELOR



The USNS Comfort is an oil tanker converted into a floating hospital. A small contingent of member volunteers was aboard during a 2009 humanitarian trip.

Church Offers “Comfort” from Floating Hospital

By Heather Whittle, Church Magazines

Dozens of LDS humanitarian volunteers rotated on and off the United States Naval Ship *Comfort* on a four-month humanitarian mission this summer as part of a government-sponsored mission to provide medical care to countries in the Caribbean and Central and South America.

The *Comfort* was converted from an oil tanker into a hospital ship in 1987. Its primary purpose is to serve as a combat trauma facility, treating wounded U.S. military. However, its secondary mission is to provide full hospital services to support U.S. disaster relief and humanitarian operations around the world.

The ship carried a crew

of about 800, but after all the rotations, some 1,200 medical professionals, engineers, and volunteers from the armed forces, public health services, and nongovernmental organizations were involved as the ship visited Antigua and Barbuda, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Panama as part of Continuing Promise 2009, an annual humanitarian civic assistance operation.

Church Humanitarian Services further contributed by sending 10 shipping containers of medical equipment and supplies, which were unloaded along the way

at each country.

With the 2009 mission beginning in Port Au Prince, Haiti, and ending in Corinto, Nicaragua, organizers planned to perform more than 90,000 medical procedures, including 3,000 surgeries, as well as several community relations projects.

Those who volunteered through LDS Charities did so for many reasons, but all seem to have learned a common lesson: all are children of God.

“On this trip I’ve met sick people, hungry people, ambassadors, dignitaries, and high-ranking officers,” said team leader and nonmedical volunteer Jenna Rix. “We are all children of a Heavenly Father who places us together to help each other.”

“Heavenly Father loves all of His children,” said Melissa Elmer, a registered

nurse from Highland, Utah, USA. “He will put people in our lives who will touch us, and He allows us to touch others.”

Angela Berrett, part of the LDS envoy and a registered nurse, worked with an orphanage in Haiti. She recalled a four-year-old girl who was “running around wild.” To keep her out of the workers’ way, Sister Berrett picked the girl up and held her.

“She sat in my arms for a minute or two, and next thing I knew, she had just snuggled into my arms,” she said. “She laid there for an hour, and every once in a while she would readjust.”

Sister Berrett wondered if the girl had ever been hugged like that before, but concluded, “She needed me as much as I needed her.” ■

BeSmart Firesides Kick Off

On August 25, the Church’s BeSmart program will begin two months of fun and informative firesides across 38 locations in 20 states.

Dedicated to preparing youth for higher education, the BeSmart firesides and Web site offer advice about college preparation and provide information on attending institute or a Church college or university.

The BeSmart firesides will inform prospective college students of the purpose of continuing education, the options CES offers, and how to transition to college education.

Youth are encouraged to attend in order to meet

with other youth, to gain valuable information about higher education, and to learn about the opportunities available to them.

Visit BeSmart.com for 2009 fireside locations. All firesides will begin at 7:00 p.m. ■

AROUND THE CHURCH

Thousands Participate in U.S. Day of Service

Members on both ends of the United States organized a Day of Service on April 25, 2009, when tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints, along with friends and neighbors, donated their time, their money, and their talents to their communities.

Interfaith volunteers stocked shelves, painted fences, picked up trash, donated blood, planted

gardens, assembled emergency kits, served food, and constructed homes in their communities, among other projects.

Working under the umbrella of Mormon Helping Hands, stakes and wards across the nation organized various service projects in their areas.

The 96 stakes in the North America Southeast Area joined with people

from various communities to serve while, thousands of miles away, Southern California reported approximately 25,000 volunteers from Bakersfield to the Mexican border.

“It’s powerful when like-minded people join together to meet a wide spectrum of needs in diverse communities. We can bring help and hope to others no matter what their circumstances,” said Elder Walter F. González of the Presidency of the Seventy, who helped oversee volunteer efforts in the southeast area of the United States.

Elder González challenged more than 665 congregations from the southeastern states to join with other service organizations and municipalities to serve in what was named “The Helping

Hands and Linking Arms Project.”

Meanwhile, in Southern California, yellow-vested volunteers served under the Mormon Helping Hands banner of “Community Service, Making Our Communities a Better Place.”

The North America West Area reported approximately 50,000 total hours

of service in the one-day concentrated effort.

“It was a phenomenal success and very, very well

received,” said Elder John C. Dalton, North America West Area Seventy. “We were pleased to do it.” ■

Church, Mutombo Hospital Partner

A new partnership between the Church and the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation promises an additional water source for the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital and Research Center, located in Kinshasa, the capital city of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The not-for-profit hospital, which opened in 2007, is the vision of Dikembe Mutombo, who retired this year after 18 seasons in the U.S. National Basketball Association. The facility currently has 150 beds with a planned capacity of 300.

The hospital is mindful of its water utilization both in quality and quantity and already has a system that treats water before and after it is used. However, the existing public system has a slow flow rate, which prevents on-site water tanks from filling to capacity. This project will help provide a consistent flow of clean water for the hospital.

“The city of Kinshasa has but one dialysis center, and it is overburdened and unable to meet demand,” Mr. Mutombo said while in Salt Lake City to discuss the



Members of the Searcy Ward, North Little Rock Arkansas Stake, joined with members of the community to help clean a cemetery behind a Methodist meetinghouse from 1857 that is undergoing restoration.

project in a meeting with Church leaders. “The supplemental water source helps us accomplish the

first step in adding a 10-bed dialysis unit that would serve several hundred patients per year.”

WORLD BRIEFS

FamilySearch Adds Canadian Censuses

FamilySearch recently added the 1851, 1861, and 1871 Canada Census indexes to its online collection, which already included the 1881 and 1916 Canada censuses. There are plans to add the 1891 Canada census shortly. The searchable online databases, found at FamilySearch.org, contain some 17 million records. Free public access to these indexed censuses will make it easier for Canadians to extend their knowledge of their family’s history.

Humanitarian Groups Meet in Salt Lake

Hundreds gathered in Salt Lake City for the 17th annual National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) conference in April 2009. NVOAD is a coalition of more than 50 nonprofit organizations, including Latter-day Saint Charities, the American Red Cross, and the Salvation Army, that work in disaster relief preparedness, response, and recovery throughout the world. Holding the conference in Salt Lake City was a recognition of the Church’s active humanitarian efforts.

Tongan Scriptures Available in New Format

The Tongan edition of the triple combination, containing the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price, is now available online at scriptures.lds.org/to.

The online version of the triple combination in Tongan includes footnotes, maps, and photographs and allows the reader to mark the scriptures and perform key word searches.

Tongan is the 13th language to be added to the Church’s scriptures Web site.

Book of Mormon Published in Guarani

In April 2009, the First Presidency announced the publication of the Book of Mormon in Guarani, a dialect spoken mainly in Paraguay. This full translation of the Book of Mormon replaces the edition of Book of Mormon Selections that has been available since 1982.

The full Book of Mormon is currently published in 82 languages. Book of Mormon Selections is available in another 25 languages. ■

According to the World Health Organization, the average life expectancy in DR Congo is 46 to 49 years

of age. The facility has a staff of 450 and last year provided medical care to 22,000 patients. ■

Comment

Excited About Conference

We gained so many wonderful ideas from “Preparing Our Children for General Conference” in the March 2009 *Ensign* (p. 23). Our children were excited to listen to



conference and listened more intently than ever before. We are now reading the conference talks during family home evening as the article also suggested and have had more attentiveness and willingness to participate than at any other time. Thank you so much for these great suggestions.

Nancy Nichols
Utah, USA

A Thoughtful Article

I experienced a miracle as I turned to page 67 of the June *Ensign*. I had always thought that you really didn’t have much control over the thoughts that come to your mind.

As years went by, bad thoughts seemed to trouble me more and more. I prayed earnestly, but the thoughts didn’t go away. I figured I must be a bad person, even though I read my scriptures regularly and served in the Church.

When I read the article “Thinking About What You Are Thinking About,” I felt my prayers were being answered by every word. I feel closer to my Heavenly Father. I know now how you can change your thoughts. Thank you!

Name Withheld

Addiction Recovery

I was so grateful to see the wonderful article, “Addiction Recovery: Healing One Step at a Time,” in the June 2009 *Ensign* (p. 67).

I am the facilitator for one of the addiction recovery groups here in Santa Rosa, California. We find many people do not respond to the word *addict* and do not believe this program is for them. Your covering the wide scope of the addiction recovery program will perhaps help them open their hearts to trying the program, leading to the healing of themselves and their families.

Lynn
California, USA ■



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Treasure the Word, by Elspeth Young

"Treasure up these words in thy heart. Be faithful and diligent in keeping the commandments of God, and I will encircle thee in the arms of my love" (D&C 6:20).



“There is great power in setting aside quiet, prayerful, meditative time. In the stillness that accompanies our pondering, we can come to know the Father and His Son,” writes Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi. See “Opening the Heavens,” page 34.

